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An exploration into the socio - political and socio - psychological dynamics between the Orthodox Bulgarians and Bulgarian - Turks in Bulgaria through the lense of the historical event of the “Revival” process

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To my mother.

“A name is an identity and an identity has to be recognised”

“The Arc of Love”, Esther Perel

Abstract

In the 1980s in Bulgaria, the Communist regime launched a forced assimilation process targeting the country's Turkish minority. The process was surreptitiously named "the revival process" as it sought to disguise the forced assimilation with a campaign, which aimed to revive the "real" identity of the Turkish and Pomal population in Bulgaria. According to the process, the Turkish minority in the country were people with roots planted in Bulgarian Orthodoxy, or "real" Bulgarian history, who over the course of time and, specifically, during the Ottoman rule in Bulgaria (from the late fourteenth century until the 1898), forgot who they really were in terms of religion, culture, language and communal history. The purpose of "the revival", launched by then president Todor Zhivkov, was to revive the memory of these people and "clean" the country of its Turkish heritage.

At the heart of the government's propaganda lied the name changing part of the campaign when Turkish sounding names had to be, willingly or by force, changed to Bulgarian sounding ones. In the beginning stages of the campaign, those who refused, sighted their human rights, protested and tried to disrupt the process, were either jailed, beaten, fined or killed. Later on, after the Government could not handle their outrage, the tune around who the minority were changed and they were branded as Turkish spies who had come over to form a second Ottoman empire and repeat the course of history. The moral panic, which the second story created in the hearts and minds of the Orthodox Bulgarians, urged the then president to challenge the Turkish minority by forcing them to leave Bulgaria and go to Turkey. Those who wanted to stay had to change their names and prove allegiance to "real" Bulgarian history they had "forgotten" by accepting new identities. Those who left, were the real "Turkish spies" who had been discovered and had to go back to their homeland - Turkey.

This process could almost be understood as a sort of reenactment of old wounds and of reminder that the betrayal of the Bulgarians who did convert to Islam to save themselves, their families and livelihoods during the Ottoman rule, was never going to be forgotten. It was almost a delayed response and a punishment to those who did convert during that time. The act itself had

branded them cowards, who betrayed the greater struggle of freeing the motherland in order to survive. Despite the fact that most of them had never lived outside the borders of Bulgaria and only knew Islam and “Turkishness” from within the borders of Bulgaria, more than 150 000 Bulgarian - Turks exiled during the “revival”. For them, giving up their names meant stripping themselves of their identities because “Having your name changed is very hard. Changing your name from Ayse to Fatima is hard. Becoming Angelina from Ayse is a lot worse.” (Aljazeera, 2015: 8:15’ - 8:22’)

This dissertation argues that there were other underlying causes for the evokement of the such a campaign, which lie in the heavily political relationship within the Communist regime, and specifically, between the Bulgarian president at the time and the Soviet Union. The stand I take is that the Turkish minority were innocent victims of a campaign, designed to illustrate to the higher political Communist forces to what degree Bulgaria was pleading allegiance to their cause and ideology. It was a way for Todor Zhivkov to secure his position as a Communist figure by exploiting the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of people, not only the Bulgarian - Turks but also their Bulgarian Orthodox counterparts by inciting fear, prejudice and hatred.

Keywords: exodus, Bulgarian-Turkish minority, Pomaks, Communism, border crossing, refugees, Bulgarization, Islamisation, name changing, revival process, identity

Introduction

During a week's vacation in Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria in 2018, I found myself in a situation which stirred me so much that it then became the basis of this thesis. I hailed a taxi from the corner of a street and while making arrangements with the driver as to where I needed him to take me, it quickly became apparent to him that I must not to be a native to the country.

Although my mother is Bulgarian and I was born there, I speak Bulgarian with an accent and struggle with vocabulary and grammar. I also do not exhibit the typical facial features of Bulgarian women but rather, those of my Cuban - American father. The driver himself looked and sounded completely native to me. I did not notice a foreign accent from him nor did the darker tone of his skin even register with me initially.

When we passed by a regular street police patrol down the road however, it became evident how much he did see a difference between us. He said to me half jokingly, after the police let us through, that he was very glad that he had picked up a white foreigner as his passenger because if I were not riding with him he would have, without a doubt, been stopped, extorted for money by the police officers or unjustly jailed without a crime to his name, had he refused to oblige them. He would have been subjected to this humiliation simply because of his darker skin tone, which to the local Orthodox Bulgarians spells: "Turk". I, being the "foreigner", however, was inadvertently acting as his saviour and was somehow perceived as superior.

This statement struck and shocked me at first because I did not have an understanding of this type of discrimination amongst the two predominant groups in Bulgaria. What the driver referred to as "Turks" were actually members of the Bulgarian - Turkish minority of the country. I later found out that ultimately, the two groups differentiate in religious affiliation where the majority of Bulgarians are Orthodox Christians and the Bulgarian - Turkish minority defined themselves as Muslim. Because of that, they were understood as having a Turkish origin and most importantly, somehow a stronger Turkish and not Bulgarian affiliation.

This derogatory way of separating one group from the other is based solely on appearance and pejorative perceptions. Had the driver been stopped by the police, his documents would have shown that he has a Bulgarian (Slavic) sounding name and that he was born in the capital city. However, when I presented this reasoning to him he dismissed it by saying that how his name sounded would not have mattered since after the ‘revival process’ in the country from the 1980s nearly everyone, regardless of origin - Slavic or Turkish, would have a Bulgarian sounding name.

Before the “revival” process, based on documents and witness accounts, the two groups had been living peacefully and even celebrated at each other’s festivities. However, during the “revival”, as author Gergana Tzvetkova elaborates, “Slavic Bulgarians were drawn into paid networks of informants, to surveil and report on infractions of these prohibitions by their Turkish neighbors, thus breaking long-standing solidarities and introducing tensions within communities, which were further deepened by propaganda work by the state that began to characterize the Turkish minority in ‘anti-state’, ‘subversive’, ‘separatist’ terms.” (2012:5) Therefore, it could also be argued that although the “revival” had popularly been directed towards the memory of the Turkish minority, what had really happened was a revival of the hatred that Orthodox Bulgarians had been carrying towards the Turks ever since the time of the Ottoman Empire.

Where does the pain of history stop being traumatic and morph into an accepted and normalized form of perpetual hatred and everyday prejudice? Moreover, how does that translate into current political situations of perceptions based on religious affiliation? The thesis will examine these issues mostly through a socio-psychological perspective because the experience of time in this matter and the prejudice and internalized hatred, which keeps breaking through the barriers of time, cannot solely be understood through the political and sociological. Rather, a deeper dive is needed to grasp how exactly and why the events of “revival” were able to have happened.

This dissertation will look exactly at what the implications of these types of realities in the country have on its’ citizens, what is at stake here with regards to the future, and what went on

historically to cause these undermining tensions. Moreover, what were the sought after goals of the then Communist government when the ‘revival process’ began? What makes it lucrative in an ideological way to pitting two otherwise commoradorative groups against one another over the excuse of a historical trauma which took place more than five hundred years before?

Initially, the questions guiding my direction and research revolved around understanding what the best definition for the Turks in the country was. If they were not Bulgarians what were they - a Turkish diaspora, IDPs, settlers? How were they a threat to Bulgarian society? What is a pure Bulgarian? What I did not understand with these initial and misleading questions was that I was subconsciously adopting the position of the Slavic Bulgarians and had myself, albeit being initially unaware of it, succumbed to the bias of the residual hatred towards these “Others”. I experienced then the false feeling of nationalism and doom of a pending fabricated threat that nested over the Bulgarian people and was, moreover, perpetuated by them.

It was only after careful reading and listening to the stories of the Turkish minority that I understood how easy it was to give in to the collective trauma instilled in me from my own Bulgarian Orthodox mother with horrific stories from the time of the Ottoman empire since I was a child. Inevitably, these stories had also been passed down to her from her previous generations. This is the story of that historical period, which Bulgarians first think about when they talk about the history of their country. It is evident from my personal experience as a “foreign” child that when Bulgarian parents teach history, they teach that exact traumatic past to their children and ultimately, instill and multiply all the subconscious fears towards these “Other” in them.

In order to gauge into the events, which this dissertation positions as central, we must first understand who the different actors involved are. According to Mila Maeva, author of “The Revival Process and its influence on the Identity of Bulgarian Turks in Turkey”(2015), there are three layers of reasoning when it comes to the events leading to the “revival”. Firstly, it is the international relations between Bulgaria and Turkey. Following that is the layer of internal affairs of each of the countries and, lastly, the component of historical trauma between them.

Moreover, Anja Kublitz (2016), Alexander Betts (2009), Liisa Malkki (1992, 2011) and Karen Jacobsen (2014) will also inform the theoretical understanding of the situation through their parallel theoretical examples of difference in generational religious affiliation, forced migration, displaced livelihoods, refugees and borders. These sections will be followed by a discussion about the current/recent domestic environment between the two groups and how the international political European climate affects their relations.

Essentially, the trajectory of this thesis will start by examining the most outer layers of the issue by examining the political reasons that unleashed the possibility of the “revival”, then the discussion will go deeper into the stories of the victims, which will then unpeel the socio - psychological pieces, where I believe the answer to as to why the “revival” was possible lie. The theoretical part will be supported by the writing of Vamik Volkan in order to understand how the trauma of the Ottoman rule over Bulgaria still lives in the collective unconscious of its people. Lastly, the dissertation will end with a recap of this information in the form of a conclusion and a list of references.

Reasons

While visiting a village in the Rhodope Mountains called Rudozem for her research, author Evgenia Troeva noticed that the children of the village would spread the news of hers and her team’s arrival by saying “We have guests from Bulgaria”. (2014:77) What this indicates is that, although the Rhodope Mountains are part of Bulgaria, albeit inhabited mostly by the Muslim minorities, they did not place their consciousness and belonging in it. “On the other hand, it indicates the existence of invisible boundaries established by communities in order to affirm their own identity.” (2014:78)

These boundaries inevitably have cultural symbols such as, for example, the language they speak, the clothes they wear, the traditions they keep, which are specific to the region and differ

from the those of the Orthodox Bulgarians. However, what is also true is that because Pomaks lived predominantly in the Rhodope mountain and because of their relative isolation, they really don't have much familiarity with the cultural traditions in Turkey either. Rather, they share many of the cultural practices that Christian Bulgarians have and add some of the cultural heritage left by the Ottomans.

According to Carol Silverman, Pomaks are Bulgarian-speaking Muslims (1989:3) Although the dominant religion in Bulgaria is Christian Orthodox, the above statement immediately presupposes that being anything other than that religious affiliation also strips you of a Bulgarian nationality. Recalling the dominant historical account of the time of the 'Turkish yoke' which in Bulgaria lasted for approximately five hundred years, what stands out mostly as a historical trauma within the national conscience of the Bulgarians is their forced conversion from Christian Orthodoxy to Islam during the time of the yoke.

In a sense, the Pomaks are remnants of that time and they are, therefore, thought of as Bulgarians who have lost the true way of what it really means to belong to the nation. In other words, they have forgotten how to be true Bulgarians, which inevitably comes down to being baptised and having stayed in the Orthodox faith. Pomaks are, therefore, perceived as capitulated Bulgarians, weak enough not to withstand the oppression of the Ottomans of those five hundred years.

According to Gerasimova, "The Bulgarian Orthodox Church played a crucial role in preserving Bulgarian culture during the Ottoman occupation and was a guardian of the national identity and a major factor in the education of Bulgarians." (2007:2) Therefore, with the presence of Islam or even Muslim sounding names, it was seen as a threat to national identity and an adding of salt to the wound of that inherited historic trauma. This understanding came about in two ways. Once, it was the juxtaposition of the Bulgarian (victim) versus the Turkish (enslaver) identity, through the representation of the difference in religious affiliations. Secondly, that the Communist regime did not allow the practice of any religion, so Islam was a threat to that socialist regime and socialist society as well.

