

We, the People

Politics of National Peculiarity in Southeastern Europe

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INTRODUCTION: TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR STUDYING THE POLITICS OF NATIONAL PECULIARITY IN THE 19TH CENTURY

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THE PROJECT

This volume is the result of a 15-month research work which brought together young scholars from different Southeast-European academic cultures on a project initiated and hosted by the Centre for Advanced Study in Sofia in partnership with Collegium Budapest.¹ The project entitled *We, the People. Visions of National Peculiarity and Political Modernities in Southeastern Europe*, is inscribed into a broad and daunting design: to help craft a more coherent methodological and structural framework for dealing with questions of collective identity and the institutionalization of national discourse in the context of “late-coming” nation-state projects. In undertaking this task, we focused on a particular, yet critical area: exploring the political instrumentalization of key concepts describing collective identity, such as nation, folk, people, ethnos, national tradition, race, etc., with the purpose of “mapping” the discursive and institutional itineraries through which this set of notions became a focal point of cultural and political thought in various Southeast-European contexts, coincidental with the emergence of political modernity. Our intention was thus to grasp the processes of actual emergence of the terminology of collective identity in these cultures during the long 19th century.

Students of the region are likely to intuit the ties of an enquiry into the politics of national peculiarity to constitutive aspects of Southeast-European intellectual and political cultures. What we are dealing with are political traditions where the definition of the collective self had long been and, in a sense, still is, a principal question. Obviously, any attempt to grasp the processes of identity formation in contexts marked by profound discontinuities, forced structural changes and, in consequence, acute modernization dilemmas presents a major challenge to, but also a strong attraction for, the scholars reflecting on these

¹ I would like to thank the German Foreign Office and the Swedish Bank Tercentenary Foundation for the support they offered to this focus-group research and the series of attending workshops.

issues. Understanding the evolution of these cultures is, on the other hand, essential to any attempt to reconstruct the conditions of nation making, the precarious reality of the nation-state framework and, ultimately, what István Bibó had called “the fear about the existence of the community” in this part of Europe.² Therefore, whereas the connection between the questions of modernity and collective identity is a generic one, the historical trajectory of the Southeast-European societies makes the recreation of the narratives of national identity even more challenging and germane to the comprehension of these societies’ experiences of modernity.

Research in this field on a historical-regional scale has the potential to probe the existence of a regionally distinctive political culture by reconstructing the actual scope and channels of cultural interaction and highlighting cross-cultural patterns of similarity and differences. On this basis the formulation of a new set of questions and the generation of new analytical concepts becomes possible, stirring us to rethink some of the basic comparative categories of contemporary scholarship. Albeit indirectly, this also implies facing the mainstream historiographic traditions stemming from the region, which tend to interpret the evolution of social and political ideas almost exclusively within discrete national frameworks and discursive isolation. Although the individual contributions to this volume do not engage in straightforward comparative enquiries, it is the inherent dialogue between them, their inbuilt cross-references, intertwining themes and juxtaposed concepts—in brief, the polyphonic tenor of the collection as a whole—that intimates the heuristic advantages from such a negotiated comparativist approach.

The threads that created that common texture unfolded along three main lines of enquiry. One was the conceptual reconstruction of the fundamental terms of identity-building processes (e.g., folk, nation, race, national peculiarity, culture, lineage, etc.) in the chosen national traditions during the 19th century. Another sought to chart the external (mostly Western, but also intra-regional) discursive and theoretical influences, and the models and institutions of cultural transfer, in the nation-making processes in the region. The third aimed to develop a provisional map of the competing discourses in the respective thematic field. The comparative setting thus orchestrated yielded, at the end of the day, important new results. It made it possible to highlight the cross-cultural mechanisms of reception of certain scholarly paradigms coming from Western Europe and, at the same time, allowed us to detect

² Bibó (1986), p. 162.

some almost completely neglected intra-regional cross-fertilizations. The aspiration to devise an interpretative framework locating the major ideological traditions at play in the various national contexts, on the other hand, sparked off several fundamental questions: what were the ideological options for constructing the national “ideologems”?; could the labels commonly used in the scholarly literature for certain configurations (such as populism, liberal nationalism, racism, etc.) be used in these contexts or do we have to develop an alternative conceptual framework for dealing with these phenomena?; what criteria should guide attempts at classifying the nationalisms in the region? While we took the contested nature of national identity—the multitude of inventions and the struggle over their meanings—essentially for granted,³ our hope was to go one step further by throwing the main forces behind this diversity into relief and exposing their cross-cultural embeddedness.

The main asset of the project was due to the unusual intensity of comparative teamwork and interpretative negotiation. As a result, a number of more precise questions could be formulated, which created underlying links among the individual research agendas. Such questions concerned the modalities and typology of political nationalism in Central and Southeastern Europe (“supra-national,” “a-national,” “imperial,” etc.); the ideological function of popular representation and its institutions; the relation of confessional and national identities (especially the politicization of religion in the last decades of the 19th century); the “paradigm-shifts” of the national discourses (mid-19th century, *fin-de-siècle*, post-1914); the professionalization of science; and, finally, the itinerary of various theories of ethno-genesis and of race, kinship, etc. The intentional focus was on certain themes, texts and figures which could present a synoptic overview of the common traits and the local peculiarities of the traditions under exploration. Our objective along the way was that, while developing their individual research projects around these common questions, the members of the team could come up with something more than the usual collection of unrelated research papers: a shared vision of the main lines of the history of political ideas in Southeastern Europe in the long 19th century, thus providing an example of a new type of “negotiated” historiography in the region.⁴

3 The “Inventing the Nation” series (ed. by Keith Robbins), London, Arnold, which includes publications on several countries in Europe and Asia, is illustrative of the kind of studies concentrating on these issues within specific national frameworks.

4 In this respect, the “We, the People” team work could build upon the experience and the insights gained in the course of a preceding, broadly comparative project of CAS Sofia, *Dis-*

In a sense our venture may also be seen as a response to the so-called “political myths of identity” in Southeastern Europe which during the last two decades were the ones primarily studied in a typologically comparative manner, thus, in a way, pathologizing these intellectual and discursive traditions and attributing to them the chronic conflictuality of the region. It is our hope that the thematic focus and the approach proposed here will shed a different light on the local traditions of political and social thought by way of demonstrating the potentiality and creativity of local projects in confronting the crucial challenges of modernity and devising new structures of social cohesion. The notion of “people” or “folk” is considered to be heuristically operative in this respect, in that it can bridge the cultural and the political dimensions of nation making—the upsurge of national consciousness and the emergence of the conception of popular sovereignty and democratic politics.

