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**The Time Beyond Space:
Exploring Alternative Directions for the Analysis of Identity
Formation in the case of Romania and Turkey**

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Abstract

The article explores the possibilities and potential limitations revealed by the comparative analysis of identity formation in the case of Romania and Turkey. The author develops the argument from a critique of mainstream social constructivist accounts in the field by rejecting the idea that territoriality is essential for the definition of national identities. Thus, the article attempts at opening paths toward structured analysis from alternative perspectives. The focus is not necessarily on the terms of comparative analysis, but rather on its sense and the clarification of its object. To that purpose, the author offers an interpretation of modes in which citizenship and language have been interpreted by Romanian and Turkish sovereignties at their very inception. The article thus proposes an account of national identities as colonisations of time, deeply connected to the ontology of sovereignty.

Introduction

Despite the apparent abundance of academic literature concerned with the Turkish identity and the beginning of a sustained concern with Romanian identity, virtually no effort has been dedicated to date to the comparative analysis of the two national identities or to enlarging the spectrum of research beyond the stage of conceptual initiation. Classical studies of Turkish identity, for instance, tend to focus almost disturbingly on the relation between language and identity formation (Heyd 1954), on Turkish identity as inseparable from Turkish nationalism (Baskin 1990), or on the role played by Islam in the formation of Turkish political identity (Ozay 1990). This is while the first notable research attempted by an anthropologist ended up as a strange sort of list of features apparently to be used by anyone wanting to literally produce Turkish identity (Güvenç 1995). The result is that identity formation turned into a rather unclear object of research, an academic factoid which is necessarily secondary to and dependent on definitions of linguistic or other forms of nationalism deeply penetrated by conceptions of territorial sovereignty. On the Romanian side, things are not much better. The research undertaken by Sorin Mitu (2001),

despite apparently being limited to Romanians in Transylvania, represents an excellent start for the academic analysis of identity formation in Romania in general. Lucian Boia (2005) successfully introduced conceptualisations borrowed from the literature on the imaginary, inspired evidently by Benedict Anderson, or by structuralist-poststructuralist innovations, with identity obviously linked to nationalism. Katherine Verdery (1993) also approached notably the topic of Romanian identity but, again, with a particular attention given to the nationalist accents. This author maintains simply that these efforts are extremely valuable but that it would be quite self-deceiving for the research to follow exclusively into these steps. The association of identity formation with nationalism may stand correct for particular stages in identity formation but not for all. Language became instrumentalised in the historical process but not all the time. The imagery involved in the production of the nation and its meanings does generally draw heavily on various interpretations of territorial sovereignty, though this is not always the case.

This article explores the possibilities and potential limitations presupposed by such an approach. In doing so, the author undertakes analysis from the social constructivist perspective in international relations theory (IR), with an emphasis on the interpretation of the object rather than explanation. The approach is also marked by author's distrust of the tendency in constructivist interpretations of identity to focus on territoriality and borders as critical for the understanding of political identities. The starting point is the view that the object of research indicated here, national identity formation, is problematic and it cannot and should not be understood as a given, a factoid ready for research. On the contrary, this author considers that national identity and national identity formation are categories that need to be first of all defined as objects of research both ontologically and methodologically. In the absence of such clarifications, the risk exists that, as noted by Brubaker and Cooper, analysis tends to make no distinction between identity as a category of practice and as an object and category of analysis (2000).

A Critical Perspective of the Constructivist Analysis

The formation of political identities plays a crucial role within the academic context of IR since it is conceived of as contributing to the crystallising of active players on the international stage, with

considerable influence on their behaviour. Social constructivism has therefore contributed significantly to this area of research by placing a clear emphasis on the problematic nature of identity and, in this spirit, by bringing to the fore aspects which appear as non-problematic in other schools of thought. From the social constructivist perspective, Alexander Wendt has notoriously defined social identities as sets of meanings that an actor attaches to itself while also including, consciously or not, the views of others and thus becoming what Wendt called a "social object" (1995, 385). The question about where the self ends and where otherness starts was already central to social science in general, with the notable contributions of scholars who advocated the critical focus of scientific inquiry as being the boundary circumscribing a target group rather than the essence of what the boundary encloses, or the ontology of identity per se (Barth 1969; Cohen 1998; Bray 2004). Research therefore ironically tended to allocate more and more effort to the linear, non-spatial concept of border at the expense of the very space that it encloses.

