

Nationalism Revived: The “Revival” Process in Bulgaria.
Memories of Repression, Everyday Resistance and
Neighborhood Relations
1984-1989

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ABSTRACT

The subject of my MA thesis is the so-called “Revival process”: the renaming of Turks living in Bulgaria, with Bulgarian names. The process was conducted in mid-eighties of the 20 c. The methodology used is the analysis of Party documents, and in-depth interviews with both Turks and Bulgarians, inhabiting two municipalities. The research confirms Rogers Brubaker’s (et al) thesis that there is “a disjuncture between intense and intractable nationalist politics and the ways in which ethnicity and nationness are embodied and expressed in everyday life.” During Zhivkov’s regime the BCP constructed the Turks as a “Fifth column” of Turkey, as a minority, whose external ‘kin state’, homeland, is Turkey. As this construction was perceived as a threat for Bulgaria, it had to be re-constructed by imposing a Bulgarian identity on Turks; by “inventing” their Bulgarian origin and changing their names. The interviews do not confirm the constructed by the Bulgarian communist state relation between Turkish ethnic identity and the “essential symbolic link” with the Turkish territory, neither their Bulgarianness. Their ethnicity and the sense of belonging to a homeland are split. The homeland is understood as “the place I was born and my parents were born”, i.e. Bulgaria, the ethnicity is Turkish, related to the language spoken and their names. Memories of the interviewed people do not show signs of ethnic tensions on an everyday level. The study confirmed the thesis about the religious tolerance between Bulgarians and Turks. However, while Bulgarians estrange themselves from the “Revival process”, the Turks clearly remember the process of renaming and their strategies for choosing a new name and coping with the new situation. The Turks accepted their new names as external signs, as public masks, as nicknames. This thesis uses the concept of individual and personal identity, developed by Jan Assmann and argues that Turks had kept

their old names as ‘a rigid designator’ of their individual diachronic consistency in their private lives, while the new names had been a ‘persona’; masks for public use, and as such, they could be regarded as an everyday form of resistance. The interviews confirm the hypothesis that the Turkish people had created an alternative code to the official power discourse, which acted on two levels. One was public, demonstrated by irony, in a Brechtian way, or deliberately, by speaking Turkish publicly. The other level was a hidden one, which operated at homes at night: the naming of children, religious rituals, reading Turkish books, etc. Both levels opposed the official power discourse and kept what was perceived and felt like a real identity; an individual and a collective ethnic identity. This alternative code consolidated Turkish ethnic identity, which until then was not self reflected. However, to keep their neighborhood relations, both Turks and Bulgarians placed the responsibility of the “Revival process” at the “political top”, on remote from their everyday life agencies such as the Soviet Russia and Brezhnev.

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Introduction

The topic of my interest is the process of forceful renaming of the Bulgarian citizens of Turkish ethnic origin, labeled the “Revival process”. Attempts of cultural homogenization of the Bulgarian nation state had long history. Those related to ethnic Turks had been mostly directed towards “moving” them to the territory of Turkey.¹ But the story of the so called “Revival process”, which started in December 1984 and was officially proclaimed as finished in February 1985, is different. For the first time ethnic Turks, living in Bulgaria, had to be convinced, that they were actually Bulgarians.. The process of renaming was called “Revival” (a communist propaganda expression from early 1985), because Turks should have returned to their “true” Bulgarian roots and identity.² The American researcher Mary Neuburger³ prefers to use the term “re-birth” process for those events, translating literally the Bulgarian word “*Vazrajdanе*”, while Bulgarians translate it as “revival” because BCP made a reference of this process to the so-called “Revival process” of the Bulgarian national liberation movement in the mid-19 c., which is a kind of historical irony. No matter whether this process would be labeled

¹ The history of those attempts is presented in the book edited by Iskra Baeva and Evgeniya Kalinova: Искра Баева и Евгения Калинова/съст./ „*Възродителният процес*”. *Българската държава и българските турци /в средата на 30те и началото на 80 г. на 20 век/*(“The Revival Process”.Bulgarian State and Bulgarian Turks /in the mid 30ies and beginning of 80ies of 20 c./ (София: Изд. Държавна агенция „Архиви”, 2009).

² The Bulgarian authors Michail Gruev and Alexei Kalionski use the euphemism “Revival process” as a metaphor for the Bulgarian communist party’s (BCP) politics towards Turks and Bulgarian speaking Muslims – Pomaks, in the whole communist period. Their thesis is that, in spite some inconsistencies in that politics, especially in the early communist period, from 1950ies on, there is a clear trend towards assimilation of minorities and establishment of an “united socialist nation”, based on its Bulgarian, understood as primordial, ethnic origin. The assimilation politics starts earlier and is more persistent towards Pomaks, but culminates in the attempts for assimilation of the Turks – Bulgarian citizens. See Михаил Груев, Алексей Калъонски (Michail Gruev, Alexei Kalionski). “*Възродителният процес*”. *Мюсюлманските общности и комунистическият режим: политики реакции и последици*. (София: ИИБМ, СЕЛА, 2008). [The “Revival Process”. Muslim Communities and the Communist Regime: Policies, Reactions and Consequences]

³ Mary Neuburger. *The Orient Within: Muslim Minorities and the Negotiation of Nationhood in Modern Bulgaria* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

“re-birth” or “revival”, both words clearly indicate the essentialist nature of the assimilation policy of the Bulgarian communist state.

Their ethnic identity had to be “deleted” and acquiesced to the Bulgarian national identity. It meant that the basic characteristics of their ethnic identity should be attacked, as enumerated by Anthony Smith: their collective name, the idea of common origins and shared historical memories, distinctive elements of a common culture, the association with a definite “fatherland,” and their sense of solidarity. The change of collective name requires changing of personal names, as well as the prohibition of the Turkish language; a new common origin should be invented and new historical memories should be implanted; the “old” culture should be destroyed, Turkey should be proclaimed hostile to Bulgaria. All these steps had been fulfilled. With the help of an army the ethnic Turks, (Turkish) Bulgarian citizens were forced to change their names with Bulgarian ones; after just 24 hours, speaking the Turkish language was prohibited and Muslim religion and fests forbidden. Turkey was pointed out to be an external enemy, which allegedly was turning Bulgaria’s Turkish population into a vanguard of its expansion, aiming at detaching autonomous regions from the “motherland”.

At the moment most of the archival documents – decisions of Politburo, reports of Secret police, etc. – provoking and “regulating” that process have been published.⁴ There are a lot of

⁴ Веселин Ангелов, *„Строго поверително. Асимилаторската кампания срещу турското национално малцинство в България (1984-1989)*, (София: Симолини: 2008) [Top Secret. Assimilatory Campaign against Turkish National Minority in Bulgaria. (1984-1989)];; Искра Баева и Евгения Калинова/съст./ *„Възродителният процес”. Българската държава и българските турци /в средата на 30те и началото на 80 г. на 20 век/(*София: Изд. Държавна агенция „Архиви”, 2009) [“The Revival Process”.Bulgarian State and Bulgarian Turks /in the mid 30s and beginning of 80s of 20 c./]

studies, giving the political macro frame and context of these processes.⁵ A process of gathering interviews from the repressed Turks started, too, as well as research on the Turks, who left Bulgaria.⁶ However, oral testimonies of Turkish people, victims of the “Revival Process” are not abundant. The missing ‘points’ in the research are analyses of how the process of renaming had been carried on local level, how people perceived it, what kinds of strategies for choosing names had been invented by Turks, what type of everyday resistance (J. Scott) appeared; did these resistances create an alternative code to the official discourse? What was the impact of renaming process to the self perception and feeling of identity of the renamed Turks? As usually interviews had been taken only by Turks, I want to compare the memories of Turks and Bulgarians of the “Revival process”, living together in one municipality; their evaluation of it, as well their perception of the specific interrelations on everyday level between them, before the renaming, during that process and after it.

My approach is in the field of new social history and oral history. The method used is in-depth interviews with Turks and Bulgarians from two municipalities with mixed populations.

The main research concerns of my MA thesis are:

⁵ Ali Eminov, *Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities of Bulgaria*, (New York: Routledge, 1997); Mahon, Milena 'The Turkish minority under communist Bulgaria—politics of ethnicity and power', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 1: 2 (1999): 149-162; Mary Neuburger, *The Orient Within: Muslim Minorities and the Negotiation of Nationhood in Modern Bulgaria* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

Груев, Михаил, Кальонски, Алексей, *Възродителният процес. Мюсюлманските общности и комунистическият режим*. София: ИИБМ, ИОО, 2008 [Mikhail Gruev and Alexei Kalionski, *The “Revival Process”. Muslim Communities and the Communist Regime*]; Стоянов, Валери, *Турското население в България между полюсите на етническата политика*. (София: Лик, 1998) [Valeri Stoyanov, *Turkish Population in Bulgaria between Poles of Ethnic Policy*].

⁶ Zhelyazkova, Antonina, ed., *From Adaptation to Nostalgia: The Bulgarian Turks in Turkey* (Sofia: International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, 1998); Parla , Ayse. *Terms of Belonging: Turkish Immigrants from Bulgaria in the Imagined Homeland*. (A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Department of Anthropology. New York University. May 2005).

- The main characteristics of the power discourse of the Bulgarian communist party towards Turks, living in Bulgaria;
- Inter-ethnic and religious relations on local level between Turkish and Bulgarian neighbors before “Revival process” and in the present;
- The ways of conducting of the renaming process on local level (at the two municipalities) and strategies, adopted by the Turks to cope with the renaming;
- The renaming process and its impact on the personal identity of Turks;
- Everyday forms of resistance (James Scott) against the renaming process and manifestations of neighbourhood solidarity;
- Perception of homeland;
- The evaluation of the “Revival process”: reasons for it, who is responsible, and the problem of guilt;
- And, what factors aided overcoming ethnic tensions, if any.

The thesis consists of three chapters. In the first chapter I develop the theoretical prism through which I will analyze the research topics. In the second chapter I present the assimilation politics of the BCP towards the Turks, Bulgarian citizens, and the BCP power discourse. The third chapter is the analysis of the in-depth interviews with Turks and Bulgarians, inhabiting two Bulgarian municipalities.

First Chapter: Theoretical Framework and Methodology

1. 1. Disciplinary field and approach

As stated in the introduction, the topic of my interest focuses on the process of forceful renaming of the Bulgarian citizens with Turkish ethnic origin in the mid-eighties. My main research questions are as follows: What are the memories of this process in both Turks and Bulgarians, living together in one municipality? What was the impact of the violence act of renaming upon the identifications of Turks, what kind of coping strategies did they develop in the aftermath of it? Was there any everyday resistance against the campaign? Can we identify any acts of everyday neighbourhood solidarity? In order to answer these questions I will conduct in-depth interviews within both Turks and Bulgarians, living in two municipalities.

The research questions and the applied methodology position my MA thesis in the field of oral history. Oral history is closely related to the new social history and micro-history, as it aims to present “‘history from below’, ‘voices of the less powerful,’ of those, ‘hidden from history.’”⁷ It is viewed as an appeal for the “democratization” of history on behalf of the voices of “the ordinary people,” often neglected by classical historiography and the macro-historical approach. My research is also closely related to the field of social history since it focuses on a specific ethnic group. Juergen Kocka argues that new social history is neither situated on the microhistory level nor on the macro history one because it requires both of them. My research will try to illustrate the necessity of both micro and macro levels. On the one hand, “micro-history is useful for the social history only then, when it is attributed to larger issues and to

⁷ Graham Smith, “The Making of Oral History,” *Making History. The Changing Face of the Profession in Britain*, http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/oral_history.html#historyfrombelow (accessed 20 May, 2012).

larger contexts, therefore, when, it is inserted within the macro history.”⁸ On the other hand "micro history is indispensable as a critical instance, because it performs the task of criticizing the macro-historical narratives, theories and structures. Because an accurate study of one family, village, district, city... often brings with it the unexpected, it gives results that go beyond the frame and they ...generate an element of contradiction, introduce dynamics and act as prerequisites for innovation – they serve as a criticism.”⁹

This is especially true when studying nationalism that targets minority ethnic groups in a community, as is the case with the “Revival process.” As Eric Hobsbawm notes in his book “Nations and Nationalism since 1780”, the “dual phenomena” of ideologies such as nationalism, which “are constructed essentially from above and cannot be understood, unless also analyzed from below, that is, in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, desires and interests of the ordinary people.”¹⁰

The study research objective focuses predominantly on a particular social group - an ethnic minority subjected to the repressive politics of the Bulgarian communist state, which aim to change its group identity. I present the interplay and interrelation between micro and macro historical levels. I will achieve this through first, outlining the macro-historical framework of the political processes at work in the second chapter. These processes include dissecting the nationalistic discourse and politics of the Bulgarian communist party (BCP). However, the

⁸ Юрген Кока. “Социалната история между микроисторията и глобалната история” In: *Между макроисторията и микроисторията, или историята в множествено число*. (София: Дом на науките за човека и обществото, 2010), 43. [Jurgen Kocka, Social History between Microhistory and Global History,” in *Between Macrohistory and Microhistory, or History in plural*].

⁹ Ibid., 44.

¹⁰ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 10.

focus of my paper will deal with the memories of the Turks and their Bulgarian neighbours about the renaming process.

Following the macro and micro level distinction, I shall now present the theoretical approaches and concepts relevant to my topic.

1. 2. Macro historical approaches to understanding the “Revival process”

1. 2. 1. The classical ‘nation-state’ approaches

As the “Revival process” represents the peak of BCP politics for national homogenization, the first theoretical conceptualization will refer to nation-state and nationalisms studies.

In the last 40 years, the problems associated with the genesis of the nation state and nationalism as well as the formation of national identities has been the research focus of many prominent historians, such as Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson, Anthony Smith to mention just few. All these authors defend the thesis that the nation state is constructed or “imagined” as described by Benedict Anderson. Eric Hobsbawm argues that in modern times, in particular after 1780, the nation-state appears as a form of political and cultural power over a given territory. The modern nation-state emerges as a unitary authoritative center that strives to homogenize a given territory in economic, political and administrative terms. In order to legitimize and strengthen the political power over a specific territory, the people inhabiting this territory should be united as a single cultural or ethnic entity. For this reason the modern state was reinvented as the nation state - the nation being created as "an imagined political

community [that is] imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”¹¹ The notion of an “imagined community” must be kept alive in every individual; every individual must regard him/herself as a community member. In this case, “communities are to be distinguished not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.”¹² This “imagining” is achieved by forceful cultural homogenization, aimed at abolishing differences among ethnic groups and imposing a dominant ethnic identity, a common official language, driven by a specific historical and cultural canon. According to Anthony Smith, “the fundamental features of national identity” are: “a historical territory or homeland, common myths and historical memories, a common mass public culture, common legal rights and duties for all members, a common economy with territorial mobility for members.”¹³ The national identity is often predicated on the creation of a dominant ethnic identity, described by Smith as “a collective proper name, a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more differentiating elements of common culture, an association with a specific “homeland,” a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population;”¹⁴ and should suppress any other ethnic identities.