THE APPROACH

A common characteristic of the inquiries included in this volume is that they address theoretical issues by focusing on particular case studies. For the methodological platform of this work, two focal points have been of crucial importance: the common European “pool of ideas” and typological similarities, and the context-sensitive reconstruction of the various ways of ideological transmission, adaptation and subversion. This double-bound approach has helped us, in the first place, to map the junctures of external discursive and theoretical currents with the local intellectual dynamics and networks. The process of cultural negotiation between the 19th-century European “core” and “peripheries” has been studied from various perspectives. There exists a series of works documenting the interaction of a given local tradition with the Center mostly by scholars stemming from the respective East-European cultures but sometimes also from academic centers of the “core,” who had surveyed the reception of ideas coming from their respective countries. However, there barely exists any instance of “horizontal” thematization—neither in view of the actual interaction (e.g., how some of the ideas became paradigmatic for certain similar cases), nor in view of the typological similarities and differ-

courses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770–1945), carried out by a team of young East-European scholars and crowned by a four-volume edition, the first two of which, *The Late Enlightenment—Emergence of the Modern “National Idea”* (2006) and *National Romanticism—The Formation of National Movements* (2007), have been published by CEU Press.

ences between the European “small nations.” The bulk of comparativist research which the 20th century bequeathed to us is marked by a strong sense of cultural superiority on the part of the European “great cultures,” commonly describing the process of reception in unilinear terms.

Our collection has engaged with the reverse perspective—from the “periphery” towards the “core.” This means, in the first place, to see the European periphery not as a passive recipient of influences emanating in the big core cultures but as a dynamic critical participant in a process of cultural exchange and adaptation. The philosophy of cultural peculiarity was not merely exported from the West to the Balkan East. It drew upon circulating cultural resources across Europe whereby local folk traditions became paradigmatic for the entire European flow of ideas. (Consider, for example, Vuk Karadžić’s role in promoting this “universalism of the particular” and the European Romantic canon generally.) What we are confronted with under the headline of conceptual or paradigm transfer has never been a one-way impact (as commonly implied by notions such as “influence,” “import,” “adoption”) but a circulation of ideas where complex trajectories of interaction and modes of involvement of the “recipient” culture occupy the center stage. In the spread of nationalism, furthermore, regional intellectual networks and institutions often were more crucial than direct contact with or intervention by the West.⁵

By saying this I do not mean to relativize the disparity in radiation and reception between the two ends of the cultural interaction. Even when the “Center” was not plainly engaged, it was, mimetically or subversively, ever and over-present. A number of asymmetries constrained the autonomy in the non-Western societies’ construction of self and other: asymmetries of political power, of access to technologies, even of vocabularies of identity.⁶ Paradigms were being imported then adjusted, sometimes beyond similarity, but always claiming resemblance to the original, thus divesting local cultures of generative and cognitive capability. Most importantly, in all these cultures the “West” participated as a major semantic constructor of the national. Binary self-projections such as “we” and “Europe,” local tradition and foreign import, authenticity and imitation, backwardness and civilization became constitutive of the “identity languages” in the region and set the framework for the perennial battles over the representation of the nation. The underlying notions of “lack” and “lag” had proved as formative of the protagonists’ agendas across

⁵ See Mishkova (2008).

⁶ Bracewell (2008), p. 66.

the ideological spectrum as they did for latter-day interpretations of East-European nationalism.⁷

However important the noted asymmetries and receptions though, there was anything but a deficit of creativity, expressive power or diversity in the politics of self-description. Indeed the modalities of identity discourses—on an intraregional, intranational, even intradisciplinary level—have proved incredibly diverse. Significantly, while the greater part of the constitutive elements were in some way present in all these contexts, they interacted differently with the local traditions and discursive milieus, thus giving rise to mutations and innovations which, with hindsight, appear as having been latent in the original “Western” ingredients themselves, but which were unlocked precisely under the “pressure” of the local environment.

Coming to terms with these complexities touches upon a problem which has become central to historical research in recent years—that of the methodological premises of comparative analysis.⁸ The study of national ideologies and identity politics makes a compelling case for an “entangled history,” combining trans-national and comparative analyses—for at least two reasons. The first one ensues from the above-mentioned paradoxical condition of their formation: the discourses of national uniqueness were forged in a context of intense international exchanges and a common matrix of producing difference.⁹ The phenomenon at issue concerns the universalization of the notion and the discourse of national uniqueness—the existence of a narrative of national authenticity available and utilized across Europe, whose authority lay precisely in its transnational referentiality. *Transnational* discourses it was, in other words, which have shaped and legitimated nations and established their supposed differences. Secondly, similar to Fredrik Barth’s definition of ethnic groups, we can argue that national ideologies cannot be understood but in relation to and interaction with each other, that they can only be defined through their dialectical relationship with one another.¹⁰ This does not mean, on the other hand, that the bounda-

7 On the “temporality” of East European nationalism see Todorova (2005), pp. 140–164.

8 See in particular, Cohen and O’Connor (2004); Conrad and Conrad (2002); Haupt and Kocka (1996); François, Siegrist, and Vogel (1995); Kaelble (1999); Marrero (2003), pp. 147–152.

9 See, *partes pro toto*, Thiesse (2005), pp. 122–143; (1999); Leerssen (2006). On “entangled histories,” see especially Werner and Zimmermann (2002), pp. 607–636; Conrad and Randeria (2002); Werner and Zimmermann (2003), pp. 1–36.

10 Barth (1969), pp. 9–38.

ries between them—or rather the material of which these boundaries were built—could not prove rigidly “real” and insurmountable, involving a series of practices of mutual separation and exclusion. Our venture posed a special challenge in this respect as it sought to highlight, and provoke reflection on, the degree of ideological and cultural similarity across rather divergent social, political and institutional frameworks.