As Silverman points out, however, “From a native Bulgarian point of view, the difference between Bulgarian and Pomak is more than a difference in religion - it is a difference in attitude (resisting vs. surrender), and perhaps a living reminder of the 500 years of Ottoman domination which they are still lamenting.” (1989:4) The Muslim minorities at the time of the Communist regime, be they Bulgarian - Turks or Pomaks, really had no bigger and more predominant culture to subscribe to. They had inherited cultural symbols and practices from both the Turks and Bulgarians. As author Evgenia Troeva also points out, Muslim Bulgarians “perceive themselves as a boundary community, and in fact are regarded as such both by Christian Bulgarians and Turks.” (2014:77)

That is also why when at the end of the ‘revival process’ Turkey opened its borders to the exiled, “These emigrants were essentially refugees and were not fully accepted by Turks in Turkey either.” (Fichtl, 2005:5) Moreover, it could be argued that because their culture also cultivated Bulgarian practices, these also crossed over into Turkey with their carriers. Therefore, the specific identity of the Bulgarian - Turk, made up of two cultural understandings, practices, traditions, languages and, in some instances, both a Bulgarian and a Turkish name, testifies to a double, bordered sense of belonging. As Maeve writes, “This proves that the Bulgarian Turks migrants continue to live torn not only between two parts but also between two cultures. “ (2017:.8,9)

The ‘revival process’, according to Silverman, did not however begin with the assimilation attempts against the Bulgarian Turks but with the Pomaks and the Gypsies in the country. “In effect, Pomaks and Gypsies were legislated out of existence.” (1989:6) from the Constitution at the time which was in force from 1971 until 1991. In it, what was previously referred to as Bulgaria’s “national minorities”, had now been changed to the term “citizens of non-Bulgarian origin” (Fichtl, 2005:6) “ In this manner the nation itself was identified with the dominating ethnos ignoring the variety of its ethnic ingredients.” (Ibid)

However, if the general and vastly spread motto of the ‘revival campaign’ was that the Bulgarian government was trying to essentially remind these minorities that they were Bulgarians, who with time and after the fall of the Ottoman empire forgot their native roots, was this same government not contradicting itself by constitutionalizing a ‘non - Bulgarian origin’? Moreover, if the Bulgarian - Turks were perceived as Turks who had stayed after the fall of the empire, where their consecutive generations not already also Bulgarians ? Therefore, there must be other reasons for the mass exodus.

According to Troeva, there were three major reasons behind the forced assimilation campaign. Firstly, the leading Communist party at the time - BCP, became increasingly concerned that the long-term ethnic balance in Bulgaria was beginning to move scales because Bulgarian - Turks had a higher birth rate. As Maeva points out, “The Bulgarian authorities indicate as the most important reason for the change of the names the demographic boom of the Turkish population, which according to different data is between 900 000 and 1.5 million people” (2017:2)

Secondly, because of the geographic location which the minorities populated, the regime feared that the former might take over those areas and cause economic disturbance since they inhabited the most important agricultural areas of Bulgaria. Lastly, the events of the “Cyprus precedent” in 1974 where Cyprus became divided between Turks and Greeks, stirred fear into the hearts of the Communists and re-ignited the fear that the 500 years of misery under the Ottoman empire might repeat itself. (2017:6,7) Therefore, the initial attacks against the Pomaks and Gypsies were really a prelude towards assimilating the larger Bulgarian - Turkish minority.

The significance of the name and the name changing campaign, which was at the heart of the ‘revival process’ carries an even deeper meaning. That is because, as Fichtl points out, “One of the most significant markers for confessional and ethnic identification is the name.” (2005:78) Therefore, one’s name, whether it sounds Bulgarian or Turkish is a boundary maker. The name is a decision and a statement which draws lines between different ethnic groups. Moreover, the significance that the name carries, also tells the story of an identity and a history which comes

with it. But for the Communist government of Bulgaria, this history had to become undone and re-written. As Silverman writes at the time of the 'revival process', "The government seems to be trying to eradicate all traces of a Turkish presence and to force the Turks to accept a new identity based on a new history." (1989:6)

"The ideological preoccupation with purity, homogeneity, monoethnism, and nationalism requires reconstructing not only the present and the future but also the past." (1989:6-7)

Therefore, the practise of memory obliteration and assimilation during the revival went as far as erasing the names of ancestors of Turkish descent and with Turkish names from the graves. According to Silverman (1989), however, what is understood to have been a forced conversion of Bulgarians into Islam during the Ottoman rule, might not have actually been violent and forceful.

Nevertheless, the idea of violent conversion has been etched into the national conscience of Bulgaria for centuries and, as discussed in chapters to follow, it has been understood as one of the main reasons for the revival process in the 1980s. As Maeva writes, "the change of the names of the Turks is rationalized by the migrants as a "revenge", as a response of the pressure, exerted by the Ottomans over the Christian population within the framework of the Ottoman Empire." (2017:2)

Despite Troeva's argument listed above regarding the three layers of reasoning, one cannot but question what the relations between the actors of the regime were, and more specifically, the relationship between the then president Todor Zhivkov and the higher political figures in the Soviet Union. According to a report from 1986, the author acknowledges that Bulgaria had been one of the stronger satellite states to the Soviet Union. However, Bulgaria also showed independence which deviated from the lines of Communism. Therefore, there were public speeches which hinted at the dissatisfaction of the Soviets with the country.

In this special report by J.F. Brown, it is stated that “In 1985, the Soviet ambassador complained publicly about the quality of Bulgarian goods exported to the Soviet Union, and therefore has been speculating that Gorbachev believes it is time to turn Zhivkov out to ceremonial pasture” and that Bulgaria “is losing its most - favoured- nation status with Moscow” (1986:6) Moreover, “In the case of the massive migration of 1989, it is quite clear that the communist regime has used the ethnic conflict to lessen the political crisis and to postpone the forthcoming democratic changes which have already been in progress in East-Central European socialist countries.” (1986:343)

Therefore, there could be an additional underlying component to the decision behind the “revival” campaign, which comes directly from the observational understandings of the exiled minority. “All the migrants are definite that the “process of revival” pursues political goals, its organizers are solely the rulers in Bulgaria at that time and thus they justify all the remaining Bulgarians.” (Maeva, 2017:3) What this means is that in the beginning of the 1980s, the then Bulgarian president looked to secure a stronger position with the SSSR. The way he could show his political and ideological devotion was by “Bulgarianising” the whole population of his country. Ultimately, under the Communist regime and socialist ideology, “ The aspiration was to incorporate its population to the “socialist way of living”” (Maeva, 2017:5), which being a true Slav embodied.

This, however, had nothing to do with religious affiliation, which was contrary to the Marxist ideal anyway. Being a socialist did, on the other hand, draw its definitive lines against Slavic people who constituted the Soviet block. A Slavic sounding name was a testament to a Slavic origin, belonging and loyalty. This understanding, by its very point, then excluded the Bulgarian-Turkish minority and that it why, for the president, their names had to be changed. The Slavic name created a standard under which everybody “Bulgarian” had to fall. For Todor Zhivkov, the revival process was a way to demonstrate his devotion to the regime by forcefully subjecting the whole Bulgarian population to it. “Leading by ideology of scientific atheism, the

communist regime in Bulgaria perceived Islam as the most serious obstacle “in the path of Turkish integration”” (Maeva, 2017: 95)

What followed as a reaction to the name changing campaign, were many strikes and huge waves of rebellion from members of the Turkish minority. One of the most remembered strike actions, remembered as a hunger strike, is what is called the “May events” in 1989. These subsequent strikes demonstrated to the Communist officials that although, “Imprisonment, beatings, and even murder were among the tools used against whole communities in an effort to force compliance, culminating in the forced expulsions of 1989 and official government claims that “There are no Turks in Bulgaria!” (Maeva, 2017:3), they did not work. Therefore, in order to save his cause of Soviet allegiance, the last straw for the president was to “clean” the country of the non - Soviet counterparts. In that way, the Revival Process was “considered a political instrument of construction of “a new Bulgarian socialist” nation” (Maeva, 2017:97) perhaps also in line with the Gorbachev’s Perestroika.

This process of “cleansing” reminds of the events of the Cuban revolution from 1953. During the time of the Revolution, everyone who did not subscribe to Fidel Castro’s political ideal was allowed to leave. Additionally, however, the then leader also expelled all prisoners and patients in mental institutions, and in a sense cleansed the society from its’ delinquents. Moreover, much like the second Bulgarian Communist message of treason by those who had left, the Cubans who fled for Miami were also called ‘gusanos’ - a derogatory term meaning ‘worms’, who were betraying their land by not wanting to live in the sacrifice it was inevitably confiding them to.

I am also connected, albeit from a generational distance, to this experience through my father who was born in Cuba and also ended up living in Miami. Although the circumstances of these two events differ, the aftermath resembles. Just like the Bulgarian - Turks in Turkey, so did the Cubans whose identity now included “American” after itself, longed for what was left behind. Between Bulgaria and Turkey stood border control and between America and Cuba the ninety

mile strip of ocean representing that wall which cut off time, memory, identity, language, religion and its' people.

The experiences which the Cubans had because of the land they parted and the constant worry about the relatives they left behind, and would probably not see for a very long, strike the same historical cord. The ones who escaped to Miami either legally with a visa or on a raft were called 'gusanos' (worms) for betraying the 'greatness' of the Revolution just like the Turkish minority was accused of leaving and betraying Bulgaria because they did not feel Bulgarian enough at their core to stay and prove their devotion by changing their names.

As author Maria de Los Angeles Torres writes about the relations between both groups of Cubans whose definitions take shape in the narrow spaces which politics and a ninety mile strip of water allowed them, "One does not let you go back because the act of returning is treason; the other does not let you return because the act of leaving was treason." (Puentes a Cuba, 1995:40) What she means here is that the ones who left the island of Cuba during the revolution were seen as betraying its' ideology for a life in Miami, which was branded capitalist and selfish in the pursuit of material goods.

The result of that demonstration of devotion in Bulgaria was the renaming campaign, which according to Maeva, "passed in the same manner everywhere – the populated areas were surrounded by the army and the militia, the leaving was forbidden, the telephone connections were cut off, the identity papers were taken and the people were compelled to sign declarations that they did not have any relatives in Turkey and that they did not want to emigrate and they voluntarily changed their names." (2017:4)

Much like what is understood to have systematically happened during the Ottoman days, when Bulgarians were forcefully subjected to change their religion, the reverse started occurring hundreds of years after in the 1980s but expressed through a different channel that now involved a change to whole identities. Of course, one could argue that changing religious affiliations could

also be perceived and constitute a change of identity. However, the name carries much more than the religious subscription. In the case of the Turkish minority, specifically, religion and customs were already engraved into the significance of their names. The witness accounts of those days are described in the section to follow.