The pressure for cultural homogenization by the Bulgarian state can be examined by those theories. The Bulgarian communist party’s politics for the establishment of a national identity based on the dominant Bulgarian ethnic identity “follows” all the features, pointed out by Anthony Smith. However for a distinct minority, as the Turkish minority in Bulgaria is, the thus constructed national identity will be imposed as alien, because it contradicts to their ethnic

¹¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Revised and extended edition) (London: Verso, 2006), 6.

¹² *Ibid.*, 6.

¹³ Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1991), 14.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

identification. Something more, the relations between the minority and the nation state will be perceived as intermediated by the “kin state” of the minority, as Rogers Brubaker argues.

1. 2. 2. Rogers Brubaker’s “nationalism reframed” approach

In his book *Nationalism reframed*, Rogers Brubaker analyzes contemporary nationalism, which is different, in his opinion, from the 19th century form. His book focuses on a variety of nationalisms, which appeared after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. He defines them as “nationalizing nationalisms of newly independent states,” which “involve claims made in the name of a ‘core nation’ or nationality, defined in ethno-cultural terms.”¹⁵ At the same time, minority nationalisms (or ethnic nationalism) appear as a response to the nationalisms of the newly independent state. They derive legitimization and strength from another state, named by Brubaker as their “external national homeland.” Thus, new nationalisms descend from “a triad, linking national minorities, the newly nationalizing states in which they live, and the external national “homeland” to which they belong, or can be construed as belonging by ethno-cultural affinity.”¹⁶ Although this triad is particularly constructed to explain the contemporary nationalisms in the countries, established after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, in my opinion, it is also a valid explanation for the relations of the Bulgarian state – both the bourgeois one and the communist one - to its Turkish minority, which *was always considered* to be linked to its external “homeland” – Turkey, the core of the former Ottoman empire, which Bulgaria belonged to before gaining

¹⁵ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

independence. The possibility of such a linkage provoked frequent suspicion among Bulgarian state officials and thus, fear from both the Turkish minority and Turkey. For this reason, the Bulgarian state has periodically organized forced expulsions of Turks living in Bulgaria as well as assimilation campaigns, mainly focused on Bulgarian-speaking Muslims. Another important aspect of Brubaker's approach is his focus not on the nation as an authentic group, but on nationhood, nation-ness and "nation" as "a practical category, institutional form and contingent event."¹⁷ This is a dynamic understanding of the construction of a "nation", dependent both on structural prerequisites, but also on the concrete role of political elites, so the consequences of nationalistic policies and behaviour could not be fully predicted. In my next analysis, I will illustrate that the "Revival process" was at the same time structurally conditioned and appeared as a contingent event, to which the role of political elites was crucial.

1. 2. 3. The "Revival process" through the prism of mechanisms of power: individualization techniques and totalization procedures. Symbolic violence or symbolic genocide?

Since the focus of my research is on the renaming process of the Turks, Bulgarian citizens, the next question is - why renaming is so important, what type of violence is that?

For the explanation of that exactly procedure, I think that the most relevant approach is that of Michel Foucault, whose main theoretical focus is on the relation between the modern power and the modern subject. The thesis of Foucault is that the modern state combines individualization techniques with totalization procedures, its goal being the creation of the

¹⁷ Ibid., 7.

modern subject in his ambivalent modus – as subjugated and as individuality, as “subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge.”¹⁸ The individual identity is created by categorization, imposition of a law of truth, which should be recognised by the individual and by the others. This is precisely the approach of the communist state – it wished to categorize the Turks as Bulgarians, to impose the “law of truth” on them, which is expected to be acknowledged by themselves and by the others.

I was inclined to label this process using Pierre Bourdieu’s term - “symbolic violence”. But after reading *Practical Reasons: A theory of Action*¹⁹ and *Masculine Domination*,²⁰ I decided that the term is not suitable for the events that occurred under communism in Bulgaria. For Bourdieu symbolic violence is a type of soft violence, hidden within the dominant discourse or language, in such a way that it remains unnoticed. The soft violence is so ‘self evident’ that it is not contested. The Bulgarian case exemplifies just the opposite – the Communist party attacked precisely people’s long lasting identifications by trying to replace one ‘accepted’ and non-recognizable ‘symbolic violence,’ which had become part of their existence, with another one, more violent. The pressure on the Turks can be labelled as symbolic violence, but it is not soft violence, it rather resembles ‘symbolic genocide,’ which aims to abolish and obliterate all the previous identifications.

All the theoretical approaches discussed above explain the politics of the nation state, oriented towards complete cultural homogenization of its population. The next questions aim to

¹⁸ Michel Foucault, “Why study Power: The Question of the Subject”, afterword in *Michel Foucault : Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, by Dreyfus Hubert and Paul Rabinow (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982), <http://www.oocities.org/saidyoungman/fouc01.htm> (accessed May 15, 2012).

¹⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reasons: On the Theory of Action* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994).

²⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998).

answer whether the dominant discourse can fully subjugate people and whether they are passive objects of the totalization procedures of the state politics?

1. 3. Theoretical perspectives oriented towards “the view from below”

1. 3. 1. Everyday forms of resistance

In conceptualizing those forms of resistance, I was inspired by two authors – Michel de Certeau and James Scott. Michel de Certeau’s book *The Practice of Everyday Life*²¹ questions Foucault’s approach and opposes the concept of the dominant discourse with the notion of the invention of the everyday life. According to the French philosopher, emphasizing the production of order and power by political elites by means of beliefs, knowledge, concepts, ideologies and meanings is not sufficient. Such a subject-object approach begins from the presumption that the population is a passive consumer of such an elite-driven belief system and language – religion, science, laws, commodities, etc. In fact, Certeau states that daily life is invented, not imposed from above. On the contrary, it is the invention of the masses, a type of anonymous deviation from the language of the elites. According to Michel de Certeau, these deviations produced by daily life as a counterpoint to the official language fade away and thus, they are not capitalized on and hard to identify. Nevertheless, people coexist with such deviations. It is precisely there, in the twisting and turning of common practices that we see the day-to-day resistance of suppressed groups. In the history of the relationship between the power discourse and its daily (mis)use, Certeau argues that it is possible to find innumerable examples of similar deviations and resistance, if only one bothers to look for them.

²¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984).

James Scott takes on the feat of looking for such examples. In his book *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*,²² he has summarized the results of his anthropological study on the life of Malayan peasants from the village Sedaka. He criticizes several presuppositions dominant within the social sciences. Scott focuses on the group of peasants, often neglected by researchers, because it is perceived to be passive and subordinated, and is only commented as “appendage” to figures about agrarian production. When peasants are seen as a social actor, they are thought of above all in terms of peasant rebellions and revolutions. On the contrary, Scott asserts that peasants are social actors in their day-to-day practices with their hidden forms of resistance against power. Such forms of resistance are „... foot dragging, dissimulation, desertion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so on,”²³ which he calls “Brechtian” or “Schweikian” acts of physical resistance. More serious forms of resistance are associated with the struggle over work, property rights, grain, and cash. Scott’s book illustrates how in telling simple moral stories or in the commenting of fellow villagers, “ordinary people” define what is the “normal, correct, preferred behaviour.” In this way, they construct their own definitions of justice and “struggle to control the concepts and symbols by which current experience is evaluated...and finally it is a struggle over land, work, income and power.”²⁴ Thus, in his final chapter *Hegemony and Consciousness: Everyday Forms of Ideological Struggle* Scott, who seems at first glance to be an orthodox Marxist, using concepts such as “class,” “class consciousness,” “basis and superstructure,” in fact criticizes both Marx’ thesis about the total domination of the ruling classes and Gramsci’s thesis of “cultural hegemony”, illustrating the conflicts between

²² James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

²³ *Ibid.*, xvi.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

hegemony and the symbolic resistances of peasants who create a normative code, alternative to the dominant one.

In my research, I shall test whether an alternative discourse to the dominant one was invented, and if yes, what were its characteristics and what were the limits of the everyday resistance in a situation of vigorously imposed power discourse.

1. 3. 2. Brubaker's concept of everyday ethnicity

In *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, Rogers Brubaker and his team supplement his “nationalism reframed” approach, which explains national politics from above, with an approach oriented towards understanding nationhood and ethnicity as perceived from below. The book is composed of two mutually complimenting parts. The first part presents the historical and social milieu of contemporary life in Cluj and the nationalist politics from above, while the second part focuses on the everyday “work” of ethnicity in the interethnic relations of “ordinary Clujeni” – the view e from below. The authors’ thesis is that a stark disjuncture arises between the “intense and intractable nationalist politics and the ways in which ethnicity and nationness are embodied and expressed in everyday life.”²⁵ Nationhood and nationalism are related to political claims, while ethnicity is evident in everyday practices and self-understandings. The authors challenge the substantiality behind the understanding of ethnic groups as collective individuals as well as themethodological individualism of rational choice theories. They try to escape the clichés about fluid, multiple, unstable identities and look for specific forms of ethnic and national

²⁵ Rogers Brubaker et al., *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 16.

identifications, which are stable but not affiliated with groups. “‘Ethnicity’ is used as an interpretative prism, a way of making sense of the social world,”²⁶ it is perceived as “embodied” and as “enacted.” The authors correctly distinguish and describe different acts of ethnic categorization, concluding that that ethnicity does not act alone but ethnic categorizations are imbricated with non-ethnic ones. Exactly the common everyday life issues, faced by both ethnic communities, soften the ethnic tensions and prevent conflicts. While this could make for a good hypothesis to be tested in my research, the focus of my study remains the process of renaming since I cannot explicate all the categorizations mentioned in Brubaker’s study. The other significance of this book for my research is that ethnicity cannot be regarded entirely in the categories, described by Anthony Smith. The ethnic identity (Brubaker prefers the term ‘identification’) is not always conscious since it is a practical relation to the world and is often difficult to be captured by asking direct questions. The researcher should look for markers of ethnicity, such markers are the spoken language and names. But names are predominately related to the individual identity.

1. 4. Name and identity.

1. 4. 1. Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of name and identity

Pierre Bourdieu, in his short text *Biographical Illusion*,²⁷ criticizes the notion of life history as “a sum of the events of an individual existence, seen as a history,”²⁸ because, he argues, life is not “a coherent and finalized whole.”²⁹ Bourdieu cites the French novelist Allain Robbe Grillet: life resembles a modern novel, whose reality is, “discontinuous, formed by

²⁶ Ibid., 15.

²⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, “Biographical Illusion,” in *Identity: a Reader*, ed. Paul du Gay, Jessika Evans, Peter Redman (London: SAGE, 2005), 299-305.

²⁸ Ibid., 299.

²⁹ Ibid., 299.

elements juxtaposed without reason, each of them unique.”³⁰ If this is true, the question is how integration and self-consistency is possible Bourdieu’s answer is that the “social world, which tends to identify normality with identity, understood as the constancy to oneself of a responsible being that is predictable,”³¹ invented many “institutions of integration and unification of the self. The most evident of these institutions is of course the proper name, which, as ‘a rigid designator’ (Kripke’s expression), ‘designates the same object in every possible world.’”³² The name gives the individual a diachronic consistency and synchronic unity, beyond the multiplicity of occupied positions. Bourdieu also cites Ziff “who describes the proper name as ‘a fixed point in a turning world’ and argues that baptismal rites are the required way of assigning an identity.”³³ Through this norm of “naming, “a constant and durable social identity is instituted, which guarantees the identity of the biological individual in all possible fields where he appears as an agent.”³⁴ That is why the signature authenticates the personal identity.

Thus, Bourdieu’s view suggests that the personal name holds the integration of a Self, both as a past inconsistent experience, and as a multitude of social roles.

The name ties a person to society because through it the person is perceived and acknowledged. If the name is “robbed” and changed, the biography of the individual could turn into what it actually is - “discontinuous, formed by elements juxtaposed without reason” and the person will lose the symbolic centre that holds him. If this is true, what happened to the Turks after the renaming process, how did they cope with the attack on their personal identity? Djemile Ahmed, a Bulgarian sociologist from Turkish origin, describes this as a split identity,

³⁰ Ibid., 300.

³¹ Ibid., 301.

³² Ibid., 301.

³³ Ibid., 301.

³⁴ Ibid., 301.

which actually leads to identity loss: “you can neither be “Bulgarian,” because you will be considered an outsider to your own ethnic community; nor a “Turk” because then you will suffer from state repression.”³⁵ But after analyzing some of the interviews, I found the classification given by Jan Assmann to be most productive and appropriate.

1. 4. 2. Jan Assmann’s distinction between personal and individual identity

In his book *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*,³⁶ Jan Assmann distinguishes between two types of “I identities” – individual and personal.

“Individual identity is the coherent self image that builds itself up in the consciousness of the individual through features that a) distinguish them significantly from everyone else and b) remain constant across the various phases of their development. It is the awareness, beginning with the constant motif of one’s own body, of an irreducible self that is unmistakable and irreplaceable. Personal identity, on the other hand, is the embodiment of all of the roles, qualities, and talents that give the individual his own special place in the social network. Individual identity relates to contingencies of life, incorporating such key elements as birth and death, physical existence, and basic needs. Personal identity relates to social accountability and recognition.”³⁷

This distinction at first glance appears sophisticated, since the processes of individuation relates to personal uniqueness and socialization to publically performed social roles, both of which are determined sociogenically and culturally. But when a split between the private and public sphere occurs such as in the eighties in Bulgaria, the notion of organic duality regarding “I identity” is very helpful in explaining the unproblematic coexistence of the intimate self-perception and the imposed public roles and masks.

³⁵ Джемиле Ахмед. “Име, преименуване и двойна идентичност. (Българските турци по време на “Възродителния процес”)[Jemile Ahmed, “Name, Renaming and Double Identity. Bulgarian Turks During the “Revival process”]. *Социологически проблеми*, 1-2 (2003): 177.

³⁶ Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 113.

Unlike the individual identity, which is irreducible, the collective identity is more “fluent.” It is a symbolic reality of membership and it lacks the factor of irreducibility. “The collective or “we”-identity is the image that a group has of itself and with which its members associate themselves. It, therefore, has no existence of its own, but comes into being through recognition by its participating individuals. It is as strong or as weak as its presence in the consciousness of its members and its motivating influence on their thought and actions.”³⁸

The distinction between individual and collective identity is related to the issue of memory, an important topic in oral history. Initially I intended to reflect upon the debates about collective and individual memory and to relate them with my research, looking for an answer whether there is a collective memory about the “Revival process”. I had decided that this is very specific topic, so I dropped it.

1. 5. Main research hypotheses

Keeping in mind the research questions as well the theoretical conceptualization used for analyzing them, I had formulated the following hypotheses:

A) The study will confirm Brubaker’s thesis that there is “a disjuncture between intense and intractable nationalist politics and the ways in which ethnicity and nationness are embodied and expressed in everyday life.”³⁹ One of the reasons behind the strong assimilation politics is that the Bulgarian communist party considered the Turkish minority to be linked to the “kin state” – Turkey.

³⁸ Ibid., 113-114.

³⁹ Rogers Brubaker et al., *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 16.

