

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF POST-OTTOMAN POLITICAL
INFLUENCES ON BULGARIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY
CONSTRUCTION AND CONFLICT

BY

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Abstract

Bulgarian society has a successful history of maintaining a relatively peaceful multicultural environment over centuries. This thesis is a comparative analysis of three transitional periods in Bulgaria coinciding with 1) the latter years of Ottoman dominion: 1762-1877, 2) the end of the Balkan Wars and World Wars I and II: 1878-1947, and 3) the latter years of the Communist dominion: 1947-1989. These periods will be analyzed with the aim to understand the role that regional political agendas have played in shaping an imagined Bulgarian national identity. It will be shown that when it has occurred, identity-based conflict in Bulgaria can be better explained by examining the contributions of nationalist political influences from 1876 – 1989 on identity construction rather than an inherent Balkan propensity to religious and ethnic intolerance. The Bulgarian case is especially relevant to understanding national identity construction in the Balkan region while holding out the possibility for various religious, linguistic, and ethnic groups to coexist peacefully in a heterogeneous environment.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The frozen image of the Balkans, set in its general parameters around World War I, has been reproduced almost without variation over the next decades and operates as a discourse (Todorova 1997, 184).

A. Competing Views of Identity-Based National Conflict in the Balkans

While many contemporary Bulgarians view themselves to be part of Southeastern Europe or as one of the newest member states of the expanding European Union, “most people in the West refer to that region as simply ‘the Balkans,’ a name that immediately evokes ethnic conflict, crime and instability (Van Ham 2001, 5).” This perception of the Balkans is indeed so prevalent in Western thought that the word “balkanize” is now defined by Merriam-Webster as “to break up (as a region or group) into smaller and often hostile units.”¹

It is clear to anyone studying the history of the Balkans that there is ample evidence of powerful cycles of conflict which have repeatedly shaped the ethnic and religious identities as well as the geographic boundaries of this region. Yet, how does one approach the study of this region’s periodic eruptions into national identity-based conflict while not also acknowledging the rich history of multiethnic heterogeneity under which generations of Muslims and Christians lived in relative harmony with one another? Is there a primordial propensity to ethnic and religious violence in the Balkans as so often seems to be expressed in popular understandings since the dawn of the 20th century or are there other theoretical factors which might better explain these periods of conflict?

¹ Merriam Webster's Online Dictionary, accessed on March 31, 2008 at <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/balkanize>.

This thesis will address popular conceptions of the Balkans as a region of loosely constrained internecine religious and ethnic tensions. It will introduce the alternative hypothesis that the region, Bulgaria in particular, has a long history of heterogeneity and that concrete political factors better account for its periodic ethnic and religious conflict rather than the absence of a Balkan capacity for peaceful coexistence of heterogeneous groups.

It is a comparative analysis of the three transitional periods in Bulgaria coinciding with 1) the latter years of Ottoman dominion: 1762-1877, 2) the end of the Balkan Wars and World Wars I and II: 1878-1947, and 3) the latter years of the Communist dominion: 1947-1989. These periods will be analyzed with the aim to understand the role that regional political agendas have played in shaping an imagined Bulgarian national identity.

This Bulgarian case is especially relevant to understanding identity-based conflict in the Balkan region as national identity constructions have resulted in drastically differing outcomes in Bulgaria and neighboring Yugoslavia, which share a similar cultural and ethnic legacy of the Ottoman Empire. In other words, both Bulgaria and Yugoslavia faced similar national identity tensions between heterogeneous ethnic and religious population demographics as well as in defining themselves vis-à-vis the Great Powers. Yet at the same time, the Bulgarian homogenizing experiments never resulted in the sheer numbers of mass killings which were witnessed throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s among the peoples of the former Yugoslav republics. If it can be demonstrated that the Bulgarian case is an exception to stereotypes of irreversible

escalating identity-based conflict in the Balkan region, then further research would be justified into looking at other transitional states facing strong national or identity-based tensions such as Turkey, Rwanda, Sudan, Iraq, Israel/Palestine, etc. Might that mean that there is a greater chance of mitigating and/or perhaps reversing national identity tensions if the relevant political causal factors could be identified and clarified over and against stereotypical appeals to ethnic and religious roots to violence?

B. Thesis

Identity-based conflict in Bulgaria can be better explained by examining the contributions of nationalist political influences from 1876 – 1989 on identity construction rather than an inherent Balkan propensity to religious and ethnic intolerance.

C. Literature Review

Nationalism

Before turning to a more in-depth review of the literature surrounding national identity conflict in Bulgaria, it is important to situate this analysis within the broader theoretical framework of nationalism within some common approaches to define and explain its origins. Among social science theorists, there are two dominant conflicting views of nationalism which can be identified as primordialist/nationalist and modernist/constructivist which have been actively debated for decades.

Primordialist (and Ethnosymbolic) Nationalism

For the primordialist, nationalism has to some extent or another always existed throughout history as various ethnic groups have sought after security or legitimacy by defining themselves over and against their neighbors.

Tatu Vanhanen explains his views of the origins of universal ethnic conflict in that it is an inherent part of our human nature for all ethnicities to resort to ethnic nepotism when there is a fear of losing advantage. His concept of ethnic nepotism is that first of all “significant ethnic divisions tend to lead to ethnic interest conflicts in all societies” and secondly “the more a society is ethnically divided, the more political and other interest conflict tends to become channeled into ethnic lines (Vanhanen 1999, 58).” His fundamental thesis is that “Our shared disposition to ethnic nepotism is the common factor behind all ethnic conflicts (66).” While I sympathize with Vanhanen’s pessimistic view of our all-too-frequent motivation to seek after our self-interest, his approach depends on static overgeneralization and cannot be sustained when confronting all of the complexities inherent in the shifting and negotiated heterogeneous milieu of the Post-Ottoman Balkans as will be demonstrated in the subsequent chapters.

Anthony B. Smith champions a moderated primordial view in what he calls the ethnosymbolist approach which he claims has more in common with the modernist approach since he too claims that the nation is a creation of the modern period. He continues to be identified with the primordialist approach, however, because he maintains that although the nation might be a modern creation, a successful nationalist

program must draw upon preexisting and ancient common memories and identities (religious and ethnic) in order to form a national sense of belonging. Thus his approach seems to be extended from that of the primordialist with the contention that prenational building blocks must be present in order for a nation to develop. While the nation may not be primordial, the prenational identities have certainly existed for long periods of time.

In a debate between himself and Ernest Gellner, *Do Nations Have Navels?*, Smith insists that nations do have navels, which symbolize the prenational building block of nationalism. In fact, they are so essential to the development of nations that they must be invented if they didn't previously exist (Smith 1996). While I believe Smith overstates the necessity of the existence of these building blocks before a nation can develop, he does offer some very useful explanations of how the pre-modern building blocks, *if they exist*,² can be co-opted during the subsequent shaping of national identity consciousness during the modernization period in ways that supplement and complement the approaches of the modernist/constructivist theorist discussed below (Smith 1993).

Modernist/Constructivist Nationalism

Benedict Anderson and Ernest Gellner are two of the more noted modernist nationalism theorists whose works have influenced this research. Benedict Anderson defines the nation as “an imagined political community - and imagined as both

² Author's emphasis and not that of Smith's reasoning.

inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (Anderson 1991, 6).” Anderson’s views convincingly resonate with the development of that nationalist enterprise in the 18th and 19th centuries and will greatly inform the discussion below in chapter two. In particular, it is through Anderson’s analysis of the role of vernacular and print language development that it will become clear how political purposes can and have shaped the imaginary Bulgarian national identity.

Ernest Gellner also contributes to the discussion by describing how the shift from pre-modern to modern times puts more practical homogenizing pressures on previously heterogeneous contexts. For example, he contends that in pre-modern times the presence of heterogeneity within a regional or local village context was easily tolerated and perhaps even desirable. “The social situation of a peasant was in no way aggravated by the fact that he speaks an idiom distinct from that of his bailiff, landlord, shopkeeper, innkeeper, priest, and local political overlord. They know each other so well that they communicated only too easily without the use of lucid and explicit prose. The differences in their speech actually help to avoid ambiguities of status and hence friction (Gellner 1997, 84-85).”

But this changes with the rise of modernity. As mentioned in reference above in his debate with Anthony Smith, Gellner makes the case that nations don’t have navels because they are modern creations and therefore have no need for an actual ontology of prenational conditionalities in order for a national consciousness to develop but instead

are a response to modernity (Gellner 1996). With modernity, the status quo necessarily must change and nationalism enters into the picture and becomes a necessary part of facilitating economic interchange through its homogenizing pressures. “All this changes when men move into an economically and politically centralized, mobile, anonymous and egalitarian world”... which leads to the “need for a shared, standardized, politically underwritten ‘national’ culture (Gellner 1997, 84-85).”

Another nationalism theorist is Rogers Brubaker who also provides some useful understanding of the patterns of ethnic unmixing during the aftermath of the breakup of the Ottoman Empire which will bear upon this thesis in chapters two and three. For Brubaker, there is no “foreordained” outcome of how ethnic groups might choose to differentiate themselves other than in response to more significant political pressure that often have more to do with economic rather than xenophobic realities (Brubaker 1995, 203).

The modernist/constructivist approach in which nationalism is viewed as a relatively recent construction coinciding with the advent of modernity is the theoretical approach that is more closely identifiable with this thesis. Therefore, drawing upon this approach, this thesis will seek to explain the evidence of national identity-based conflict in Bulgaria in decidedly anti-primordialist terms while at the same time drawing upon some other theorists such as Smith and Brubaker to help acknowledge the reality of ethnic identity differentiation. Ultimately, while recognizing that this ethnic and religious differentiation is present throughout the various periods, this thesis will show

that the primary factors contributing to periodic outbreaks of conflict were political and not unavoidably based upon ethno-religious differences.