From the Witness Stand

*“They said, ‘There is no such thing as a Turk in Bulgaria. You’re Bulgarian.’
(Yanat, Aljazeera, 2012: 7:17’ - 7:19’)*

According to the BBC’ “Witness podcast” (Alex Last, 2017), Bulgaria’s revival process was a policy of persecutions directed at the minority Bulgarian Turkish population. (0:19’ - 0:24’) The reporter defines it as “a Balkan tragedy: Europe’s largest movement of refugees for forty years” (0:35’-0:40’) during which approximately 150 000 people had to leave their livelihoods and move to Turkey to build new ones. The witnesses share experiences of unspeakable living conditions where one was not allowed to speak their own language - Turkish, and where the land they were born and grew up in rejected their identity. In short, they speak of being denied their very existence. Against a background of crying sounds, one Bulgarian - Turkish woman confirms that “Conditions are unspeakable, you can’t go out, you can’t talk about anything in your own language, you utter a Turkish word in fear and you look around to see if anyone heard you.” (0:57’ - 01:09’)

This ingrained fear of speaking Turkish was based on the monetary fines, which the Communist officials at the time would issue to anyone who was caught, or accused of, speaking any other language but Bulgarian. According to another witness, the fines at the time ranged between three and five dollars per uttered word. (9:51’-9:55’) The non - monetary fines were beatings and imprisonment. The repression was so strongly enforced that it in its effort to quench the “otherness” of the minority, the policy enforcers would even reach ridiculous levels. For example, a woman from the documentary movie “Göç”, discussed further below, recalls how she

was fined by a police officer after he accused her of laughing in a Turkish manner while talking to her friend at a bus stop. (Göç, 2013: 15:43'-15:59')

Language was not the only problem. The minority were also harassed because of the traditional clothing they wore. Those were mainly baggy trousers called “shalvari” and the headscarves traditional for women from the region of Southern Rhodope mountain where Pomaks and Bulgarian - Muslims lived. “When we go downtown wearing our traditional trousers, the old women are ridiculed and beaten up, and that’s why we want to go to Turkey.” (Ibid, 01:09’ - 01:19’) Although one would assume that this type of clothing and specific fashion would also not be the same in Turkey, and that there was a likelihood that this type of clothing would have been ridiculed there as well, what really stands behind the strong wish to leave Bulgaria is the violence and racism at play, which the Turkish minority desperately wished to escape from.

Their clothing was as much a symbol of what they were (Bulgarian - Turks and Muslim) as well as of what they were not (Slavs and Orthodox Christian) and were also not willing to fully accept and convert to because for most, that would mean completely severing off their personal history and identity. The perseverance of keeping their decades old type of clothing is not just a form of resistance to the “revival” process of the time but of centuries of peaceful coexistence with Slavic Bulgarians in Bulgaria and not assimilating into their majority.

Zafa Kudle, who was also interviewed for the BBC podcast, recalls that soldiers would come to the Turkish families carrying stamps with all letters of the Bulgarian alphabet so that they could issue the new passports with the new names immediately. Initially, the Turks were given the option to choose their new names but if they refused to do so, the officials would baptise them with new names by keeping the first letter of their Turkish name and completing the new Slavic sounding name with Slavic sounds. (BBC Witness podcast, 03:05'-03:16') Anyone who continued resisting this process was taken away to prison by the police or later in the “revival” process, directly deported to Turkey. Visits to mosques, Turkish schools, minority traditions, newspapers and radio programmes in Turkish were also banned and anyone accused of its breach

was declared a criminal. “It was a systematic attempt to erase the collective memory and the identity of Turks.” (Ibid, 04:30’ - 04:40’)

The people, having been forcefully ordered to leave Bulgaria, define their own language as Turkish. One might argue that it would be more logical to assume that since these people were Bulgarian citizens, their language, traditions, school systems and even clothing should be Bulgarian or Slavic, as well. What helped them keep their ways was that before the 1980s events, the Constitution of Bulgaria allowed and promoted the existence of Bulgaria’s minorities. Therefore, the “revival” process was in effect a turn of the Bulgarian government against its own constitutional declarations.

Perhaps one could also argue that before the ‘revival’ events, the Bulgarian minorities were allowed to freely practice their cultural traditions as a means to keep them controlled. That is because by allowing them to be and express their history amongst themselves, the Turks were kept satisfied and undisturbed, which guaranteed peace for the whole state. However, this peace and tranquility did not emerge out of good intentions. Rather, it was a way to keep the minorities silenced and unrepresented in the country. The fact that no party existed to fight for and secure minorities’ rights, until 1990 when the Movement for Rights and Freedoms was formed, was an expression of that silencing.

In the documentary “Göç – Stepping Across the Border” (2013), briefly referred to above, all of the approximate ten interviewees share that they and their Bulgarian counterparts never had any racial confrontations during the period before the revival process when nearly 350 000 Bulgarian - Turks left. Children of both groups used to play without discriminating between one another and their families would celebrate birthdays and Bulgarian national holidays together. However, when the revival process began, the propaganda of the Communist regime worked not only in the Turkish minority’s homes but in the schools as well, where the Turkish children would be interrogated about the activities of their parents and the language they spoke amongst themselves at home.

One of the witnesses in the documentary, Kasim, recalls how he was manipulated into accepting a Slavic Bulgarian name by being told that he could no longer keep his Turkish name since all of his friends at school had already changed theirs. (2:10'-2:21') After continuing to resist being called Hristo rather than his birth name Kasim, he was told that he had no choice because all his friends "had already become Bulgarians". (2:08'-2:10')

Another witness, Metin, also recalls being secretly interrogated by his Bulgarian history teacher while discussing the "revival" process in class and whether or not the renamed students believed that they were in fact not Turks but Bulgarians, who had been forcefully converted during the Ottoman time long before. Metin shared, at the time of the interrogation, that he was unsure what roots his family had but for him it was important to be able to choose which culture and ethnicity he belonged to and to express that freely, the same way the teacher could freely express he was Bulgarian without being persecuted. (11:52'-12:55') After Metin's comment, the history teacher called the police, the child's parents and the dean of the school, who did not let Metin and his parents walk out of the school freely until Metin declared that he did feel Bulgarian. (12:55'-13:40')

Most of the witnesses share that they used their Bulgarian names and their false subscription to the Slavic societal group as a way to acquire jobs, medical services and social status, which would have otherwise been impossible for them to receive, had they not pretended to agree with the Communist propaganda. Despite that, however, one of the victims of the "revival" process, Sevginar, shares how when she was a child she would play happily with the Bulgarian children on any other day but the 3rd of March. The 3rd of March is a Bulgarian national holiday commemorating the day Bulgaria gained freedom from the Ottoman empire in 1878. On that date, Sevginar would be told by the other children to go away because she would make their "feeling of nationalism arise" (Ibis, 14:34'-14:38')

This false subscription to the culture and ways of the Bulgarian and Orthodox Christian majority could be compared to the experience of W.E.B du Bois of “double consciousness”. In his famous work, “The Souls of Black Folk” (1903) he writes about the feeling of being split into several parts of identity without being able to fully express or find a public outlet for them together. For example, the African Americans have been, and some might argue still are, seen through and understood through the eyes of white Americans. In that way, black people in the United States do not fall in either a category of African or American because the former assumes belonging solely to black African cultures and the latter - belonging to the white race. But being African American, they are in a sense a mixture of both, understanding the predominantly white country they live in but having African family histories. Therefore, they have developed a double consciousness of what it means to belong to both and understanding both but falling in a category outside each of their strictly determines boundaries.

Their double consciousness also entails, according to Du Bois, conflicting struggles of self - acceptance and cultural identity formation. In the same manner, Turkish-Bulgarians fall in between knowing they are Bulgarian citizens but subscribing to the Turkish ways of being by speaking Turkish, observing traditions from Turkey and practising the Muslim faith. However, they were also not fully Turkish because, for most, the land of Bulgaria is all they knew their whole lives. Therefore, like the double consciousness of African Americans written about by Du Bois, the Bulgarian - Turks has a fragmented national and cultural identity. In the example of the Bulgarian national holiday, they could not naturally follow the celebrations related to the so faithful date because they were constantly reminded that they were descendents or somehow belonging not the to victims (Bulgarians) but to the enemy (Ottoman Turks).

The Bulgarian Turks were inbetweeners. While on their way to the Turkey, some would arrive on foot, dragging all their possessions with them; some would arrive by car, and others by train. The way they would be packed in a single train compartment, women, men and children all together reminds of the way the Jews would arrive on trains at the concentration camps. As Metin (Göç, 2010) says, when they were initially welcomed into Turkey, they were looked upon as foreigners because their Turkish accent was different, they did not know the proper Turkish

culture, traditions and daily life. However, neither did they know the Slavic Bulgarian ones. Therefore, perhaps this identity is not a problem of nationality but of borders which lock them out of a specific definition. With the revival process they light was shone on how they were forbidden to be themselves freely. They had to fit in either a rigid frame of Bulgarians or Turks.

The events of that fateful day of the 3rd of March, would in a way remind Bulgarians of the buried hatred and fear from the Turks. The Turks would then be seen as either cowardly Bulgarians who succumbed to the pressures of the Ottomans and converted to Islam and the Turkish ways, or as Turkish invaders who could once again arise and drawn Bulgarians in the suffrage of another five hundred years. As Kasim states, on that day “if you were Turkish, then you were a barbarian, a murderer; you’re a bad person because the Ottoman empire did all these bad things to the Bulgarians” (Göç, 14:52-15:05) This propaganda was also fueled by the specific movies which were played on national television on the 3rd of March. They were carefully selected to have a strong nationalist tone and to constantly remind Slavic Bulgarians of the suffering of the long gone past, which was to also never be repeated again.

On that same and only television channel at the time, the propaganda trickling down from the sectors of the government was in full force. Journalist Julian Popov writes that minorities dressed in Bulgarian national costumes were shown to dance out of joy for “their rediscovered identities and their gratitude to the Communist Party which had facilitated the journey to their genuine roots.” (2012, Aljazeera) What was not broadcasted, however, were the hundreds of thousand being forced to leave and the reality of the atrocity committed against them. Neighbours and friends, both Bulgarian and Turkish, were, in reality, turned against one another. As Bahtiyar Karaali recalls, some of the Bulgarians were recruited in by the government to assist the name changing campaign. “One morning 30 years ago, two policemen carrying Kalashnikovs turned up in his house. One of them was his neighbor.” (2014, Deutsche Welle)

As a continuation of the Communist government’s propaganda, another term for the “revival” process was coined - “the big excursion” (Göç, 38:38’-38:40’) It is unclear from the documentation of the events who first came up with this derogatory term for the atrocious

exodus. However, it could nevertheless be understood that the Bulgarian - Turkish minority were made to be “tourists” at the Southern border with Turkey. They were tourists as long as they were on the territory of Bulgaria because they did not belong to it; they were just passing through it on the way to their “real” motherland. The minority were undermined by these terms because their suffering was not taken seriously as the violation of International Law. On the contrary, their experience was dehumanized, possibly because in this way the government, its officials and the Bulgarians who corroborated as part of it, could more easily see through their mission of expelling everyone they believed did not belong in Bulgaria, without the feeling of guilt and awareness of the great pain their actions were causing to innocent people.

Much like the atrocities that the Jews faced in the concentration camps during the Second World War, the officials could not comprehend the extent to the human rights violations they were authorizing and participating in. As Hannah Arendt explains in her work “Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil” (1963), the evil caused was banal because for the violators, they were just following orders. They were part of a propaganda and a system that demanded for them to be diligent and excellent at following orders.

This disengaged the Nazi officials and common bureaucrats from understanding the evil they were creating because they dehumanised the targets of the evil, the Jews, for the sake of following the orders put in place in order to reach the goal of “the final solution”. In much the same vein, it could also be said that this mocking and dehumanising of the Bulgarian - Turkish minority helped everyone involved to follow the orders of the government and their communist leader and father - figure in order to get a ‘clean’ Bulgaria, purge themselves of the five thousands years of past torture and reclaim a new Bulgaria and a new mass identity.