Instead, the substantial content of identity was passed gradually towards the responsibility of other fields of research, with the students of national identities vis-à-vis nationalism taking the lion's share. This academic field developed somewhere between the aporias posed by Herderian theory and the description of the nation (in Ernst Renan's words) as a daily plebiscite. In a strange twist of logic, attention in the field gradually turned towards boundaries, especially under the influence of important figures such as that of Ernst Gellner (1998) who gave licence to a view of the culture-organisation nexus in terms of territorial boundaries, or Benedict Anderson (1991, 5-7) for whom the nation as an imagined community was inherently limited and sovereign, with the territorial aspect never seriously questioned. George Schöpflin was to strengthen this view when describing nationalism as a political theory category in terms of territoriality. In his own words, "nations may be defined by various characteristics, but crucial among them is their relationship to a particular territory and their claim to exercise political control over that territory in the name of the nation." Nationhood is then equated by Schöpflin with identity as a legitimising principle and, paraphrasing Keens-Soper, source of "affective, symbolic and ritually reaffirmed ties upon which community rests" (Schöpflin 1996, 219-220).

This line of reasoning found expression virtually unquestioned in the work of social constructivist theorists of international relations,

especially under the influence of Robert B.J. Walker and David Campbell. Thus, focus on boundaries became reified as object of IR theory, with special attention given to territoriality as a crucial aspect of the nation-state's sovereignty. Walker (1993) favours the axiom accepted by both the realist and idealist schools that a common identity is indispensable for the existence of a political community, which resonates sensibly with Renan's basic idea. Walker is then able to identify the political community on the basis of the palpable separation of its inside from the outside. Territoriality is viewed by Walker as inherent to the modern understanding of sovereignty which, in turn, "offers a plausible account of contemporary political practices, including the practices of states" (1993, 14). Walker claims that the principle of difference in international relations emerged in a context of identity defined by Christianity in universalistic terms. Difference appeared naturally with the territorial state, modern sovereignty originating in the Westphalian arrangements, while identity remained to be pursued, still in universalistic language, by the emerging national sovereignties (Walker 1993, 116-117). "Political life occurs in space", states Walker, in line with what he sees as the approach common to both realist and idealist thinkers of IR, that is, an approach deeply embedded in a special imagery (1993, 126-127). These same assumptions continue in the work of David Campbell, with resonances of John G. Ruggie's (1993) view of territoriality as a mark of national sovereignty in the modern age. Campbell (1998) sees the inside/outside dichotomy as the very source of insecurity in international relations, a relation multiplied in practices dictated by the states' need to define themselves in relation with other states. The logical corollary of this reasoning is that, "[i]dentity is an inescapable dimension of being," with the Renanian adjustment according to which, "identity is performatively constituted," while identity per se "is achieved through the inscription of boundaries" marking the limit between the inside and outside, between the domestic and the foreign (Campbell 1998, 9). Identity is indeed attributed some sort of ontological function but it is also viewed by the scholars above as a variable dependent on performative practices and in particular, on the delineation of spaces of identity divided along the "inside-outside" dichotomy. Criticism of this view here does not imply the dismissal of results of research undertaken with the respective view in mind. On the contrary, the studies of national identities developed under the influence of the line of thought briefly sketched above produced valuable conclusions and opened the way for potentially rich investigations. The view of this author however is that a focus on territoriality and border in

the study of identity simply limits the scope of academic work and risks to lead towards a non-desirable indebtedness of researchers to a positivist account where physical geographic representations in identity formation receive more attention than they may actually deserve.

An understanding of identity formation in terms other than the “national” or the “territorial” opens the door to a purely constructivist view of identity as product of social and political engineering, where bare sovereignty becomes the central object of research. The theme is essential in the postmodern account of modernity which builds on an evident awareness about the techniques employed by states to simply create nations, that is- forms of social and political engineering aimed at producing an imagery describing the birth of particular political communities. The focus of students of nationalism on the national definitions of such communities is not misplaced but, at the same time, cannot explain how for instance there are Romanians and Turks who proudly call themselves Turks and Romanians while concurrently rejecting nationalism as such. On the other hand, accounts of the role played by the aspect of political geographies and territoriality in general in identity formation could not provide an interpretation of the preservation and continuous development of identity while territorial definitions of sovereignty change. Accounts of history in both Romania and Turkey contain reference to major territorial disputes which contributed, indeed, to the formation of Romanian and Turkish identity respectively.