Bulgarian Nationalism

In order to have a foundational background for a regional understanding of nationalism it is important to recognize the historical milieu of the 500-year Ottoman domination (1393-1878) over the geographic territory that encompasses present-day Bulgaria. It is the principle role of this Ottoman period that I believe provides a legacy for constructions of Bulgarian national identity. This legacy, as will be shown in successive chapters, provided the core identity building blocks utilized by successive nationalist campaigns to pursue deliberate agendas of either homogenization or heterogeneity within the Bulgarian geographic territory. In rejecting the idea that the presence of heterogeneity was maintained only through active opposition to the foreign Ottoman domination throughout the territory, I maintain instead that it was heterogeneity that was the more natural legacy of the Ottoman period. It was a deliberate shift, albeit gradual, of 18th and 19th century leaders of the Bulgarian nationalist movement that consciously started the homogenization ball rolling through employing the rejection of “non-Bulgarian” identity to further their political goals of autonomy which were successfully achieved in 1878. This will be detailed further in chapter two.

It is precisely in the realm of Balkan national identity construction that the works of Maria Todorova and Mary Neuburger are particularly informative with regards to this legacy. While they differ from one another in their respective conceptualizations of the

role of European distinctions of Western vs. Oriental theoretical frameworks in understanding how these identities are constructed, they both share a common approach in helping to elucidate the ebb and flow of repeated negotiations of identities in relation to an imagined “Other” whether that is defined in terms of binary oppositions in language (Slavic/Turkic or Greek/Slavic), religion (Christian/Muslim), or physical geography (Balkans/Europe, Europe/Asia, or West/East).

Maria Todorova serves to identify two primary interpretations of the Ottoman legacy in the Balkans. The first, which she calls a “legacy of perception,” was that the Ottoman Empire was a “religiously, socially, institutionally, and even racially alien imposition on autochthonous Christian medieval societies (Todorova 1997, 162-164).” The other, which she calls a “legacy of continuity,” is that of a “complex symbiosis of Turkish, Islamic, and Byzantine/Balkan traditions” in which “several centuries of coexistence cannot but have produced a common legacy” or heterogeneity (Todorova 1997, 164-166). While not denying that real history of identity-based conflict in the Balkans, Todorova challenges prevailing stereotypes of the Balkans as a frozen image in time as mentioned above or as a place doomed to repeat one interpretation of its own history again and again, namely, that of national identity-based conflict. Instead she maintains that the Balkans have a “powerful ontology that deserves serious and complex study, and it is an ontology of constant and profound change (184).”

Mary Neuburger also highlights vacillations and fluidity between categorizations in which “the Bulgarian nation building project both accepted and rejected, by turns appropriated and dispossessed both the East and the West in its search for national

grounding (Neuburger 2004, 3). Furthermore, she explores aspects of Muslim agency as they “enter the story as navigators of modernity on their own terms” and thus not relegated to being only “victims” of the ethnic Bulgarian “perpetrators (12-13).” It is in the “ambiguous interplay of sameness and difference, brother and enemy, flavored by the Bulgarian-Muslim as well as the Bulgarian-European encounter” that Neuburger conceives of a “conceptual axis around which understanding all of Balkan nationalisms and Muslim/non-Muslim relations should revolve (6).”

In some of the other literature reviewed, broad patterns of consensus with Todorova’s two positions of Ottoman legacy as “perception” or “continuity” can be identified as one looks at how the various authors understand whether or not Bulgaria exhibits a Balkan propensity to violent identity-based conflict, both of which have historical (18th and 19th century) and contemporary (20th century) expressions. Whether expressed in contemporary or historical literature (Hilendarski 1999, Vazov 2000), the region is commonly believed to be prone to ethnic conflict, which is merely a natural reflex reaction for the Bulgarians as a dominant population group to utilize its power to eliminate the “Other” that threatens it (Nelson 1991). This primordialist bias, although not stated in those terms, is present in several of the writings reviewed as is evidenced in a supposition that had the Bulgarians found a more efficient modality, they would have been as ruthless as Yugoslav leaders in the subsequent years (Bell-Fialkoff 1993, Bojkov 2004, Eminov 1997, Mahon 1999, Nitzova 1997).

On the other hand, a second view found in the literature seems to point to a lack of true commitment on the part of the Bulgarian leadership to really follow through with

the large scale ambitions of forcible assimilation once it became clear that success would only be achieved through more violent means (Angelov and Marshall 2006, Petkova 2002, Vassilev 2002). A key part of this view is that Bulgarian society had a successful history of maintaining its multicultural environment with tolerance which essentially squares with the primary assertions of both Neuburger and Todorova.

As a result, the risk of instability would be greater than any supposed gains to be found through a more thorough ethnic cleansing attempt similar to what would subsequently take place in Yugoslavia (Angelov and Marshall 2006, Fotev 1999, Petkova 2002, Vassilev 2002). Again, there are historical examples of this multicultural identity present in Aleko Konstantinov's 19th century fictional Bulgarian character, Bai Ganyu Balkanski, who is Bulgaria's most universally recognized Bulgarian literary creation (Konstantinov 1992, 1999).

A weakness in the existing literature is in the failure to comprehensively address the gaps over which paradigm more correctly understands the Bulgarian situation, especially as it bears upon the final historical period under consideration here, that of the Rebirth/Revival assimilation campaign against the ethnic Turks during the latter years of the Communist period. Both Neuburger and Todorova are confident about recognizing the complexities associated with identity-based conflict in Bulgaria and understand this being rooted in how national identity has progressively been constructed over time.

Todorova contributes much to the literature through her discussions of the Ottoman legacy as well as through her explorations of the historical trajectory of how the

Balkans have been viewed as a type of hybrid or bastardized European child. Yet she doesn't seem particularly interested in analyzing the depth of the interplay among the various imagined identities within Bulgaria in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the periods under review. Neuburger, on the other hand, is much more interested in examining the issues that Todorova overlooks, but primarily from the point of view of the Muslim minorities. This thesis will attempt to contribute to the existing literature by providing a comprehensive argument which often parallels that of Todorova and Neuburger, but at the same time, extends the comprehensive comparative analysis beyond that of the Christian/Turk, Balkan/Other, East/West oppositional frameworks by examining neglected examples of imagined nationalist heterogenizing and homogenizing influences during the periods under consideration, such as perceived threats to the Bulgarian nation by Greek, Macedonian, and Serbian identities.

D. Method and Summary

The structure of this comparative analysis will involve the evaluation of the constancy of religious, linguistic, and ethnic heterogeneity throughout the three historical periods of political transitions under review as a dependent variable with a specific focus on how in the third period, an intensified socialist, secularist agenda operated as a causal variable to explain intensified national identity-based conflict.

I will do this by providing examples of the presence of religious, ethnic, and linguistic heterogeneity throughout all three periods. I will also provide examples of how in the heterogeneous environment, minority groups were perceived by the

dominant ethnic groups during each period as bringing about economic and social contributions to the larger society. Finally, I will identify the possible political motivations in the perceived necessity to greatly intensify homogenizing activities which were exhibited chiefly during the second half of the third period under review. While acknowledging that there were alternating homogenizing and heterogenizing influences throughout all three periods, it was really only during the latter period that the heterogeneity became intolerable.

In summary of the chapters of the thesis, in this first chapter I have provided a general introduction to the research problem and a brief literature review situating this project within the existing literature.

In the second chapter, I will explore the period of 1762-1877 within the context of the Ottoman Empire's dominion over the present-day territory of Bulgaria. This second chapter is crucial because it marks the first of the three transitional periods under review. This period represents the beginning of the nationalist identity construction as the Bulgarian Nationalist Revival Movement began co-opting and reframing key identity building blocks in order to begin redefining the Bulgarian nation.

In the first section, brief mention of the relative local autonomy and millet system existing before the Bulgarian Nationalist Revival Movement will provide an important historical foundation for the examination of the latter part of the period under focus. In the second section, the publication of Paises Hilendarski's *A Slavonic- Bulgarian History* will also be noted especially as his primary arguments for national revival were

not directed against Ottoman Turks and the usage of Turkish vernacular but against Greek Orthodox elites and the usage of Greek vernacular. In addition, I will highlight the literacy and educational campaign of the nationalist movement to help elucidate that this was not initially an “anti-Turkish” movement. I will show how the educational campaigns coupled with the attempts to establish the Bulgarian Orthodox Church (over against the Greek Church) began heightening awareness of the role of religious differences in the area. I will show by the latter part of this period, Bulgarian nationalists, such as Ivan Vazov in his novel *Under the Yoke* successfully utilized themes originally introduced by Hilendarski against the Greek Phanariots over a hundred years earlier, but reapplied them to an anti-Turkish/Islamic context, thereby reimagining the “non-Bulgarian other” to be Muslim-Turkish. Finally, I will briefly discuss the conflicts surrounding the April Uprising and how the Great Powers strove to maintain a balance of power in the region, often siding with “Islamic Ottomans” until the time when Russia invaded the Balkans in the “defense” of Balkan nationalist movements. Focus will be given on how, again, these were initially political “balance of power” issues and not inherently ethnic or religious conflicts.

In the third chapter, the second period of 1878-1947 will be introduced as a second transitional period in which the attempts to frame fluctuations in Bulgarian national identity take on new directions that aren’t just defined in religious or ethnic terms, but especially in geographic, linguistic, and political terms. This section will highlight the role that redefined geographic boundaries played in developing a new conceptualization of Balkan identity under which competing claims on the same territory would prove to

be problematic for some time. The role of deliberate language planning policies to bolster geographic claims will be noted. In addition, I will examine the numerous struggles that Bulgaria had in establishing a centralized government during this period especially with regard to competing philosophies of European integration, agricultural vs. urban economic bases, plus lingering remnants of population shifts from the Balkan Wars. Finally, I will highlight Aleko Konstantinov's creation of the fictional character of Bai Ganyu Balkanski as a Bulgarian archetype for the fluctuating Bulgarian identity during this period. Bulgaria's most notable fictional character provides significant evidence of the reality of a "constructed" Bulgarian identity in distinction over against Ivan Vazov's nationalist protagonists, who are stalwart anti-Turkish revolutionaries. Published within two years of one another, Konstantinov's and Vazov's novels represent the real time negotiations between the heterogenizing and homogenizing Bulgarian identity constructions occurring during this period.