Could it be possible, however, that behind this ironic term lies an expression of what the Slavic Bulgarians really thought about the revival process if it did, in fact, come from the general Slavic population? Perhaps for the Slavic Bulgarians it was a way to mock the government at the time

without being jailed or persecuted, as a form of resistance and a show of opinion in solidarity with their Turkish - Bulgarian counterparts.

According to Slavic Bulgarian, Georgi Simidchiev, “We knew there was something happening called the “Revival Process” and to this day they still dare call it revival. I say dare because the word “revival” means something positive for everybody but what we are talking about here, is exactly the opposite” (1989, Bulgaria’s Exodus, 01:01’ - 01:16’) For the people being exiled it was a forceful migration. They were something that had to disappear from Bulgaria especially after then president Todor Zhivkov declared that it was of utmost importance for the Turks to be exiled to prevent history from repeating itself. (Balcanicaucaso, 2009)The name of the documentary previously referenced, also stems from those words since the word “göç” in Turkish loosely translated means “a person who has been driven away” (Göç, 2010)

The five hundred years of Ottoman rule is a constant reference for even the current political direction of Bulgaria. (Reddit, 6:28 - 6:31) It is a historical trauma which very much still festers. The process of “the revival was just one testament of the presence of that pain. In a way, the Turkish exodus was an attempt to stop the saying of “history repeats itself” (Ibid). However, the Bulgarians were repeating history by inflicting more trauma and pain onto their minorities. In that sense, history repeats not by events but by infliction of suffering through injustice.

From the historical overview of Bulgaria, it becomes clear that the country as a state never really had a chance to build a strong national identity. Bulgarians were either under the Greek, Turkish, Russian or Western forces. Therefore, with the revival, they had made an attempt to eliminate what they did not want to be, and namely Turks, in order to recreate what they did want to constitute and the history they did want to have happened and to have remembered.

Many of the Turks who opposed the government’s propaganda were sent to a labour camp/prison called Belene. The people that were imprisoned there, however, say that it was actually a concentration camp where they tried to forcefully assimilate the Turks (1989, Bulgaria’s Exodus, 21:30’ - 21:43’) What Ahmet, a former prisoner at Belene, however, recounts is that this governmental tactic had an opposite effect, because out of strong will and feeling of resistance,

the Bulgarian Turks who at that point did not speak Turkish very well, actually learned Turkish perfectly and refused to speak Bulgarian again. (1989, Bulgaria's Exodus, 21:50''-21:53'')

This was possible because many of the Turkish intelligentsia were sent there so for the resistance fighters, much like in the "Count of Monte Cristo" (Alexandre Dumas, 1844), it was also a classroom. It was this intelligentsia amongst all the other hundreds of thousands of people who crossed into their new home - Turkey, that also granted their intellectual potential to it. As Metin says, "Turkey won 500 000 people of great potential" (Göç, 30:46 - 30:57) since Turkey did not have to spend any money on their education, health, food and shelter up to the point of exodus.

How did the majority of the Slavic Bulgarians experience the process? "In Bulgaria there rained terror not only over the Turkish population but over the Bulgarian one as well" (Göç, 30:00'') and it was the silence of the Bulgarians at the time that felt most hard and soul crushing to the Turks. Help, however, was given in secret as, for example, Metin's Bulgarian childhood friend, Mitko, silently put 300 leva in Metin's pocket before he left for Turkey with his parents. (Ibid, 31:51-32:04'') Perhaps it is also because of these small gestures of care and kindness that the trauma of the migration, according to Metin, is no longer spoken about at all. (Ibid, 33:47'') The revival process for the Turks that were forced to leave is more connected to the political regime at the time rather than with the Bulgarian Slavic population. "People don't want to talk about this because it evokes hatred in them but they don't want to hate the Bulgarians so they chose not to remember."(Ibid, 33:50'')

If it still hard to talk about the time of the "revival process", then there is still pain, feeling of betrayal and buried trauma, which is not spoken about for fear of it being evoked and re-lived. This could also explain why many of the exiled Bulgarian Turks refused to return to Bulgaria after the fall of Communism. As Sevginar says, ""I prefer to be here (in Turkey) because until the age of 20, I believed in something and then it turned out to be a lie. So now I have made my place here. I have made space of myself." (Ibid, 36:10-36:16)

Another interviewee also states that although Bulgaria has now become part of the European Union and its citizens are free to go around Europe, he would never return and especially not for that purpose. “I don’t want to have a Bulgarian passport just because Bulgaria is in the European Union and I would have the freedom to go to any county I want. It’s not right for me to do it.” (Ibid, 34:29 - 34:44)

According to the above mentioned Georgi Simidchiev, Slavic Bulgarians in the country knew there were problems arising with the Turkish and Pomak minorities and that they were subjected to humiliations. (1989, Bulgaria’s Exodus, 01:37 - 01:42) According to him, the mass exodus of Bulgarian Turks to Turkey was explained and officially described to the Bulgarians as “a voluntary decision by those who don’t feel Bulgarian.” (02:15 - 02:18) The incoherent explanations, which the Communist government presented to the Slavic Bulgarians, also showed the nation that there was more to the story of exile. The actions of the government were presented and justified in two conflicting ways.

One way was that the Bulgarian government was waking the Turkish minority up from a century old sleep, during which they forgot that they were actually Bulgarians, who were made to forget their true origin during the Ottoman rule. In other words, “The changing of names was a collective favour by the state which gave back Bulgarian names to people whose ancestors were forcefully assimilated during centuries of cruel Turkish slavery.” (Julian Popov, 2012, Aljazeera) Another explanation was directed towards the Slavic Bulgarians, who the government wanted to keep secure, safe and protected from the Turkish minority who were connected to Turkey and could once again harm them by forming alliances with the enemy state.

Because of the geographical locations, which the Bulgarian Turks and Pomaks occupied, they presented a key economic factor in the prosperity of Bulgaria. They were predominantly positioned in the most agricultural areas of the country and it was mostly upon their shoulders that the responsibility of crops lay. With the “revival process”, however, many of the tobacco, wheat, fruits and vegetables fields became deserted. This also reflected onto the economic losses

that Bulgaria experienced during the 1980s with the great exodus. In order to save what could be salvaged of the agricultural sector, “the government appealed to the more ‘patriotic Bulgarians’ to support their state, which had been so badly let down by these ‘traitors’ and to offer their help in the areas worst affected by the Turkish exodus, and collect the harvest.” (1989, Bulgaria’s Exodus, 02:45’ - 03:04’)

What many of the Slavic Bulgarians encounter were deserted areas. Those Bulgarian - Turks who had stayed had resorted to begging for food and money. “The policy worked like this: a whole area was sealed off, no more food got in, all contacts with the health system were cut off so they had no choice but to leave for Turkey. This also explains why in some places children were begging us for bread.” (Ibid, 05:42 - 06:03) The incoherent information given to the Bulgarian majority about the situation with the minorities helped create different opinions amongst the former, which were nevertheless still directed against the minorities.

On the one hand, the government had explained that the Turks were demonstrating and revolting because they had expressed a wish to cut off parts of Bulgaria and make them separate countries, much like what Muslim Kosovo represents now to Orthodox Serbia. On the other hand, however, the Bulgarians were told that the minorities had forgotten that underneath their Turkish names, traditions and identities, they were true Bulgarians who had been forcefully converted into Islam during the Ottoman yoke.

Evidence of the situation told a different tale. One of the most heartbreaking decision, which the government took against the minorities, was perhaps the last step of its goal to obliterate the Turks’ existence through memory. What the Slavic Bulgarians encountered during their time in the agricultural areas were renamed grave stones. “The names of their ancestors were chiselled out on the graves and replaced with Bulgarian ones which shows a very low state of decision making.” (Ibid, 04:04’ - 04:17’) By having the names of the graves changed, the manipulation of the government went as far as wanting to rename even the dead. Psychologically, the logical outcome of that decision was either to break the Turks into complete submission or, in effect,

make their exodus easier because they would now also be leaving already changed history, which they could never again return to.

The protests by the minority, which followed the assimilation campaign, in a way made it easier for the government officials to target people. That is because whole villages would turn up to the demonstrations and the government officials would know which families had gone because of their links to the local village mayors. They, in turn, were systematically ordered to give that information to the higher standing Communist officials. In 1984, when the first wave of protests erupted, many were shot and many children were killed in the clashes. One of the most prominent cases, which could be said to have become a symbol of the damage of the “revival process”, is that of a seventeen months old baby called Turkan. Her faith was commemorated in the Bulgarian movie “Stolen Eyes” directed by the Slavic Bulgarian director Radoslav Spassov in 2005.

The movie depicts the story of Aiten, a Bulgarian Turkish woman and Ivan, a Slavic Bulgarian soldier. The plot revolves around the events of the “revival” process and the faithful moment of when Aiten’s daughter - Turkan, gets run over by a military tank directed at the Turkish protesters. The driver of the tank is Ivan, who is also responsible for keeping the numerous stamps with Bulgarian names during the time of new passport issuing. He falls into a traumatic shock after realising that he has killed the child and is later sent to a psychiatric hospital for recovery. To recover from her loss, Aiten, in turn, is also sent to the same hospital where the two encounter each other again and fall in love.

One of the most prominent lines of the movie is when Aiten tells Ivan: “Who are you to give birth to me? Do you know what it feels like to wake up one morning being another person as if you never existed before? Are you all crazy?” (Stolen Eyes, 2005: 43:55’ - 44:01’) This line depicts the pain, sorrow and disappointment of the renamed Turks. It contains the humiliation of having somebody else who doesn’t even know you nor de facto accepts you, to decide over your destiny. It also holds the pain of injustice over stolen choices and the freedom to will. The title of

the movie is based on that. To steal someone's eyes is to steal their outlook and the ability to discern what they see and to make choices freely based on that.

In an Al Jazeera documentary from 2012, the Bulgarian Turks can be seen kissing the Turkish flag after crossing the border from Bulgaria. They are shown crying after being greeted by family and friends who shout "Welcome to your country!" (15:00' - 15:04') What does that mean for Bulgaria? Does it mean that the Communist government was right all along to consider the Bulgarian Turks as a Turkish entity who needed to go back to their original motherland? Perhaps these cries of entering Turkey have nothing to do with which land they truly felt a belonging to.

Given that they were fleeing persecution, erasure of history, identity and existence, the Bulgarian Turks had no other choice but to fully accept and embrace a flag and a land which they might not have known well up until that moment, but which would, at least, not shun and terrorize them for who they are. As Julian Popov summarises of the minority's experience during their persecution, "Nearly a million Muslims were humiliated, thousands of families were terrorised - and those seen as more influential in their communities were in fact forced to leave the country." (2012, Aljazeera)

After the majority of Bulgarian - Turks had left for Turkey, a lot of the land they had occupied up to that point was given to Bulgarians by the government, sometimes for free. For the Bulgarian - Turks who did, willfully or forcefully, change their name a lot of problems arose when it came to claiming land that was left for them by ancestors. In Bulgaria, ownership of land is passed down from generation to generation. Naturally, those who had changed their names could have then had problems in proving which family they came from and which land they had inherited.

As one victim of the assimilation campaign states, "My three brothers and I all have different Slavic surnames so we could never prove we were brothers." (Ibid, 9:31' - 9:37') One cannot fully claim that the Communists envisioned this re-giving of land to be designed in such an ingenious way as to sever familial ties and, in essence, steal land from rightful owners by making

it impossible for them to prove their ownership because of a total lack of evidence regarding their identity. However, what is certain is that the ‘revival process’ did sever connections to the land so that the Bulgarian Turks would have no choice but to leave it behind and look for a new life elsewhere.