However, these cannot explain identity per se, unless we accept the generalisation that, for instance, a Romanian is one who fights day and night for Transylvania and that a Turk is a Turk if and only if she or he claims openly that Kirkuk is Turkish territory. The same examples, strange as they may sound, can serve to illustrate the reasons why practicing and proffering fierce Romanian or Turkish nationalism could never be accepted in academia as defining being Romanian or being Turkish. In support of this view, Lucian Boia noticed that it was only around 1800 that Gheorghe Şincai wrote a historical account of people he called Romanians (Boia 2005, 36). The territorial definition of Romanian sovereignty was to change dramatically over the next centuries, with the unification of Moldova and Walachia in 1859, the addition of Transylvania and Bessarabia in 1918, the loss of the north-western part of Transylvania during World War II to Horthy’s Hungary, and the loss of Bessarabia to the Soviet Russia. Despite these

fundamental territorial alterations of the imagery about a “round” Romania, definitions of Romanian identity followed a path somewhat dislocated from the territorial context and survived in its elementary interpretations. Ultimately, the territorially unitary and indivisible sovereignty of the Romanian state appeared for the first time in the 1923 Constitution (Flora, Szilagy and Roudomentof 2005, 37). How could one explain identity in terms of territoriality then for the previous centuries of Romanian-ness?

As to avoid such epistemological and ontological entrapping, the aim of this article is deliberately limited to a comparative analysis of the ways in which Romanian and Turkish sovereignties have chosen to define Romanians and Turks, that is- the hypothetical holders of Romanian and Turkish identity. This is therefore about definitions of citizenship in both cases, an area of research left somehow in a state of adjacency to the mainstream political science and international relations theory. Since language is inevitably in strong relation with any act of assertion, including the assertion of national identity, a brief account of the Romanian and Turkish views of the respective national languages is also included.

The Emergence of Romanian and Turkish Definitions of Citizenship – The Romanian Story

The subtitle indicates a focus on the ways in which the “Romanian” and the “Turkish” emerged as political categories denominating specific citizenships through official definitions uttered at specific moments in history. This inevitably takes us to the historical periods when Romanian and Turkish sovereignties emerged as active actors in the political life of the respective communities. The account in this article is brief only due to the lack of space but the author is aware of the fact that the issue is complex, with the epistemological, ontological and methodological implications of this approach being explored in much more detail elsewhere.¹ Here, the focus falls on the official definitions by Romanian and Turkish sovereignties of their own subjects. In other words, this article compares the ways in which Romanian and Turkish sovereignties attempted to objectify themselves by ascribing official identities to their subjects, thus defining their own human realm. The

¹ This work is part of a broader effort undertaken by the author for the doctoral thesis under the title “The European Union, State of Exception and State Transformation: Turkey, Romania and Minority Politics,” at Nottingham Trent University, Graduate School of Arts and Humanities.

timeframe envisaged is therefore the period following the adoption of the 1866 constitution in Romania, a document which introduced the notion of the Romanian citizen. In the case of Turkey, the evidence is limited to the period immediately before the first ever constitutional definition of the term “Turk” in a constitutional act of 1924, when Turkism became decisively the central concept in the construction of communal identity. The author has chosen to avoid moving chronologically further in the Turkish case due to the fundamental but quasi-temporary altering of the ways in which Turkish-ness was defined, especially during the 1930s.

From the beginning it must be said that the Romanian case is much more difficult to document than the Turkish case due to the absence of a sustained academic interest throughout the communist period and the rather slow penetration of the study of citizenship into Romanian academia after 1989. However, the work of Constantin Iordachi helps in this respect as one of the most serious contributions to the field. Iordachi (2001) takes the view that citizenship is intimately bound to state and identity formation, a complex relation sufficiently documented there. Drawing on Roger Brubaker’s (1992) seminal work on citizenship in France and Germany, Iordachi adopts the view that assigning citizenship in Romania was (from its inception) a matter of choice between or priority given to either the *ius sanguinis* or *ius solis* principles (Iordachi 2001, 163). The former meant that citizenship was granted on the basis of blood ties to Romanian ethnicity, while the later was about the granting of the citizenship by conditioned legal decision. The analysis of the legislative practice related to the adoption of the 1866 constitution and related pieces of legislation leads Iordachi to the conclusion that, “[f]rom 1866, the principle of *ius sanguinis* ... served as an exclusive basis for ascribing Romanian citizenship.” This was in observance of the principle stated in Article 3 of the 1866 constitution according to which, “Romanian territory cannot be colonised with foreign population” (2001, 164).