B) The relations between Turks and Bulgarians are “torn” between neighbourly co-existence and hidden fears, which are dependent mostly on the political (mis)use of the history of ethnic interrelations. This specific balance makes ethnic relations unstable, but at the same time not aggressive. The “Revival process” shattered this balance, but now it appears to be restored due to the fact that the process of renaming is pushed out from the consciousness. In order to keep the balance, both Turks and Bulgarians placed the responsibility of what happened at the “political top” in such a way as to “forget” their own actions.

C) Considering the impact of the renaming process on the individual identity of Turks, I will launch two hypotheses. According to P. Bourdeu’s arguments, the process of renaming would have been a strong blow to the identity of the renamed Turks and would have led to a split identity (Djamile Ahmed). But following Jan Assmann’s distinction of the two aspects of the “I identity,” the renaming would have been accepted as a requirement to the personal identity but would not have impacted the individual self.

D) There had been many forms of everyday resistance carried out by Turks, which, although not considered as resistance, directly opposed the official normative code in order to retain old ethnic norms.

1. 6. Methodology

The main method I will use to conduct my research is the in-depth interview. If I use Hugo Slim (et al)'s classification from their article *Ways of Listening*, the interview can be defined as a single-issue testimony, as it is focused on one particular theme in the interviewee's life.⁴⁰ It happened that I had unintentionally conducted two group interviews when two people joined the respondent and started to answer questions.

I carried out my research in two villages, located in two different Bulgarian municipalities with a mixed population - Bulgarians and Turks. The villages are as follows: Mineralni Bani, Haskovo, Southern Bulgaria and Dulovo, Silistra, Northeastern Bulgaria.

I selected these two villages for the following reasons:

First, the resort municipality, Mineralni Bani, was created in during socialism to take advantage of the existing curative mineral waters. Over the years the municipality has grown engulfing several little villages with a traditionally mixed population (Bulgarians, Turks, Roma). Second, the town lies in the South-Eastern Rhodopes, where the assimilation campaign for the Turkish population started the earliest and was accomplished on the largest scale. It is also important that in the Haskovo and Kardzali district the renaming was met with the fiercest resistance, in contrast to other regions in Bulgaria. Furthermore, my access to interviewees was facilitated by the fact that my family is originally from Haskovo and through relatives, I was able to organize the interviews.

⁴⁰ Hugo Slim, et al., "Ways of Listening," in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (London: Routledge, 1998), 116-119.

The municipality of Dulovo with its 27 belonging villages is also with a mixed population. Almost two thirds of the people are Muslim, among them Turks, a smaller group of Kazalbashi (Aliani) and a vanishing minority of Tartar Muslims. The other one third is Bulgarians and Roma. The town lies in the North-Eastern part of Bulgaria, in Dobrudzha. The research interest towards this municipality is that the “Revival process” campaign started with some days later and was not followed with such violent resistances against it as in the South. The second reason for my choice is exactly the multiplicity of Muslim minorities, which nevertheless were defined as Turks and were renamed, too. Another research reason was that I have done an ethnographic research in the area some three years ago, which allowed me to enter to the field with some knowledge and acquaintances.

I tried to keep the ethnic and gender balance, but it turned difficult, due to the following reasons: the interviews followed the “snowball effect” – one respondent gave the contact to the other and so on, the Turks being more interested in the topic of the research compared to Bulgarians. Next, women more often refused to answer my questions, especially Turkish women, with the answer: “O, this had passed, I don’t want to talk about that past”. At the end of the day I had done 25 interviews done, out of them with sixteen Turks, four Muslim Kazalbashi, eight Bulgarians and one Tartar Muslim.

You can find the questionnaire in the Appendix, while here I will present the main topics, discussed in the interview:

- Inter-ethnic and religious relations on a local level between Turkish and Bulgarian neighbors before “Revival process” and now;

- The ways of conducting of the renaming process on local level (at the two municipalities) and strategies, adopted by the Turks to cope with the renaming;

- The renaming process and its impact on the personal identity of Turks.

- Everyday forms of resistance against renaming process and manifestations of neighbourhood solidarity.

- Perception of homeland

- The evaluation of the “Revival process” – reasons for it, who is responsible, the problem of guilt

Second chapter: Approaches to explaining Bulgarian – Turks ethnic confrontation.

Politics and Power Discourse of the BCP towards the “Bulgarian” Turks.

The cultural homogenization attempts by the Bulgarian nation state have a long history. Those related to ethnic Turks had been mostly oriented to their forceful emigration to Turkey,⁴¹ while those who remained were subjugated to assimilation⁴². In this chapter, I will not attempt to trace in detail the cultural homogenization efforts, including assimilation policies targeting the Bulgarian-speaking Muslims referred to as "Bulgaro-Mohammedans" or "Pomaks." In this chapter, I shall present the approaches that best explain the confrontation between Turks and Bulgarians: whether they are based on religious grounds (Justin McCarthy) or an expression of cultural symbolic differentiation (Mary Neuberger). At the end, I shall analyze in further detail the politics and power discourse (Foucault) of the Bulgarian Communist Party, aimed at fully effacing the ethnic specificity of the Turkish population in Bulgaria in order to finally declare them Bulgarian.

⁴¹ Approximate emigration of Muslims (mostly Turks but also Pomaks, Cherkhez, and Tatars) from Bulgaria is calculated by Antonina Zhelyazkova as follows:

1878–1912: 350,000

1913–1934: 10,000–12,000

1940–1944: 15,000

1950–1951: 155,000

1968–1978: 130,000

1989: 360,000

1990–1997: 30,000–60,000

Antonina Zhelyazkova, ed., *Between Adaptation and Nostalgia: The Bulgarian Turks in Turkey* (Sofia: International Center for Problems of Minorities and Cultural Interaction, 1998), 11–12.

⁴² The history of those attempts is presented in the book edited by Iskra Baeva and Evgeniya Kalinova: Искра Баева и Евгения Калинова/съст./ „Възродителният процес”. Българската държава и българските турци /в средата на 30те и началото на 80 г. на 20 век/ (“The Revival Process”. Bulgarian State and Bulgarian Turks /in the mid 30ies and beginning of 80ies of 20 c./ (София: Изд. Държавна агенция „Архиви”, 2009).

2. 1. Religious nationalism or religious tolerance and ‘komshuluk’

One of the most prominent scholars on Christian militant nationalism with regard to Muslims and the Ottoman Empire is Justin McCarthy. In his famous book *Death and Exile. The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims 1821 -1922*⁴³ he argues that religious nationalism led to the death of 5.06 million Muslims and to the exile of another nearly 5.4 million, who inhabited the former Ottoman territories. His arguments are based to the existence of the millet system, which allowed self-governance and cultural autonomy for various religious communities within the empire. Only the rulers were required to be Muslim, while the rest of the subjects, generally from the local population, were awarded relative autonomy. There were no assimilative or integration policies for ethnic and religious groups in the Ottoman Empire. McCarthy argues that the Turks did not practice forcible conversion to Islam (the Janissaries, who were famous for that, were an exception to the official policy, not the rule). Christian churches were repositories of centuries of cultural traditions and were the only source of collective self-determination. Freedom of religion reinforced the demarcation between Muslims and other religions in the Ottoman Empire and isolated the oppressed communities, even though all the ethnic groups ate the same food, lived under similar housing and even spoke the same Turkish language. Thus, instead of receiving respect and loyalty for centuries of religious tolerance, the Ottoman Empire paid a high price for it. Anti-Ottoman nationalism arose from within the religious communities. As a consequence, this nationalism, based on religion, generated intolerance particularly towards people, who professed any other religion. Thus, they were easily identified as enemies. Those, who challenged the aspirations for national independence,

⁴³ Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile. The ethnic cleansing of Ottoman Muslims 1821 -1922* (Princeton, New Jersey: The Darwin Press, 1995).

were believed to be going against God himself. Therefore, Muslims were not considered as part of the liberation movements or the new nations, but only as outsiders or infidels. This led to their mass exile and ethnic cleansing.

McCarthy's thesis is based on the events surrounding the Greek revolution in 1821, which was to act as an example for all the other nationalistic uprisings that followed. Thus, according to McCarthy, Christian religious nationalism was one of main reasons for ethnic cleansing of Muslims. He argues, that this model is applicable to the Bulgarian independence movement, which was exceptionally cruel towards innocent Turkish peasants in 1878 and forced mass emigration to Turkey following the establishment of the Bulgarian state in 1878. McCarthy's position is important for my MA thesis because it presupposes that the conflicts between Turks and Bulgarians are actually conflicts between Muslims and Christians, and as such they are not constructed from "above" by political elites, but are part of the everyday hostility and tension between the two groups.

Other scholars such as Milena Mahon and Antonina Zhelyazkova⁴⁴ defend the opposite scholarly position – that the folk religious syncretism of the two religions, which resulted in many common rituals, helped avoid everyday conflicts. Contrary to McCarthy's thesis, Zhelyazkova characterizes relations between the Turkish minority and the Bulgarian majority with the Turkish term *komshuluk*, roughly meaning "good neighborliness." Zhelyazkova writes: "The Turks, who remained in their native places, did not cause any particular trouble for the authorities. They demonstrated their loyalty to the state more than once, including through

⁴⁴ Milena Mahon, "The Turkish minority under communist Bulgaria—politics of ethnicity and power," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 1:2 (1999): 149-162; Antonina Zhelyazkova, "The Social and Cultural Adaptation of the Bulgarian Emigrants in Turkey," in *From Adaptation to Nostalgia: The Bulgarian Turks in Turkey*, ed. Antonina Zhelyazkova (Sofia: International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, 1998), 13.

their enlistment in the Bulgarian army and participation in the many wars Bulgaria fought. The system of peaceful co-existence of Christians and Muslims, Turks and Bulgarians, functioned smoothly over the centuries, based on a mutual respect of traditions, of specific characteristics of everyday life and the *komshuluk*.”⁴⁵

The prominent sociologist Max Weber argues that the peasants are pagans, believing only in the magical type of religiousness. Weber writes: “The lot of peasants is so strongly tied to nature, so dependent on organic processes and natural events, and economically so little oriented to rational systematization that in general the peasantry will become a carrier of religion only when it is threatened by enslavement or propertyless, either by domestic forces (financial or manorial) or by external political forces.”⁴⁶ This methodological presumption sounds convincing, and, when combined with the historical and anthropological research by scholars such Mahon and Zhelyazkova, leads to the acceptance of rather the second scholarly position, arguing against the existence of religious tensions. The results from empirical study confirmed the hypothesis of religious tolerance.

2. 2. Fighting against “The Orient within” – Mary Neuberger’s approach

In her book *The Orient Within*,⁴⁷ Mary Neuberger offers yet another explanation, this time through the prism of cultural and postcolonial studies. The approach is associated with the construction of the Bulgarian national identity. She follows Edward Said’s approach in his

⁴⁵ Antonina Zhelyazkova, “The Social and Cultural Adaptation of the Bulgarian Emigrants in Turkey,” in *From Adaptation to Nostalgia: The Bulgarian Turks in Turkey*, ed. Antonina Zhelyazkova (Sofia: International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, 1998), 13.

⁴⁶ Max Weber, “E. Religiosity of Social Strata. (E.1) Peasant,” in *Sociology of Religion* http://www.ne.jp/asahi/moriyuki/abukuma/weber/society/socio_relig/socio_relig_frame.html (accessed February 7, 2012).

⁴⁷ Mary Neuberger, *The Orient Within: Muslim Minorities and the Negotiation of Nationhood in Modern Bulgaria* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

book *“Orientalism”* by adopting a key methodological premise within her analysis that “the Balkans were themselves Orientalized or cast as the Eastern “other” by Western Europe.” The book is permeated by the constant interplay between the European civilizational gaze and the perception of the Ottoman Empire as oriental. She argues that this duality resulted in the hybrid character of the Bulgarian national identity from the very beginning: “the Bulgarian national Self was at once European and Semi–Oriental.” In order to overcome this hybridity and assert the national identity as purely European, the Bulgarian independent state began to clear out all the remnants of the “dark” “Oriental” past in the post-1878 period. Muslim minorities – the so-called Pomaks (Bulgarian-speaking Muslims) and Turks, inhabiting the territory of the Bulgarian state, were suddenly perceived to incarnate the remnants of the “dark” past. These remnants were perceived to be embodied in their way of dressing, everyday habits and traditions, religion and names, which needed to be removed. The easiest way of doing this was to forcefully push Muslim minorities to emigrate or resettle to Turkey or nearby villages/cities, which explains the several migration waves. However, since the Muslim population was important for the Bulgarian economy, the state – under both bourgeois and communist rule, imposed the belief that Pomaks and Turks living in Bulgaria were in fact Islamized Bulgarians and that their origin and blood was Bulgarian, thus, justifying the call for the return to their true, essentialist identity.

One of the most interesting theses of the book concerns the interrelation of nationalism and communism. Often communism is perceived as alien to nationalist ideas, due to Marx’s basic presumption that “workers have no fatherland” and supported internationalism. Neuberger offers well grounded arguments that nationalism is the tool with which communism “paved the road” to modernization: “these notions of essential sameness drove the

modernizing, Bulgarizing assimilation projects of the twentieth century that attempted to integrate Muslims into the Bulgarian nation.”⁴⁸ This thesis is developed in the last four chapters of the book by explicating the violent policies of the communist state towards Muslim minorities. In its efforts to “delete” the Muslim identity and to impose the European one (meaning Bulgarian one), efforts that were in line with Marxist dogma that “the base” determines “the superstructure,” the state focused on altering the “bit” (a word meaning “way of life”) of Pomaks and Turks by trying to “modernize” their way of dressing and habits. However, I would argue that the nationalist rhetoric was hidden under the modernization discourse or at least they were closely intertwined. The legitimation of the modernization process was not associated directly with European values but rather with the Soviet model and the “socialist development,” which was proclaimed as the new “civilizational norm.” The logic is similar – the Turkish population living in Bulgaria was to be incorporated and integrated in the new civilizational model. The Bulgarian Communist Party insisted that the politics towards Turks living in Bulgaria was dictated by the necessity to modernize their traditional rituals.⁴⁹ The politics and discourse of the Bulgarian Communist Party is the topic of the next section.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁹ This explanation, in one or another degree, is shared by some Bulgarian authors, writing on assimilation politics towards Turks, Bulgarian citizens, like Baeva and Kalinova.