The fourth chapter focus on the final transitional period under review, namely, 1947-1989. This chapter is particularly important because it will demonstrate the radically alternative heterogenizing and homogenizing strategies employed by Communist leaders to facilitate the establishment of a socialist, secular state. The early communist strategy encouraged the maintenance of heterogeneous religious, linguistic, and ethnic practice while the latter communist strategy disavowed that any such differences ever existed to the point of mobilizing the army to forcibly carry out the new strategy or assimilation. This chapter will show that it was not the religious or ethnic differences that were the causal variable which explained the employment of

violent identity-based homogenization, but rather it is the belief that homogenization would speed up the achievement of socialist secularization.

In the final chapter, the overall argument will be reviewed again in particular to demonstrate the fluidity and ease within which inhabitants of the geographic area of Bulgaria were able to resume relatively peaceful coexistence after periods of heightened political tensions. In particular, the reinforcement of the times in which heterogeneity was maintained or reestablished subsequent to brief homogenizing influences will cement my contention that there is nothing inherent in the Bulgarian case to indicate that future generations of Bulgarians need revisit a violent homogenization or identity-based conflict on the scale witnessed in other parts of the world (Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Iraq, etc.). The validity of generalizing the results of this thesis to understand other parts of the Balkans will be discussed in addition to summaries of significant points along the trajectory of this thesis that bear further elucidation.

Chapter Two: Throwing off “the Yoke”: Enlightened Bulgarian National Identity (1762 – 1877)

A. Introduction: Pre-Ottoman and Ottoman Legacies

Anthony Smith makes a useful contribution towards the understanding of the origins of nationalism, by pointing out the roles of 1) “names,” 2) a “belief or myth of common ancestry,” 3) “historical memories,” and 4) a “shared culture” that provide “ethnic categories” that nationalists later might utilize to construct a national identity during the modernist period through “vernacular mobilization” (Smith 1993, 50-52, 56). While the next section certainly predates the period under review, it does provide an example of some of these ethnic categories that will be discussed later on in this chapter. While Smith is correct in pointing to the co-option of existing prenational ethnic categories, it does not necessarily follow that these are in effect, primordial nations. What is significant in looking at this early history is the degree to which even the construction of some of these early identity building blocks were shaped by political considerations vis-à-vis the greater regional political milieu.

Early Background on Bulgarian Linguistic and Religious History

Contemporary Bulgarians are the ethnic descendents of Slavic tribes who settled in Bulgaria in the 6th century AD and the proto-Bulgarians or Bulgars (mixed Turkic nomadic tribes from Central Asia) who also settled there in the 7th century AD. The

integration between the two groups likely resulted in a mix of ethnicity, language, and culture. The advanced political organization that enabled the foundation of the first united Bulgarian kingdom in 681 AD is a legacy attributed to the proto-Bulgarians, yet the linguistic heritage of the Slavs provided the starting point for the modern Bulgarian language (Crampton 1997, 8-10).

The contemporary Bulgarian language is of Indo-European origin and is grouped in the South Slavonic (Slavic) language family together with Old Slavonic, Macedonian, Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, and Slovenian. It uses the Cyrillic phonetic script in its orthography. Two Macedonian-born brothers, Methodius and Constantine-Cyril, are credited with the creation of the earliest forms of this script which enabled the Slavonic vernacular to be reduced to writing during the 9th century AD (Sanneh 1989, 215).

The significance of the brothers' work must be placed within a broader political context. First, their endeavor to create this script was at the behest of the Byzantine emperor who appointed the two as missionaries to Moravia in an apparent attempt to check the expansion of German influence into that region through Carolingian missionaries from the Roman church (Jelavich 1996a, 16). The brothers already had translated portions of the Bible and an entire liturgy from Greek into the Slavonic vernacular utilizing their new script before they even left Constantinople for their mission (Sullivan 1954, 27). The decision to make the Christian religious texts accessible in the vernacular had an extensive impact as it effectively enabled the foundations for what nationalists would later appeal in trying to wed ethnicity to religion as it allowed the "transpos[ition of] Christianity into the terms of Slavic

culture. The religion became synonymous with the project of Slavic self-identity (Sanneh 1989, 215).” The persistence of the brothers’ attempts to make Christian literature available in Slavonic fostered acrimony between themselves and the German clergy who maintained “the only languages permissible in the Eucharist were the three which were alleged to have been in Pilate’s placard on the cross of Christ- Hebrew, Greek, and Latin (Latourette 1975, 308-309).”

Although the brothers’ mission to Moravia ultimately failed, it was not the end of their linguistic and religious influence. While scholars debate whether the original alphabet the brothers created was the proto-Cyrillic or Glagolitic (Davis 1996, 321; Jelavich 1996a, 16), the early texts that were produced through their early efforts facilitated the expansion of the Slavonic language throughout that region and eventually into Russia after 950 AD (Latourette 1975, 309).

The work of Cyril and Methodius carried on through their disciples; in particular, Kliment Ohridski, who can claim credit for the ongoing development of the emerging Bulgarian language. Kliment settled in Preslav, Bulgaria after the brothers’ death along with other students of the brothers. Preslav was the new Bulgarian capital established by King Boris I, who was the first Bulgarian ruler to convert to Christianity in 865. Kliment founded a school in Preslav which “attracted over 3,000 students in its first 7 years.” The center of Slavic Orthodox Christianity that was developing in Preslav produced a vast amount of literature in Old Slavonic which by that time had come to closely resemble the modern Cyrillic alphabet (Jelavich 1996a, 16).

Bulgarian nationalists will later refer to this time as a “golden age” when the new Bulgarian identity seemed to solidify through the convergence of Slavic ethnicity, the Bulgarian language, and the Orthodox Christianity. For the nationalist movement, 893 AD is a pivotal marker as it is when Slavo-Bulgarian was declared the official language of both the Bulgarian Church and the nascent kingdom (Crampton 1997, 17).

Ottoman Legacy

However, this early period is not the only significant period in providing a legacy for the latter nationalist movement. The Ottoman rule from 1373 to 1878 was the longest period of the territory comprising present day Bulgaria under foreign domination. The interaction of ethnic, linguistic, and religious dynamics during this period make it the most significant historical experience in shaping Bulgarian national identity.

Maria Todorova identifies two primary interpretations of the Ottoman legacy in the Balkans. The first is that “it was religiously, socially, institutionally, and even racially alien imposition on autochthonous Christian medieval societies.” The other is that of “complex symbiosis of Turkish, Islamic, and Byzantine/Balkan traditions” in which “several centuries of coexistence cannot but have produced a common legacy” or heterogeneity (Todorova 1997, 162-164).

Todorova’s second interpretation seems more likely especially when one considers the sometimes overlooked aspect of the Ottoman Sublime Porte to allow considerable freedom to Christians and other faith communities through the establishment of the

millet system. The millet system was one in which administrative hierarchies were arranged by faith communities, so that in essence, Orthodox Christians appointed by the Muslim government would rule Orthodox Christians. There were Jewish, Catholic, Armenian Christian, Orthodox, and Muslim millets. By “integrating Orthodox institutions into their system, the Ottoman government had the advantage of being able to incorporate a complete administrative network (Jelavich 1996a, 50).”

Mark Mazower details how the millet system reflected a comfortability with heterogeneous religious identities especially in village life where the distinctions between the religions were sometime blurred or perhaps were revealed to be subservient to a stricter adherence to magical folk rituals that perhaps predated either Christianity or Islam (Mazower 2002, 54-58). “In this shared world, devotional practice cut across theological divides not only in the realm of the supernatural, but also in the daily mundane life of the Ottoman world. Islamic courts...were available for non-Muslims as well as for Muslims...who might utilize them as means of bypassing their own religious authorities (59).”

However, over time, the system allowed competing allegiances to develop in the Orthodox Church as classes of administrative leadership began to centralize around the political structure of the Porte who began awarding leadership posts in the Christian millet administration to the highest bidder (Jelavich 1996a, 51-52). By the 17th century a wealthy and corrupt emerging Greek leadership, called the Phanariots, began filling many of the Orthodox administrative posts in the Porte. As the Phanariots grew in power, they began exerting a stronger Greek influence over the Orthodox millets across

the Ottoman Empire, which had actually retained quite a degree of independence before this time, even under a Muslim ultimate authority.

B. National Revival Movement

In returning to the Bulgarian case, interestingly enough, it was Greek power abuse and not Turkish power abuse that provide the impetus for the nationalist movement that eventually spread across Bulgaria (Jelavich 1996a, 53-57). As Bulgarian priests began accommodating the Phanariots demands to diminish a distinctively Bulgarian identity among the Orthodox Church in Bulgaria, it was personalities like Paises Hilendarski and Vasil Levski (popularly known in Bulgaria as “the Apostle of Freedom”) who became what Anthony Smith would call “vernacular mobilizers” for what would eventually become known as the National Revival Movement.

Hilendarski’s Construction of a “Glorious” Slavic-Bulgarian Identity as a Precursor to the National Revival Movement

A crucial point in Benedict Anderson’s understanding of the factors contributing to the construction of national imaginaries is his view that “print-as-commodity is the key to the generation of wholly new ideas of simultaneity (Anderson 1991, 37).” His point is particularly well demonstrated when one considers the role that the production in 1762 of Bulgaria’s earliest modern Bulgarian history, *A Slavonic-Bulgarian History* by the Christian Orthodox monk Paises Hilendarski³, played to signal the start of

³ Popularly known as Otets Paises (Father Paises).