The xenophobia underlying this assertion can be traced back to the centuries of incipient development of a local, ethnically-defined identity in the so-called Romanian principalities, with strong accents of othering oriented invariably towards foreigners inside the principalities. The unfortunate role played by the Greeks of Istanbul’s Fener (Phanar) district and in the administration of Walachia and Moldova has instigated the locals to view the foreign element as not only foreign per

se, but also as enemy of the emancipation of Romanian ethnics (Bărbulescu Deletant, Hitchins, Papacostea and Teodor 1998, 299-329). The element of Romanian stock was thus to be portrayed throughout the following period in terms of xenophobic contrast with the “foreign” Greeks of Istanbul and their Ottoman sponsor who ruled political life at the time, with the Jews replacing them later (Roger 2003, Mitu 2001). In this respect, the 1848 uprising against the Phanariot-Ottoman rule marked a turning point in the process of identity formation. It was then for the first time that an opposition to foreigners based on a political programme appeared in the shape of a logically articulated discourse. Bluntly put, in the words of Spiridon, “[t]he Romanian revolutionaries blamed the Phanariots for every possible fault in the character of the Romanian nation” (Spiridon 2006, 380). Bluntness is however to be accepted here, for it was basically this rationale that underlined most reformist energy in the young Romanian state until the first half of the twentieth century, when Phanariotes and Ottomans were to be replaced by the Jews as the new main scapegoats on duty.

The legal context set by the 1866 constitution for the definition of Romanian citizenship made the legal evidence necessary for documenting the belonging of an individual to the Romanian ethnic stock extremely difficult. Iordachi employs technical data gathered by Barbu Berceanu (1999) to indicate the numerous documents required by the bureaucracy to serve for proving someone’s Romanian citizenship (Iordachi 2001, 164). The hurdle is interestingly explained in the spirit of Article 3 of the 1866 constitution mentioned above: it was an instance of what Brubaker had already identified as the political use of citizenship by the sovereign as to close access of foreigners to fundamental sources of income throughout the country, particularly those derived from land ownership (Iordachi 2001, 167). Indeed, the drafters of the 1866 constitution were guided in their efforts by pragmatic principles according to which the institutions to be created with the constitution served the emergence of the Romanian state, and the rights granted to citizens prioritised Romanian ownership of land, favourable in particular to big land owners (Bărbulescu et al. 1998, 384-386). In other words, the concept of citizenship became instrumental for the implementation of a social project aiming at the economic emancipation of Romanian ethnic group and, moreover, at the creation or consolidation of a Romanian bourgeois class. This can be interpreted as an act of sovereignty, with a deep ontological link between sovereignty and identity.

This practice was replicated in the province of Dobrogea between the Danube and the Black Sea, which was granted to Romania following the War of Independence against the Ottomans in 1877-8. Around the beginning of the 1880s, Turks and Tatars represented approximately 30% of the population of Dobrogea, with Romanians and Bulgarians sharing the bulk of the rest. After becoming subject to Romanian sovereignty, the colonisation of Dobrogea with Romanian ethnics led to the more than doubling of that population over the next two decades. Land ownership had been almost 50% in the hands of Turks and Tatars in 1882 but by 1905 Romanians reached 63% in land ownership. This was due especially to the gradual effects of the 1882 Law Concerning Immobile Property in Dobrogea which in turn applied the constitutional principles of Romanian citizenship as reaffirmed in the 1880 Law Concerning Dobrogea's Administrative Organisation (Iordachi 2001, 172-175). The constitutional design served therefore to modify radically the ethnic configuration of the region and also promote the social, political and economic emancipation of the Romanian ethnics in a province that had been for centuries under Ottoman sovereignty. It was in this way that identity was constructed discursively and practically according to the official definition of the country as a land forbidden to foreign colonists through Article 3 of the 1866 constitution. Iordachi reads in these accounts a confirmation of Margaret R. Somers' understanding of citizenship as a dynamic concept of political design with practical value as agency of social change. Far from being a tool of democratic egalitarianism, this in turn served rather as an instrument of stratification along lines of demarcation between ethnic majority and minorities, generally to the advantage of the former (Iordachi 2001, 186; Somers 1993).

A fundamental layer in the construction of Romanian identity has been represented by the constant efforts on behalf of authorities as to build a coherent historical account of what became termed "Romanian continuity" in the current geographical space of the country. This called in the aid of linguistic studies that pushed hard for building a relatively homogenous genealogical line of Romanian language, traceable back to the Roman Empire's incorporation of Dacia and characterised first and foremost by a lack of interruption. The geographical space inhabited by Romanians north from the Danube River and west from the Black Sea has been insistently interpreted as an indicator of Romanians' belonging to geographical Europe (Spiridon 2006, 377). The reference is at best