2. 3. The politics of the BCP towards Turks and Bulgarian citizens: Ideological legitimization of the “Revival process”

2. 3. 1. The “tolerant” period

All scholars who wrote about BCP’s policies towards the Bulgarian-speaking Muslims agree that they were inconsistent.⁵⁰ It was generally argued that until 1956 when Todor Zhivkov came to power, the policy followed the multiethnic Soviet model. The Turkish language periodicals were restored, the number of Turkish schools increased, a pedagogic Turkish school was established in Stara Zagora, and quotas for admission of Turkish youth in secondary schools and high schools were introduced, etc. In the first "socialist" constitution in 1947, the Turkish community had been recognized as a national minority and were guaranteed the rights provided under Art. 79: the right to learn and practice their mother tongue and to develop their national culture.⁵¹

In fact, despite the guaranteed minority rights within this period, the attitude towards the Turks, citizens of Bulgaria, had always been built upon the previously mentioned triad described by Brubaker. The state, nevertheless, viewed the Turkish population as a minority, whose homeland was not Bulgaria, but a powerful country - Turkey. Tensions in the triad were additionally strengthened by the fact that Turkey was a capitalist country, a NATO member and had borders with Bulgaria, where Turkish population lived.. The arguments stressed by Neuburger also outweigh the state’s desire to deal with the shame from five centuries under the

⁵⁰ Neuburger 2004, Gruev and Kalionski 2008, Baeva and Kalinova 2009, etc.

⁵¹ Чавдар Маринов, “От интернационализъм към национализъм. Комунистическият режим, Македонският въпрос и политиките към етническите и религиозните общности”, В *История на Народна Република България*, съст. Ивайло Знеполски (София: СІЕЛА 2009), 506 [Tchavdar Marinov, From “internationalism” to nationalism. The Communist regime, Macedonian question and the politics toward ethnic and religious communities,” in *History of People’s Republic of Bulgaria*, ed. Ivaylo Znepolski].

Turkish ‘Yoke’ and the need to establish the new Socialist ‘civilization’ model. A statement by Georgi Dimitrov in 1945 testifies to the importance of Turkey and its borders during the "tolerant" period: "we have to operate cautiously with the Turks " and that "Turkey has to go in Asia.” During the plenary session of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Social Democratic Workers Party (January 1948), Dimitrov defined "the non-Bulgarian population" along the southern border as "a constant ulcer for our country."⁵² It is not coincidental that the first wave of emigration in 1950-51, following the establishment of the communist regime, was very large – 155 000.

Throughout the entire communist period, the BCP used two arguments to distinguish the Turks from Bulgarians. The first one refers to the so-called modernization/ civilization issue, while the other is geopolitical.

The modernization argument defined the Turks as backward at the time. They lived mainly in villages and were engaged in farming, primarily with tobacco cultivation and were perceived to be more conservative or traditionalist. That is why, the BCP argued, not only from the point of their religious beliefs but also in terms of clothing, they were alien to the industrialization that was taking place and to the ‘new workers’ life and morality. Therefore, it was important that they had to be modernized – factories had to be built in their settlements, so that they could join the ‘workers class’. They should wear urban clothes, the BCP proclaimed, to be sanitized and educated etc.⁵³

⁵² Cited in Tchavdar Marinov, 2009, 507.

⁵³ Modernization policies towards the Turks are described in detail by Gruev and Kalionski, 2008, Neuberger, 2004, Baeva and Kalinova, 2009.

The geopolitical argument defined Turks as 'foreign' in spatial terms, as far as they were associated with Turkey. Thus, they were perceived to be on the border line between two epochs - the 'new' and 'old', and between two states, on the edge between Bulgaria and Turkey. The spatial border reconfirmed the first temporal border, because it demarcated "socialism" and "capitalism." On the one hand, the modernization argument justified the politics in the name of the improvement of their welfare conditions by opening factories, schools etc. On the other hand, the latter also led to the legitimization of direct repression through the banning of traditional clothing, the *sjunet* (circumcision), religious rituals, which are described in detail by Gruev, Neuburger etc. The geopolitical argument stood behind the assimilation policy, which became particularly obvious following the advent of Todor Zhivkov.

2. 3. 2. The assimilation nationalistic discourse

By the end of 1950s, BCP's policy partly encouraged the ethnic affiliation of the Turkish minority.. At the same time, BCP had also attempted to "modernize" them, thus, softly "attacking" their identity. Since the early sixties, the focus began to change. The new goal was to delete the identity of "Bulgaro-Mohammedans" and Turks and to impose an "authentic" Bulgarian identity. They had to become Bulgarians – not just through adopting a modern lifestyle, as was the policy until the end of the fifties, but also in terms of self-consciousness and identity in order to "fully" become part of the "unified socialist nation," understood as a Bulgarian. In that sense the assimilation politics of the late Bulgarian communist state can be defined as what Brubaker calls "transitive type of assimilation."⁵⁴

54 "In general and abstract sense, the core meaning is increasing similarity or likeness. Not identity but similarity. To assimilate means to become similar (when the word is used in-transitively) or make similar, or treat as similar

It was not until then that the “cultural-historical” discourse, defended by Neuburger, combined with the geopolitical argument, came into existence. It was precisely the fear that Turkey could "steal" part of the Bulgarian population or tear off part of Bulgaria’s territory in the case that "Bulgarian" Turks requested autonomy, which provoked assimilation politics and adoption of a politics to “reinvent” Turks as Bulgarians.

Researchers usually cite October 4, 1958 as the crucial date when BCP’s Central Committee held a plenum, during which it accepted new directives concerning the new assimilation policy for Muslim minorities. The central issue of the document regarded the fight against ‘manifestations of nationalism and religious fanaticism among the Turkish population.’ According to the Bulgarian historian Tchavdar Marinov, the party leadership revised its policy favoring Turkish ethnocultural identity and began restricting their rights and freedoms.⁵⁵ According to Hugh Poulton, cited by Warhola and Boteva this plenum marked a “sharp change in policy toward the Turks and the Bulgarian Muslims,” whose goal of “full assimilation” was chillingly straightforward.”⁵⁶

The first victims of the new politics were Bulgarian-speaking Muslims, who had always been perceived by the state as forcefully Islamized Bulgarians. At its meeting on March 6, 1964, the BCP Secretariat called for the removal of "the old traditions and noxious customs"

(when it is used transitively). Assimilation is thus the process of becoming similar (or of making similar, or treating as similar). In the specific and organic sense, the real meaning is transitive. To assimilate something is to ‘convert it into a substance of its own nature, as the bodily organs convert food into blood, and thence into animal tissue....to absorb into the system, to incorporate’ (Oxford English Dictionary) Assimilation in this sense implies complete absorption. In the first sense the accent is on the process, not on some final state and assimilation is a matter of degree. In the second sense the accent is on the end state and assimilation is a matter of either/or nor of degree” In: Rogers Brubaker, “The Return of Assimilation? Changing perspectives on immigration and its sequels in France, Germany and the United States,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 4, (July 2001): 534.

⁵⁵ Tchavdar Marinov, 2009, 8.

⁵⁶ J. Warhola and O. Boteva, “The Turkish Minority in Contemporary Bulgaria,” *Nationalities Papers* Vol. 31, No.3 (September 2003): 255-278.

"religious fanaticism" and the "Turko-Arab names."⁵⁷ During the same month, the first violent renaming campaign was initiated among the Bulgarian-speaking Muslims. The campaign was met with resistance and was suspended but later resumed in 1972-73. In March 1973, rebellions took place against the renaming campaign: one vivid example was in the village of Kornitsa, Blagoevgrad district, where many people were convicted and interned.⁵⁸ But in spite of the resistance the names of the Pomaks were changed.

Intentionally or not, preparation for the renaming of the "Bulgarian Muslims" was accompanied by a boom in novels focusing on the "forced conversion" of the Bulgarians during the "Turkish yoke," mainly in the Rhodope Mountains, where the largest part of the Bulgarian-speaking Muslim population still lived. In the 1960s, Nikolai Haitov's (famous Bulgarian writer) texts started asserting the image of the 'true,' 'authentic' Rhodopi Bulgarian. In 1964, Anton Donchev's novel *Time of Parting* ("Vreme razdelno") was published, which tells the story of the violent Islamic conversion of the Rhodopi mountain population. It turned out that the cruel Janissary, who carried out the process, was born exactly in the village, where the conversion takes place.. Anton Donchev persuades the reader that the Bulgarian identity of the people, living in the Rhodope Mountains, is "proven" by their native belonging to this land. It is not accidental that the novel was adapted into a film in 1986 and promoted in 1987, following the renaming process.

While for the BCP the origin of the Bulgarian-speaking Muslims was self-evident, the situation with the Turks was more complex. They spoke Turkish and had a mighty kin state, bordering Bulgaria. Therefore, the language of the party leaders was twofold – on the one hand,

⁵⁷ Cited in Tchavdar Marinov, 2009, 502.

⁵⁸ The process is presented in detail in Mary Neuberger's and Gruev and Kalionski's books.

they had to be careful when discussing the Turkish ethnic identity and on the other hand, the Turks had to be presented as Bulgarians. I first came face-to-face with the argument that the Turkish population in Bulgaria was actually Bulgarian in Todor Zhivkov's speech at a BCP Central Committee meeting held on 28 December, 1967:

"The Turkish population in Bulgaria is not Turkish by origin, because although the Turks enslave the country, the Turks did not settle in Bulgaria. Of course, there may be exceptions. Only Turkish garrisons came to Bulgaria. These included Janissaries i.e. Mohammedanized Bulgarians. Their story is radically different from the Turkish population living in Turkey. It is connected with the Bulgarian land, with the Bulgarian people."⁵⁹

The thesis similarity with that of Donchev's is obvious. In the same speech, it becomes apparent that Zhivkov was aware that he could be accused of conducting assimilation measures so he specifically distinguishes between the "rough, reactionary, chauvinistic, imperialist assimilation" from the "progressive" one:

"We are in favor of creating a united Communist nation in the People's Republic of Bulgaria, but not centered around the Turkish and Gypsy population, but around the Bulgarian population. If we create this Communist nation centered on the Turkish and the Gypsy population we, Bulgarians, will be erased from the world."

Furthermore, Zhivkov realizes that "it is not convenient to use the word assimilation, but here, at the meeting we may permit ourselves to use such talk..." and declared that:

"The union will happen on the basis of our socialist system ... on a unified international basis. The victory of communism throughout the world, including Turkey... We are resolving an essential issue for our country, for our socialist system, for Bulgaria. Otherwise, Turkey will start making claims on our lands, and unions [with our Turks]. By the way, one part of the Turkish intelligentsia is already raising these questions."⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Baeva, Kalinova, 2009, 66.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 66-67.

This statement clearly shows the inconsistency and ambiguity of Zhivkov's words. Turks are at the same time Bulgarian and Turkish. If the nation is created around them, the Bulgarians will be lost. The reasoning behind such assimilation measures calls for a victory for international communism, but behind all this talk lays the visible fear of Turkey. The arguments are the same for the debate on the "Bulgarian Turks," plagued by continual fear of Bulgaria's declining population and Turkey's expansionist policy.

The demographic issue was often mentioned among party and secret service documents as one of the most important reasons standing behind the assimilative measures. "In 1975, the Turkish population is 772,000 (8, 8% of the total population in the country) and its natural growth rate is nearly 4 times greater than that of the Bulgarian population. It is argued that the affiliation process between Turkey and Bulgarian Muslims and Roma increased."⁶¹ In the early eighties, the Turkish population is 800,000 (9% of the total Bulgarian population).⁶² Behind these numbers lays the fear that the Bulgarian majority will diminish into a minority.

The Cyprus crisis in the seventies was regarded as a serious reason to begin the implementation of assimilation measures in Bulgaria. In a meeting during the summer of 1971, the BCP Politburo declared that Turkey will most probably seek to "create a new Cyprus in Bulgaria and on the Balkans."⁶³ These concerns were provoked by Politburo's conviction that Turkey's foreign policy drastically shifted. Unlike its previous policy, which strove to gather

⁶¹ I present these reasons as they are given in the introduction to the first volume of the book edited by Iskra Baeva and Evgeniya Kalinova: Искра Баева и Евгения Калинова/съст./ „Възродителният процес”. *Българската държава и българските турци /в средата на 30те и началото на 80 г. на 20 век/* [“The Revival Process”.Bulgarian State and Bulgarian Turks /in the mid 30ies and beginning of 80ies of 20 с./ (София: Изд. Държавна агенция „Архиви”, 2009)]. The authors of the introduction – Evgeniya Kalinova and Iskra Baeva present these reasons as objective facts, but these reasons are given as arguments in the Communist party documents. Ibid., 27.

⁶² Ibid., 28.

⁶³ Ibid., 27.

"all Turks from the former Ottoman Empire back to the mother homeland," its current strategy aimed to use Turks from within their hometowns in Bulgaria as a "fifth column of Turkish interests."⁶⁴ A famous Bulgarian poet pronounced the Turks living in Bulgaria to be "a reserve of international reactionary circles, oriented against Bulgarian national security."⁶⁵ The assimilation policy was legitimated as a response to the onslaught of Pan-Turkism.

This fixation with Turkey, which I call geopolitical discourse, was used as legitimation for the assimilation policy. The party officials started to construct the ethnic identity of Turks living in Bulgaria as a Turkish identity of a minority, closely linked to its "kin state" Turkey, which sought a return to its homeland. Whether the "Bulgarian" Turks felt that way was unimportant for the party leaders. As described by Brubaker, the political elites helped to construct the triad. They "imagined" the ethnic identity of the Turks in order to re-imagine Bulgarian national identity. In a situation where it was already clear that the communist ideology was failing to work, the rhetoric of nationalism appeared to be a good substitute. A new enemy was invented – Turkey and its "Fifth column" in Bulgaria – the Turks. Being a capitalist country and a member of NATO were strong enough reasons for masking nationalist ambitions.

The constructed as a "hostile" Turkish ethnic group has to be "disarmed" and thus the thesis of its Bulgarian origin had been launched by Zhivkov. . At the beginning of 1970s, a series of historical works were published by scholars from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences on the Bulgarian roots of the Turkish population, who were allegedly forced to become Muslim under centuries of Ottomanism. Their main goal was to prove that the Turkish minority

⁶⁴ Ibid., 27.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 103.

population had to recover its authentic origin. It even came down to linguistic/semantic analyses of Turkish personal names and names of sites, towns and villages in search of Bulgarian roots and meanings.

Up until the start of the forceful renaming campaign, the party documents preserved their ambivalent rhetoric, which did not call for outright assimilation but at the same time stressed the need for it. This ambivalence is most clearly illustrated in the debates regarding a special decision by Politburo titled: "For the further unification and integration of the Bulgarian Turks in the name of socialism and BCP politics," taken on May 8, 1984. The decision and the discussion minutes are published in Baeva and Kalinova's book.⁶⁶ It is worthwhile to note that all the documents, dedicated to the deliberation of the Turkish situation in Bulgaria, were labeled as "top secret." Also, have in mind that the employed terminology "Bulgarian Turks" is already indicative of BCP's conviction that the Turks are actually Bulgarians. The discussion is particularly critical for the creation of the "socialist consciousness" among "Bulgarian Turks," considering their growing affinity to Turkey at the time. One of the Politburo members timidly posed the question whether the Turkish language should be optional in Bulgarian schools, which could lead to the total prohibition of Turkish language in all the public places forcing Turks to speak only Bulgarian. They discussed whether to ban all Turkish language print and electronic media. It is interesting to note that although Zhivkov clearly states that the Turks are a specific ethnic group with a distinct cultural heritage, the whole discussion revolves around the topic of imposing Bulgarian cultural and historical heritage on Turks.⁶⁷ Not a single word is uttered about the renaming process. The discussion reiterates that the Turks have one homeland

⁶⁶ Baeva, Kalinova, 137-162.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 151.