For all that we consider the two, often counterpoised approaches—the transnational and the national—as conditioning and complementing each other. The concept of “connected histories of nationalism” (and “transnationalisms”) implies distinct national ideologies, which are, however, connected to and in communication with each other, so that they cannot be defined without reference to “other” nationalisms. This applies as much for cultural (and ideational) as for “political transfer”: the increasing nationalization of politics in the course of the 19th century went hand in hand with rising international interaction and “trading” of political models. In this respect our approach concurs with Henk te Velde’s admonition that the concept of transfer should be primarily used as a perspective and a heuristic tool—demonstrating that “things did not only happen at the same time or resemble each other, but were also connected”¹¹—rather than as an alternative model. An approach such as this is able to accommodate both an emphasis on the contingency, constructedness and representational nature of nation making, and the differences—political, social, and religious—that marked the infrastructures of regions as they developed historically into states and nations and which played such important roles in creating representations and fostering policies about the nation.¹²

The level of analysis, on which the authors in this volume posit themselves, brings together the approaches of conceptual history, intellectual history and history of cultural transfer.¹³ Our constructivist position may be seen as “hard” in that it brings to the front the role of political and intellectual elites in nation making and asserts the historical precedence of the discourse of the nation, in

¹¹ te Velde (2005), pp. 206–208.

¹² For arguments, derived from tackling particular research problems, in favor of combining the comparative and cross-national along with the structural and post-structural, the *emic* and the *etic*, see, respectively, O’Connor (2004), pp. 133–144 and Petrusiewicz (2004), pp. 145–163.

¹³ See in particular Brunner, Conze, Koselleck (1972–1992); Koselleck (1985); Skinner (1979); Pocock (1972); Espagne and Werner (1988); Espagne and Middell (1993); Schalenberg (1998).

hegemonic-political and cultural sense, over its social “reality.”¹⁴ In our case the chosen unit of analysis—the folk, folk culture, nation—is not viewed as a concept with a history of its own but as a generic category encompassing various political and cultural concepts. While employing it as an organizing principle, we are primarily interested in bringing to light political discourses (or “idioms”) located in particular practices, institutions and intellectual subcultures. This is why we have chosen a contextualist approach focused on mapping the usages, employments, and instrumentalizations rather than on the occurrence and evolution of the concept itself.

WHY THE “PEOPLE”?

The “People” already came to be thematized as a constitutive concept of politics (or anti-politics) before the advent of Romanticism. Arguably, the Rousseauian, and in some ways even the Herderian constructions were posing an “internal challenge” to the Enlightenment canon of philosophical anthropology. Some of the implications of these ideas reached the Eastern and other parts of Europe rather early, but the full blossoming of the local versions of the philosophy of cultural peculiarity is indeed connected to the Romantic discourse. Significantly, this period was marked by the emphatic appearance of the “folk” in the political discourse. While for Herder the *Volk*, rather than humanity, was the carrier of culture and progress, and the *Volksgeist* was found to cause all human values and understandings, his views of the organic, historically specific cultural-linguistic community was *not* political—it was indeed “anti-political, different from and even opposed to nationalism.”¹⁵ It was the Romantic revolutionaries with their expanding networks of followers across Europe who were primarily responsible for imbuing Herder’s valuation of membership in a group or a culture with political meaning. “You should have no joy or repose as long as a portion of the territory upon which your language is spoken is separated from the Nation,” Mazzini clamored for while prognosticating the rise of “The Countries of the People, defined by the voice of the free.”¹⁶ Along with the fully-fledged

14 As R. Suny and M. Kennedy maintain, “Nations in this modern sense could not exist before there was a discourse of the nation, that is, before there was an understanding, a language, and a practice of nationness in this modern sense.” Suny and Kennedy (1999), p. 394.

15 Berlin (2000), pp. 168–242.

16 Beales (1969), pp. 151–2.

appearance of this set of new themes, the first decades of the 19th century brought also the European “constructivist” re-evaluation of the archaic self and the new sense of historicity. Far from being unilinear, the interaction of the European margins and the core meant that some of these local lores became paradigmatic for the entire European circulation of ideas, such as the Nordic or Balkan epic traditions.

All these changes came to signify a new mainstream historical approach displaying the resurrection of a holist aspect in modernity. The argument of much national history since the 18th century is, to use Hayden White’s term, “organicism”: its strategy is “to see individual entities as components of processes which aggregate into wholes that are greater than, or qualitatively different from, the sum of their parts.”¹⁷ By engrafting holism on the main body of liberal individualism, the Romantic vision gave birth to spiritual collectivism. The outcome was a shift in the arrangement of cultures from being defined by their position “in time”—hence being thought of as more or less primitive or more or less civilized—to positioning them “in space,” where cultures become equal by virtue of their origin. Here was an undoubtedly modern, even revolutionary ideology destined to have a long political and intellectual career. In this way, while “exporting” the terminology and the underlying philosophical theories to these cultures, the European cultural mainstream integrated a number of East-European cultural contexts, describing them as peculiar *loci* of authenticity.

It was therefore a natural development that the local outcomes of this dialogue, the various versions of national liberalism, seeking political, social and cultural emancipation and Europeanization, were marked by the curious intertwining of the project of modernity with the project of conserving the specificity inherent in “folk culture.” The Romantic imagery of the folk thus infiltrated a wide range of modernist discourses throughout the 19th century and was frequently used to legitimate modernizing projects and reforms. For the East European nations, folk tradition and folk culture, as an embodiment of the specificity and vitality of “the people,” became a condition of modernity rather than an object of modernist extinction. A far-reaching and tenuous paradox thus emerged: the collective individuality of the people, mobilized for the emancipation of its historical being and admission into the modern world, could remain the same collective individuality only by “playing out” its original and a-historical specificity.

17 White (1973), p. 15.

What makes the study of the chosen traditions of political thinking particularly fascinating is that they can reveal the modalities in which the notions of the folk were able to fuse these contradictory claims. The question then arises: was there anything peculiar, locally distinctive, which sets the identity narratives in our region apart? The fruitful notion of “historical (meso)region,” we should be advised to keep in mind, is not free of a danger of smuggling essentialism back in, offsetting the boundaries but not the limitations of the national framework it aspires to outdo. Long before and at least for some time after 1989 nationalism was seen as the *differencia specifica* of and the gate-keeping concept for Southeastern Europe.¹⁸ But while in more recent years this tendency has been increasingly problematized, at least in the academe, the question of whether the regional nationalisms and discourses of identity display certain traits derived from a particular historical-cultural experience is still a vexed one.