Bulgaria's National Revival Movement. In his history, written while Bulgaria was still under Ottoman rule, Hilendarski laments that Bulgarians were beginning to speak Greek during the Ottoman rule and were forgetting their Bulgarian.

O, Weak-minded Fools. Are you ashamed to be called Bulgarian and don't read and speak your own language? ... And for what reason, you stupid person, are you ashamed of your own people [only] to falter in a foreign tongue? (Hilendarski 1999, 20)- Author's translation.

Although the linguistic threat that Hilendarski warned of is often confused in the popular mind to be Turkish and not Greek,⁴ the survival of the Bulgarian language in the midst of foreign linguistic influence is a strong factor that these earlier thought leaders of the movement toward national consciousness utilized to contribute to early Bulgarian imagined identities. Hilendarski himself seemed to recognize this potential and so he embarked upon widespread travels throughout the region to publicize his handwritten manuscript throughout the 1760's. He met several enthusiastic supporters along the way so that in the ensuing years, his handwritten manuscript was copied numerous times so that "at least fifty copies are now extant (Crampton 1997, 49)." It wasn't published into book form until 1844, but it had already become well known by this time (49). Its print publication came at a unique timing to provide further background for the adoption of some of Hilendarski's ideas by the 19th century national movement leaders.

⁴ From dozens of informal interview with Bulgarians as to the context of Hildendarski's famous quote conducted between 1998-2003.

One of Hilendarski's most significant contributions during the period is that he is the first modernist to reconnect the Bulgarian identity primarily to an ethnic self-perception of a strong Slavic and Christian origin,

From among all Slavic peoples the most glorious have been the Bulgarians, they were the first to call themselves Tsars, the first to have a patriarch, the first to be baptized (as Christians), and it was they who ruled over the largest amount of territory. Thus, from among all Slavic peoples, they were the strongest and the most honored. The first Slavic saints cast forth their radiance from among the Bulgarian people and through the Bulgarian language, and for this foremost, have I written this history (Hilendarski 1999, 20). – Author's translation.

Parallels to the Other 19th Century Nationalist Revolutions Across Europe

Before examining more of the specific phases of the development of Bulgarian National Revival Movement in detail, it should also be noted that these developments in Bulgaria can be placed with the context of similar developments all across Europe during much of the 19th century.

For example, German philosopher Johann Fichte, sounding a great deal like Paiisi Hilendarski, delivered a series of lectures in Berlin during the winter of 1807-1808 entitled *Addresses to the German Nation* which were inspired by the French revolution of the late 18th century,. In these addresses, Fichte outlines a system of educational measures which he is exhorting his fellow German citizens to undertake in which he outlines the importance of ethnic and linguistic differentiation of the German people. He passionately argues that this course will help advantage German ascendancy over other European nations:

In other words, the majority of the citizens must be educated to this sense of fatherland, and, in order that one may be sure of the majority, this education must be tried on all. So with this is it now plainly and clearly proved, as was

likewise formerly promised, that education is the only possible means of saving German independence (Fichte 1922, 154).

Hans Kohn, in his book *Nationalism: Its Meaning and History*, also picks up on the unique role that national linguistic development plays during the 19th century as he notes the interest of many in Germany who:

set out to write grammars and compile dictionaries of their native tongues, to translate foreign works, to collect folksongs, to explore national antiquities, to do research in historical chronicles and archives. All that was not done for its own sake but *ad majorem nationis gloriam*, to enhance the glory of one's own nation, and to establish its equality, if not its superiority in relation to its neighbors and to the more advanced nations (Kohn 1955, 46-47).

Kohn also notes the influence that the 1848 establishment of the Second French Republic played on a further recasting of the nationalist ideals for Europe as he contends that nationalism quickly shifted from a liberal humanitarian ideal to a more “aggressive exclusivism” in which:

This change of the character of nationalism in the middle of the nineteenth century occurred not only among the Germans but among all the people of Central and Eastern Europe. The new spirit of violence, of glorification of heroic deeds, for the revival of a dim past and of its use as an inspirational source – phenomena which came to darken the horizon of the twentieth century – was first noticeable in 1848 (Kohn 1955, 52).

As we return to examining the Bulgarian case, it is striking how closely the National Revival Movement of the latter 19th century follows educational reimagining strategies advocated decades earlier by Hilendarski in Bulgaria and Fichte in Germany decades which became united with more aggressive developments described by Kohn.

Distinguishable Phases of the Revival Movement

The Bulgarian National Revival movement (Balgarsko natsionalno vazrazhdane) was the genesis of a force that would ultimately result in Bulgaria's independence after nearly 500 years of foreign rule. The "Revival (vazrazhdane)" movement, as it was often commonly termed, went through three phases involving an educational literacy campaign, the reestablishment of the Slavonic liturgy in the Orthodox Church, and a discernible shift of the movement's focus away from anti-Greek sentiments to anti-Turkish sentiments.

Educational Campaign

The first phase was an educational campaign to revive national Bulgarian identity consciousness. By opening new schools, the leaders of the movement hoped to counter the Greek (not Turkish!) influence that had started to wear down the Bulgarian pride in its distinct ethnicity and language. Hence, the schools taught Bulgarian language classes for the students. As a corollary, the only textbooks available were primarily religious in nature, so the revival started to take on both a religious as well as linguistic characteristic (MacDermott 1986, 14-15).

Slavonic Liturgy Reestablishment

The second phase focused on the reestablishment of the Slavonic liturgy in the Bulgarian Orthodox Churches. It also focused on "securing appointments for

Bulgarian bishops [instead of Greek Phanariots] in dioceses with a predominately Bulgarian population (MacDermott 1986).”

Shift from Anti-Greek to Anti-Turkish Sentiment

As the movement began to grow as the Bulgarian identity was galvanized around ethnicity, language, and Orthodox Christianity, it entered the third phase which began shifting the focus from the Greek Phanariots to Turkish Porte. Ivan Vazov, one of the educational reformers and later nationalist revolutionary was a notable figure during this time. Vazov, in his novel *Pod Igoto (Under the Yoke)*, successfully utilized themes originally introduced by Hilendarski over a hundred years earlier, but reapplied them to an anti-Turkish/Islamic context (Vazov 2000). Although published just after the end of this period in 1893, Vazov’s novel is evidence of the emerging interpretation of the Ottoman legacy which holds to the “incompatibility between Christianity and Islam” as well as “the incompatibility between the essentially nomadic civilization of the newcomers and the old urban and settled agrarian civilizations of the Balkans and the Near East (Todorova 1996, 46-47).”

What is equally important during this period is the role that the Bulgarian Orthodox Church is seen as having played in the preservation of the Bulgarian language during the Ottoman rule. The circumstances seem to be a sort of recapitulation of the vernacular philosophy that mobilized the prodigious literature development of Cyril, Methodius, and Kliment. This trend continues throughout the communist period and is evident in reviews of Bulgarian textbooks undertaken by John Georgeoff in 1966

(Georgeoff 1966, 443). Contemporary popular expressions of these ideas also run along these lines: “The early Christians helped us define ourselves as a nation and the later Christians helped us preserve our identity as a nation “under the yoke.”⁵

C. National Liberation

The April Uprising of 1876

All of this national imagination of the Bulgarian identity as Slavic and Christian was increasingly highlighted as members of the Bulgarian National Liberation Movement in April 1876 planned a staged armed uprising in four different districts. This prompted an especially brutal response by the Bashi-bazouks in which hundreds of Bulgarians were slaughtered in an attempt to quash the uprising. The Bashi-bazouks were Ottoman irregular soldiers who often didn't officially represent Ottoman policy but were instead recruited to be a stopgap measure while formal Ottoman troops were off waging war in Serbia. This retaliation against the Bulgarian nationalists was quickly noticed on the international stage and although it had not been officially sanctioned by the Ottoman administration, it soon became viewed by many of the Great European powers as a threat to the carefully cultivated regional stability that it sought vis-à-vis the Turkish Porte. It was also successfully utilized as a mobilizing influence in the nationalists' campaign against the Ottoman regime through the rehearsal of the horrors of the bloody massacres resulting from the suppression of the uprising (Crampton 1997, 80-83).

⁵ From dozens of informal interviews with Bulgarians in the context of discussions about the legacy of the Ottoman Empire conducted between 1998-2003.

The Great Powers and the Russo-Turkish War

The Great Powers, which were predominantly Christian in background, had long striven to maintain a balance of power in the region, often siding with “Islamic Ottomans” who had still been viewed as a rather benevolent stabilizing presence in the region. However, after the event of April 1876, the European powers began attempting to persuade the Ottoman Porte to institute a series of reforms under European supervision (Crampton 1997, 83). These reforms were increasingly perceived by the Ottomans as unwelcome meddling by the Great Powers into Ottoman affairs and relations became further strained (Mazower 2002, 68). Eventually, Russia invaded the Balkans in 1877 in “defense” of the fledgling Balkan national movements and after a protracted fighting in Bulgaria, the San Stefano truce was signed in March of 1878 which gave Bulgaria its initial independence from the Ottoman rule (Crampton 1997, 83-85).

It should be noted that there existed during this time period a movement known as Pan-Slavism which sought the incorporation of other “Slav-speaking peoples, even against their will, into a greater Russia” with aspirations of eventual Russian world domination. Pan-Slavism assumed ethnic and linguistic similarities “resulted in an affinity of civilization and political ideology and in a desire for union (Kohn 1955, 71-72).” Barbara Jelavich asserts that while Pan-Slavism was a “fad” Russia clearly was able to greatly influence Balkans national boundary shaping as it Pan-Slavism drew many adherents in the 1870’s (Jelavich 1996a, 353-355).