– Bulgaria, making it vital that they share the common socialist values, which would require their integration in the “unified socialist nation.” The decision itself carefully formulates the main discussed issues. But in the addendum to the decision, labeled “very top secret, of extreme importance,” the Turkish minority assimilation measures are clearly defined as such.

2. 3. 3. The debates in the BCP leadership about renaming of Turks – 1984

The only Party document, which clearly connects the integration of the “Bulgarian Turks” with the renaming campaign, are the discussion minutes from October 24, 1984 from a meeting of the leadership of the Department “Ideological Politics” at the BCP Central Committee. The minutes are published in Baeva and Kalinova’s book. The topic of the discussion is the elaboration of a “Classifier of Bulgarian names.”⁶⁸ The “Name Classifier” was supposed to have only a recommendatory function and was initially directed at families of mixed marriages with the aim to help them make an adequate selection of a Bulgarian name for their child. The tone of the discussion was relatively soft.

At the beginning, the proposal called for the preparation of a Classifier of *Bulgarian* names, which later also included names of foreign origin. The foreign names had to have Bulgarian transcription. Around this time, the first “theoretical” problems appeared. First, the creation of a name list required extensive research over a lengthy period of time, which would not be convenient for the political apparatus. In other words, this was a contradiction between practice and theory and the party did not want to loose any time around a theoretical framework.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 175-184.

A Turk, working at the Ideological Department, recommended that the name list be labeled “A Classifier of Names of *Bulgarian Citizens*,” not of “Bulgarian names,” to avoid frightening the Turks. The list was meant to be an Index of names, including the names of Bulgarian Turks, which were to be accompanied by an explanation of their meaning. The arrangement and order of the Classifier of Names was clear: the first part was to include Bulgarian names, followed by a second part with the Turkish names and their meanings. I suppose that with the use of bilingualism, the role of a name as an identifier would be reduced. Furthermore, the search for a Bulgarian equivalent of a Turkish name can be interpreted as finding its Bulgarian historical roots.

During the discussion, a third problem was raised concerning name day celebrations. Assuming that the official Bulgarian Name Classifier would include Turkish names with their equivalent Bulgarian explanation, it would lead to acknowledgement of the Muslim name calendar, alongside the Orthodox one, which would be in contradiction to the party’s nationalistic politics. Another aspect arising from the inclusion of Turkish names in the Name Classifier was how to deal with the relation between the name and religion. As Muslims often named their children after names from the Koran, the documentation of Turkish names would lead to legitimating the Koran. Thus, the presence of Turkish names was to be rejected. Furthermore, there were also modern names with no analogue in the Christian Name Calendar. Thus, if a generally applicable Classifier of Bulgarian names was approved, should it fully coincide with the Christian Name Calendar or not? And if the party wished to maintain the Bulgarian ethnic identity through the usage of names, should the Name list include only authentic Christian names? This on the other hand, would exclude traditional, non-Christian, Bulgarian names, as well as modern ones.

All these debates led to the conclusion that ultimately the ideal project for a Bulgarian Name Classifier was utopian. The question of ignoring Turkish names revealed a deeply rooted problem with the collection of Bulgarian names, as it was not easy to define what constitutes an authentic or “real” Bulgarian name. Though not formulated in such a way, the members of the Ideological Department understood the complexity of the problem and one of them concluded: “If we go looking for foreign names in Bulgaria, the list will amount to millions of names.” Next the logical “politically correct” conclusion followed: “We should keep the Bulgarian character of the names.”⁶⁹

Thus, the final decision limited the number of names on the list to 5000, which was also to include Orthodox calendar names, “which are perceived as Bulgarian.”⁷⁰ It is evident that the restriction on Turkish names would inevitably lead to restrictions on the Bulgarian ones too. The direct, but unexpressed political message was that any Turkish name would be dangerous. The first date set for the preparation of the Bulgarian Name Classifier was mid-1985. Additionally to the Bulgarian Name Classifier, a list of foreign (Turkish, Armenian, Arabic and others) names was to be drafted in the near future (no specific date set), with their respective Bulgarian etymology. A working group was set up, consisting of scientific experts such as philologists and historians, who were to draft a solution.

The debate indicates that the ideology of the Bulgarian identity and unified Bulgarian nation, based on common Bulgarian names, faced a serious dilemma. On the one hand, there was no criterion for what constituted a Bulgarian name. On the other hand, it was obvious that to declare all foreign names, which were far more numerous than the Turkish ones, as

⁶⁹ Ibid., 177.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 178.

essentially Bulgarian, was absurd. But to prohibit all foreign names was also not acceptable. Although the Turkish names were perceived as dangerous and were recommended to be ignored, some Bulgarian family names were Turkish. This presented an unresolvable 'theoretical' dilemma, which revealed the clash between logic and realpolitik and ideological nationalism.

The dilemma was resolved in the practice via the positions of ideological nationalism and violent politics.

2. 4. When did the “Revival process” begin? The renaming as a structurally conditioned process and as a contingent event

No Politburo decision was ever discovered for the launch of the forced renaming campaign. If there was such a decision, it was probably destroyed. Gruev and Kalionski give December 10, 1984 as the date when Dimitar Stoyanov, the then Minister of Interior, ordered the district departments of Interior and the first secretaries of the district committees of the Communist Party “to prepare the renaming of Bulgarian citizens of Turkish origin in all districts where there is such population.”⁷¹ This is based on an investigation of the journalist, Tatyana Vaksberg, but the document is not published yet. Although the official Name list had to be drawn up by 1985, it appeared that name indexes were already available at the start of the "Revival process." The massive renaming actions in the Kardzjali district started on Christmas day, December 25, 1984 and officially ended in February 1985.

⁷¹ Gruev and Kalionski, 139.

In the memoirs titled *The Threat* by the former Minister of Interior, Dimitar Stoyanov, the date, December 10th, is not mentioned. He represents the renaming process as smooth and voluntarily, which started in 1982, with a regulation stating that children from mixed marriages – between a Bulgarian and a Turk or Pomak, should be registered with Bulgarian names. For Stoyanov, the renaming was simply a necessary stage in the wider “Revival process,” which was oriented towards the restoration of a historical truth – that the Turks living in Bulgaria were in fact Bulgarians. In describing the process of renaming, he has two main arguments. The first one refers to the constant threat from Turkey’s expansionist politics and the self-organized, illegal, “Bulgarian” Turkish terroristic groups. It is possible that the sudden start of the renaming process was influenced by two terrorist acts committed by Turks at the Varna airport and the railway station in Plovdiv in the summer of 1984. Later on, with the opening of the secret police archives, it turned out that the four perpetrators were agents of the secret police.⁷² Whether these attacks were ordered by the secret services is still a question without an answer today. The terrorist acts justified the gendarmerie’s further violent actions against the Turks.

Furthermore, Stoyanov suggests that the changing of their names was voluntary. Here is a description of the process: local committees were established to study the family roots of the “Turkish-speaking citizens” (Stoyanov never uses “Turks” for the Turks, living in Bulgaria, are “Turkish-speaking” Bulgarian citizens) and children from mixed marriages. In the course of this endeavor and as a result of extensive scholarly activities, the committees had to face the fact the *majority* of the Turkish-speaking citizens living in the border regions have Bulgarian roots. The *until then veiled truth* that Turkish-speaking citizens are actually Bulgarians, converted to Islam, came to light...It is interesting that in this situation many Turkish-speaking citizens

⁷² Gruev and Kalionski, 138.

begin to show interest in seeking out their ancestral roots. So exciting are the numerous crowded meetings between family and relatives, only until recently complete strangers. The result is a *partial* renaming with Bulgarian names.”⁷³ (Italics mine, L.P.).

Following the "spontaneous" desire of Kardjali's citizens to change their names, on December 25, 1984, the Kardjali villages were occupied by troops. Whether it was Stoyanov, Zhivkov or the first secretary at the BCP district committee in Kardjali, it is unclear, who instigated the mass renaming of Bulgarian Turks. Stefan Tzanev writes that Zhivkov boasted to his associates: "I decided to take personal responsibility for this historic renaming. If I had left this matter to the next Secretary General it would have taken years until he would dare to launch such a step."⁷⁴

There are different versions as to who exactly is to be held responsible/accountable for the start of the renaming process. Due to the lack of clarity surrounding who ordered the occupation and why, one can conclude that the “Revival process” probably started accidentally. Nevertheless, BCP's general policy and the protracted debates around the name lists, indicate that sooner or later, this act of violence was bound to happen. Thus, the “Revival process” was at the same time structurally conditioned and manifested as a contingent event, during which the political elites played a crucial role.

⁷³ Димитър Стоянов, *Заплахата* (София: Албатрос 1997), [Dimitar Stoyanov, *The Threat*] 166-167.

⁷⁴ Стефан Цанев, *Български хроники* vol. 4, (София: Изд. Труд, 2009), , [Stefan Tzanev, *Bulgarian chronicle* vol. 4], 401.

Third Chapter: Memories of Renaming, Interplay of Identities and Everyday Forms of Resistance in the “Revival Process”

The focus of the third chapter will be to analyze the 25 interviews conducted with Turks, living in Bulgaria, and their Bulgarian neighbors. The main research questions are as follows: what are the memories of the Turks concerning the renaming process? How did they choose their names? Was there any identity crisis? Was there any everyday resistance and if yes, what type? How did both groups evaluate the “Revival process” twenty-seven years later? Who did they hold responsible for its occurrence? After analyzing the answers, I will try to find an answer regarding the interrelation of the different types of identities – individual, personal, ethnic, sense of belonging. The chapter will be structured alongside these questions.

3. 1. Research description

As described in the first chapter, my field research was conducted in two municipalities: Mineralni Bani and Dulovo. At Mineralni Bani, Haskovo district, I carried out two study trips. The pilot research was done during the period August - September 2011 and the second trip was carried out during the period 13 April – 20 April 2012. The research was conducted in the following villages: Mineralni Bani, Karamantci, Tatarevo, Sarnica. I conducted 13 interviews, one of which was a group interview with three persons – men, Turks. The respondents are: four Bulgarians – three men, one woman, and eleven Turks – nine men and two women.

The next research site was Dulovo, Silistra district, where I had been from April 24th to April 30th 2012. The research was carried in the following settlements: town of Dulovo, villages

Chernik, Okorsh, Ruino. I conducted twelve interviews: four with Bulgarians, three with Turks, one of which was a group interview with three Turkish women, four with Kazalbashi Muslims, one with a Tartar Muslim.

The total number of interviews is twenty-five. The number of respondents was larger than expected, due to the fact that two of the interviews were group interviews. Thus, the total number of people whom I interviewed is twenty-nine: sixteen Turks, four Muslim Kazalbashi, eight Bulgarians and one Tartar Muslim. Naturally, the number of Turkish respondents is larger, because the focus of the research emphasizes the experience of the renaming process. Men predominate among respondents, due to the fact that women often refused to answer the questions. Often the men took the “responsibility” of being interviewed or upon hearing the topic of the conversation, the women commented: “Oh, this is in the past, all has passed.” Only upon insisting on whether they will tell their grandchildren the story of the “Revival process,” the answer was “not now, probably when they grow up.” The unwillingness of the Turkish women to talk about that process deserves special attention, but it should be tested and commented in another research. As a whole, the interviews became possible with the help of several people, who introduced me to the respondents based on the “snowball” principle.

Quotations, taken from the interviews, are indicated by a number in order to preserve the respondents’ anonymity. The interviews are numbered in chronological order. In brackets, I indicate the sex, the ethnicity and the site – MB means Mineralni Bani, D means Dulovo. As I am using qualitative methods, the interviews cannot be regarded as representative, but they can lead us to useful typologies, illustrate specific experiences and present the meaning of the

events. As Alessandro Portelli claims, “the first thing that makes oral history different ... is that it tells us less about *events* than about their *meaning*.”⁷⁵

3. 2. “My name” and the public name: the interplay between individual and personal identities

The renaming campaign started in December 1984 and officially ended in February 1985. For less than three months more than 800,000 people were forcefully renamed.⁷⁶ The formal procedure was the following: the Turks, who were considered to be Bulgarians by party policy, but unaware, were summoned to the municipality where they were given a list of “real” Bulgarian names,⁷⁷ from which they had to choose.

The questions that greatly interest me in this paragraph are: how did people chose their names? If they choose at all, was Pierre Bourdieu right in claiming that the personal name gives the individual a diachronic consistency and synchronic unity, beyond the multiplicity of occupied positions? How did people cope with the situation of having a new name and how did they deal with being banned to use their old one?

⁷⁵ Alessandro Portelli, “What Makes Oral History Different,” in *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories* (Albany State University of New York Press, 1991), 50.

⁷⁶ Искра Баева и Евгения Калинова/съст./[Iskra Baeva and Evgeniya Kalinova – editors] „Възродителният процес”. *Българската държава и българските турци /в средата на 30те и началото на 80 г. на 20 век/* [“The Revival Process”.Bulgarian State and Bulgarian Turks /in the mid 30ies and beginning of 80ies of 20 c.] (София: Изд. Държавна агенция „Архиви”, 2009), 29.

⁷⁷ Although the debates about the name list regarding the “true” Bulgarian names could not reach an acceptable decision, as shown in the previous chapter, such a “scientific” classifier was quickly invented and applied as a key “tool” in the renaming process.

Following Bourdieu, my initial hypothesis was that the process of renaming would have a strong blow to the identity of the renamed Turks and would possibly lead to a split identity (Jemile Ahmed).⁷⁸ But upon reading Jan Assmann's distinction of the two aspects of the "I identity,"⁷⁹ I formulated another hypothesis: the renaming would have been accepted as a requirement to the personal identity but would not have impacted the individual self. I will analyze the reactions of the Turks, as they remember them, who were forced to change their names, in order to check which of those two hypotheses will be validated.

Before continuing with the analysis, I must mention that all the interviewees remember the renaming procedure as absolutely formal and soulless, like signing a minor document: "write down the first thing that comes to mind" (Int 13, m. T. MB). In many cases, the names were changed without notification or approval of the newly chosen name. Very few teachers showed sympathy to the Turkish children by trying to help them to choose a name: "I'd been changed from Orhan without knowing to Ognyan. They allowed the first letter to coincide, so something remains. But then my teacher told me, you are very studious, so the best name for you would be Nickolay" (Int.3, m. T. MB).⁸⁰

What were the reactions of the Turks to this blatant disregard of human dignity? First, part of the interviewees refused to choose a name from the proposed list. "When no one

⁷⁸ Джемиле Ахмед. "Име, преименуване и двойна идентичност. (Българските турци по време на "Възродителния процес")" *Социологически проблеми*, 1-2, 2003:177 [Jemile Ahmed, "Name, Renaming and Double Identity. (Bulgarian Turks During the "Revival process")"].

⁷⁹ Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2011).