In another documentary by the BBC, Necdet - one of the people interviewed, says that he has never been to a mosque for all his thirty-five years and yet considers himself to be a Muslim. (Reddit, 3:10-3:13) This is statement which needs unpacking. It begs questions such as: what are the components necessarily that truly construct a national identity and subscription? For example, Necdet was born in Bulgaria, had his family and land there but spoke Turkish and had evidently never been to a mosque.

This is not based on his free will but rather was made a condition for him and all the other Bulgarian Turks and Slavic Bulgarians alike under Communism, since all religion, worshiping and churchgoing was prohibited during the reign of the regime. Despite that, part of the rejection of the Bulgarian- Turkish minority by the Bulgarian government was that they were not Orthodox. Clearly, this serves as a massive contradiction within the policies of the government itself. One the one hand Communism prohibited any subscription and practise of religion, but on the other also targeted a minority group because they were not Orthodox as the majority.

Could the fact that Necdet uses the Turkish - Arab word “Allah” for god, rather than the Bulgarian Slavic “Gospod” actually be used as a key determinant in which side of the border he belongs to. (Ibid) In effect, this is how the Bulgarian government discerned and understood belonging. The fact that during Communism, practising religions was not allowed and this was facilitated by the closing down of churches, inevitably means that several generations of both Slavic Bulgarians and Turkish-Bulgarians grew up without religious practice. Therefore, the division between us and them, or Orthodox and Muslim is really based not on religion but on religious identity. For both these groups, their religious affiliation could have been just a resemblance of their families, groups and thus, identity. Their subscription to either one religious expression of faith, simply served to preserve their group.

The 'revival process' turned peaceful and friendly people from different ethnic groups living on a shared land against one another. The propaganda of the Communist government of the time managed to charge these groups in its goal of Bulgarinizing the whole and completely obliterating Bulgaria's history and the minorities born out of it. As one survivor of the campaign recalls, "Some Bulgarian friends came to check if we were speaking Turkish in our homes. You invite them, prepare dinner, serve coffee and they inform on you." (Ibid, 10:00' - 10:08')

The Bulgarians were informing the government officials if the minorities were continuing to speak their own language - Turkish, after the regime had made it illegal to be spoken. The Turkish traditions were also banned and replaced by Bulgarian ones which also entailed Christian Orthodox ones rather than Muslim ones. Moreover, all Turkish schools were shut, as well as, community centers dedicated to minorities, television programmes and mosques.

Through their clothing and language, the Bulgarian - Turkish minority and the Pomaks, showed that the historical events that helped shape their own unique cultures and traditions did, in fact, take place. The Turkish yoke did not only leave destruction and historical trauma but it also created cultural history. The minorities were that history's children. Their binary cultural heritage - at the same time made up of Bulgarian and Turkish roots, lived as a testimonial to the past. They did not fall into the black and white categories which the Communist regime so wanted to draw. Therefore, just by their existence they were an inconceivable malice to the regime. They could almost be perceived as the children born out of the rape and pillage of the Ottomans and thus, kept the wound of the past to still fester.

Historical Trauma

In order to explain the deeper reasons that led to the execution of the "revival process", this section will focus on the socio-psychological drives that made this historical period possible.

Refugee

Throughout the “revival” process, the media coverage and papers reflective of the events of that period state, that the Turkish - Bulgarian minority which exiled into Turkey were effectively refugees. For the purpose of clarity, the refugee definition, based on the 1951 Convention, a refugee is a person who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group of political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside of the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or; owing to such fear is unwilling to return to it.” (1951 Convention, Article A)

In her thesis “Liminal Belongings: West African male asylum seekers’ narratives of the asylum experience whilst in Finland” (2011), Liisa Malkki explores the category of a refugee by contrasting the term to the way countries have been formed as organised entities, or what she calls “the national order of things” (1992). In that sense, if the world is in order, the refugee stands as an anomaly to that. Despite the fact that Malkki’s understanding of refugees is based on the time period of the Second World War, it could still be argued that refugees categorically occupy an abnormal position as of their scattered sense of national belonging and abode outside of clearly defined and agreed national borders. That is also because, as Malkki elaborates, “it is self-evident that “real” nations are fixed in space and “recognizable” on a map” (1992:26)

This territorial sovereignty also brought with it territorial right and the idea of citizenship as a legitimacy of belonging to a territory. Anyone outside the control system of that territory was essentially seen as non-belonger, and therefore, a refugee. As Alexander Betts writes about territoriality and the borders that form it, “entrench the insider/outsider relationship between citizens and non-citizens by giving it legal and conceptual status” (2009:44) In a way, the refugee being a non - constituents of any state becomes illegitimate and a sort of ‘free floater’.

Also, because it's definition falls outside of the agreed scope of understanding, it can be said that he or she also becomes a problem because the refugee is outside the control of territorial borders, and therefore from from a control of a higher state power. According to Betts again, the refugee "is an historical problem that emerges with, and as an inevitable consequence of, the creation of the international state system in the seventeenth century." (2009:55)

"Refugees are thereto displaced in time and in place by nationalizing discourses, which roots national belonging into histories, place, and political loyalties" (Malkki, 1992:31) According to the author, refugees experience belonging as transitional, in a sense their liminality is experienced by not belonging to the new state and/or community, but also, in a way, severed from the one constituting their original point of departure. "This is because the discursive externalization of the refugee places them outside the banners of national belonging." (Ibid)

It is important to note, however, that 'a refugee' cannot and does not represent a typography of a person. Rather, it is here used as a descriptive term of the victims of a political situation, which nonetheless presupposes components of different personal histories and socioeconomic positions. In the case of the Bulgarian - Turkish minority, they were victims of politics and therefore, their form of migration was also political. This could also be interpreted from the messages of the Communist government, which viewed and presented the Bulgarian - Turks as embedded Turkish spies, whose mission was to create a second Ottoman Empire.

The historical discussion here is important because it exemplifies how a border can in turn create a mental and perceived distinction and separation, which then feeds onto the concepts of belonging and citizenship. Based on the above definition of a refugee, the Bulgarian - Turks were fleeing from well-founded fear directed towards their ethnicity, religion, language and membership to a particular social group, and therefore, it can be confirmed that they did fall into the category of a refugee. They were also willing to return to Bulgaria as their country of residency and nationality but not under the restricting and oppressive conditions it had presented with regards to their name which also, in a sense, represented their identities. (Göç, 2010)

If one understands that the presence of the minorities in Bulgaria embodied the memory of the pain of the past, one could also understand why the Orthodox Bulgarians did not protect or protest vocally against their expulsion. By subconsciously transferring the painful parts of their history during the Ottoman yoke onto the minorities, the Bulgarians perhaps sought to get rid of their pain by getting rid of the minorities which were made to represent and embody that for them. Of course, these feelings were inflamed and maybe even instilled for the first time during the propaganda of the 'revival process'. Because of that constant reminder of the painful past, all its ills were transferred onto the minorities; they were now its carriers. Therefore, for these heavy feelings to dissipate from the Bulgarian collective consciousness, the past's carriers had to disappear as well. In that way, the minorities became the "Others" much like what Edward Said's work constructs as the notion of "Orientalism" (1978)

According to Said, the way the West views the East is as an inferior. Historically, it provided the rationalization for Colonialism because the East being underdeveloped, exotic and uncivilized, was "in need" of a rescuing force, which would show the Orient the right way of being. The author's theory is useful here also because of the geographical location of Bulgaria and Turkey. Turkey lies on two continents - Europe and Asia, whereas Bulgaria is situated solely on the Balkan peninsula. However, because of the Russian influence soaked into the Bulgarian culture, and the Arab and Persian influence on the culture of Turkey, the countries can be said to categorise their places in the global world division as the West and the Oriental, or East. Given the implication in the history between Bulgaria and Turkey, and the way that the Turks have been perceived by the Bulgarians and especially, as savage brutes, it could be said that for the Bulgarians, the Turks represent this inferior "Other".

According to Vamik Volkan, there is a biological need for one to have enemies as well as friends, etched into the human psyche, or put another way, "the universal drive to dichotomise" (1998:46) This is part of what also makes the leader - follower relationship possible, as the leader embodies the figure of the saviour against the enemy "other". Volkan positions this need

in human evolution by using Erikson's (1996) term of "pseudospeciation" (Ibid). The term "refers to man's tendency to portray his own ethnic or social group as "human beings" and other groups as less-than-human beings." (Ibid) In this fashion, each group, tribe or clan managed to stabilize a sense of their identity. This understanding is important as it leads to analysing what identity actually is and how it comes about to be.

This understanding about the "Other" is more compelling from an evolutionary psychology perspective as therein lie the "social and psychological causes for the universal drive to dichotomise." (Volkan, 1998:46) Volkan points out that the need to see us as human, and the other as a savage and an enemy is a deeply ingrained one in our human psyche. Volkan, "developed the theory that children of a given group have shared targets for projection, and suggested that these shared targets, mostly inanimate cultural amplifiers, represent the beginning of a shared "other" (enemies) and a shared "we-ness".

This leads to the concept of ethnicity, clan, or other large - group labels or markers." (1998: 48) For example, in one of the interviewees in Al Jazeera's documentary (2012), a Slavic Bulgarian lady, says about the Turkish minority: "Let them go back to Turkey" (28:06' - 28:14') placing their belonging and citizenship there. Therefore, her comments is saturated with the understanding of more than five hundred years before when the Ottomans invaded Bulgaria. She is transferring and merging the Turkish minority's history, existence and identity to the invaders.

The "Other" and the loss of security

This mental transference had such potent public outbursts because it reminded the Bulgarians of danger, of a theft of their nation, language and traditions - the same way it is believed it happened during the Ottoman yoke. In essence, the Turkish minority represented a loss of national and societal security. Based on the concept societal security by Tobias Theiler, "Since the state is a legal and political construct built on the concept of sovereignty over a defined territory and population, it achieves security by ensuring its continued sovereignty and territorial

integrity.” (2003:250) This construct, was pitched as threatening to the Bulgarians by their Communist government, and they only felt obliged to protect it. According to the approach, the software of the state is its’ society, which cultivates its specific culture, traditions, religion(s) and language(s). “Societal security - defined as the cultural, linguistic and identitive survival of a particular social group - then becomes the logical extension of state security.” (Ibid)

The safety of the society essentially also reflects on the safety of the individual and the intactness of their personal identity. Similarly, it could be said that sameness feels more safe than change. Especially, in the case of the Bulgarians where hatred towards the “Other”, or Turks and Muslims had been installed from a very long time before, the difference started becoming very obvious when the government started pointing it out. As Theiler elaborates, “(...) it is identity rather than society that ultimately constitutes the key variable in the societal security literature: people want societal security because society helps sustain their identity.” (2003:256)

However, in a different sense, by rejecting the Bulgarian - Turkish identity and culture as part of the broader Bulgarian one, it could also be said that the Bulgarian Orthodox Christians built boundaries around what was not “theirs” and thus established what was. “(...) people derive their communal identities more from the community’s boundaries than from its cultural ‘content’” (2003:256) Therefore, the Turkish minority wearing shalvari was not an actual problem or a threat to the identity of the Bulgarians. It was, however, internalized to feel so because it was so perceived societally.