rather vague. More precise and far more insistent in literature is the depiction of Romanian-speaking population as a Romance island in a sea of Slavic languages. Romanian identity formation has suffered historically from what Monica Spiridon labels as a “genuine *Imperial syndrome*” (2006, 378; italics in original). In other words, rather than being a linear process, Romanian identity emerged out of an obsession with the belonging of the current territory of Romania to the Roman Empire almost two thousand years ago. Later, the alteration of that belonging due to the rise of various sovereign and conflicting powers in the region, such as the Angevin Hungary, Poland, the Hapsburgs, the Ottoman and Russian Empires has been interpreted as simply an unfortunate period of interruption in the line of Romanian continuity. What was manifest continuously throughout the history of the people was indeed the most precious element in the official construction of Romanian identity: language. Consequently, the Romanian people developed almost naturally a “mentality of islanders”, that is, an island of Roman stock in a linguistically Slavic sea (Tănăsioiu 2005, 120).

This simply confirms the view, already suggested here, that the content of identity is indeed strongly marked by confrontations and comparisons with another, with the border between the self and the other playing an important role. However, the content of identity per se is given eventually by features originating or found to originate somewhere deep inside the community and becoming relevant through social practices. Language is one of these markers without any doubt and it is important to note here that language in itself is simply disconnected from the territorial factor. It is in direct ontological linkage with national identity- unlike territory, which usually needs to be occupied in order to be considered appropriated, as the case of Dobrogea province indicated above actually illustrates. There, it was the language of the constitution of the new sovereign that constructed and fabricated the identity of the territory and not vice-versa. What was actually colonised with the 1866 constitution and the official definitions of Romanian-ness was time, not space. Christian values, as fundamental as they are documented in most historical accounts of Romanian state-building, could have very well come to the support of rival claims in the region, such it actually was the case with the Bulgarian territorial claims concerning Dobrogea. However, both constitutional definitions of identity and history writing in Romania advanced the more subtle idea of linguistic continuity in Robert Cooper’s sense of colonisation of time, paraphrasing Octavio Paz (2003, 48). This reading of identity formation

finds similar resonances in the Turkish case, with the claim to eternity in connection with the biological definition of the Turkish race (Isyar 2005, 356).

The Emergence of Romanian and Turkish Definitions of Citizenship – The Turkish Story

The emergence of definitions of the “Turk” in the territories under Padişah’s sovereignty is a story in-and-of itself. The revolutionary changes in Western Europe, starting especially with the discovery of the New World and technological innovations, marked profoundly the Ottoman psyche. In terms of ideological interpretations of political upheavals, it is unanimously accepted in the field of Turkish studies that, “the French Revolution was the first great movement of ideas in Western Christendom that had any real effect on the world of Islam” (Lewis 2002, 40). This in turn was to have a decisive impact on the development of a special understanding of citizenship. The historical feeling of inferiority developed gradually in the Ottoman mindset, with a famous poem by Ziya Paşa (1825-1880) giving a rather sad perspective: “I passed through the lands of the infidels, I saw cities and mansions/ I wandered in the realm of Islam, I saw nothing but ruins” (Lewis 2002, 124). The need for a reform of the Ottoman state was becoming commonplace in all sections of Ottoman society and it took objective shape in the Tanzimat (Reorganisation) period inaugurated by the Noble Rescript of the Rose Bower of November 1839.

However, the idea of restructuring not only the political and administrative system, but the society itself emerged, some say belatedly, with the humiliation of “the Turk” in the Balkan Wars. In a reflex similar to the Romanian view of the foreign, the Turkish element of the Ottoman administration tended to explain the military failure of the empire in the beginning of the twentieth century in Thrace as determined by the betrayal of Balkan nations. Bora Isyar, for instance, acknowledges the influence played by the Balkan Wars on the formation of the modern Turkish identity but at the same time insists on the fact that Turkism did not simply spring out of nowhere (Isyar 2005, 343-344). The link between the emergence of Turkish-ness as marker of political identity and the period of the Balkan Wars is however extremely significant. The revolutionary wave of the Young Turks which developed gradually as to later produce the momentum for Atatürk’s foundational act originated in the turmoil of the Balkan Wars period and

it was also then that the need for re-defining the state and the society first emerged.

As reform (strictly speaking) was concerned, scholars of late Ottoman history have long agreed that the modernisation of the Ottoman apparatus in line with the Western principles of development was already an irreversible process by 1871. With the de facto collapse of the old order, the only way out for the state was via the path of modernisation qua Westernisation (Lewis 2002, 128). What was indeed missing from the reform process was a political definition of the human realm of sovereignty.