⁸⁰ The meaning of the name "Nickolay" is "victorious", "the one who conquers peoples". Also, Saint Nickolay is known as "wonder worker." The teacher acted as a godmother, trying to give the boy a new heroic name, suggesting that he will cope successfully with the situation. Most probably this is due to the fact that the teacher felt uneasy and tried to help: "These teachers, intelligent people, knew that this is not the right way, it is not the approach, the right approach" Int.3,m.T.MB).

chooses, the official gives you some name” (Int. 4, m. T. MB). This could be interpreted as a refusal to take on a new identity, since the “given” new name is completely external to them. Second, the choice is fictitious and pragmatically formal. People either chose a name, starting with the first letter of their old one, or a name, which they could remember easily. The three Turkish women, that I interviewed, noted that they choose the same names for all their relatives, declaring, with a sense of irony, that this “so it was easier to remember.” “My husband was Blagovest Mladenov Jenkov, I am Stela Mladenova Jenkova..,My husband called his brother and asked: What’s your new name? Blagovest, he answered. O, mine is the same” (FGI 14, f. T. D.). “My daughter and I had the same names, like sisters, not as a mother and daughter - I was Galina Encheva Angelova, she had the same name, but we called her Galya... my husband was Encho. I had a father in-law, we also called him Encho and his son was also Encho. ‘Little’ Encho, old Encho and the youngster Encho, there were three Enchovtsi” (Int. 14, f. T. D.). While retelling their renaming experience, the women laughed, it seemed as if they were mocking their previous names and choices. The names did not mean anything for them. The names were just a facade for the public, not for them, which is why all the interviewees stated that they continued to use their old names at home. Of course, these are retrospective memories and at the time, the women perceived the renaming process as a heavy blow to their identity. Laughing now, the three Turkish women added: “We cried, my son, we cried a lot. To change the names of elderly people...” To retain their inner identity, the women perceived the new names as something external to them, an empty sound, which had to be remembered, but was nonetheless meaningless.

The complete alienation from the name is illustrated in a story about an old woman, who chose the name Dana. ‘Dana’ in Turkish means ‘calf.’ When asked why she chose the name

Dana, she answered: “I have a calf (‘dana’) in my yard and when I look at her, I shall recall my name...” (Int. 14, f.T.D.) The mockful remark illustrates the absurdity of the renaming process and at the same time sends a message – you treat us like animals, you fool us. In the sense of James Scott, this is a typical Brechtian act of everyday resistance. The elderly woman either consciously depersonalized herself, declaring that they dehumanized her, or she keeps her personality hidden without forgetting her former name.

The third strategy was the conscious strategy of choice by looking for Bulgarian names equivalent to their Turkish name or for names of heroes and movie stars, playing the role of heroes. Here is one such example of the story of a 70-year-old Tartar from the Dulovo municipality. In his case, he had already heard of the rumor about the renaming process, so the night before he decided, which “slavic” name his family would chose. He chose names with similar sounding for himself, his wife and his daughter. For the family name, he chose the occupation of his father: “My father was a famous boza-maker (Bozadzia) in the region. Everybody used to call him uncle Bozadzia, grandpa Bozadzia. So I suggested that my family name be Bozadziev.” His son was named after a character from the movie “Kalin the Eagle.”⁸¹ He chose Kalin because his Turkish name sounded similar and it also meant “falcon.” In the end, his strategy served its purpose since the renaming commission accepted all of the names. But he was not able to predict everything and was forced to improvise once at the municipality where they asked what name he would like to adopt as his father’s name. His response was the following: ”I know that you [Bulgarians] give your grandchildren the names of their fathers. Let us reverse the process. Let it be Kalin. Let the grandfather be named after his grandson. It is at the same time funny and at the same time...” The absurdness went even further because it

⁸¹ “Kalin the Eagle” is the first Bulgarian communist movie after the regime change in 1944.

appeared that his sister, who lived together with their father in the next village, had already given him a different name. Thus, in the next months the respondent struggled with the administration to make sure his father was registered under one name. Through these accounts one can observe the complexity of the strategy the man devised to preserve anything from his name, its meaning and finally his kin. On the one hand, he sought harmony in the way the names sound through making sure their new names had the same first two letters and preserving the similarity of his daughter's first names and the pronunciation of his son's name. On the other hand, he sought to uncover a linkage to his kin - the family name arises from the occupation of his father and the meaning his son's former name is preserved to some extent. Furthermore, he chose names, which were "politically correct" – his wife's name is Russian, and his son is named after a hero from the first communist movie. Nevertheless, the combination of all these strategies, the interplay between sound and meaning were constructed for the purposes of the external world. But the meanings of the names are relevant again only for the family, revealed only in the safe haven of the home. In such a way the new "public" names are domesticated. The whole narration of this man goes with a joke, humorous, stressing the absurdness of the situation. When the symbolical reality of the old names is publically denied, he incarnates in the new symbolical order hidden meanings. Thus he denies the new symbolical order, without problematizing it.

Here are the next examples of choices of names of heroes and movie stars.

"During our childhood, they changed our names but we made fun of it. There were children, who wanted to be named after football players: fans of Levski wanted to take the name of the "Gibbon" – i.e. the nickname of Bojidar Iskrenov; fans of CSCA wanted to be

named after Stoichkov... Kids took nicknames” (Int. No. 6, m.T. MB). “A lot of interesting things happened. I remember that among the older kids in 7th and 8th grade, there was a film called *Blake’s 7*. Many students chose the names of the main characters from this film: Blake, Jenna, Kalli. They adopted the names of football stars. It was widespread to take the names of characters from movies... my brother for example was Sergey as Stefan Danailov in *At Every Milestone*” (Int. No 3, m.T.MB).

“*At Every Milestone*” was the most popular television series during communism. The main character is Sergey, a Bulgarian boy born in the Soviet Union. As a grown man, he returns to Bulgaria to take part in the anti-fascist resistance. Stefan Danailov, one of the most popular Bulgarian actors, played Sergey’s character. The choice of a name of a character from the resistance might be symbolic as well.

Thus, the officially accepted name was laden with hidden meaning, recognizable only by its owner and inaccessible for any political power. The choice of the new names resembles the game of choosing nicknames, which suggests that the new names were perceived as nothing more than nicknames. We can only surmise to what degree these choices were deliberate unless these young people were already aware of the exerted violence, then, their preferences can be judged as provocative. In the Bulgarian context, such names sound ridiculous and inappropriate and would undermine the purpose of renaming. However, there is another possibility: maybe here the magic function of the name comes into play, where children chose the names of their favorite characters, hoping to become them.

Both strategies of choosing names – “adopting” a meaningless name to act as an external sign or looking for a hidden meaning in the new ones and using them as nicknames,

can be identified as masked consent. The new names were the public ones, but in private sphere families retained their Turkish names. “We always called each other by the old names. There was some Aledin, he became Alyosha, but we went on calling him Aledin. The other boy, he was Ziad. We kept calling him Ziad” (Int.N. 5, m.T.MB). “My neighbors never called me Nikolay or Niki, the whole village called me Orhi” (Int. No. 3, m.T.MB). “In the “mahala” (neighborhood) we used our names, we spoke Turkish. The more you press a man to lose his identity, the more he feels bound to it” (Int. N 9, m.T.MB).

And here I shall return to the two hypotheses regarding the linkage between name and identity. None of the Turkish respondents talked about a serious split in his self-perception, of “losing” him/her Self or of bewilderment. I realize that the retrospective memories may suppress the pain and psychologists, researching traumatic memories, could come to different conclusions. But my conclusion is that their individual identity, and here I shall use Assmann’s distinction, remained untouched. Some of the Turks mentioned, “the name does not make the person.” The interviewed Turks kept their coherent self-image, related to their body and biography, because their individual identity, just like the ethnic one, described by Brubaker et al, is embodied and enacted. The new name was part of their personal identity and according to Assmann was related to their public social roles, to “social accountability and recognition.”⁸² When a split between the private and public sphere occurs such as in the eighties in Bulgaria, the notion of organic duality regarding the “I identity” is very helpful in explaining the unproblematic coexistence of the intimate self-perception and the imposed public roles and masks. People kept their former names as ‘a rigid designator’ of their individual diachronic

⁸² Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 113.

consistency, which they found more and more in their private lives. Their new names were only for public use. Thus, the renaming process led not only to the opposition between public and private life, but to delegitimation of the public sphere.

So, the duality of 'I identity' corresponded to the duality of names. It consisted of using the old names at home, among friends and family, whereas the passport names were used only for official needs, such as entering into a school or taking a new job, etc. This is the resistance of the domestic identification as opposed to the forced "passportization."

The phenomenon of the double name is also found in the naming of the newborn. In the municipality, babies were registered with their Bulgarian names, but they received their true names at home. When commenting the *Thesis about the "Revival process"* in March 1988, Zhivkov acknowledged: "The fact that we changed their names, means nothing. They are baptized at home, every newborn has two names."⁸³ The hidden naming is an exceptionally interesting form of resistance. It has a religious value because it places the newborn under the protection of Allah. This also shows a reluctance to let the newborn spend its entire life identifying her/himself only as a subject of the socialist state. Third, it guarantees family continuity, which is threatened by external political elimination. The presence of two names – one for domestic use and the other for the street is not only a matter of different discourses. In fact, it means that the life of every person with a double name becomes a long-lasting field of rivalry – between self-defending autonomy and external (normative) control. On the other hand, this is a contest about owning the life history of a person, this is "a struggle over how the past

⁸³ Baeva and Kalinova, 31.

and present shall be understood and labeled,”⁸⁴ as Scott explains. Thus, all the strategies for adopting new names and at the same time rejecting them can be defined as the most widespread form of everyday resistance.

3. 3. “We are Turks, our homeland is Bulgaria”

Anthony Smith postulates that national identity is based on the dominant ethnic identity and that both identities are related to common territory, common ancestry etc. As the idea of the nation state is premised on autonomous and spatially distinct units, Ayse Perla argues that

“belonging to a particular territory is a major identity marker... Ethnic affiliation, primordially defined, is seen as organically, irrevocably rooting a specific group of people in a specific place (which may or may not be designated as their place of origin). This alleged organic relation results in a particularly strong conflation of ethnicity and place, which in turn posits the inalienable right of a group of people to a specific territory; that is, it privileges not the lived experience or interaction with that territory, but a more essential, symbolic link.”⁸⁵

This was the initial presumption of the BCP leaders’ attitude to the Turks, Bulgarian citizens. They had been, or pretended to have been convinced, that the Turks, living in Bulgaria, had Turkish ethnic identity, which was their “essential symbolic link” with the Turkish territory, and that the Turkish population in Bulgaria thus imagined themselves (in the sense of Benedict Andersson) as belonging to Turkey. This is why the Party leadership decided to create a new, Bulgarian, ethnic identity for the Turks, in order to promote their Bulgarian national identity.

⁸⁴ James Scott, preface to *Weapons of the Week: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), xvii.

⁸⁵ Ayse Perla, *Terms of Belonging: Turkish Immigrants from Bulgaria in the Imagined Homeland*. (A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Department of Anthropology. New York University, May 2005), 12-13.

The interviews do not confirm a relationship between the Turkish ethnic identity and the “essential symbolic link” with Turkish territory. The ethnicity of the interviewed Turks was clearly manifested, “embodied and enacted”, as defined by Brubaker et al.– they spoke Turkish with their relatives and fellow-villagers who are Turks, their names were of Turkish and Arabian origin, they said that they listen to Turkish music, watch Turkish TV, and that their religious rituals are Muslim. Evidently they perceive themselves as Turks. Nevertheless by homeland they understand the place they had been born and where their parents had been born – Bulgaria. At the beginning I used a direct question about the place of belonging, which led to the following answer: “Almost all Turks feel, I’m sure, very worthy Bulgarian citizens. Bulgaria is their homeland, not Turkey, not America, not Germany. Each of us is ready for his country, for Bulgaria, even prepared to give his life.”(Int. N 3, m.T.MB). After receiving this answer I realised that the question is too suggestive, provoking politically correct answers, which is why I decided to change it with two other questions: “Why did you not leave for Turkey?” and “Why did you return?” The answers were similar to the example given above.

The significance of Bulgaria as a homeland became evident when people talked about the so called “Big excursion” in 1989, when the Bulgarian-Turkish border was opened and a lot of Turks left for Turkey. For nearly half of the respondents this “Excursion” turned to be a painful event, even more painful than the process of renaming. I was struck by this finding.

“Then the ‘big excursion’ began. We were forced to travel abroad. Some wanted, some not. I, for example didn’t. I never liked Turkey, Turkey for me is a foreign country. I’ve never had a desire to go and live in Turkey. My parents neither. They lived here, we had built big houses, all families had animals, people had cars.....Nobody said ‘we want to leave for Turkey. Everybody said ‘we want our names’”(Int. 16, f.,T,D.)

This is a spontaneous answer, and it appeared when we talked about the renaming process. Another one: “I did not leave for Turkey because my family is here, they are born here, my parents, my grandparents. My homeland is where my family is” (Int. 9, m. T. MB); “People had welcomed us in Turkey, but I pined for Bulgaria. It is my homeland, my childhood was over here. As a little girl I lived in a small mountain village, Sviretz, I remember the mountain, lilacs, violets, my mother was still alive...” (Int. 12, f. T. MB) And so on, and so forth.

Of course, this is the case of those Turks who had not left Bulgaria or had returned⁸⁶, but they are a significant number.⁸⁷ Still the ethnic identification and sense of belonging of the Turks I interviewed follow neither the link, presented through Anthony Smith’s conceptual construction, nor the one which BCP party functionaries assumed to be true. The identifications are more complex and are stable, rather than fluid. Brubaker argues that such identities are not related to groups. I can neither confirm nor deny this because it would require a different methodological approach. What I am saying is that the interplay between ethnic identity and sense of belonging is more complex. In our case the two differ. The ethnic identity of Turks, living in Bulgaria, is not bound to the ethnically symbolic land of origin. Rather, the ethnicity and the sense of belonging to a homeland are split - the homeland is understood as “the place where I was born and where my parents were born”. In a way there is no sensitivity to a deeper generic line, which should be present in the ethnicity. The ethnicity is just a habitus (Bourdieu),

⁸⁶ If I continue with this research, the next step should be interviewing not only Turks who never left Bulgaria and those who had left and returned, but also those who never returned. A comparison of the remembrances among those three groups would be very valuable. Their recollections probably differ, as they are conditioned not only by temporal, but also by spatial distance. Those Turks who remained behind and live together with Bulgarians evaluate the “Revival process” from a time distance, but they still share a common life space with Bulgarians; those, who left Bulgaria, will perceive the past events from the distance of both time and space. Differences in their perception of homeland and sense of belonging will probably become evident.

⁸⁷ Gruev and Kalionski argue that those who returned are 40 %, see Gruev and Kalionski, 2008, 193.

an embodiment (Brubaker), whereas the homeland is more concrete, in a way “narrowed” to the local place where people live, and to a concrete family history.