According to the Copenhagen school regarding societal security, a state is “the social unit that provides the primary locus of identification for its members.” (2003:251) If, subjectively, a society is “a repository of shared meaning and identification for its members” of a “shared we-feeling” (ibid), then perhaps this awakening of the Bulgarian minorities, which until that moment in time had not occupied any political space on the governmental arena, as they did not have a representing party, drew attention to their existence and presence. Added to that, was the media message propaganda and the assimilation campaign. All these factors could be said to

have had created a disruption in this 'we-feeling' and also, perhaps, an insertion of fear towards the security of the group of the majority. Further to this could have also contributed the mixed messages from the government. "Societal security, then, pertains to the perceived ability of an identity community to survive." (Ibid)

"Securitization represents a speech act with a 'specific rhetorical structure'; to identify an alleged threat to the survival of the community and to the shared identity it sustains, its presumed origins and perpetrators, as well as a strategy to ward off that threat and thereby render society secure again." (Ibid) This rhetorical spin came from the infamous speech by Todor Zhivkov that it was of utmost importance for the Bulgarian minority to leave the territory of Bulgaria making clear that this "urgency" was in response to a threat from the inside of the country coming from the them. On the other hand, however, the other manipulative maneuver played with the past and essentially stated that if these people were real Bulgarians and really considered Bulgaria their beloved country they would have never left and would have succumbed to changing their names.

Chosen Trauma

In his work, "Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large - Group Identity" (2001), Vamik Volkan defines large-group identity, whether is be ethnic, national or religious, "as the subjective experience of thousands or millions of people who are linked by a persistent sense of sameness while also sharing numerous characteristics with others in foreign groups." (2001:79) According to the author, the main tasks of the group is to keep this identity alive by protecting, maintaining and whenever damaged, repairing it. All groups which identify themselves as homogenous, have experienced at some point or another a blow and distabalance of their identity. This process has inevitably caused a dent, a trauma, into their group wholeness. When trauma, however, has been passed down to the generation to follow, it is called "chosen trauma" (Ibid) It also represents an undeniable component of the group's identity.

“The term ‘chosen trauma’ refers to the shared mental representation of a massive trauma that the group’s ancestors suffered at the hand of an enemy.” (Ibid) The time of the Ottoman yoke represents exactly this time of trauma for the Bulgarians. The fact that this historical period of five hundred years is still a relevant reference for them, as discussed in the previous sections, indicates the traumatic injury, which it inflicted onto the Bulgarian large - group identity. However, why is it that after nearly a hundred years after the country’s liberation from the time frame of the years of the “revival” process, this reference is still very much used and even presented as a possible reason for the exodus of the Bulgarian - Turks? According to Volkan, “When a large group regresses, its chosen trauma is reactivated in order to support the group’s threatened identity.” (Ibid)

The regression of the Bulgarian people, as this dissertation argues, was a projection of the fear and regression that the Communist leader/president at the time also experienced because of his unstable and, one might say, unfavourable position with the Soviet Union discussed previously. This reactivation was made possible due to its’ propaganda. The manipulative messages from the then government trickled down to its people through the channels of the media, which in turn created a moral panic.

They tried and succeeded at creating a war-like social situation by portraying the minorities as non Bulgarians, forgotten Bulgarians or Turkish spies. Thus, they reactivated the fear that the Ottoman rule may be on rise once again and come back to haunt the new generations. This is also perhaps how it became possible that “People who lived together for decades were quickly transformed into bitter enemies who have fought to the death to preserve what they perceive as their group’s threatened identity.” (Volkan, 2001:80)

In a way, the Government presented the situation of the revival as a favour to the minority by yanking them back from historical amnesia which caused them to forget that they were really actual Bulgarians at their core. If they refused to change their names then they were really going back to the country which sent them to Bulgaria in the first place, hundreds of years ago, to

potentially ruin it. This is where the issue of security and securitization arose. Therefore, “Threats to state boundaries are at once threats to societal boundaries and thus constitute potential identity threats.” (Theiler, 2003:252)

A critique to this perceived identity is that communities are not essential things. Rather, they are socially constructed entities with constantly changing group identities, languages and customs. At the same time, “once a community has become socially constructed it can become so stable and psychologically entrenched that it acquires a widely accepted self-referential claim to survival and thereby becomes a potential security object.” (Theiler, 2003:254) Although, the position of this thesis leans towards social constructivist theory rather than essentialism, this point of view is not in any way undermining the existence of the state, political groups, communities and minorities. On the contrary, “it is reifying because it treats these groups and institutions as independent actors with preferences and the ability to shape social outcomes.” (Ibid)

In an ironic way, the chosen trauma of the Bulgarians reinforces their group identity. “A large group does not “choose” to be victimized by another large group and subsequently lose self-esteem, but it does “chose” to psychologize and dwell on a past traumatic event and make it a major large-group identity marker.” (Volkan, 2017: 88) The imagined horrors of the past got passed onto the succeeding generations from the generations past. This is what Volkan means by labelling the historical trauma as “chosen”. It is a chosen episode to be held onto and thus, kept alive.

On the other hand, behind the memory and nationalism in the commemoration of the 3rd of March also stands what Volkan describes as “chosen glories.” They too are passed down from generations through transgenerations transmissions and especially, through the ceremonies and festivities, which recall the successes of the past. “Sometimes designs for chosen glories appear mixed with designs of chosen traumas on the tent canvas.” (Volkan, 2017:96) Therefore, this

nationalistic feeling of that specific day so important for the Bulgarian history is also based on the myth of the glorious events which led to their independence.

This phenomenon, however, can also be contributed to all the other neighbouring countries to Bulgaria since the whole region of the Balkans was under the Ottoman rule. In Serbia, for example, during the celebrations of their independence day, “Mythologized tales of the battle were transmitted from generation to generation through a strong oral and religious tradition in Serbia, perpetuating and reinforcing Serbs’ traumatised self-images.” (2001: 91)

On that day of celebration, the retold “personal stories that emerge typically reflect what ‘others’ did to ‘us’ and additional aspects of large - group conflicts and large-group identity difficulties” (Volkan, 2001:83) Moreover, according to Volkan the way that the historical trauma remains chosen and transmitted down to the subsequent generations is through a process he calls “the transgenerational transmission of trauma.” (2001:85) Through retelling stories or sharing fears from the past, an older generation passes down onto its offspring coping mechanism, which the latter inherit, internalise as theirs and blur the historical lines between the past and the present.

In a way, the representation of the trauma becomes a collective unconscious choice. According to Volkan, this carrying over of the stories of the traumatic history “reflects a large group’s unconscious ‘choice’ to add a past generations’ mental representation of an event to its own identity, and the fact, while groups may have experienced any number of traumas in their history, only certain ones remain alive over centuries.” (2001:88) An example, of how the chosen trauma binds the group into a shared identity is expressed in the documentary Göç. This can be seen for example in the relationships between the two groups in Bulgaria on Independence day.

Therefore, the past trauma becomes a representation of the past events being carries into the present and the future through such transgenerational transmissions. “The transgenerational transmission of such a shared traumatic event is linked to the past generation’s inability to mourn losses of people, land or prestige, and indicates the large group’s failure to reverse narcissistic

injury and humiliation inflicted by another large group, usually a neighbor, but in some cases, between ethnic or religious groups within the same country.” (2001:87) Therefore, the carried trauma is more perceived than real because the historical truth and experience of it become unimportant. What does remain relevant and important, however, is that the trauma represents a glue that keeps the large group identity together and intact.

Us and Them

By having the differentiation between us and them, good and bad, friends and foes, one reinforces who they are by constantly looking at the others who remind them that they are different. “ We unconsciously check and recheck the nature of the enemy to ensure that they remain suitable reservoirs for our unwanted parts.” (Volkan, 1998:50,51) In other words, by constantly having the benchmark of the other one keeps reinforcing who they must be in order to be different. As Volkan puts it, “originally our own cultural amplifiers united us, while we utilised the cultural amplifiers of some of our neighbors as the “bad” reservoirs of our projections.” (1998:49)

By depositing what we don't like about ourselves onto others, we then create enemies, not realising that they are projections of what we do not want “us” to be. Following this logic, the propensity to wage wars is a natural expression of our psychological need to kill off what we think is bad even though it originated from our own psyche. Therefore, it is not unusual or strange that most wars or conflicts emerge between neighbouring states or groups in close geographical proximity. “Our enemies, even the real and dangerous ones, include some of our projection; therefore, to some extent they are mental creations of the members of our group.” (1998:50)

In the case of the “revival” process in Bulgaria, the regime found it crucial to expel the Bulgarian - Turks. For the Communists, the minority was either going to become part of the same organism

of the state or leave its borders. This need for them to leave can be explained by what Volkan describes as the blurring between psychological border and personal skin.

When the Bulgarian government finally came to the conclusion that the Bulgarian - Turks had to be expelled, they opened the border to Turkey and thus opened their collective consciousness to expelling their traumas with them. That is because they got rid of the elements they had put their trauma onto to carry as historical signifiers. In a way, the real significance of the larger event of the 'revival process' lies not in the actual physical border between Turkey and Bulgaria but in the psychological one. "In fact, it may be said that a physical border succeeds only when it signifies a sufficient psychological one." (2017:100)

That is because just like the perception of the tent as a protective layer of skin, the physical border is a psychological representation of the skin. "Under stress, the physical borders separating neighbours become more psychologised. A physical border, psychologically speaking, is like a skin around a group that preserves that identity." (1998:51) Here, the Bulgarians were expelling their internalised fears and traumas which they experienced as coming from the Turks.

If one looks at the warm welcome of the Bulgarian Turks by the state and people of Turkey, one could be critical and state that Turkey did not open its embrace so wildly out of goodwill. On the contrary, it could be argued that they did so because the Turkish minority of Bulgaria believed they were Muslim and already spoke a variety of the same language as them. Based on that line of reasoning, Turkey wanted to preserve the sameness, the parts of the identities the two groups did share, in thus to preserve their own by shielding the Bulgarian minority's.

Would they have done the same though for a Christian minority which did not speak Turkish nor share similar cultural practices? Because of the similar cultural, linguistic and religious features in the case of the Turkish - Bulgarians though, there were no cultural clashes or threat to the majority's Turkish national identity. Moreover, because one of the main justifications for the exodus was the minority's rootedness in the ways of the Ottoman Empire, which by refusing to

change their names they were also confirming, perhaps the latter felt an obligation to receive them out of moral considerations and an attack to their own large-group state identity.

Identity

According to the theory developed by Volkan, identity can be described as layers of clothing that the individual and large groups identify and cover themselves up with. Just like every tribe and nation uses its unique technique of clothes making through patterns and materials, so every identity carries its own unique garments. As the author writes, “the participants from large groups in conflict appear to wear two layers of ‘garments’” (2001: 83) The first layer, has to do with the personal clothing of a person. This comprises a person’s own individual identity, or “the basis of their inner sense of sustained sameness”. (Ibid) The second layer, however, covers the tent which houses and protects the abstract “tent” or shelter which is the group’s habitat. The tent is also a substitute way to think of a state, a country, or the borderlines which make up a given sovereign geographical location. “Both garments provide security and protection, but because both are worn every day, the individual hardly notices either one under normal circumstances.” (2001: 83-84) This is what also could explain the inflamed sense of group identity in times of a perceived or real crisis.

Given that the 3rd of March is the date which commemorates the sovereignty of the Bulgarians from Ottoman rule, it is not surprising that Sevginar (Göç, 2010) experienced hostility from her Bulgarian friends. Indeed, this is because the event is loaded with memory which in turn evokes the shared memory of the historical trauma. In other words, “Under ‘normal’ political and social conditions, chosen traumas are recalled during the anniversary of the original event, and the ritualistic commemoration helps bind the members of the large group together.” (2001:88-89) As Sevginar herself elaborates, her Orthodox Bulgarian friends did not want to interact with her as their nationalist feeling would arise. The nationalist feeling was in turn provoked by the trauma that was passed onto them by their parents who received it from their ancestors. It was a nationalist feeling based purely on an abstractly understood long gone past.