Thus, it is not surprising that Britain, the Hapsburgs, Greece, Romania, and Serbia were greatly alarmed at the size of the geographic boundaries of San Stefano Bulgaria fearing increased Russian presence that might further upset the balance of power for Central Europe (Jelavich 1996a, 358-361). As a result, Britain and Austria-Hungary “demanded that the boundaries be redrawn” in July 1878 under the Treaty of Berlin which was slightly larger than a third of the geographic boundaries promised under the San Stefano agreement (Crampton 1997, 85-86). This theme of Bulgarian identity in relation to the Great Powers will be revisited in more detail in chapter three. However, it should be clear that the Treaty of Berlin provided for a geographically bounded Bulgaria which initially had everything to do with balance of power issues and very little to do with inherently ethnic or religious patterns of population distribution.

D. Conclusions

This chapter has provided a brief overview of the pre-Ottoman and Ottoman legacies of ethnic, linguistic, and religious categories which have been utilized by nationalist vernacular mobilizers during the period of 1762-1878 to imagine a particular type of Bulgarian identity that is perceived to be Slavonic and Orthodox Christian. However, as was also demonstrated, the stages by which this Bulgarian imaginary was constructed clearly showed that there is not necessarily a natural state of “ethnic category” that could be attributed to Bulgaria apart from the mediating influences of political factors throughout history which have sought to define this identity over and against another. While initially these political factors sought differentiation over

against Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Christian influences, this identity only much later came to be defined in more stereotypical terms of the modern binary opposition of Christian vs. Muslim. These developments also found clear parallels in the nationalist movement occurring during the 19th century in Europe as well as the Pan-Slavism ambitions of Russia.

Interestingly enough, as Mazower notes in discussing the following quote from a Bulgarian memoir written in the 1870's, during the decade in which the April Uprising and the Russo-Turkish Wars occurred, while "the differences between Muslim and Christian were not hidden and the two communities lived side by side" the daily interactions were not "characterized by tension or conflict (Mazower 2002, 66)."

Turks and Bulgarians got on well together. The women of a village quarter bordering on Turkish houses mixed with the Turkish women in a neighborly way, while the children played with the little Turks as with their own playmates. The Turkish women and children spoke Bulgarian quite well and the Bulgarians, like their children, managed to get by in Turkish, the result being a sort of mixed patois. Those Turks who worked at Bulgarian houses were accepted as close friends.... We were used to the Turks. We Bulgarians lived our own life, to be sure, we had our own dress, our own customs and stuck to our own faith, while they lived another way, had other customs and other costume, their faith was different too. But all this we took as being in the order of things (Warriner 1965).

Chapter Three: Identity Crisis in the Early 20th Century: Schizophrenic Bulgarian Nationalism (1878 – 1947)

A. Introduction

This chapter will frame the flux in Bulgarian identity that occurred during this period not only in ethnic and religious terms, but in geographic, linguistic, and political terms. It was during this period that Bulgarians found themselves seeking to imagine their identity while at the same time vacillating between a stronger Western orientation as well as renewed Eastern focus. While fledgling steps were made towards a Western-style government that recognized the historical Bulgarian ethno-religious history, internal political inexperience and upheaval, two Balkan Wars, and both World Wars never allowed a stable modern national government to develop. The Bulgarian nationalist leaders who had aspired to a greater European or Western identity subsequently found themselves to be in a kind of no-man's land between the East and West and between Christendom and Islam, due to perceptions of betrayal by the Great Powers, especially regarding the redrawing of the San Stefano boundaries as discussed in the previous chapter.

B. Bulgarian identity construction vis-à-vis the Great Powers

Geographical Identity Imaginaries vis-à-vis Europe

Throughout this period, and especially after the Balkan Wars, it would become increasingly clear that Europe was beginning to understand the region as “the Balkans”

with something more than just a geographic association. The term itself became “loaded with negative connotations – of violence, savagery, primitivism – to an extent which is hard to find a parallel (Mazower 2002, xxvii-xxviii).” The region represented “an intermediate culture zone between Europe and Asia – in Europe but not of it (xxxiv).” Maria Todorova develops the history of the shifting concept of geographic region to constructed regional identity in her book, *Imagining the Balkans*. She claims that the entire region bears the brunt of Europe’s attempts to come to terms with its own identity vis-à-vis its Muslim neighbors.

By being geographically inextricable from Europe, yet culturally constructed as “the other” within, the Balkans have ...absorb[ed] a number of externalized political, ideological, and cultural frustrations stemming from tensions and contradictions inherent to the regions and societies outside [author’s emphasis] the Balkans (Todorova 1997, 188).

This is nowhere more evident in Bulgaria during this period as the nationalist movement realizes that while the movement thought it was preparing for Bulgaria’s acceptance into Europe, the realization comes that the Great Powers had exploited Bulgaria for their own balance of power purposes through the drafting of the Treaty of Berlin. While this floundering sense of cultural displacement that set in was never resolved in the decades between Ottoman and Communist rule, it did not prevent the nationalists from seeking to expand the construction of Bulgarian national identity to be commensurate with that of San Stefano’s geographic borders.

After Bulgaria’s liberation in 1878, as was mentioned above in chapter two, the Great Powers heavily shaped the geographic boundaries of Bulgaria in the redrafting of the San Stefano borders to the Treaty of Berlin borders. This redrafting of Bulgaria’s

borders reduced the Treaty of Berlin borders to 37.5% of its San Stefano treaty borders. For those in the nationalist movement “the real Bulgaria remained that of San Stefano. The new Bulgarian state was to enter into life with a ready-made programme for territorial expansion and a burning sense of the injustice meted out to it by the great powers (Crampton 1997, 85).”

Bulgaria’s Tûrnovo Constitution of 1878 was heavily shaped by German, Russian and Serbian political influence. It called for executive powers to be centralized with a prince, who must be of the Orthodox faith. It defined very clear connections between the Bulgarian State and the Orthodox Church (Crampton 1997, 87-91). However, finding a new monarch with royal lineage that was also a professing Orthodox Christian proved to be a problem, since, according to stipulations from the Treaty of Berlin, the candidates were not allowed to be from Russian descent (Neuburger 2004, 35). The constitution was changed to allow an exemption from the Orthodoxy clause for their new ruler, the German prince Alexander Battenberg (Crampton 1997, 87-91).

Without any practical experience of self-determination over the preceding 500 years, balancing the varied interests of the rest of Europe and Russia proved to be too much for the new ruler who was deposed after only seven years in Bulgaria. Vacillating between the East and West and conservative and liberal political pressures, Bulgarian politicians once again went on the search for a Western monarch interested in the job. They found another willing German candidate in Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, as long as he had assurances that Russia would agree not to play too heavy of hand in Bulgarian politics (Crampton 1997, 103-106).

The First Balkan War

Remarkably, it was actually a Great Power balance of power strategy which led Russia to suggest in 1912 to the Balkan countries that they form a defensive Balkan League which Russia hoped would help provide additional leverage in the region to mitigate the undue influence of Austria. Surprisingly, however, Russia underestimated the political imaginations of the greater Balkan countries as the Balkan League quickly sets its sight on Turkey and quickly secured the final liberation of South Balkan lands from the vestiges of Ottoman dominion during the first Balkan War (Mazower 2002, 105).

Trial and Error: Creating New Political Identities

One notable feature during this transitional period from 1878-1947 is that in addition to external pressures facing Bulgarian national ambitions, Bulgaria had significant problems in establishing a stable national government during this period. This is particularly salient with regards to attempting to grapple with the society being in significant upheaval. This societal upheaval resulted from competing philosophies of European integration, shifting agricultural vs. urban economic bases, multiple governments coming into power, after-effects of the Balkan Wars, as well as the effects of both World War I and World War II.

Language planning

Once the San Stefano geographical boundaries were envisaged, albeit only briefly, the political influences of how Bulgarian national identity would continue to be imagined took on a whole new meaning. In this section, we turn our attention to deliberate sociolinguistic strategies employed by linguists and politicians to grapple with the continued imaginary national identity. In a fascinating analysis, Rossitza Guentcheva provides a thorough overview of the “orthographic reform” debates that began in post-Ottoman Bulgaria and intermittently continued over the next century in the context of political controversy over the boundaries of language and national space (Guentcheva 1999, 356-358). The debate was “conditioned by the struggle over territories while both Bulgaria and Serbia cited the population’s language as a key evidence for supporting their claims.”

She identifies two scholarly principles around which the debate was framed. The first was a linguistic “phonetic” principle being driven by the “pro-reformers,” who wanted to simplify Bulgarian orthography through the elimination of letters inherited through Old Bulgarian (Old Church Slavonic) but no longer uniformly pronounced in speech, such as *jers*, *big jus*, and *jat*. In opposition to this first view was a sociopolitical view known as the “etymological” principle being endorsed by the “anti-reformers” who wanted to preserve the traditional orthography (Guentcheva 1999, 358). Many of the nationalist elites, during the early years after Bulgarian liberation

from Ottoman rule, held a primordialist view which “shared the Herdian conviction that language is an objective marker of national belonging (Guentcheva 1999, 356).”

This argument was crucial to the national imaginary because linguistic reform would eliminate antiquated forms which would otherwise lend credibility to the view that Macedonians living in the greater reaches of San Stefano Bulgaria were actually Bulgarian nationals. On the other hand, by pushing through the orthographic reforms, the changes could actually help unify the practice of contemporary speech of Bulgarians found living in the Treaty of Berlin Bulgaria, yet it would also create new affinities with the Serbian language which might bolster eventual claims by Serbia over some of the physical geography of Bulgaria. Guentcheva convincingly chronicles the linguistic reasoning behind ultimately sociopolitical approaches that alternatively recognized, then denied, then recognized again a distinct Macedonian language and nationality both outside and within the recognized Bulgarian geographic boundaries of the day. As the political landscapes changed, especially before and after the first and second Balkan Wars, so did the official language politics which were believed to favor Bulgaria’s positioning vis-à-vis the Macedonian question. Even the Bulgarian parliament took an active role in deciding these policies (Guentcheva 1999, 361-36). Guentcheva concludes that the future trend in East South Slavic languages will be to blend “grammatical and political imperatives” so that “orthography will be more about symbolic demarcation than about phonemics” thus demonstrating the active national Bulgarian imaginary in pursuit of geographic identity claims (370; cf. Neuburger 2004, 39-40).