3. 4. Forms of resistance

The problem of resistance against the renaming campaign is not as clear as it seems. The participants in those events often perceive only acts of heroism as forms of resistance. From that point of view everyday expressions of discontent and dissatisfaction or failure to meet the government regulations are not in this heroic register. One of the interviewed Turks told a story about his friend’s father, who was talking publicly about the absurdity the renaming campaign and that the "Ayshe of yesterday will become Aninka today". Because of that he was in quickly sent to prison (FGI 4, m. T. MB). In the context of repression and strict measures against any disobedience (including verbal objection to government’s decisions), acts like the one described above and the consequent punishments are not perceived as heroic. From this point of view "heroism" itself is a problematic concept. Thus the responses of the interviewees should not be understood as a tendency of the Turks to downplay their resistance, but rather as the implicit existence of some ideal standard for such. The opinion of one respondent - that in fact, there was no true resistance - should be interpreted in this light:

"How will you resist. Only with talks, you say this is not true, that everything is invented. If someone says that is not real goes in jail right away, here you see father and son in prison. And my brother and my father were also beaten (FGI, No 4, MB, Turks)

For many, resistance "through talking" is no resistance. Perhaps in view of the overall result – the total renaming of the Turks – the events of 1984-1985 are estimated as a

manifestation of a particular kind of helplessness. These remarks are necessary in view of the approach of this study. The reconstruction of resistance should combine both types of actions - the type that is recognized by respondents and the less “heroic” everyday resistance, which, in an environment of totalitarian violence, has the characteristics of opposition. In line with this approach, the interviews with Turks and Bulgarians reveal generally three types of resistance.

3. 4. 1. Political resistance

It comprises of the activities against the “Revival process” of illegal organizations, created by the Turks, and the spontaneous riots and meetings of the local population. The reaction of the state against spontaneous forms of political resistance (including sabotages, evaluated as terrorist acts), and against public protests or village barricades, was immediate - quick trials and imprisonments. "Now you reminded me, said one respondent, of the first time there was such a protest in Bulgaria. On a meeting they protested against the “revival process”, in the village of Karamantzi.⁸⁸ They arrested those seven people to intimidate the rest of society."(FGI 4, m. T. MB)

3. 4. 2. Escapes

Escape attempts, whether legal or not, generally failed. I will mention two examples in that regard. First, as renaming did not begin simultaneously in all regions of the country, driven by the rumors about what was happening, some Turks quickly prepared and submitted documents with requests for emigration to Turkey, with the hope that they would avoid the renaming.

⁸⁸ The village of Karamantzi is 10 km away from Mineralni Bani.

Another, somewhat naive, and in this respect evoking true sympathy, attempt to escape renaming would be to hide in inaccessible and wild areas or in the big cities. Cases of people from the rural population, trying to hide in the nearby forests, inaccessible mountain areas, huts and barns, were of mass character. *"But during the Revival process a lot of people had fled to the woods. You know not to get caught, to get away, you know, to hide, but..."* (Int. No 3, m.T.MB). And another: "My family even fled to the forests and stayed there for a whole week." (Int. No 5, m.T.MB). Escape attempts toward cities were based on the fact that the implementation of the renaming policy was more difficult and slower in cities. Escape to remote areas, however, was difficult, on one hand, because of the key control on roads and train stations, and on the other hand, because during the renaming process the authorities had split off the settlements with the help of police and military forces. Therefore, most people fled to close but inaccessible mountain villages. One interviewee explained this simple act as having faith in a miracle. "Yes, either in the forests or in other villages. You count on the unknown, so yeah, everyone thinks that it won't happen to him, but..." (Int. N 3, m.T.MB).

3. 4. 3. Everyday forms of resistance

Nearly all strategies for "choosing" the new name could be regarded, as forms of everyday resistance. The phenomenon of dual names - one for public use, acting as nickname, as public mask, while "under" it is the Turkish name, the sign of the individual identity, is a typical everyday form of resistance. The naming of the children with Turkish names at home, is also such a form.

Other examples relate to non-compliance with the regulations which aimed to limit the use of Turkish language. On one hand all Turks continued to raise children in an entirely

Turkish linguistic environment. “Well, everyone spoke Turkish in their families” (FGI 4, m. MB,Turks). “They banned the language, but we kept speaking it at home” (Int.6, m. T. MB). What is more, the cases of deliberate and exclusive use of Turkish in public places (in spite of the fines and punishments), became more frequent.

“So I walk through the centre, I’m in the 9th grade, a teenage, and I see my mother in front of the store, she sits on the bench and I embrace her, so I tell her hi, hello in Turkish. I say, what do you do here, what’s the matter? She tells me that my father is in the store and she’s waiting for him. Then suddenly a man comes and takes us to the police for an interrogation - why did we speak Turkish? There were such cases” (Int. No. 3,MB,Turk).

Somewhat more hostile towards the ordinary Bulgarians was the refusal to answer their questions⁸⁹ in Bulgarian under the excuse of not understanding their language. There were also cases of refusal to serve, delayed or bad service for citizens of Bulgarian nationality – in stores, in medical services, etc.

Turks continued to celebrate their religious feasts, although secretly. In their way they tried to punish, those who were part of their group but who also were part of the BCP apparatus and were thus perceived as semi-traitors:

“For example, we celebrated secretly Kurban Bayram, Bayram razaman for candy, lollipop, you know. I was a party secretary at that time and, because of that, at the Kurban Bayram they made me be the first one to slaughter an animal during the night. We were slaughtering during the night.” (Int. 6,m. T. MB)

Turkish people also hid things that were important to them:

“We hide things that are important to us. So we had Turkish tapes, hidden ...we also had some books, which were in Turkish. We hid these things.

⁸⁹ E.g. in the small village stores.

They used to come to our home, to enter our house. You know, as you have the Bible we have the Koran, which is hanging on the wall, because you are not allowed to leave it lower than waist level, this is the way our religion teaches us. We hid them, because if they caught these things they would burn them” (Int.9,m.T.MB).

There are many examples of everyday resistance, which cannot all be described here. It should be noted that no resistance by Bulgarians was mentioned, only sympathy to the Turkish neighbors and colleagues. Still some of the Bulgarians continued to use the old names of their friends. Yet that is rather an exception.

What is clear from all the interviews that the Turkish people had really created an alternative code to the official power discourse. It acted on two levels – one was public, demonstrated by irony, in a Brechtian way – “call me Dana” (calf in Turkish), or openly – speaking Turkish publicly. The other level was the hidden one, which operated at homes, or during the night – the naming of children, religious rituals, reading Turkish books. Both levels opposed the official power discourse and kept what was perceived and felt as a real identity – the individual and the collective ethnic identity. This alternative code strengthened the Turkish ethnic identity. Before that period Turks have not so strongly reflected on this identity. Its forthcoming consolidation was pointed out by both Turkish and Bulgarian respondents.

3. 5. The Bulgarians’ response towards the violence during the “Revival Process”

The interviews with Bulgarians show a high degree of estrangement, passivity and indifference in the face of violence against their Turkish cohabitants. In times of serious human rights violations, the indifference itself is equal to complicity. This is a topic brought up by authors such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Hanna Arendt and Tsvetan Todorov. In this respect, Hanna

Arendt introduced the expression “banality of evil,” whereas Primo Levi makes an even stronger statement: “There are monsters, but they are too few in numbers to be truly dangerous; normal people are a far greater threat.”⁹⁰

Bulgarians are aware of the renaming act’s severity: one of the interviewees acknowledges that taking away one’s name is a violation of personality: “No one can interfere with your personality. That is the first basic thing that one should not accept. This is my conviction” (Int.1, m. B. MB).

However, they accepted the violation of personality and identity of many people indifferently, of which some of them were their neighbors. It is not clear whether they feel guilty for their indifference, but they seek excuses for their behavior. I classify the reasons that I found in the interviews according to four types:

3. 5. 1. Blaming the political institutions at the time for the violence

The same person states: “Well, this is some political thing that we don’t understand. According to me, they are purely political motives” (Int.1, m. B. MB). The same interviewee goes on to say: “I never dealt with politics and don’t read about it ... don’t read the papers or even watch television. ‘Cause I just don’t want to be brainwashed, even in the slightest degree” (Int.1, m. B. MB).

Thus, the theme of personal responsibility is avoided through a deliberate establishment of two radically different systems of relations to the neighbors. It is as if intimacy, mutual help and tolerance apply only to daily relations of family and neighborhood. Borrowing salt or

⁹⁰ Cited in Цветан Тодоров [Tsvetan Todorov] “На предела” [On the Limit] (София: Народна култура, 1994), 127.

bread, paying visits or treating the neighbors on festive occasions is commonly accepted within the framework of non-ideologized daily life. But against this informal and friendly atmosphere the distant and estranged attitude towards the Turks stands out, insofar, as they are drawn into the role of victims by official political processes.

Thus, the gap between the public and private and, as a consequence, the specific split consciousness in the Bulgarians' relationship to the Turks raises the question of the pseudo-character of the "political" in Bulgarian socialism. Alongside this, the lack of mass protests or reactions against the political repression of the same people one has been sitting shoulder to shoulder with at the table and in the workplace, uncovers the deficiencies of perceiving them as persons valued in themselves on the whole. Indirectly, this circumstance indicates a shortfall in civic consciousness and culture with respect to the value of basic civil rights. All of this confines the Bulgarian population to the narrow horizon of family and survival. In the context of the events discussed here, the commonplace Bulgarian proverb "Everyone looks after himself" displays negative implications: a-sociality, lack of solidarity and disengagement with politics. The following avowal of one of the Bulgarians is revealing: "I am possessed by things pertaining to family. I'm too little a man to think about Bulgaria. Even if I would, nothing depends on me" (Int. 1, m. B. MB).

Within this context, a second type of explanation can be identified for the causes of indifference.

3. 5. 2. Fatalism or the impotence of common people to oppose what was happening

The events of 1984-1985 were interpreted as unavoidable, as an overwhelming political force. “Since they [the immediate performers of the repression – my remark, L. P.] are commanded by the Party, they are obliged to carry it out” (Int 2, m. B. MB). The events are perceived as a natural disaster that no one can counteract. This fatalism and resignation can also be found in the more general statement that nothing depends on little people. “What can you help with? Only with sympathy?” (Int.1, m. B. MB)

3. 5. 3. “I was not there while the ‘Revival process’ was carried out”

It struck me that in all the interviews with Bulgarians this excuse is particularly lucid. One of the interviewees declared that he was not in the region at the time, thus lacking “direct experience of what exactly had happened here” (). It was often mentioned that there was an information blackout imposed on the campaign of renaming and thus: “To speak frankly, we also felt uncomfortable to ask questions because the local situation and the political situation were such that one shouldn’t know a great deal” (Ibid, Int. 2, m. B. MB.). Tsvetan Todorov finds similar justifications among the German people regarding what occurred in the concentration camps. Therefore, he concludes that ignorance is no reason for condemnation by law but is unavoidable ground for moral condemnation sounds, which is applicable to the

Bulgarian situation. "It can be stated that if the population was really not informed about what was going on, this was because it didn't want to know."⁹¹

3. 5. 4. Justification of the process

Two of the Bulgarian men, both from Dulovo, support the official position of the BCP with all of its arguments – the role of the Turkish propaganda, historical arguments (they are not Turks, because they eat pork), even the demographic problem. Here are two examples - the Turks as 'a fifth column' and as a demographic problem.

"Turkey's goal is not to force all Turks to emigrate to Turkey, but to count on a Turkish minority in Bulgaria, because this here is the fifth column of the Turkish special services. And thus, through this Turkish minority they can influence the political life in the country. If all the Turks emigrate, how will Turkey influence Bulgaria? And in that way, with the Turkish minority at its aid, Turkey can influence the authorities and interfere in Bulgaria's internal affairs" (Int. 21. M. B. D).

In the final account, the predominant reasons for passivity and indifference during the "Revival Process" avowed by the interviewees themselves are to be understood in the context, on the one hand, of the world view of a closed family principle of life accepted by Bulgarians, and on the other hand, of the full de-politization, atomization imposed by the repressive machine of the communist regime.

⁹¹ Tzvetan Todorov, 1994, 148.

3. 6. Who was responsible for the “Revival process” – the view from “below”. The problem of guilt

To the concrete questions: “Who do you think was responsible for the “Revival process?” and do you blame somebody?” most respondents, with a few exceptions, answered the following; “They – the politicians.” Each explanation transferred the responsibility further and further away: the Party, the secret police, Todor Zhivkov (the general secretary of the BCP at that time - only three answers), Russia and Leonid Brezhnev – the explanation, “blaming” Russia was shared by three respondents in Mineralni bani and four in Dulovo. Most interviewees did not blame any of their villagers or concrete Bulgarians they knew. Here are some answers:

“Who was to blame for this process?” – “The regime clearly, the state security and such stuff....Personally, my opinion is that the regime was under Russian influence, the aim was to make sure tht Turkey did not have such influence in Bulgaria. Back then they spoke about the ‘pure nation’, ‘united nation’ etc. (Int. 15, m. T. D)

To the question: Who was responsible for the “Revival Process?”

The interviewee responded as follows:

“Todor Zhivkov did. They wanted one nation only for Bulgarians. But such things do not exist anywhere in the world...Then they passed a rumor, was it Brezhnev then in Russia, supposedly it was decided there that if you change the names, it will be better for Bulgaria. You know back then the commander was Russia” (FGI 14, f.T.D.).

“I know a Turkish documentary about the “Revival process” and it said that this process was an experiment by the Russians. If it became successful, they would apply it throughout the Caucasus region” (Int.9, m.T.MB).

As I mentioned above, generally the Bulgarians accused the state and the politicians or just disregarded the problem. Two of them justified it.

The Turks do not accuse their Bulgarian neighbors and mention that they could not have done anything in reality. “Similar like us, they also suffered from severe anxiety. It wasn’t possible to stand up against the state machine, no matter if you are a Bulgarian or a Turk” (Int. 3, m. T. MB). The men participating in the focus group interview expressed a similar opinion: “Even if they wanted to say anything, they couldn’t have said it because they knew that you cannot turn against the authorities. Fear... They couldn’t have expressed their opinion freely because someone, somewhere could have reported them to the authorities and accused them of spreading propaganda or revolting” (FGI 4, m. T. MB). What is most impressive in the Turks’ statements is the forgiveness of their neighbors.

However, two facts must be mentioned. First, the interviewees are more inclined to forgive the behavior of the Bulgarians than that of the “traitors and betrayers” from the Turkish ethnic group. Here is what one group of interviewees in Mineralni Bani said about who is guilty for the “Revival Process”: “Well, some people from the government, you must know better. And they used such people as Shukri Tahirov – Orlin Zagorov. They often say now that the government carried out the “Revival Process” on the basis of a proposal by some Turks.” The participation of Shukri Tahirov, who voluntarily took the name of Orlin Zagorov, was discussed for a long time in the group, as was the participation of a MRF⁹² deputy in the “Revival

⁹² Movement for Rights and Freedoms – a Bulgarian party founded in 1990, which defines itself as a centrist party, generally perceived as a party for the ethnic Turks in Bulgaria because its leadership consists mainly of Turks and Turks vote widely for it.