Without embarking directly on it, the authors gathered in this volume propose some directions and insights in the quest for answers. Above all they rebut the Manichean division of national identities into good Western (civic, liberal-democratic, and universalistic) and bad Eastern (ethnic, antiliberal, and xenophobic), and of national discourses into “progressivist” (underlying universalist and activist agendas) and “conservative” (stressing continuity, organic development and tradition). Taking their cue from Hans Kohn’s influential mid-20th-century book, itself reverberating Friedrich Meinecke’s famed dualities, many scholars have partaken in the convention of construing both nationalism and the East-European political cultures in terms of binary oppositions.¹⁹ As it happens though, such professed counter-positions converged, and our regional canvas brings to the fore the different combinations in the process and the range of normatively “aberrant” options inherent in the national-Romantic discourse.

The Enlightenment quest for improvement and social solidarity had already posed the question of the boundaries of the community entitled to their exercise and, at least by implication, about the space of patriotism and, eventually,

¹⁸ For definitions of Southeastern Europe from various disciplinary viewpoints, see the special issue of *Balkanologie* 3 (2), 1999. For an overview of the debates on Southeastern Europe as a historical region, see Müller (2003), pp. 393–408.

¹⁹ Kohn (1955). For the sake of illustration, among many others, two otherwise rather divergent approaches to regional nationalisms, separated by a 30-year time span, those by Sugar and Lederer (1969), and Boia (2001, esp. pp. 33–34), appear as being of the same opinion on this point.

of nationhood. But the pre-existence or otherwise of institutional and ideological traditions, upon which that nationhood could be erected, mattered critically for the answers given. Whereas in the historically named countries of the European “core,” inadvertent nation making and the rise of the doctrine of popular sovereignty followed the creation of centralized “national states,” in Central and Eastern Europe the pressure towards defining the boundaries of the national community eroded the existing dynastic state frameworks through politicization of culture and the popular frameworks.²⁰ The inescapable antinomy of national determination—the impossibility of self-determining the identification and boundaries of the national self²¹—was an obvious institutional predicament. Ivor Jennings formulated it aptly: “on the surface it seemed reasonable: Let the People decide. It was in fact ridiculous because the people cannot decide until someone decides who are the people.”²² The national framework, furthermore, emerged as something which “had to be created, retrieved, wrested over and continuously safeguarded from not only the power instruments of the existent dynastic state framework but also the indifference of a part of one’s own population and the shakiness of national consciousness.”²³ This is what István Bibó bemoaned as the “misery of the small East European states,” with the implication that nation building in this part of Europe entailed first of all the “making of ethnic majorities” by creating normative national identities and winning over hesitant populations for the national idea before facing up to the task of acculturating ethnic minorities. It is this condition that made many national-liberal and radical movements in 19th-century East-Central Europe specially susceptible to more than just defining the nation in cultural terms. It made them link in one inextricable whole the “inner freedom,” that is democratic rule, and “outer liberation and unification,” that is the boundaries of the demos—in other words, the internal (civic) and the external (irredentist and ethnic) nationalism. Popular sovereignty and the national self stood out thereof as the two facets of a single meta-language—that of national-Romantic liberalism. It was this ideo-

20 On the distinction between the early-modern “national state,” which moved “unwittingly” towards administrative and socio-cultural integration of its diverse populations, and the modern “nation-state,” which deliberately pursues cultural homogenization, see Hall (1993); Mann (1986; 1993).

21 Brubaker (1998), p. 279. On the modern Eastern European discourses of collective identity, see Sugar (1995).

22 Jennings (1956), p. 56. Cf. Linz (1993), pp. 355–369.

23 Bibó (1986), p. 162.

logical concoction that shaped the normative core of Southeast-European modernity.²⁴ To be sure, the complementarity between civil society and cultural homogeneity was above all a pragmatic one since, as Locke had long before observed, a (limited) government built on the will of the people and civic equality required a culturally “consensual” polity.²⁵ In their exertions to validate their nation’s readiness for modernity, therefore, modernizers across Eastern Europe showed little reverence for distinguishing between the liberal and the Romantic, the universal and the particular, the politically modern and the antiquarian. What they had offered instead was a remarkable mixture of classical liberal and citizenship precepts, the language of nationalism, and Romantic celebration of tradition, thus legitimating their project as universal and rational, on the one hand, and local and patrimonial, on the other. The evocation of “we, the people” in the entitlement of this volume is intended to capture precisely that ambiguity and syncretism which rarely join to the analysis and the notion of (South)East-European nationalism.

MODALITIES OF NATIONAL SELF-DEFINITION BETWEEN POLITICS AND CULTURE

More than a few among our essays has set about exploring identity ideologems which emerged in two 19th-century imperial settings—the Ottoman and the Habsburg. Three of them focus on political constructions of identity variously classified as “imperial,” “a-national” or “supranational.” Generally speaking, the debates on the ideological core of these nationalisms can be approached from two angles: in terms of their avowed rationale and objectives, which often prove to be contingently conceived and incoherently formulated; or in view of the forces they had unwittingly unleashed and failed to control—i.e., in terms of their unintended logic. It is the frequent intermingling of these two dimensions that seems to be responsible for much contradictory assessment and contestation of the ideology and political practice of such supra-ethnic nationalisms.

A. Vezenkov takes the first position as a vantage point for his analysis which sets forth to “understand the political project of the [Ottoman] leaders

²⁴ For a comparative survey of 19th-century Serbian, Bulgarian, and Romanian liberal nationalisms, see Mishkova (2006), pp. 399–456.

²⁵ Locke (1990) [1689]. In accord with his model of nationalism, Ernest Gellner (Gellner 1994), ch. 13) makes the same argument. Cf. Hayden (2002), pp. 205–231.

in its integrity” and proper context. For him, and contrary to the prevailing view of the post-Ottoman national historiographies, the political unity and identification with the Ottoman state, which the official “Ottomanist nationalism” pursued through modernizing legal and administrative reforms, was not a nation-making project. At best, that was a form of politically and administratively forged patriotism, combining traditional and modern elements, which was essentially ripped of ethnic and civic substance.²⁶ The author’s conceptual and contextual analysis points to the predicaments inherent in an imperial nationalism trying to fuse the legal precepts of enlightened citizenship, traditional identification with Islam, and an antidote to the increasingly assertive national claims of the non-Muslim elites of the empire. These predicaments had reflected above all in the incoherence and ambiguity as regards the meaning of Ottoman and the allegiances it was meant to induce—to the state and the dynasty, or to Islam and “Turkism”—but also in its limited and transient success.