The Second Balkan War

After tasting collective success in its joint campaign with fellow Balkan League countries in its attacks on the Ottoman Turks in the first Balkan War, Bulgaria found its own independent confidence bolstered as it attacked its former allies in attempts to recapture more of its claims to the San Stefano borders. This second Balkan War ended badly for the Bulgarians who also found themselves losing some of their recently reclaimed geographic borders in compensation for its aggression (Crampton 1997, 135-141).

“Bai Ganyu” as Metaphor for Bulgarian Identity Crisis vs. Vazov’s Ognyanov & Stomatov

Bulgaria’s literature during this time captures the awkwardness of Bulgarian attempts to come to grips with its place in a world very different from that under Ottoman rule (Konstantinov 1992). According to Bulgarian literary critic Svetlozar Igov in his introduction to Aleko Konstantinov’s novel featuring the Bulgarian caricature of fictional Bai Ganyu, Konstantinov captured the essence of Bulgarian “national, social, and philosophical-historical problems of the Bulgarian ... ‘road towards Europe (Konstantinov 1999, 5).’”

This is evident from the first moment of our introduction to the character in the opening passage,

They helped Bai Ganyu take off his Turkish cloak, and he slipped himself into a Belgian mantle – and everyone exclaimed that Bai Ganyu was already a complete European (Konstantinov 1999, 17) – Author’s translation.

Todorova also confirms the unique role that Konstantinov’s character plays in helping us to understand the self-analytical national lens through which Bulgarian identity is viewed. Her elucidation of the difficulties in understanding how one should approach understanding Bai Ganyu parallels in a microcosm the problems the Bulgarian nation has in defining itself in either ethnic or social terms with the difference being,

Whether Bay Ganyo should be analyzed as a biological, racial, national, cultural, civilizational type or as a distinctive sociohistorical type without an indispensable ethnic/national specificity, belonging to a definite transitional period in the development of backward societies (Todorova 1997, 39).

This point remains open to interpretation as evidenced by an amusing passage in the 1895 fictional chronology of Bai Ganyu dropping in unannounced on the European notables of his day. In this passage we see a clear description of the on the spot Bulgarian imaginary of Bai Ganyu Balkanski as he symbolically and literally, in name, represents the Balkan period under review.

Lunch is ready. They move into the dining room and sit around the table... Bai Ganyu, before beginning to eat, begins the motions to make the sign of the cross, but half crosses himself and half begins to giggle, as if to show his hosts that he is not one of the simple folk or a deep believer, yet at the same time indicating it’s not so bad (with the devil we do great, but what little difficulty it is to also invite the Lord’s blessing- just in case). “I’m a liberal, from a liberal party,” he explains. “It’s no big deal to submit to a little ‘crossing of oneself’, it’s not so bad, we’re human.... Oh, what’s that? Soup? Oh, I love soup. Chorba [Turkish name for soup] is Turkish food. We mostly eat soup nowadays. Oops, pardon, excuse me. I spilled some all over your tablecloth. Tsk, Tsk, Tsk. Hope I don’t see bad luck! (Konstantinov 1999, 49)” – Author’s translation.

Over and against Konstantinov's literary creation of Bai Ganyu, we can also point to Ivan Vazov's novel, *Pod Igoto (Under the Yoke)*, published just two years before Konstantinov's first Bai Ganyu stories. In Vazov's novel, Bulgarian heroes Ognyanov and Stomatov recapitulate the ideas and themes of the Bulgarian Nationalist Revival Movement in graphic form as they valiantly and violently seek to defend the Bulgarian national homeland against Vazov's portrayal of Turks which Neuburger laments are "unequivocally cruel, if not bestial, alien interloper[s], occupying and preying on essentially 'Bulgarian' cultural and material belongings." Interestingly enough in addition to his clear anti-Turkish sentiment, Vazov also critiques European Bulgarian characters who are vilified for their collaboration with the Turks rather than connecting with the national Bulgarian (Neuburger 2004, 38; Vazov 2000).

It should also be noted that Ivan Vazov took an active role himself in the early orthographic reform debates highlighted above advocating for the "etymological" principle in which he fears the loss of political advantage by getting rid one of the historical letters *big jus* (Guentcheva 1999, 359).

As Todorova claims when discussing her two views of Ottoman legacy perception vs. continuity, "these two interpretations of the Ottoman legacy are not merely possible scholarly reconstructions; they actually existed side by side throughout the Ottoman period (Todorova 1997, 166)." The fact that Ivan Vazov, representing Todorov's perception view, remains popularly known as Bulgaria's most celebrated writer as well as the fact that Bai Ganyu, representing Todorova's "continuity" view is popularly

known as Bulgaria's most famous fiction creation, should only highlight the reality that this period is clearly one of significant identity imaginary creation and negotiation.

C. Conclusions

In chapter two, it was demonstrated that the earliest constructions of modernist national Bulgarian identity in the 18th and 19th centuries were shaped by political maneuvering and not as is commonly assumed to arise from ethnic or religious oppositions of primordial tensions between Bulgarian Christians vs. Turkish Muslims.

In this chapter, it was demonstrated that heterogenizing and homogenizing imaginaries of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were often negotiated through Bulgaria's fledgling attempts to define and differentiate itself not only from its Ottoman past but its uneasy relationships with the competing interests of the Great Powers. In particular the repartitioning of Bulgaria's geographic territory which shrank it from its borders negotiated by Russia under the San Stefano Treaty to the renegotiated borders under the Treaty of Berlin, left some of the nationalist elites struggling to redefine themselves over against the manipulations of the West which it aspired to join and the East which it desired to leave behind (Neuburger 2004, 35). This occurred through active language planning strategies, popularized fiction, and stops and starts for many attempts at establishing a stable national government.

Chapter Four: Socialist Secularization: Progressive Aggression in Bulgarian Nationalism (1947 – 1989)

A. Introduction

In September 1944, the Bulgarian Communist Party (alternatively known as the Bulgarian Workers Party during this time) seized power during the chaos ensuing in the latter months of World War II as Bulgaria switched allegiances from the Axis powers to the Allies. For the next three years, the Communists gradually consolidated complete domination over state institutions as they eliminated ideological opposition by executing many former government members as well as members of the intelligentsia by scapegoating them as German collaborators (Crampton 1997, 180-189).

During these early years of Communist rule in Bulgaria, the regime employed strategies which not only tolerated but actively encouraged the maintenance of heterogeneous religious, linguistic, and ethnic practices which were believed would help foster a greater sense of solidarity within a greater Bulgarian socialist nation defined more on civic nationalist terms rather than ethnic nationalist terms. Therefore, it was relatively surprising when the strategy later shifted and the Communists disavowed that any such ethnic differences ever existed. This latter strategy eventually employed aggressive tactics such as mobilizing the army to forcibly carry out the new strategy of assimilating the ethnic Turks.

This chapter will illustrate the political realities of both the heterogenizing and homogenizing strategies employed under Communism to facilitate the establishment of

a socialist nation and thus show that it is not the religious or ethnic differences themselves which explain the employment of violent identity-based homogenization, but rather it is the belief that homogenization will speed up the achievement of socialist secularization.

B. Relative Tolerance: Co-opting Muslim Identities (1947 – 1957)

The early Communist period following the end of WWII was a significant time of communist identity-shaping in Bulgaria. The 1947 Bulgarian Constitution, drafted under BCP chair Georgi Dimitrov, stated that “National minorities are entitled to be taught in their mother tongue and develop their national culture (Petkova 2002, 42).” This provision proved to be not only theoretical but practical as well. Borrowing from the Soviet socialist model in which “national cultures were used as vehicles for advancing Communist modernization,” the BCP invested substantially into creating secularized Turkish schools, media outlets, and cultural bodies among the illiterate population (Neuburger 2004, 63).

While attempting to highlight class commonalities between Bulgarian and Turkish workers in an ideal “socialist nation (Neuburger 2004, 56),” it should be noted that the Communists probably never intended this modernization strategy to foster a greater sense of Turkish identity consciousness. However, this period can be categorized as a time when ethnic Turks experienced a high degree of stable cultural and religious freedom of expression. In fact, it is remarkable that Turkish Muslim clergy could even be said to have fared much better during the early years of Bulgarian Communism than

their ethnic Bulgarian Christian Catholic or Protestant clergy counterparts, many of whom were executed or imprisoned in an attempt to stamp out organized religion (Petkova 2002, 43).

It should also be noted that in 1950-51, there was a mass emigration from Bulgaria to Turkey of around 150,000 Turks. This most likely stemmed from changing economic realities as thousands in the Turkish farming communities struggled to adjust to the collectivization of their farms. Thus this early migration is due more to economic hardships than to any demonstrable ethnic persecution unique to the Turks (Brubaker 1995, 203-205; Hopken 1997, 67).

C. “Zhivkov’s Theses” and Bulgaria’s “Great Leap Forward” (1957-1969)

What happened to change the status quo of this tolerant modernizing strategy of the early Communist period? This section will highlight the evolution and intensification of the homogenizing process based upon growing anxiety that the Muslim minorities’ relative autonomy was inhibiting true socialist assimilation and negatively impacting national economic progress. Particular care will be paid to demonstrate Todor Zhivkov’s economic and political motivations as opposed to the presence of inherent religious or ethnic tensions existing among the various ethnic groups.

Todor Zhivkov, who began taking a more central role among the Communist party elites after becoming party secretary in 1954, favored a more rapid urbanization and collectivization of agricultural lands than the slower pace established by his predecessors. His attempts to rapidly industrialize and modernize Bulgarian industry

and agriculture in the late 1950's and early 1960's precipitated significant lifestyle changes in rural and village life around Bulgaria. By 1958, collective farms in Bulgaria were reformed and expanded in size reducing the total number from 3,450 to 932 (Crampton 1997, 196). This, in turn, profoundly affected the status of the predominantly rural Muslim workers engaged in agricultural production.