This was something with potentially terrible consequences for a state in which, under the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz, the official doctrine was that the Ottoman ruler was not only the sovereign of the Ottoman Empire but also the religious leader (Caliph) of all Muslims as heir to all the early Caliphs of Islam. This turned the Sultan-Caliph inevitably into a significant ideological reference point for a variety of anti-Western and implicitly anti-reformist militants in the Muslim world (Lewis 2002: 124). Should then the subjects of the Sultan be identified as Ottoman, or should they be defined as Muslim only? The political implications of an answer to this question in the multi-national and multi-religious Ottoman Empire were tremendous. The defeat of the empire in the Balkan Wars and its practical exclusion from Balkan affairs led to a feeling of an even deeper exclusion which had already been confirmed with the Crimean War. It meant that there was virtually no say for the Ottoman state in international or even regional affairs, and that the century-old reformation efforts were simply in vain. This rather blunt reading of the situation is actually describing the perception among Ottoman elites and it is in line with the scene evoked by Ziya Paşa.

It was in that context of failure that a debate arose about the content of political identity in the Ottoman elite circles, summarised by Yusuf Akçura's systematic approach to the issue in a classic 1904 essay. Akçura gave it the title *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* (Three Ways of Politics) and in it he developed an argument starting from the premise that the solution to the problems of the Ottoman Empire was to be found in the adoption of the most adequate form of citizenship, in line with the principles of modernisation. He therefore identified three options: Islamism, Ottomanism, and Turkism. Islamism would have presupposed the acceptance of the fact that anyone identifiable as Muslim could

constitute a citizen of the empire. Ottomanism on the other hand was characterised by an even more civic definition of citizenship on territorial basis, with all subjects to the territorial sovereignty of the Sultan being eligible for Ottoman citizenship. Turkism however was most favoured by Akçura as a principle of citizenship in line with the spirit of modernity, “which would bring forth a ‘Turkish political nation based on the principle of race’” (Isyar 2005, 348). The Ottoman context in which this conception appeared was strangely similar to the Romanian context at the time. In both spaces, the emerging sovereignties took the name of the majority ethnic groups. In both cases, the respective denominations indicated actually the groups which were excluded from the previous political, social and especially economic arrangements of their societies. The word “rumân” had also the social connotation of an illiterate, ordinary man from lower ranks, that is to say- not an owner of productive land. A similar sense of social identification was attached to the word “Türk”, denominating the illiterate, Turkish speaking people who were traditionally not allowed to play a role especially in economic activities other than agriculture. The option for a racial definition of the ethnic group was justified by the impossibility of individualising the respective group in a society that was both Islamic and Ottoman as a whole. Only the distinct linguistic identity of the Turkish ethnicity could serve as basis for the formulation of an alternative to Islamic or Ottoman definitions of the subject in the political system.

It is interesting to note how Mustafa Kemal Atatürk himself was later to cut short the debates in the Turkish Grand National Assembly in October 1927, when he stated clearly his view that the sovereignty of the Turkish nation had been seized by force by Ottomans who kept it under their control for six centuries. He went on to state that, “[n]ow the Turkish nation has rebelled, has put a stop to these usurpers, and has effectively taken sovereignty and kinship into its own hands. This is an accomplished fact” (Mateescu 2006, 231). The view of the founder of the Turkish Republic was based on an interpretation of the Ottoman past as a deviation from the natural course of history in which the Turkish identity evolved toward sovereignty. This view is common place in the contemporary Turkish psyche and it portrays the Turk as politically passive throughout the imperial history, especially with regard to the actual ruling of the empire, a context which *imposed* on Turkish people to establish their state anew on the ruins of a failed Ottoman political structure (Bostancı 2001, 654). The emergence of the political identity of the Turk is thus ontologically linked to the establishment of the Turkish

Republic as its zenith, that is, the establishment of the Turkish sovereignty.

In Yusuf Akçura's theoretical account, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 played a fundamental role for the understanding of identity in relation with progress. He viewed that war's outcome as the failure of the French conceptualisations of nationality, while the German version triumphed. In Isyar's words, the confrontation of 1870 was one of "the passionate feelings of race overcoming other forms of belonging especially ones that are interest-bound or artificial" (Isyar 2005, 348). This is usually connected to the outcome of another major war, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904. The victory on behalf of the Japanese Empire signalled in the Ottoman society at the time that the myth of yellow races' inferiority did not have solid support (Kadioglu 2007, 286). The communal bond in Ottoman society was therefore portrayed in terms of interests and civic duties, while allegiance to Turkism was on the contrary constructed in terms of feelings of racial brotherhood endowed with a naturally victorious destiny. Language was again the key marker and time rather than space looms as the focal centre of argument. The fundamental justification of Turkish sovereignty in Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's discourse indicates the view of a line of continuity in the political emancipation of the Turkish race, with the Ottoman period transformed conveniently into a simple parenthesis in the flux of history. The conception of sovereignty in the Turkish Republic was to confirm this view. In the words of Berdal Aral, "[f]rom the Kemalist perspective, national sovereignty did not entail direct political participation by the populace in decision-making. It simply implied a republican regime as opposed to monarchy" (Aral 1997, 80). The republican revolution in the Ottoman Empire meant the abrupt interruption of Ottoman sovereignty and the recovery of a Turkish political tradition of ethnic sovereignty.