The pre-1848 liberal project of the Transylvanian Romanians likewise pled for a multiethnic (Transylvanian) patriotism and a non-ethnic political nation. But the reasons for this apparent similarity, as K. Sata has shown, were of a different nature and can only be grasped if the competing political projects, the Hungarian and the Austrian, are taken into account. The justification and purpose behind the pre-1848 liberal and the Ottoman supra-national patriotisms diverged—a discrepancy exposed most clearly by their sharply contrasting understandings of popular sovereignty and representation. While Ottomanism, and Ottoman modernity generally, implied modern subjecthood made of fellow citizens (*vatandaşlar*), who listened and obeyed rather than participated in the governance of the empire, the liberal Transylvanian Romanian project implied the political enfranchisement of not even individual, ethnically disparate citizens (as the Hungarian liberals demanded), but of legally sanctioned and politically represented ethnic communities (“corporate nations”). The ideological function of the former was the cultivation of a non-

26 As Selim Deringil—Deringil (1993), 166—put it, “The concept of ‘society’, much less ‘civil society’, did not really come into their frame of reference. The threat linking [the reign, 1808–1838, of] Mahmud II and Kemal Atatürk is precisely this obsession with the state.” To be sure, had Ottomanism been approached in terms of the processes it did not intend but helped to unleash (e.g., through the wider spread and relative opening of education or the expanding “application” of Turkism in the Ottomanist language of the “intellectual bureaucrats”), one could discover a series of linkages between Turkish nationalism and the period of Ottoman “reordering” known as the *Tanzimat*.

national “constitutional patriotism,” or social solidarity, divested of any notion of popular political participation; that of the latter—a mediated political education of the different ethnic communities in the exercise of their legitimate sovereign rights. In the light of this cardinal divergence, the patriotic Ottomanist agenda appears to be much more similar to Austrian state patriotism, whereas the Transylvanian liberal followers of George Bariț turn out to share far more with the “Turcophile” nationalists among the Bulgarian subjects of the sultan or with the movement of the Young Ottomans.

With this backdrop, the peculiarities of the incipient Macedonian “supranationalism” several decades later become even more trenchant. T. Marinov maps the multitude of “identity options” that were laid open to the Macedonian nationalists and the variety of “mixed solutions” adopted: from a contingently inspired political separatism with a loose Bulgarian and Macedonian ethnic complexion, as it was espoused by the various national-revolutionary organizations, to the idiosyncratic fusion of internationalist, a-national, and ethnic Macedonian ingredients in the ideology of the Macedonian socialists. Muddling through this diversity induces Marinov to take on board Fredrik Barth’s proposition to view the patterns of self-identification as “to a large extent the contingent result of a specific interaction within a particular setting.” This contextual, circumstantial and interactive approach makes it possible for him to unveil the mechanisms which had triggered the noted discursive pluralism and dynamism and spurred the increasing ethnicization of what hitherto had been an essentially political program.²⁷

These three case studies thus exemplify three different kinds of supranational identity politics raising interesting questions about their similarities and differences. The heuristic benefit of bringing them together is precisely that, on the one hand, this operation makes us aware of crucial dimensions inherent to the studied phenomena which tend to remain hidden when scrutinized in isolation. On the other, it sensitizes us to the variety of non-ethnic nationalisms, even within a single imperial setting, and to the methodological equipment required to make sense of this variety, which considerably complicates the picture imparted by conventional taxonomies. The three studies also lay bare a number of paradoxes in the political constructions of identity that tra-

27 Rogers Brubaker’s notion of “relational *field of differentiated and competing positions or stances* adopted by different organizations, parties, movements, or individual political entrepreneurs..., each seeking to monopolize the legitimate representation of the group” (where “field” is employed in the sense of Pierre Bourdieu), is also appropriate in the Macedonian case (Brubaker [1996], pp. 61, 68–69, italics in the original).

ditional national historiographies, predictably, fail to come to terms with. Read together they underscore the existence of vital areas of overlapping and complementarity between warring political and nationalist agendas. The relational character of the Romanian and the Hungarian nationalisms in Transylvania—indeed the constitutive impact of the interaction between them on almost every aspect of their ideological makeup—has been compellingly borne out by K. Sata. It was in effect exactly the pre-modern Hungarian understanding of political nationhood that formatted the early Romanian project in a corporatist direction. Having emerged largely in response to the rising nationalist discourses, the official Ottomanist ideology, in both its vocabulary and politics, mirrored their subversive messages. But Ottomanism too proved able to exert a reverse, allegedly less “natural,” impact on the nationalist ideologies in the region. T. Marinov’s essay offers ample evidence of this type of transfer by outlining the broad intersection zone between the Ottomanist patriotic discourse and the supra-national code of the Macedonian revolutionary ideology. A considerable section among the Bulgarian nationalists and Macedonian autonomists, furthermore, deemed it perfectly plausible to combine “two patriotisms”—an a-national imperial and a nationalist one. The Transylvanian Romanian liberals too proved fully capable to harmonize their staunch imperial (and Transylvanian) patriotism upholding the territorial and great-power integrity of the multinational Austrian empire, with a Romanian ethno-cultural identity projecting a rather disparate national geography. As in the case of Macedonian autonomism, the political and the cultural Romanian nationalisms split ways and, before a series of contingencies took place, did not set on the road to convergence.

While the studies discussed thus far concentrate on the elements via which a modern political community in an empire was defined and, by extension, on the structure and consistency of multiethnic identity, those under Part III touch upon this same problematique in the perspective of personal subjectivity and consciousness. Shemseddin Sami Frashëri, an Ottomanist reformer and a canonizer of two competing national projects—the Albanian and the Turkish—is a conspicuous embodiment of the purportedly incompatible blending of imperial and not even one but two ethno-nationalisms. For Sami, dynastic loyalty was the hallmark of membership in the Ottoman multiethnic and multireligious state community to whose modernization he was as committed as the leading statesmen-intellectuals of the *Tanzimat* era. But the dominant element in that state, he argued in what was later praised as a major breakthrough of modern Turkish nationalism, were neither the Ottomans nor the Muslims but the “Turks”—a bigger and older cultural community (older

than Islam itself), far outstretching the realms of the sultan. Not without similarity to George Bariț, the intellectual guide of the pre-1848 Romanian liberals in Habsburg Transylvania, Sami could unproblematically fuse a political loyalty to the empire and an ethno-national Pan-Turkism, which, as B. Bilmez has demonstrated, were in many respects antithetical. But there was yet another “we” on behalf of which Sami spoke, with greatest eloquence at that: the assertively ethno-cultural Albanianism whose political implications he formulated much more clearly and strongly than when musing over ethnic “Turkishness.” Tellingly, Jovan Jovanović Zmaj, a leading liberal-Romantic intellectual operating at that same time in another imperial context on behalf of a “minority” national cause, that of the Habsburg Serbs, presented an akin case of “dual self-identification”: a fervent fighter for the Serbs’ cultural awakening and autonomy rights in the Dual Monarchy, Zmaj eschewed exclusivist and irredentist agendas and, albeit often criticizing the politics of Magyarization, remained loyal to his native Hungarian “homeland.” It is hardly surprising that national historiographies tend to suppress evidence of such controversial stances, especially when figures of the national pantheon, such as those highlighted in this volume, are involved. Yet, personifying the interpenetration of different worlds as they did, these figures were no accident of history. Casting light on the phenomena they came to epitomise may teach us, in the very least, to be less amenable to the deceptive coherence of historical teleology.