Zhivkov modeled this period of economic expansion on Mao Tse-tung's "Great Leap Forward," even adopting the terminology (Jelavich 1996b, 366-367). While Bulgaria's "Great Leap Forward" ultimately was seen to be a failure, Zhivkov became premier in addition to party chief by 1962 thereby solidifying his control over the Bulgarian state with the full blessings of Krushchev who had been maligning Zhivkov's predecessor, Vulko Chervenkov since 1956 (366-367). Zhivkov's early contributions to rapid economic expansion, however, clearly had immediate implications for the BCP's strategies of dealing with the ethnic minorities. The dawning realization was that if economic expansion must occur more rapidly, then the strengthening of a socialist consciousness must also occur more rapidly if the former could be expected to succeed, especially in the rural areas most actively impacted by the economic changes.

As Communist values across Bulgaria became more established elsewhere, it became clearer that the daily life (*bit*) of Turks and Pomaks in Bulgaria was remaining too closely associated with older cultural traditions (often religious) and not matching up to a Bulgarian socialist ideal (Neuburger 2004, 58,73). It also was clear to some Communist leaders that the educational policies had helped forge a stronger Turkish

identity than it had a “socialist consciousness” and were thus perceived to be a “failure” requiring a change in strategy (Neuburger 2004, 72).” Thus the gradual shift in the government’s policy toward the Turkish minority was realized beginning with the merger of Turkish schools with Bulgarian ones in 1958 and gradually the cessation of all formal education in the Turkish language by the 1970’s (Simsir 1988, 197). While there was no active action against utilization of the Turkish language itself, it was believed that without media or educational support for Turkish, its usage would decrease (Neuburger 2004, 72).

D. The “Inclusion” and “Rebirth” of Bulgarian Muslims (1970’s, 1984-1989)

A more radical policy shift occurred in the 1970s as Todor Zhivkov’s government began to more actively and aggressively reimagine the parameters of acceptable identity definitions. There have been several explanations offered as to why the BCP became more aggressive in pursuing an additional incremental change in the strategy including: 1) the government’s wariness of the growing demographic disparity (Crampton 1997, 210), 2) an increasing perception of the incompatibility of Turkish traditional religious culture to be amenable to secular socialist progress (Neuburger 2004, 73), 3) the Turkish and Greek conflicts in Cyprus which might provide precedence for an analogous conflict in Bulgaria among Turkish nationalists (Bojkov 2004, 355), or 4) an attempt to further centralize power that seemed suddenly achievable due to the elimination of previous threats to Zhivkov’s rule (Dimitrov 2000, 9-10). Quite possibly it was a combination of the above factors, but moreover, it

clearly seems to be the result of political machinations rather than a response to actual threats or tensions present among the minorities themselves.

This renewed process was initially termed “inclusion (*priobsthavane*)” and it was hoped that the socialist secularization of Bulgaria might foster the creation of a melting pot, ultimately mixing the majority ethnic Bulgarians together with the Turk and Pomak minorities. It included another attempt at actively reeducating the minority groups according to a more ideological national Bulgarian identity. As Milena Mahon notes the vacillating heterogenizing and homogenizing strategies pursued by the government resulted in confusion as to whether the reeducation should involve opposing Islamic religious identity or include cultural traditions as well.

‘Since the religion was considered the most obvious mark of their distinct nationality it was targeted first and its cultural expressions were labeled as ‘Turkish bourgeois nationalism’ thus calling into question Turkish ‘loyalty to the Bulgarian state; practicing Turkish-Muslim cultural habits indicated disloyalty (Mahon 1999, 157).’

As a part of this process, the Bulgarian constitution was noticeably modified in 1971 to describe the minority ethnic groups as citizens of “non-Bulgarian extraction.” Another part of this early process included replacing the term “Turk” with the term “Muslim Bulgarian” as well as eventually changing the Arabic names of Bulgarian-speaking Muslims (Pomaks) to Slavic equivalents (Hopken 1997, 69). In addition, deliberate strategies to curtail Muslim religious practices during this time were also put in place along with the discouragement of speaking Turkish (Petkova 2002, 47). Despite the Bulgarian government’s claims of a successful policy of “inclusion” that was resulting in “a single ethnic type and ... nearing complete homogeneity,” the

policy actually had little impact on Turkish religious, cultural, and linguistic practice (Hopken 1997, 69).

This government instigated homogenizing process was notably and aggressively intensified in late 1984 and 1985 as the government embarked on what it called the “rebirth/revival process (*vazroditelen/ vazrazhdane protses*)” as it was officially termed. The actual terminology employed by the Communists deliberately evokes the language of 19th century Bulgarian National Revival movement described above in chapter two. According to government documents, this Turkish rebirth/revival was intended to aid in “the recovery of a Bulgarian self-consciousness chiefly for the definitive integration [of the Turks] into the Bulgarian nation (Alp 1988, 170).”

This process was accomplished by requiring Bulgarian Turks to “voluntarily” fill out petitions to change their own names to Slavic equivalent, a sample of which is provided below in which the petitioner voluntarily asks to be reregistered as an ethnic Bulgarian with words provided for the petitioner on pre-printed applications:

On the basis of the accompanying petition and in accordance with the state regulations for maintaining registries of resident status as published in the 1970 issue, edition no. 2 of the IZVESTIE newspaper, we request to be included in the registry of BULGARIAN nationals and to change our names as follows... (Alp 1988, 170) – Author’s translation.

In December 1984 alone, 233,310 Bulgarian Turks had their names changed in the Kurdzhali region. The success of this experiment led to a secret Politburo decision to carry this out for the whole country (Nedelcheva 2004, 183). Those unwilling to submit to this name change lost their jobs or were forced at the threat of violence to

comply with the name change. One individual, Hikmet Halid Mehmet, recounted his experience below:

The police came with guns, and we were gathered in the center of town. They'd say, 'What name do you want?' I'd say, 'I don't want a new name.' They'd say, 'What's your name?' I'd say 'Hikmet.' They'd say 'Hikmet...OK, now you're Hristo (i.e. Christ).' And they'd hold your hand and force you to write your new name (Malcomson 1993, 49).

It is estimated that thousands of those resisting were imprisoned or sent to labor camps, including around 1500 sent to internal exile on the island of Belene on the Danube River (Helsinki Watch Report 1986, 11). The threat of internal exile was clearly hinted at in Politburo member Stanko Todorov's speech of 28 March 1985 in which he expressed that:

those who 'do not wish to live in their native towns and villages can move out.' For cases of this kind, he added, instructions have been give to the appropriate Bulgarian organs, to ensure speedy removal (reportedly within hours), 'not to Turkey but to other regions of Bulgaria, where these people will be able to live peacefully and happily (Amnesty International 1986, 14).'

Bulgarian Interior Minister Dimitar Stoyanov is also quoted during the time as saying:

All our fellow countrymen who reverted to their Bulgarian names are Bulgarians. They are the bone of the bone and the flesh of the flesh of the Bulgarian nation; although the Bulgarian national consciousness of some of them might still be blurred, they are the same Bulgarian flesh and blood; they are children of the Bulgarian nation; they were forcibly torn away and now they are coming back home. There are no Turks in Bulgaria. The issue is closed (Bell 1999, 24)."

In addition to the forced changing of one's own name and those of his immediate family members, the names of the Muslim dead were also changed posthumously and

Turks could be fined for not covering over the old names on their ancestor's tombstones (Korkud 1986, 41). Fines were also levied for the use of Turkish in public, for wearing Turkish or Muslim dress, and for carrying out Muslim rituals such as circumcision or burial customs (Alp 1988, 203; Amnesty International 1986, 18; Petkova 2002, 47). Turkish folk music was also banned (Petkova 2002, 47).

Georgi Fotev argues that the impetus for these changes was to attempt to create "unified civil rituals" under which the influence of all religions would be eventually eliminated as "a prerequisite to the final aim - the consolidation of the Bulgarian socialist consciousness (Fotev 1999, 39)."

E. The Great Excursion and the Collapse of the Homogenization Experiment (1989)

Although this initial phase of forced assimilation was completed in 1985, a new wave of protests by the ethnic Turks over their treatment by the government began at the end of March 1989 in anticipation of the CSCE Paris Conference on the Human Dimension (Nedelcheva 2004, 185). By early May, as thousands protested in Kliment, the Bulgarian police surrounded and beat protesters, killing some. The next day in the village of Todor Ikonomovo at a wedding, soldiers fired into the crowd and killed several and wounded dozens. These orchestrated protests, coinciding as they did with the Paris human rights meetings, brought a lot of media attention to the continued ethnic discrimination facing Turks in Bulgaria.

Turkey, in particular, strengthened its repeated denouncements of the situation facing Bulgarian Turks. On May 27th of 1989, apparently as a result of the increased

international attention being focused on the protests, Todor Zhivkov challenged Turkey to open its border with Bulgaria and publicly offered tourist visas to any Bulgarian citizen who wished to visit or live in Turkey. This can only be interpreted as a tacit admission of the specious logic espoused during the rebirth campaign, for why would “ethnic Bulgarians” want to go live in Turkey spontaneously? The BCP apparently did not expect the dramatic results that occurred which included the exodus of 369,839 ethnic Turks between May and September when Turkey closed its own border as it was unable to handle the tides of incoming Bulgarian Turks. In what became known as “The Great Excursion,” in four months 43% of the total Turkish population of Bulgaria (around 850,000 at the time) had left the country (Vasileva 1992, 347-349). While there is clear evidence that the Bulgarian authorities forcibly deported many Turks during the early part of this process, many others took advantage of the new freedom to escape the threat of violence or to seek better economic alternatives in Turkey (Helsinki Watch Report 1989, 27-38).