Process.” “Our present mayor, his father worked for National Security then...” M1: “Yes, and now he’s mayor...” M: “Now, this is a different thing...” M1: “It’s not different, it’s all the same” (GI 4, m. T. MB).

This is an argument between a father (M1) and his son (M). The father was in prison during the “Revival process” and is more inclined to blame, whereas his son explicitly says that the mayor is not responsible for his “reviver” father’s actions. But even when it is spoken from guilt, this is an act of distinguishing oneself from the “revivers,” a moral condemnation and not a quest for vengeance.

Furthermore, the “forgiveness” is stronger in the interviews with Turks, who never emigrated. This appears so most probably due to the forced co-existence with Bulgarians for decades following the events, which required mutual compromises and tolerance. The following interviewee statement demonstrates the Turkish forgiveness: “Look now, we are generally such people, believers. We never dwell on the past. We never want to avenge or to look at things with jealousy. Because that was a state policy. Normal people, they did not do it, I mean, Bulgarian people. What is their fault? It’s not their fault” (FGI, 4, m. T. MB).

From a moral standpoint, the Turks regarded the profiteering from the Turk’s hurried emigration with irony, understanding and even a sense of humor. “There were cases in which, we call them hagglers in the folk’s language, they come with their cars and, for example, if a cow cost 1000 BGN, they would buy it from you for 100 or 50. I even remember he took the neighbor’s jars” (FGI 4, M. t. mb).

3. 7. The mutual assessment: Bulgarians about Turks, Turks about Bulgarians.

3. 7. 1. The general evaluation of the other ethnic group

Bulgarians appraise Turks almost always positively. The Turks are “friends, industrious, disciplined,” “nice people” (Int.1, m. B. MN). However, the Turks’ evaluation of Bulgarians is more reserved. On the one hand, benevolence is demonstrated. “For so many years our forefathers have communicated together, we should communicate as well” (FGI 4, m. T. MB). But, on the other hand, it is noteworthy that all interviews lack positive appraisements of any national Bulgarian virtues. Turks see Bulgarians only as people, with which they are bound to share their living territory and which require at least a minimal degree of tolerance and agreement with regard to religion and morality. Due to the above mentioned, any expressions of approval of Bulgarian behavior during the “Revival Process” pertain only to particular persons, which is not common or massive. “I’ve heard older people say that their Bulgarian friends, superiors and managers did not approve of this process, that they disagreed with it. Party secretaries as well. But I have no information that they undertook something against it” (Int. 3, m. T. MB). This selective attitude, however, can be interpreted as demonstrating concealed distrust of the Bulgarian community as a whole and definitely articulates suspicions towards Bulgarians, which have not yet been overcome.

3. 7. 2. The neighborly and personal relations between Bulgarians and Turks

The tone here is definitely warmer and more cheerful. The relations are predominantly friendly (both before and after the violence). One frequently hears that members of neighborly Turkish and Bulgarian families work together in the same enterprise or on the field and that their children also go to school and play together. Neighboring families visit each other. “The

relations between the neighbors have always been, I assure you, ideal. There has always been a respect for the others, they have celebrated together all the holidays” (Int. 3, m. T. MB).

Both Bulgarians and Turks expressed their mutual respect and reverence for each other’s religious traditions, holidays, rites and rituals. Which is more, each holiday is open to the other group. In this way, the period of celebration removes all ethnic differences. All interviewees mention the exchange of gifts during Bulgarian and Turkish holidays. Examples are ubiquitous; they typically exchange ethnic dishes such as traditional Turkish baklava or sweets during the so-called Şeker Bayramı or dyed eggs on Easter. One of the interviewees said: “Look, just a moment before, they’ve brought baklava for the boys, they’ve brought it for the Şeker Bayramı. We were eating together until a few moments. And they are still on the table, all of them [Bulgarians and Turks – my remark, L. P.] together” (Int.1, m. B. MB). “We celebrated Easter together, my Bulgarian neighbor gave me dyed eggs, I even went with her to the church, because she is old and needs help” (Int. 12, f. T. MB). Or just without any occasion:

“When they have their Bayramı, the other neighbor’s wife always comes here with mekitsi. And my wife too. There’s absolutely nothing, how to say it, well, we demonstrate this respect ... it is not just demonstrative, you know, it is about human relations. For example, recently my grandson was playing on the road and this neighbor. Emin’s wife, she tells him: “Come, come” to give him something. And she gave him a thing, a sort of kebabche, she had just fried them. I don’t know how they’re called, she gave it to the little one and he took it and went to play on the street. Everything’s normal with normal people” (Int. 2, M.B. MB).

But for some people, both Bulgarians and Turks from Dulovo, neighborhood relations nowadays are not what they used to be:

“Look, this was a clumsy process. From the whole thing, the result was that the people started opposing each other. The tension was artificially created between people, who have lived a lifetime together. There was no such term as "ethnic tension" for a long time. You were small, but it was like that, Bulgarians, Turks, especially in our area lived neighborly, friendly, without any reservations. Back then the relations were ideal. After that though, you know, nationalist parties appeared, which pushed this ethnic hostility to the fore” (Int 15, m. T. D.).

In any case, it appears that the neighborly relations reach beyond ethnicity and religion and are established upon coexistence and mutual help. That is why even the religious holidays are shared and do not divide people, for they are an occasion for common celebration and confirmation of the specific togetherness.

On the contrary, the abstractions “Bulgarians” and “Turks” rather emphasize the differences. When Bulgarians speak of Turks as “nice people” and “friends,” they refer to the surrounding Turks. It is unclear how they appraise Turks in general. One of the Bulgarian interviewees in Dulovo distinguished Turks as a whole, who “act as a Fifth column for Turkey in Bulgaria” from his Turkish neighbors, who are “good people” (Int 21, m. B. D.).

The Turks’ answers illustrate a certain distancing from Bulgarians as a whole, which doesn’t concern their neighbors. It is precisely the transition from the context of specific neighbors and friends to the level of ethnicity that makes nationalism possible. And, vice versa, the specific interaction between specific people can explain to a certain extent the normalization of the relations between Bulgarians and Turks after such a violent act against the Turks by the Bulgarian state. That also explains the Turks’ ability to forgive their neighbors’ indifference and inaction in the face of this violence.

3. 8. Conclusion

The interviews show that the “Revival process” is far from forgotten. The memories of the forceful renaming are still vivid among the Turkish respondents, while the interviewed Bulgarians do not want to remember the events. People remember the humiliating renaming process, but they do not look for culprits and do not blame anybody. It is as if some “foreign” state committed this violent act, in which by chance some Bulgarians and Turks took part. On the level of everyday life and coexistence, guilt cannot be sought after and life must continue like it used to be before. The Turks tried to preserve their everyday lives within the home, beyond the state-controlled public space. The individual identity was maintained at home, while in their public lives they used their new names only as an official mask. The question remains as to whether this dramatic division between public and private delegitimized the public and the politics in general.

Conclusions

In the second chapter I presented the assimilation politics of the BCP towards the Turks and Bulgarian citizens, in addition to the BCP's power discourse. The assimilation politics towards the Turks were driven by two main motivations – modernization and geopolitical. The former was related to the wish to purge “the Orient within” as Mary Neuberger put it. Modernization politics claimed that the Turkish population was backward and rural and should develop into a new urban ‘workers’ civilization. In other words, it should become modern, meaning that it should “reach” the more “civilized” Bulgarians. The geopolitical argument defined Turks as 'foreign' in spatial terms, as far as they were associated with Turkey. Turks were perceived as on the border between two epochs – the ‘new’ and the ‘old’ – and between two states; on the edge between Bulgaria and Turkey. The spatial border reconfirmed the first temporal border, because it was a demarcation of “socialism” and “capitalism.” During Zhivkov's regime the BCP depicted the Turks as a “Fifth column” of Turkey, as a minority, whose external ‘kin state’, or homeland, was Turkey to which the Turks were loyal. Whether the “Bulgarian” Turks felt that way was unimportant for the party leaders. This fixation with Turkey, which I call geopolitical discourse, was used to legitimize the assimilation policy. The next step was to breakdown the depiction of Turks as hostile to Bulgarian identity in order to reconstruct them as Bulgarian. For this purpose the argument of their Bulgarian origin had been launched, which led to “restoring” their Bulgarian names.

The interviews do not confirm the construction by the Bulgarian communist state relation of a Turkish ethnic identity and the “essential symbolic link” with the Turkish territory.

The ethnicity of the interviewees was evident, “embodied and enacted”, as Brubaker (et al) defined it (Brubaker et al 2006). They spoke the Turkish language with their relatives and fellow-villagers who are Turks. Their names are of Turkish and Arabian origin. They said that they listen to Turkish music, watch Turkish TV, and their religious rituals are Muslim. They perceive themselves as Turks. However, by the word homeland they understand the place they were born and where their parents had been born: Bulgaria. The identifications are more complex and do not follow neither the conceptual construction of Anthony Smith for instance, nor that one of the BCP functionaries. Their identities are not fluid, they are stable. There is more complex interplay between ethnic identity and a sense of belonging. The ethnic identity of Turks living in Bulgaria is not bound to the ethnically symbolic land of origin. The ethnicity and the sense of belonging to a homeland are split. The homeland is understood as “the place I was born and my parents were born”, so in a way there is no sensitivity to a deeper generic line, which should be present in the notion of ethnicity. The ethnicity is just a habitus (Bourdieu), embodiment (Brubaker). The homeland is more concrete, in a way “narrowed” to the local place where people live and to a concrete family history. Both identifications, although stable, do not have any essentialist features.

Memories of the interviewed people do not show signs of ethnic tensions either. The study confirmed the thesis of religious tolerance between Bulgarians and Turks. On an everyday level Bulgarian and Turkish neighbors had no tensions; they celebrated religious feasts together. This situation was typical for the period before the “Revival process”; confirmed by most of the respondents. Some of them argue that there are some tensions now, though they are not great and as a whole they are provoked by politicians. So, the relations between Turks and Bulgarians are “torn” between neighborly co-existence and hidden fears, which are dependent

mostly on the political (mis)use of the history of ethnic interrelations. This specific balance makes ethnic relations unstable, though at the same time not aggressive. The “Revival process” shattered this balance, but now it appears to be restored due to the fact that the process of renaming is pushed out from the consciousness. In order to keep the balance, both Turks and Bulgarians placed the responsibility of what happened at the “political top”, remote from their everyday life agencies such as the Soviet Russia and Brezhnev, who ordered the Bulgarian politicians to perform “this experiment”; either to help the BCP to unite the nation, or to experiment their future policies towards Caucasus who were striving for national emancipation. In such a way the reasons for the “Revival Process” events are prescribed to a foreign agency and the very events are “pushed” away into a distant past.

However, while Bulgarians estrange themselves from the “Revival process”, with the repeated argument that they had not witnessed it, because they had been absent when those events occurred, the Turks clearly remember the process of renaming and their strategies for choosing a new name and coping with the situation. The Turks accepted their new names as external signs, as public masks, as nicknames. The notion of organic duality regarding “I identity” (a distinction between individual and personal identity), defined by Jan Assmann, is very helpful in explaining the unproblematic coexistence of the intimate self-perception of the renamed Turks and the imposed public roles and masks. People kept their old names as ‘a rigid designator’ of their individual diachronic consistency, which they found more and more in their private lives, and the new names were only for a public use. Thus, the renaming process led not only to opposition between public and private life, but also to discrediting the legitimacy of the public sphere.

The usage of the old names could already be defined as an everyday form of resistance. The interviews confirm the hypothesis that the Turkish people had really created an alternative code to the official power discourse. It acted on two levels. One was public, demonstrated by irony, in a Brechtian way – “call me Dana” (calf) – or deliberately, i.e. speaking Turkish publicly. The other level was the hidden one, which operated in homes at night: the naming of children, religious rituals, reading Turkish books, etc. Both levels opposed the official power discourse and kept what was perceived and felt as a real identity; an individual and a collective ethnic identity. This alternative code consolidated Turkish ethnic identity, which until that time was not self-reflected. This consolidation was pointed out by both Turkish and Bulgarian respondents.

The political “realm” and everyday one operate in different logic, the problem is that they cannot meet: public life was delegitimized for the Turks after the “Revival Process”; the politics of the BCP did not care about the everyday lives of Turkish people. The consequence of this could be political representation which resembles family relations and private life as totally alienated from the public sphere.

APPENDIX I

Guide for in-depth interviews

A. The life at the beginning of 1980s (before the “Revival process”).

Relationships with their Bulgarian neighbors. Sense of identity.

- How would you describe the life in the village/town back then?
- What were the main differences in the village/town?
- How do you evaluate your relations with your Bulgarian Neighbors/ Friends/Colleagues prior to the so called “Revival process”:
- Did the two ethnic groups have any disagreements, if yes – on what issues; what united them?
- Did you have any close friends belonging to the other ethnicity and religion, if yes, what did you do together, did you know the rituals and beliefs of your friends, did they know your beliefs and rituals, did you celebrate common feasts, if yes, which one?

B. Questions about the “Revival Process”. The process of renaming. Everyday resistances. The reactions of their Bulgarian neighbors, friends, colleagues to this process.

- What is your most lurid remembrance of the “Revival process”?
- When and how did this process begin?
- How the process of renaming was carried on, by whom?

- Did you have the opportunity to chose your new Bulgarian name, if yes, what name did you chose and why exactly this? If not, what was the logic of giving you exactly this new Bulgarian name?
- How did your relatives/friends/colleagues call you – with your old name or with the new one?
- How did you feel and cope in a situation when in practice you had two names? Did your life change substantially? How did you manage to keep your old life?
- Were there any resistances against the “Revival process”? If yes – of what type, if not – why?
- Did you continue to talk in Turkish language, in spite of the fact that it was forbidden? Did you hide any forbidden things – like Turkish books, music, Koran? Did you continue to practice “sjunet”?
- Did you go to Turkey after the opening of the borders in 1989? If yes, when and why did you return? If not, why did you stay in Bulgaria?
- How your Bulgarian neighbors/friends/colleagues had reacted to the “Revival process”? Were they sympathetic to you or not, did they help you or not, if yes – in what way, if not – why?

C. Evaluation of the “Revival process”. The problem of guilt.

- How do you evaluate this process now?

- What is your explanation about it, why it had started exactly in mid 1980ies, what have been the reasons?
- Who is to blame for all that, are there any specific persons whom you regard as guilty.
- Do you feel the influence of this process now, if yes – in what way, in what type of situations.
- Do you think that this process should be remembered, that your grandchildren should know about it? If yes – why, if not – why=

D. Evaluation of the situation now.

- In your neighborhood how do Turks and Bulgarians live now? Compared to the situation before the renaming are there any changes? If yes, what had changed?
- Is there ethnic tension now? If the answer is “no”, what was the most important factor for overcoming it?
- Do your Bulgarian neighbors/friends/colleagues respect your religious feasts?
- Are there any members of your family who are living and working abroad, if yes, where, how do they feel abroad, do they miss their old place of living?

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