Even so, the tendency towards “ethnicizing the political” was latent in, or ran parallel to, all those supranational discourses and, however diverse the thrusts behind its escalation in the different contexts, by the turn of the century it had everywhere prevailed. In fact, rather than weakening ethnic and separatist movements, the a-national projects tended to stimulate them. Remarkably, nationalists of rather different formats, such as the Bulgarian revolutionaries and the “loyalist” Albanian nation-builders like Shemseddin Sami Frashëri, agreed that the modernizing *Tanzimat* reforms had posed their respective ethnic communities under severe threat. The bulk of the 1830s–1860s generations of Southeast-European nationalists were the heirs, not of the 18th-century programs of national regeneration through political reform, but of those figures standing at the threshold of two paradigms, like Herder and Fichte, who fused a reverence for ethnic culture and tradition with a project of progress and enlightenment and in the process transformed the understanding of what community and patriotism were about. The studies of B. Trencsényi and D. Lilova throw a bridge to another register of nation-making resources—one that was contemporary to the patriotic Ottoman and liberal Transylvanian discourses but which drew upon the immanent culture and historicity of the

community. For all these cultures the 1830s emerge as a watershed marked by the simultaneous upsurge of new means of social communication and crystallization of the liberal-Romantic canon of identity.

A common *topos* of this new national discourse, as it surfaced among the Romanians and the Bulgarians in the first half of the century, was the transitory state, or mixed makeup, of the nation between barbarity and civilization. This taxonomy, and the barbarian stereotype of Bulgarian identity, Lilova tells us, was applied to all spheres of Bulgarian self-description (including history and folklore!), systematically perpetuated by the new “alphabet” of modernity, and thus stabilized as “the main framework in which the nation builds its identity.” Significantly, it was the nationalizing Bulgarian elite that was diligently engrafting the stigma of “primitiveness” onto the national imagination and postulating the deficit of “national culture” as the primary disqualifier of civilization.

This striking divergence from the conventional, Romantic myth-based representation of East-European nationalism deserves some attention. One can think of instances from almost any country in the region where self-stigmatization had been employed, by 18th-century reformers and 19th-century liberal nationalists alike, less as a confession of inferiority than as a political stratagem with an emphatically didactic purpose: to spotlight the ailing condition of their home environment, spur their “idle” readers to change (mostly through education), and awake them to the imperative of “patriotic improvement.” Let it be recalled that such was the strategy of the *philosophes* themselves when carping the deplorable state of their own societies and pointing to the “unheard-of progress” of Russia by virtue of its enlightened ruler, who had turned their gospel into reality. Several decades before the Bulgarian debates took off, the Serb arch-enlightener Dositej Obradović intimated this “functionality of self-stigmatization” in a characteristically instructive message, historicizing (Western) Europe’s own entitlement to civilization: “If Europeans had not dared to correct their thoughts and enlighten their minds with reason, they would remain until today in their aboriginal stupidity and barbarism, and would be like the wretched peoples of Africa. [...] All nations which merely cling to old opinions and customs must lie in eternal and hopeless darkness and stupidity, like all the nations of Asia and Africa.”²⁸ As Lilova’s enquiry seems to suggest, the stigma of “self-barbarization” was a perfectly justified political strategy in terms of the modernizing reform agenda: by

28 Noyes (1953), pp. 147, 211.

dramatizing absences and contrasts with “civilized Europe,” to shake the nation out of its complacency and give weight to the liberal-national programs about what ought to be done to redress its dismal condition.²⁹ That meant in effect domesticating the Enlightenment civilization-barbarity discourse and projecting the *mission civilisatrice* onto one’s own population.³⁰

For many liberal-Romantic treatises on the Romanian “national character” the collective self-denunciation in cultural dearth was a distinguishing framework as well. But there it was largely overlaid by what B. Trencsényi calls the “hermeneutic circularity” of ethno-pedagogy—educating the people by confronting them with their past. This strategy of extracting the norms of modernity from the people’s “hidden self” which then is employed to reconstruct its “outer self” and, in the process, indigenize the essential attributes of civilization of which the West was so proud, was not a rare liberal practice either. As an eminent student of 19th-century Serbia had observed, the Serbian liberals, having discovered little foundation for “Western-type” modernity in their contemporary society, turned to national history to “search for the rudiments of the Western liberal institutions [presenting] our whole democratic movement as the return of our people to its historical character.”³¹

In the end all these narratives of national development were animated by the universalist vision of irreversible progress. In 19th-century Southeastern Europe, national ideologies were produced and utilized within a modernity-confident framework of thinking and action, whose ontological fundament was the progress-prone community. Far from celebrating a return to the a-historical organic, the national community of the liberal-Romantic era validated its *Geist* by essentializing and historicizing its propensity to progress. That current proved powerful enough to engulf not only the Christian aspirants to Europeaness but also the Ottoman westernizers, whose notions of modernity were predicated on the modern cultural distinctiveness of Islam and for whom “the logic of Ottoman nationalism was not to perform politics

29 For the similar assignment of a number of East European travelogues on Western Europe, see Bracewell (2008).

30 Towards the end of the century a similar process, which Eugen Weber defined as “akin to colonization,” came to characterize the relations between the (“modern”) metropolitan centre and the (“primitive”) rural peripheries in the countries of the “core” such as England and France. As the social reformer William Boost poignantly framed it in 1890, “As there is a darkest Africa is there not also a darkest England?” Weber (1976), p. 486; Keating (1976), p. 145; cf. Hechter (1974).