In the weeks following the exodus of such a large percentage of the Bulgarian Turks, it became apparent that several factors made the continuation of the revival/rebirth policy no longer in the interest of the Bulgarian government. First of all, the reality of thousands of Bulgarian Turkish “tourists” waiting to cross with household belongings into Turkey drew a lot more attention and media coverage than the Bulgarian government anticipated as outcries by human rights organizations such as the Helsinki Watch Committee and Amnesty International soon were echoing from the Turkish and American media as well as attracting the notice of the CSCE in Europe

(Atanassova 1999). These negative portrayals greatly hampered Bulgaria's ability to continue to spin its version of a voluntary self-awareness of ethnic revival to an increasingly skeptical world.

Finally, the economic instability exacerbated by the unanticipated loss of an estimated one third of Bulgaria's agricultural workforce, brought the government quickly to its senses. The internal political instability resulting from these actions paved the way for the Communist government to distance themselves from Zhivkov's campaign and to eventually ask Zhivkov to resign his position in November 1988 (Petkova 2002, 49).

In November 1989, Zhivkov was replaced as head of the BCP, which changed its name to the Bulgarian Socialist Party. Within weeks, the BSP reversed the failed assimilation policies as one of its first legal moves thus allowing those who had their names forcibly changed to reclaim their original names (Vasileva 1992, 347).

Although thousands of Bulgarian Turks returned to Bulgaria before the fall of the Zhivkov government in November 1989, it was the explicit change in the Bulgarian government's own policies against the "rebirth process" and the passing of the "Names of Bulgarian Citizens Act" in December 1989 which encouraged the return to Bulgaria of nearly half of those who crossed into Turkey to escape the ethnic cleansing campaign. By March 1991, 600,000 ethnic Turks had applied for re-appropriation of their old names (Petkova 2002, 49).

F. Conclusions

In chapter two, it was demonstrated that the earliest constructions of modernist national Bulgarian identity in the 18th and 19th centuries were shaped by political maneuvering and not as is commonly assumed to arise from ethnic or religious oppositions of primordial tensions between Bulgarian Christians vs. Turkish Muslims.

In chapter three, it was demonstrated that heterogenizing and homogenizing imaginaries of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, were often negotiated through Bulgaria's fledgling attempts to define and differentiate itself both from its Ottoman past and its uneasy relationships with the competing interests of the Great Powers.

This chapter has demonstrated the political realities of both the heterogenizing and homogenizing strategies employed under Communism to facilitate the establishment of a socialist nation. Again, it seems clear it is not the presence of religious or ethnic differences themselves which explain the occurrences of violent identity-based conflicts, but rather it is the belief that homogenization will speed up the achievement of political goals accompanying Bulgaria's socialist secularization agenda.

Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions

A. Summary of the Project

The overall argument will be reviewed in this chapter to demonstrate significant heterogenizing and homogenizing political influences throughout the three great transitional periods under review, namely: 1) the latter years of Ottoman dominion: 1762-1877, 2) the end of the Balkan Wars and World Wars I and II: 1878-1947, and 3) the latter years of the Communist dominion: 1947-1989. In particular, in recapitulating the main case of each chapter, I will reinforce my contention that there is nothing inherent in the Bulgarian case to indicate that future generations of Bulgarians need revisit a violent homogenization or identity-based conflict on the scale witnessed in other parts of the world (Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Iraq, etc.)

In this first chapter, I provided a general introduction to the research problem and a brief literature review situating this project within the existing literature. I sought to frame the theoretical suppositions of the thesis in decidedly anti-primordialist terms while at the same time acknowledge the reality of ontological ethnic identity differentiation. I also sought to demonstrate that my contribution to the existing research lay in providing a comprehensive understanding of the transitional periods under review in order to follow up on the work of Todorova and Neuburger while extending the comprehensive comparative analysis beyond that of the Christian vs. Turk and East vs. West oppositional framework.

In chapter two, it was demonstrated that there were legacies of ethnic, linguistic, and religious categories which were available to be utilized by nationalist vernacular mobilizers during the period of 1762-1878 to imagine a particular type of Bulgarian identity that was perceived to be Slavonic and Orthodox Christian. It was also demonstrated that there was not necessarily a natural state of “ethnic category” that could be attributed to Bulgaria apart from the mediating influences of political factors throughout history which have sought to define this identity over and against another. While, initially, the nationalist actors sought differentiation over against Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Christian influences, this identity only much later came to be defined in more stereotypical terms of the modern binary opposition of Christian vs. Muslim. Other 19th century European nationalist antecedents were noted as well, in addition to recognizing the role of Russian Pan-Slavism.

In chapter three, it was demonstrated that heterogenizing and homogenizing imaginaries of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, were often negotiated through Bulgaria’s fledgling attempts to define and differentiate itself not only from its Ottoman past but via its uneasy relationships with the competing interests of the Great Powers. This occurred through active language planning strategies, popularized fiction, and stops and starts for many attempts at establishing a stable national government, especially as they related to attempts to reclaim the borders of the Bulgarian territory as defined under the San Stefano Treaty.

In chapter four, the political realities of both the heterogenizing and homogenizing strategies employed under Communism to facilitate the establishment of a socialist

nation was demonstrated. Again, it seems clear it is not the presence of religious or ethnic differences themselves which explain the occurrences of violent identity-based conflicts, but rather it is the belief that homogenization will speed up the achievement of political goals accompanying Bulgaria's socialist secularization agenda.

The validity of generalizing the results of this thesis to understand other parts of the Balkans will be discussed in addition to summaries of significant points along the trajectory of this thesis that might stimulate further research.

B. Applications of the Project and Conclusion

If, as it has hopefully been demonstrated, identity-based conflict in Bulgaria can be better explained by examining the contributions of nationalist political influences on identity construction rather than an inherent Balkan propensity to religious and ethnic intolerance, what kind of applications might there be for future research? Below are a few areas that seem to me to be suggested by this thesis as deserving further research consideration.

Areas for further research

The Incentives Fulcrum

One model that might explain how conditions in a given area can become conducive for the commission of the type of more aggressive homogenizing activities experienced by the Turks in Bulgaria during the 1980's is that of an *incentives fulcrum*. Although the phrase used is coined by the author, the concept mirrors that of Samantha

Power's concept of "lack of will (Power 2003, 508)." In describing what she means by lack of will she is referring to active calculations of risk and incentives that political actors weigh before deciding on how they will act in a given situation. She contends that:

In a democracy even an administration disinclined to act can be pressured into doing so. This pressure can come from inside or outside. Bureaucrats within the system who grasp the stakes can patiently lobby or brazenly agitate in the hope of forcing their bosses to entertain a full range of options (Power 2003, 508).

In my use of the phrase *incentives fulcrum* I am suggesting that in order for an action to occur, such as the intensified aggressive homogenization of ethnic Turks, the balance of interests or incentives for a potential perpetrator of such an act must be offset by disincentives for intervention by other parties. Conversely, the cessation of such activities might logically occur when the disincentives for the perpetrator increase or the incentives for intervention by other parties increase. Citing cases of genocide like the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, Power suggests in her discussion of political will that violent acts such as those described above are more likely to occur if other parties aware of the actions do not make much "noise" in protest when they do occur (Power 2003, 509).

This process might work in the same way that a fulcrum works in the mechanics of a lever. For example, if there are incentives for one party to undertake such activities and another party also has the incentive to intervene if the first party does so, then it is quite likely that a state of equilibrium is maintained which will prevent the action from occurring. However, if the first party has the incentive to act and the second party

doesn't feel that it is in their interest to act, it is as if two children are on a see-saw and one scoots forward out of his seat and, as a result, the whole balance is thrown off leaving one child with his feet dangling in the air. At the point in time when that child tires of being suspended, he merely needs to scoot back onto his seat and the equilibrium returns and the two children continue to relate as if each is of equal weight.

It is my contention, naïve though it might appear to be at first, that national identity conflict need not occur in the current international climate if one party is ready to adjust his seating position so as to enable the power of the fulcrum to bring about a resolution to a situation of inequity. This appears to be what happened when the Turkish minorities called Zhivkov's bluff and accepted his invitation for a "grand excursion" into Turkey. It was as if one of the children on the playground climbed off the teeter-totter resulting in the other child's crashing return to the earth with a thud.

I believe that this model might bear further testing to see if it is feasible and if it could be developed in a more sophisticated manner than that of a see-saw or teeter-totter.

Religious Identity and Differentiation

Is it possible that one of the reasons why the religious distinctions in Bulgaria are less meaningful or less likely to arouse passionate disagreement over substance is because they are in a sense Christian or Islamic veneers over a functional folk religion predating the conversion of the Slavs to Christianity? This seems to be hinted by Mazower but certainly bears further exploration (Mazower 2002, 54-76).

One possible way to explore this idea of shallow or deep religious identity or differentiation would be to conduct a comparative analysis between urban and rural Bulgarian communities alongside analogous communities in the former Yugoslav republics. Of course, any type of research involving ascertaining religious identity is fraught with methodological challenges, but it would certainly be worth exploration if the study could be properly designed.

Pan- Balkan Studies

This thesis also clearly suggests the need for more in-depth comparative analyses between Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav republics of Serbia and Macedonia in particular to further test whether the experiences of both of these republics bear any resemblance to the political pressures exerted on Bulgaria during the same time periods.

Other Transitional Heterogeneous Communities

Further research is also needed into looking at other transitional states facing strong national or identity-based tensions such as Turkey, Rwanda, Sudan, Iraq, Israel/Palestine, etc. Perhaps what is needed are some comparative analyses among some of the Bulgarian periods in combination with analogous transitional periods, perhaps post-colonial periods, with some of the aforementioned regions having histories of national identity-based conflicts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would hope that further research into one or more of the above areas might contribute to the emergence of new opportunities to mitigate and/or perhaps reverse national identity tensions if the relevant political causal factors could be identified and clarified over against stereotypical appeals to unavoidable ethnic and religiously motivated conflict.

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