Why this response to the transmitted trauma is so strong, could also be explained through the perception of time. Although, the Ottoman rule had ended nearly a hundred years before the years of the “revival” process, during the Turkish exodus, based on the witness accounts, it seems that time had stopped. This is because “when a chosen trauma is fully reactivated within the large group by stressful and anxiety-inducing circumstances”, such as the propagandist messages of the Communist rulers, “a time collapse typically occurs.” (2001:89) The fears of the past connect to the real or perceived threats of the present and they become connected in the subconscious of the large group forming episodes of the same timeline. “This process magnifies the image of current enemies and current conflicts, and an event that occurred centuries ago will be felt as if it happened yesterday.” (Ibid)

The reason why children would also perpetuating this nationalist feeling is because it flowed through them due to the instilled perception that the trauma did not end with the generations which directly experienced it. “New generations may share a conscious or unconscious wish to repair what has been done to their ancestors and to unburden themselves of the humiliation that is now a part of their identity.” (1998:52) In their subconscious psyche, the enemy as the Ottomans, was resurrected on the national day, which acted as a catalyst for all the traumatic feelings passed down to them to resurface.

Moreover, in order to be part of the collective identity they also felt the need to take on these traumatic feelings and keep them as theirs. In that way, the stronger the feeling of trauma, the stronger the solidarity they felt to the collective. “Through being reservoirs of deposited images and the tasks given to them in order to deal with these images, children’s psychology becomes linked to the history of their families and often these families’ ancestors’ histories, especially the traumatic ones and various types of prejudice.” (Volkan, 2017: 88)

“For each new generation, the description of the actual event is modified; what remains is its role in the psychology of group identity” (1998:52), much like the play of Chinese whispers where

one word is passed down onto the group members sitting in a circle with the goal of maintaining the original word unchanged. However, much like the chosen trauma, the original word (or the details and events around the original trauma) is never really truthfully reproduced. However, what is significant here is that the trauma does get passed down through the generations, whether mythologised or not, which then finds its way into the new generations psyche or, in other words, into the fabric of the layers of “tent” covering the group identity. Therefore, “through the mental mechanism of displacement, a group with a chosen trauma contaminates its emotional attitude towards the new enemy with the enemy of their psychologised and mythologised history.” (1998:52-53)

Generations

Similar to Malkki’s theory of liminal belongings discussed above, author Anja Kublitz examines structural continuities across generations of Palestinians living in Denmark. According to Kublitz, those Palestinians who centre their identity on Islam and those who are dedicated to the revolution of Palestine are not interchangeable actors but are rather, substitutes; belonging liminally across generations. The younger generations of Palestinians in Denmark, seen through the experiences of Hiba, Maissun and Layal, is that religion and the specific cultural expressions, such as wearing a scarf, could be understood to have come from wanting to bridge the gap between their heritage and their present - belonging of two countries and two identities.

“Islam became the option” (2016 :9) in order to bring forth and be able to cohesively merge or string together two belongings weighing equally to them. In a sense in order to be complete, one must not have to give up their other parts because of prejudice or rigid stereotypes. By bringing these different elements, however, the participants create a new way of being to the very strictly defined places which make them, or “the national order of things” (2016 :2) They challenge the norms of what is to be either Palestinian and Danish by between both and at the same time in between. As the author writes herself, “My interlocutors have therefore never experienced being

a legitimate part of a nation- state but have always moved within the space of the other, forced to seize emerging opportunities to change their predicament.” (2016:3)

This can also be seen and understood in the context of the Bulgarian - Turks. Their position of belonging is liminal since they are perceived by other and by themselves as inbetweeners in a country they have known their whole lives but, to which society they were not allowed to belong. Historically, they are either viewed as traitors or as the enslavers, which is also reflected in their different culture, language and religion from the majority’s perspective. During the time of the ‘revival’ process, it was made clear that their liminal belonging was not acceptable in Bulgaria. As already established, they were not allowed to be there because their existence in the country challenged the order to Communism.

The difference between Kublitz’ analytical group and the Bulgarian minority is that for the latter, turning to Islam and Turkish was a form of resistance, rather than a bridge. Learning Turkish and how to pray was a type of internal resolve and a solution which could not be taken away from them, the same way the external expression of who they are - their name, could and was. It was a severing of the connection and ironically, a defiant acceptance that they were not accepted as they were, as culturally enriching remnants of the past and proof of history. Rather, that reminder of the past was an unhealing wound flared up by Communist propaganda and nationalist ideology.

Nationalism

According to George Orwell, nationalism is “a pathological contamination of the mental process” (Volkan, 1985:222) or “patriotism turned sour” (Ibid) These statements can be seen from the embodied experiences of the Orthodox Bulgarians against the Turkish minority, but they could also be witnessed in the Bulgarian - Turks against Bulgaria. For example, during the revival process, “For the Bulgarian Turks migrants the key result of the “process of revival” was the reinstatement or more precisely the “clarification” of the Turkish ethnic and cultural

self-consciousness: “Bulgaria made us nationalists.” (Maeva, 2014:31) Because of their ultimate rejection by the country, which they had known and subscribed to nationally for generations, the migrants also started rejecting their Bulgarian identity. Ironically, they started subscribing to the exact nationality, which they were falsely accused of being devotees to in the first place.

During the years of the “revival” process, Bulgarians rose up together in fear against their minorities. As already pointed out, this rising was nevertheless sparked by the propaganda of the Communist government. “Although leader-follower dynamics are an important aspect of large group processes, I believe the main task of a large group is to protect the canvas of the tent itself - the large-group (i.e. ethnic, national or religious) identity.” (2001:84) The stance of the Bulgarians at the time, also portrayed in the already mentioned movie “Stolen Eyes” (2005), is forever locked in what Ivan, the Bulgarian army boy guarding the stamps asks the Bulgarian Turkish school - teacher. Ivan says “And why do you want to create a second Cyprus?” (Stolen Eyes 34:08’ - 34:10’) inevitably comparing the Bulgarian - Turkish conflict to the Greek - Turkish one from 1974.

Here, the connection between the Bulgarian and Greek positions is established by the religion, in that both countries are Christian Orthodox in faith. In order to protect what the values of that religion are perceived to be and the identity making it perpetuates, much like their Greek counterparts during the Cyprus events, the Orthodox Bulgarians ironically, however, forgot these same values and overtaken by perceived fear, stooped to its’ lowest expressions.

The humiliating beatings and overall aggressive behavior by the Slavic Bulgarians directed at the Turkish minority remind of the dehumanising practices the German soldiers had against the Jews. According to Volkan, “Dehumanisation is a response to a group’s need to keep alive the ritual of not being like the enemy, and it establishes firmer boundaries between the two groups.” (1998:54-55) Moreover, by not seeing someone as equal in their humanness, eases the task of treating them as anything but that. Just like Hannah Arendt in the trial of Eichmann states that they were referred to and perceived as non-human to protect what is - and ultimately the Third

Reich. (1963) They embody a type of brave victimhood, which makes them shield their perceived threatened Bulgarian identity from the enemy within its' boundaries. Most importantly, dehumanisation “ removes any feelings of guilt and it gives permission for one group to treat the other in inhumane and harmful ways, “as it is acceptable to kill what is not human” (Volkan, 1998:55), which thus also makes the task of protecting this which is “at stake” easier.

Livelihoods

What happened after this symbolical “severing” when the Turkish minority had crossed over the border? The displacement of the Bulgarian Turks and the loss of their livelihoods, can be understood theoretically through the analysis of Karen Jacobsen in “Livelihood and Forced Migration” (2014) According to the author’s theory, when forced migration or forced resettlement occurs, the livelihoods taking place and functioning until that moment, also get displaced. The resettlement of the Bulgarian - Turks is a great exemplifier, although the same could be said for all other such historical instances, such as, for example, the exodus of Palestinians with the creation of Israel as a state and of Cubans who fled the island during Castro’s revolution.

Just like these additional examples, having left a great amount of what they own, such as houses, lands, and personal property, possessions, family members and friends, it’s important to realize that once the Bulgarian - Turks crossed over the border and into the Turkey, they were starting their lives from a position of loss. Because of their forceful expulsion and sudden fleeing, “the pursuit of livelihoods by forced migrants is different from those of other migrants or those who are equally poor or discriminated against.” (2014:1)

Once the Bulgarian had crossed the border, the majority of them had to be located to a provisionally established refugee camp where the children were schooled and in some way, had begun to integrate themselves into this different culture, which was even more palpable beyond

the confines of the tents, until their parents and adults could find legitimacy in the form of documents in this new state (Aljazeera, 2015) In this case, Turkey was very receptive to the Bulgarian - Turks and so their integration was aided by the state. These forced migrants have to draw on a number of different assets in the host country they find themselves in. Such assets draw from a financial aspect but also human and social capital. “Such networks provide assistance when migrants first arrive and help them find housing and employment.” (2014:2)

As Metin elaborated (Göç:2010), although the Bulgarian - Turkish migrants did share certain similarities with the Turkish majority, initially they were still perceived as different or as the “Other” albeit in a more sympathetic way that what can, for example, be observed with the current Syrian refugee crisis where the latter are received as total aliens to the culture, language and religion in their respective countries. In that sense, as Jacobsen writes, “Forced migrants must try to re-establish their livelihoods in a policy context that is often weighted against them.” (2014:1)

Furthermore, as “inbetweeners” and even after they have established themselves, migrants can still be perceived as “the unoriginals” who do not entirely possess a right to express their voices and opinions in the governance of the state as citizens. “For refugees, losses incurred during the journey combined with lack of access to assets in the host country means they are deeply disempowered, constrained in their ability to act and to challenge rules and power structures.” (2014:2)

As the author also suggest, however, “Not all refugees arrive at their places of asylum impoverished, and some nationalities do better than others.” (Ibid) In the case of the Bulgarian - Turkish minority, many of them had been university educated, professionally established people. Since they had occupied the most agriculturally heavy part of Bulgaria, they also had the knowledge of land keeping and plant raising. Therefore, Bulgaria not only lost part of its’ cultural and historical heritage with the exodus but also experienced a large brain drain.

This is also implied at the end of “Göç” where in the ending scenes of the film, the professional title of each of the Bulgarian - Turkish participants in the movie, has also been listed underneath their name. These professional titles and expertise, had been acquired in Bulgaria and were freely given or gifted to the state of Turkey. In that way, then although initially dependent on the state of Turkey for aid in order to rebuild their lives and livelihoods, the Bulgarian - Turkish minority did not stay a dependent factor to the state. Rather, they used their skills and knowledge to contribute to the Turkish society of which they were now a part of.

Today

Since the linear fabric of historical trauma, discussed previously, can be recreated as if it were still happening, then what are the relations between the Slavic Bulgarians and the Turkish minority currently? Moreover, what are the relations between Bulgaria and Turkey? This section will aim at examining these questions.

A news piece by author Ivan Dikov in the online publication “European views” from April 2019, reads that Bulgaria demanded an apology by Turkey’s Foreign Minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu, after he had commented upon Bulgaria’s Religious Denominations Act. The act itself oversees the rights and freedoms of the ethnic groups in the country. In December 2018, Bulgaria’s government incorporated amendments to the act, which provide a large financial annual support for the minority groups from the state budget. The outrage caused in April revolved around a statement by the Turkish Foreign Minister, according to which, Turkey had intervened in the law making of Bulgaria in order to secure those grants for the Turkish minority there.

Another part of the ensued misunderstanding between the two countries revolves around the matter that the Grand Mufti in Bulgaria, who is the main religious head for the Turkish minority in the country, has incurred major financial debt towards the state and has failed to cover it. In the dispute, a discussion around those arose because the chief of the ruling party - GERB, Boyko Borisov, had initially wanted to write off the debt owed by the Bulgarian - Turkish Mufti but

after social pressured had instead opted out for granting the religious figure a ten year period of gradual repayment.