31 Jovanović, (1934), I, p. 44. For a discussion of the national ideology and identity discourse of the 19th-century Serbian liberals, see Mishkova (2006), pp. 404–414.

within the parameters of a foundational moment but to surpass it, to move away urgently from it, and to rise above it.”³²

But since progress was also seen as imposed from outside and a threat to the national organic, a clash emerged, and with time acerbated, between those who called for wholesale “import of civilization” and those who self-styled themselves as custodians of local tradition.³³ The real challenge from the point of view of the nation-builders, in other words, was how, at the backdrop of major historic ruptures, to conceive of national cohesion and “regenerate” the national community on behalf of values which were not of the community’s making. Remarkably, the bulk of actual ideological solutions to this problem selectively blended rather than replicated the two opposing positions by offering various recipes of regulated progress and variedly balanced mixtures of Western “import” and national “authenticity.” The result was a broad array of narratives seeking to reconcile modernity and archaism, foreign models and local traditions, the universal and the particular.

Several of the contributions herein underpin this diversity of framing national progress and national self, conveying the breadth and complexity of existing modalities. Some highlight the paradoxical interweaving of normative history, locating the locus of national purity and dignity in the ancient past, and the meta-political language of irrevocable progress. In the radical-democratic thought of Nicolae Bălcescu, the leading ideologist of the Romanian 1848, the a-historicity and resilience of the Romanian peasant culture was what made it a repository of the Romanian national character and a source for national regeneration. In a similar vein, both the Ottoman “ethnic awakener” Shemseddin Sami and the Albanian “critical nationalist” Faik Konitza saw the “savage” and archaic Albanian mountaineer, living his centuries-long secluded life untouched by “knowledge, civilization and trade,” as the incarnation of Albanian authenticity and stronghold of Albanian “language and nationality.” All those national canon-builders juxtaposed past heroic glory, military valor and Golden Age to the dismal corrupted present, brought about by foreign influences and inauthentic interventions. At the same time all of them, despite their otherwise divergent ideological convictions and political agendas, envisioned national history and identity within a vigorously evolutionist, sometimes stadial theory of progress, whose providential fulfilment was crowned by the (“emancipated,” “unified,” “civilized”) nation’s state.

³² Makdisi (2002), p. 782.

³³ For a comparative treatment of the regional elites’ discourses along such lines, see Höpken (1996), pp. 91–108.

Their concepts were thus, to borrow A. Puto's characterization of Konitz's outlook, at once "evolutionary, organic and historicist."

The exploration of the economic facets of national individuality complements the national-characterological perspective to this phenomenon. The "national system of economy," as elaborated by the German liberal economist Friedrich List,³⁴ appears to have been as attractive to liberal nationalists as it was to statist imperial reformers in the two empires. It was evoked by the specter of a common threat—the imperialism of the economically powerful, and came up with a common solution to it—a state-protected domestic industry and trade. The Bulgarian debate on the railroads, however, signaled a major breach in the original theory: while, in the 1830s–1840s, List had zealously pioneered railway construction, seeing it as a major integrative force in social, cultural and economic sense (and railway stations became national symbols in Germany), for the Bulgarian nationalists of the 1870s, railroads spelled the danger of colonizing the empire and, with it, of eliminating any chance for national prosperity. Nevertheless, the theory's bottom-line—the logic of "economic nationalism"—remained intact. Lilova makes a strong case in favor of the essentially modernist ("anti-European but not counter-modern") stance of the Bulgarian nationalizing elite in this matter—one of the great many examples of the quest to strike a balance between the requisites of (imported) progress and the safeguarding of the national. Similar to the choice of August Schlözer, not Herder, as the godfather of the Bulgarians' "historical sense," this premeditated departure from another influential theory underscores the decisive role of a recipient peripheral culture in selecting, interpreting and utilizing the Western intellectual import.

In all these contexts assertions of historical continuity and providentialist visions appear to have enfolded within a fundamentally modernist consensus. The linkage between social regeneration (or "social revolution"), modernization ("progressive development") and nationalism ("national unity" and a viable nation-state) was a generic one across the region during its liberal phase. The national-Romantic idiom itself came to signify the fusion of pre-existent, traditional forms of social organization and self-government with the notions of modernity and progress. Political modernity in Southeastern Europe was, as a matter of fact, in a large measure the outcome of this fusion.

The taxonomies of modernity, and the ideological reactions they had generated, deserve the attention they have received from the contributors for one

34 List (1904) [German Edition 1841].

more reason: they help us historicize the much-debated question of stigmatized identity. There is a sufficient amount of regional testimonies of inferiority consciousness *vis-à-vis* a putative Western (occasionally neighboring) standard since at least the early 18th century. For most of the 19th century, however, this inferiority presented itself not as an ontological but as a “temporal” problem, one of degree rather than of kind, failing (as yet) to produce distress of inauthenticity, “split consciousness” or “collective crisis of identity.”³⁵ The linear-evolutionary, progressivist visions of the kind exemplified by oppositions like “barbarians vs. civilized” or “ancient purity vs. corrupted present” were the ones that dominated the historicist discourses about the civilizational trajectory of the nation. The ultimate pedagogic thrust of such binary oppositions was vitally hooked to the idea of benevolent evolution and swift civilizing process, provided “reasonable” politics (and all politics were seen as an exercise in education) were employed. In general, the national discourses in their 19th-century versions, either liberal or social-radical or conservative, were deeply rooted in a pervasive linear-progressivist, teleological vision of history.

The historicizing of identity along such vision reveals an important dimension. The universalizing of time and progress, as espoused by the European “center,” does not appear as having produced solely “absences” and inferiority in the “periphery.” It could also operate as a strong mobilizing and emancipating force. Translating the modernization gap between the West and the non-West into a mere difference in time implied a possibility for emancipation of non-Western history. The laggards were not doomed to an eternal subaltern position, “all nations could count on their own modernity, the differences being reduced to a matter of arriving ‘early’ or ‘late’.”³⁶ At the hands of Western colonialists this “denial of co-evalness” may have served as an “ideologically constructed instrument of power” justifying the “white man’s mission”³⁷—an instrument derived as much from claims to moral authority as from economics. At the hands of the East-European “modernizers” and nationalists, be they Ottoman reformers, Albanian or Bulgarian secessionists, it acquired a different twist and was made to serve different ends—such as targeted the “civilizing” of their own populations. (Due to their conspicuous “omission”

35 For an argument along similar lines, see Drace-Francis (2005), pp. 24–53 and Bracewell (2008), pp. 103–105. As these authors indicate, the literature on the (South)East-European identities abounds with notions of “identity crisis,” “cultural dualism” or “cultural schizophrenia,” often conceived in a post-colonial key and a-historic manner. Cf. Young (1990).