Initially in the Turkish revolutionary movement, the purity of the Turkish element did not figure as paramount condition for the construction of identity. The Young Turk movement for instance originated in the European territories of the Ottoman Empire, called Thrace, and it included in its ranks a significant number of Turkish-speaking Muslims of Balkan, Caucasian and other ethnic origins (Lewis 2002: 212, note 4). The Ottoman society had been multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious all throughout its history. Things were however bound to change once the social mosaic became challenged for the first time by an official interpretation of sovereignty in ethnic and

racial terms. It was in 1924 that the Turkish Grand National Assembly concluded a major debate about the definition of the term "Turk" with the adoption of Article 88 of the second constitution of the Turkish Republic. The article read that, "the people of Turkey regardless of their religion and race were, in terms of citizenship, to be Turkish' and as such would enjoy equal rights." This interpretation was to be preserved in the 1961 and 1982 constitutions and presupposed an understanding of the Turkish nation as a rather civic concept which equated membership of the Turkish nation with the status of Turkish citizenship (Kirişçi 2000, 1). The definition however projects Turkish-ness above alternative definitions such as on the basis of linguistic specificities and links it to the system granting citizenship. Apparently, it was territoriality rather than national identity in terms of ethnicity that formed the essence of this formulation. However, the practice of the "Turkification" policy pursued in Anatolia indicates a slightly different interpretation of the principle.

The exchange of populations as a tool of social engineering emerged on the agenda of the Ottoman state in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars, once it became evident that it was the only solution for a relatively sound settlement of relations with neighbours. The practice was extended to the Anatolian inland where it aimed at the exclusion of non-Muslims from the economic and political reconfiguration of Turkish society after 1923.² This was accompanied by an aggressive policy of assimilation towards the Muslim non-Turkish populations in Anatolia. The result was that while in 1913 one in five persons in the current Turkish territory was a non-Muslim, at the end of 1923 the ratio was altered down to one in 40 (Kadioglu 2007, 287-288). Turkish citizens belonging to religious or ethnic minorities were thus not recognised, a practice that endures to this day in the Turkish political system. Based on the same definition of Turkish-ness, those citizens were actually excluded from a range of economic rights. An essential aspect remains that citizenship was perceived as essential for understanding Turkish political identity formation, political participation and, implicitly exclusion (Kirişçi 2000, 2). Despite the formal definition of citizenship in terms of territoriality, the objective territory played only a locative role;

² The Turkish War of Independence was conducted under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal and ended with the victory of the Turkish Armed Forces over the invaders of Anatolia in 1919. The Turkish Grand National Assembly was formed on 23 April 1920 and the Republic was proclaimed by the Assembly on 29 October 1923.

the processes of exclusion/inclusion were essentially built on the subjective interpretations of Turkish-ness.

The territorial aspect in the formation of Turkish identity played however a more evident role than in the case of Romanian identity. The fact that the Turkish national territory was cut out of a huge empire and the defeat of foreign invaders during the Turkish War of Independence has been persistently presented as ontologically crucial for various conceptualisations of Turkish nation. Thus, the integrity of the homeland is usually linked to the integrity of national unity (Aral 1997, 79). The obsession with unity however could not alleviate the huge social and economic discrepancies between various regions of Turkey, with the Western Anatolia by far more developed than its central and eastern parts (Keles 1989; quoted in Aral 1997, 80). Territory, like in the Romanian case, did not play in political practices a central role in positively addressing the troubles of the Turkish society as a whole. On the contrary, those troubles continue to give nightmares to the central authorities even today and the same authorities persist in attaching importance demagogically to the quasi-theoretical territorial unity of the state. Moreover, the very understanding of Turkish identity by revolutionary Turkish nationalists was permeated by a general emphasis placed on time-related representations. The new secular identity proposed as an alternative to the Ottoman or Islamic drew conceptual energy from "the pre-Islamic glory of the Turks" (Aytürk 2004, 2). This approach generated automatically a chronological design in which continuity was found in the permanent historical presence of the Turkish language behind various Turkish/Turkic forms of state organisation. The approach confirms the Herderian influence on the official construction of Turkish linguistic identity with an emphasis on passionate feelings rather than civic bond as the essence of identity. The visceral, the primordial and the perennial Turkish identity could find expression therefore in the assertion of a linguistic identity disconnected from Ottomanism and Islamism.