Turkey never apologised for its' remarks that it had to intervene in the internal state affairs of Bulgaria, in order to save it's Muslim denomination, because according to the state, it was just looking out for the Bulgarian minority. The parliamentary leader of Bulgaria, however, stated that: "I understand that they have elections [in Turkey] but [that cannot be] at Bulgaria's expense. Our Muslims do not need any protection in any way because they have absolute rights and freedoms, of religion and of everything else" (European Views, 2019)

If one breaks down these diplomatic relations and the ensued clash, he or she could say that Bulgaria wants to protect their Turkish minority because it has nowadays claimed it and acknowledged it as its own. It is here important to understand that acknowledging it does not necessarily mean accepting it as part of Bulgaria. To the former testifies the fact, that until two years ago the office of the Grand Mufti in Bulgaria was subsidized by Turkey but now it is in Bulgarian hands. After the state of Turkey cancelled its financial help, however, the Mufti incurred massive debts in social security payments, which shook the Office and the community of the Turkish minority.

After the state of Turkey intervened, with their comments, the Bulgarian government rose up to defend their people and even wanted to write off the debt completely. By introducing the amendments to the religious act, Bulgaria also shows solidarity and recognition with its minority by providing them with even more annual financial help. In a way, then the misunderstanding really boils down to which side can demonstrate itself as a greater protector of the minority.

To understand how these dynamics came to play out in today's time, one has to also look at what occurred after the fall of Communism when a portion of the exiled Bulgarian - Turks did return to Bulgaria. Contrary to the urgent voice of Communist then president, Todor Zhivkov, that these hundreds of thousands Turkish - Bulgarians had to leave with a forced immediacy, stood

the voice of one of Bulgaria's former prime ministers, Ivan Kostov, who helped adopt a declaration of apology in 2012 to the more than 360 000 Bulgarian - Turks for the human rights violations they suffered under the Communist regime. (Eurasia Review, 2012) Former president Petar Stoyanov had also issued his in 1998. According to author Julian Popov, however, "It took the Bulgarian parliament 22 years to adopt a declaration apologising to its own citizens for the suffering inflicted on them" (Aljazeera, 2012) after the regime had fallen.

According to an online publication by RefWorld, from July 2018, in Bulgaria there is a rise in the "hostility towards minorities and migrants". Although the open hostility has mostly been directed towards the Roma population, the Bulgarian - Turks have also experienced attacks, such as for example, a campaign in 2016 seeking to ban the public wearing of headscarves, which passed successfully. This was directed towards the Bulgarian - Turkish women for whom wearing the scarf is an essential attribute to their clothing. "Ostensibly neutral while in fact targeting Muslim women, the law enables authorities to exact fines or suspend welfare payments for offenders." (Ibid) Based on a survey done by the Open Society Institute, "There was also a significant increase in the share of respondents who had heard statements against Muslims - from 10.6 per cent in 2014 to 38 per cent in 2016." (2018)

During the time of the "revival" process, the city of Kurzdali in Bulgaria was mostly populated by the Bulgarian - Turks. Being so, it could also be said that it was perceived by Orthodox Bulgarians and Bulgarian - Turks alike to be the "capital" of the latter. Kurzdali was also the most agriculturally rich area with a big tobacco industry, which also died down once the Bulgarian - Turks exiled. In March 2018, the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made a statement regarding the city, as part of many other cities, to represent a part of the spiritual boundary to Turkey. (bulgarianpresidency.eu, 2018) What that statement carries at its center is a nationalist rhetoric, according to which Turkey, its culture, language and religion, cannot be contained within its current geographical borders but stretches across all territory comprising the Ottoman Empire hundreds of years ago. Essentially, it alludes to the nostalgia of that time and the prospective future of a second empire.

Perhaps as a covert response to that, in May 2018, in the city of Stara Zagora in Bulgaria, the process of renaming more than 800 places took place whereby Turkish - Arabic sounding streets, monuments and squares received new Slavic sounding names. According to the online publication Euscoop, the Bulgarian - Turkish minority, “called it a new “Revival Process”” and although quite popular with the nationalist groups in the country, the Party for Rights and Freedoms vilified the act. The office of the Grand Mufti also released a statement, which said that “the level of racism and intolerance towards Muslims and all things connected with them is reaching critical levels.” (BalkanInsight, 2018)

Moreover, just like during the time of the initial “revival” process in the 1980s when the Turkish minority were fined for speaking Turkish, in separate instances in 2013 and 2014, members of the party for Rights and Freedoms, “were fined for speaking Turkish in villages populated predominantly by ethnic Turks.” (Minority Rights, 2018) It is in cases such as these, that one can see the love - hate relationship between the two groups. Although, the events of the past remain shameful to the country, the covert ways of expressing opinions against the minority remain. Perhaps the only difference is that such attacks are done in a milder manner without overt and direct attacks.

Why does this issue continue until today? As my example in the introduction demonstrates, although my taxi driver’s documents would show a Slavic sounding name, the colour of his skin and his facial features would still ring an alerting bell into the psyche of the Orthodox Bulgarian police officers that he is different. Therefore, the process of the “revival” proves to have failed at its mission since an excuse of “otherness” is still found. This attitude is also reflected politically in Bulgaria because as author Ben Dedominicis points out, “Bulgarian polity is unique in Central and Eastern Europe in that does not formally accept ethnic minority political self-expression as a political principle; openly “ethnic” or “religious” parties remain constitutionally illegal.” (2011: 2) Perhaps, this covert intolerance really does allude to the historically perpetuated goal of a complete and total distillation of Bulgarian values. The minorities are, however, consistently perceived as a challenge to that.

Ultimately, demonstrative intolerance towards the “original” minority groups in Bulgaria also reflects on the open and hostile attitude towards other forced migration into the country. For example, according to Ref World again, after receiving more than 10 000 Syrian refugees, and being unable to cope with the social and political requirements that they need, “the government's policies shifted focus from helping refugees at the borders to reducing inflows, including through the construction of a barbed wire fence along the 100-mile land border with Turkey.” (2018) Most of the refugees who enter Bulgaria do so through the state’s borders with Turkey, Greece and Serbia. As stated above, Bulgaria has been an avid suppressor of the people wanting to come in. It could also be argued that the general intolerance of the “Other” has now shifted from being towards the minorities in the country to the newly “others” - the Syrian refugees. Perhaps, it is not so much a shift as it is an expansion of intolerance.

In order to feed this, Bulgaria has expressed solidarity with Turkey, especially, after Turkey signed a deal with the European Union to curb the entry of refugees into Europe by not permitting them to enter further than Turkey and into Greece. Otherwise, this is known as the EU - Turkey deal. The deal itself has been presented in many different rhetorical ways in order to justify its means. For example, that this ban and closing of borders would actually prevent more death into the Aegean sea. However, one has to wonder about the geographical aspects of this issue.

If Europe is so vast and Sweden alone, could accept and accommodate nearly 17 000 refugees, then why would Europe start denying further entry to these victims of war? A possible explanation comes from the online publication HelpRefugees, according to which, “Newcomers were increasingly framed as a threat to Europe, both cultural and in terms of resources.” (2018) Consequently, at the center of the EU - Turkey deal lies a political motivation rather than state capacity.

Similarly to the rest of Europe, the situation in Bulgaria towards its' minorities and the incoming refugees is not so much a problem of capacity but of intolerance of "otherness". The "other" and everything that the Bulgarian majority project onto them "has become the "enemy" ethno-sectarian group against which the Bulgarian national identity community struggled politically and at great cost to gain national self-determination." (Dedominicis, 2011:5) With the current political relations between Bulgaria and Turkey regarding the refugee crisis, Bulgaria has, in a way, dialed down it's intolerance from the inside in order to battle the intolerance coming from outside in the face of the refugees.

Perspectives

Additional to the research in this thesis, what would be beneficial to the fullness and completion of the discussion, is to conduct and include additional data, which demonstrates the sentiments of the Orthodox Bulgarians regarding their Bulgarian - Turkish counterparts, and vice versa. For example, questions such as : how many Bulgarian - Turks do you know? How many would you consider your friends? Do you have any Bulgarian - Turkish colleagues? If yes, how often would you say your interact with them? Have you ever felt discrimination because of your name? Because of your skin colour? Because of your facial features? Have you ever initiated a racial attack? The answer to these questions would demonstrate most clearly what the current relationship is between the two groups.

Bulgaria has been continuously experiencing a population and brain drain due to immigrating. Specifically, "after communism fell, population began to decline *precipitously*"(Medium.com, 2017) How do these expats feel about the Turkish minority? In my six months of data collection and research, I was unable to find statistical information regarding this issue. Having it, would contribute to the analysis of the understanding, which Bulgarians have of "the other", and how their nationalistic feelings either spreads with them or gets left behind once they cross the borders and leave the country.

Additionally, had I not been pressed by time, I would have also examined the relationship of “us versus them” and the ingrained hatred against the “other” by comparing the current situation of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria against their Orthodox counterparts with the current situation of African - Americans in the United States. For example, I would have liked to analyse how a political figure such as Donald Trump could actually act as a catalyst to “revive” the ingrained hatred and prejudice in white Americans against African - Americans. Just as the discourse and manipulative rhetoric of Todor Zhivkov played a catalytic role to uncover and really revive the instilled hatred in the Orthodox Bulgarians so does the current president of the America.

Really, what this uncovering shows is that although there might have been moments of overt truce between any of the two groups above, the fact that this hatred and “othering” is being awoken, shows that, albeit asleep, it was always there. Therefore, until the trauma and manipulation of the past is truly healed and embraced, its embers will inevitably always be there ready to be re-ignited.

Conclusion

In its’ first chapter, this thesis has presented the overall arguments made regarding the reasons behind the “revival” process. It has also included an additional reasoning looking at the deeper levels of interpersonal relations between Todor Zhivkov and the SSSR with regards to how the differences regarding the expression of Communism came to be the “revival”. Essentially, although the exodus was a result of “pleasing” the higher Soviet powers by the Bulgarian president, the process was really a stand alone act. It became an unstoppable machine, which played on the psyche of the Bulgarian population and opened the historically perpetuated trauma left by reign of the Ottoman empire.

This perpetuation has been illustrated through the socio-psychological theories of Vamik Volkan, according to whom, belonging is essentially expressed through inheriting and embodying the historical fabric of trauma and glory. Therefore, events that could have happened more than two

hundred years ago, such as the case of the Ottoman yoke, are perceived and understood as if they were current. Moreover, the aftermath of the exodus has been looked at through the theories of livelihood, displacement and forced migration.

What has really stood out from all perspectives this thesis has looked through, is that because Bulgaria has almost always been under the rule of higher political powers, it has never really been able to secure a definitely cut identity for itself. Meaning, there are no truly Bulgarian values to its' society. The collective pain that comes with that realization creates a chauvinistic wish for self - definition and the longing for the freedom to be able to gain it. Communism and the societal manipulation that the "revival" brought out, were a catalyst for that realization.

The Turkish minority was the most obvious sacrificial lamb which, as a carrier and a reminder of the unbearable past, had to be done away with. In the collective psyche, if the most obvious "other" left, what would have remained in Bulgaria would have been the pure and core. This is also why the constant, albeit covert, ways of targeting the "other", or rather of there always being an "other" to be targeted, speaks to that wish of self -determination and identification, which can ultimately only happen if all elements of the society are accepted and incorporated into the whole.

The "revival" was a chance at that. Where it went "wrong", however, is that acceptance was not it's guiding force, but obliteration. Consequently, based on that reasoning, perhaps all instances of intolerance, for example, with the current refugee crisis and the ways the refugees have been targeted in Bulgaria, speak to that core inability to understand that society and identity is not a static thing but a fluid constant creation.

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