Asserting this identity led Turkish republican ideologists in the 1930s to venture officially into the moving sands of extreme racist nationalism with the advancement of two hallucinating theses under the auspices of the Turkish Language Institute. The first one maintained that Turkish language was an Indo-European language, while the second "aimed at establishing Turkish as the *Ursprache*, the original mother tongue of all human beings," this culminating in 1936 with the elaboration of the Sun-

Language Theory (Aytürk 2004, 7-8; italics in original). These struggles with conceptualisations of Turkish language may appear puerile to contemporary readers but they served a very pragmatic purpose: projecting Turkish linguistic identity beyond the reach of time into eternity and thus contributing to the survival of the Turkish nation at a time when all Europe was marching blindly toward World War II accompanied by the horrors of political religions such as Nazism, Fascism and, later, Communism. The actions undertaken within the Turkish Language Institute aimed simply at putting the young Turkish Republic on the same footage with its forerunner in international arena, the Ottoman Empire, using the discursive practices in fashion at that historical moment.

Conclusion

Territoriality is indeed an important element in the formation of identities as historical phenomenon. Analysis undertaken with this idea in mind can produce undoubtedly a wide variety of valuable results. However, this article has advanced the idea that territoriality, or the understanding we have of nationalism does not explain identity in itself as an affirmation of a particular self. The essentialism usually associated with official definitions of national identities cannot be explicated exclusively in terms of territorial demarcations or nationalist impulses. The focus of analysis on borders is judged by this author as even more potentially misleading since the existence of borders of identity is dependent on the previous identification of something truly belonging to and individualising first those identities.

Thus, this author has tried to focus the reader's attention toward the assertion of Romanian/Turkish sovereignties through the assigning of citizenship. This comparative approach revealed similarities which can be attributed to the source of inspiration in both cases: the West European practices of identity building within particular international contexts. While differences between the two cases can be attributable to innumerable causes, cultural and religious included, it is the similarities that reveal potential patterns worth studying. In this sense, the European-inspired understanding of modernisation in both cases is confirmed as able to provide valuable insights. The assigning of citizenship revealed the socio-economic value attached by both Romanian and Turkish sovereignties to the mere definition of the Romanian and the Turk. Moreover, this article provided evidence concerning the particular relation between conceptions of language and

time. It revealed that in both cases the respective sovereignties have done their best as to project linguistic identities somewhere above the territorial and the national *per se*, that is, somewhere beyond the regular passage of time. In doing so, linguistic identities emerged as somehow disconnected from the temporal ideals of, say, territorial unity and rather more connected to a more subtle effort aiming at the colonization of time with contemporary national values. It results that the active definition of national identity by the respective sovereignties deserves a closer look. In the spirit of the Peloponnesian War, it is the sovereign *qua* the powerful that decides on what its human realm *is*. That decisional moment may contain much more of the essence of identity formation than reference to second-order subjectivities, such as nationalism or even territoriality. A serious insight into official definitions of citizenship and language may therefore tell us more about techniques and practices of identity formation in which an instrumentalizing of concepts, territory and nationalism included, become simple adornments round the neck of the Leviathan.

The comparative approach to the formation of Romanian and Turkish identities was bound to be incomplete from the outset due to the absence of sustained academic interest in Romanian circles and the inevitable difficulties related to epistemological and ontological interpretations. However, the author claims that some positive steps have been taken here toward exploring the possibilities and potential limitations presupposed by such an approach. First, it has been demonstrated that analysis of identity formation in the absence of a focus on territorial or religious aspects is possible. Second, the article proposed a view of national identity formation as the colonization of time rather than space and the evidence employed proved that such an approach is worth further exploring. Third, a close evaluation would reveal that this work opens the way for an interpretation of national identities in a closer relation to the emergence of sovereignties. Indeed, it is the belief of this author that an interpretation of identity as the very ontology of sovereignty should be the next step in the research. In other words, identity may not actually be the “inescapable dimension of being” but the very being of sovereignty. The currently rather shaky understanding of the content of identity may receive conceptual substance when viewed from the perspective of discourses of sovereignty.

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