36 S. Conrad, (1999), p. 73.

37 See in this sense Fabian (1983), pp. 144–147.

from the course of European development, the Bulgarians exemplified these tendencies in a more accentuated way. Their response was the construction of a vehemently evolutionist narrative of national development whereby they could historicize but also relativize their backwardness). Here was a clear case not of importing but of appropriating the Western discourse on development through a strategy that Sebastian Conrad called “temporalization of space”—transforming economic and political differences between East and West into a lag in time along a universal path of development. The characteristic enlightenment credo—that all people and nations are the same but that good institutions make good peoples, while bad institutions corrupt them—was of course part and parcel of this worldview. For the better part of the 19th century this progressivist construal and the attendant drive at Europeanization proved remarkably resilient in the face of various Romanticist currents and politico-ideological cleavages. After about the 1860s things began to change—and several of the papers in this volume suggest why and how they did. But it is precisely the diachronic approach that allows us to grasp the significant dynamism of, and obviate static conclusions about, identity formation and identity politics in the region.

MULTIPLE NATIONHOODS: SOURCES OF DIVERGENCE AND PATTERNS OF CONTENTION

As the political-multiethnic and the liberal-Romantic projects should have suggested, the representations of the national possessed none of the stability and coherence that national historiographic and literary canons tend to *ex post* assign to them. Rather than being defined by presumed continuities, they are better thought of as battlefields of permanent contestation, struggle and negotiation. Both within and outside the Romantic nationalist mainstream there emerged divergent “national pasts” and “national essences” to support different political projects (liberal, democratic, conservative, or socialist); to underscore different religious distinctions (Greek-Orthodox, Catholic, Greek-Catholic, Protestant, or Muslim, a-religious or pantheistic); to frame different political geographies (nation-statist, irredentist or (con)federalist). The case studies in this volume look into the ways in which normative discourses of the national self, historical narratives and political projects permeated and shaped each other, underscoring the close connection between alternative pasts, cultural self-definitions and modernities. Several major contextual elements even-tuated the variety of scenarios.

The social resources for articulating the nation, or the fit between class and *ethnie*, could vary significantly across our disparate environments. Thus the Romanian version of liberal nationalism, which devoured its social radicalism after the unification of the two Danubian principalities, differed considerably from the ethno-populist (*narodnik*) version endorsed by the Serbian and the Bulgarian political elites and epitomized by intellectuals such as Jovan Jovanović Zmaj. Nevertheless, the image of the peasantry as the embodiment of national authenticity, and of peasant culture as the cohesive material binding together the national community, was a common one. It had two sources. The peasant ideology of Romanticism was one of them, and it cut across the liberal-conservative spectrum—a situation that explains the central function assigned to folklore. The other was the massive predominance of the rural population in these societies which, among other things, conferred social respectability to both left-agrarianist and conservative-organicist sociological theories. While nation-states and their institutions were pressing to align the rural “substance” with the imported “forms” by transforming peasants into national subjects, “newborn citizens were being construed as ‘ideological peasants’, ‘as the subjects of a national myth-system incorporating and forever reproducing the primary ingredients of rurality, blood and soil’.”³⁸ Clearly, peasants and peasant culture lent themselves to various, sometimes opposing representations of national personality, and the “people” received no consensual location in the march of progress. B. Trencsényi’s map of the various Romanian conceptions in this respect can be seen, *mutatis mutandis*, as a blueprint for the rest of the region.

Obviously, the politico-institutional environment of the different “national revivals” was in many respects vital in shaping the content of the individual national projects. It mattered greatly whether the program of national “awakening” was taking place in the framework of a sovereign state (Greece), a quasi-state (the Serbian and the two Romanian principalities), or imperial structures (as in the case of the Bulgarian, the Albanian, and the Macedonian “awakenings”). On this point our volume does not posit a duality between (the subjective role of) human agency and (the objective one of) social or geopolitical history, but concurs with the view that both the particular conjecture and the strategies and resources which were available for transformation define any actor or institutional agency’s ability to reconstruct preexistent dis-

38 Peckham (2004), p. 41. See Nairn (1998), pp. 107–134.

courses in a new way.³⁹ In environments such as the Albanian or the Macedonian, where the legal and institutional means of defining the national were least favorable for doing so in terms of political legitimacy and citizenship, identity drifted heavily towards “non-political” markers such as history, language and religion. In both those cases references to the political dimensions of national organics and agencies of the people’s will, such as popular representation and its institutions, were conspicuously absent. In certain settings the relative weight of political “events” was paramount. The Macedonian search for national peculiarity perhaps best exemplifies the implications, elucidated by Marinov, of the transnational (geo)political dynamics. The vicissitudes of the so-called “Eastern question” proved similarly decisive for both the demise of the Bulgarians’ “bucolic identity” and the rise of the Albanian ethno-political projects, as did the Romanian-Hungarian conflagration of 1848 in sealing the fate of a Transylvanian supra-national *patria*.

The variety of cultural mediators (French, German, Italian, Russian) produced different “Enlightenments,” thence different “national Romanticisms,” whereby different “universalisms” came to compete, and often fight, with each other. The notion of intellectual transfer is, in this particular respect, most pertinent. It helps us to understand not only the processes of professionalization and institutionalization of sciences, which are the object of exploration of the essays in Part II, or the local preeminence of certain schools of thought, paradigms, and concepts. It is just as useful in allowing us to contextualize the genealogy of competing notions of modern government and society. The intellectual connections to France and Germany, for example, often entailed rival political models and institutional arrangements—e.g., republicanism vs. monarchism, social revolution vs. organic evolution, liberalism vs. socialism. From among the intellectual contexts explored here, the Romanian displays most graphically these correlations by juxtaposing the French lineage of the liberal-Romantic *pașoptist* movement and the German one of the organicist liberal-conservative *Junimea*. But the two main narratives within the national-liberal framework—the revolutionary and the evolutionary, had counterparts in and shared a number of common themes across most of the cultures in the region, validating conflicting political agendas.

Within the array of contextual sources for differing self-projections in space and time regional or religious cleavages play a pivotal role. The distinct Wallachian, Moldavian and Transylvanian cultural-political narratives in the case of

39 Cf. Suny and Kennedy (1999), p. 398.

(what later became greater) Romania, or the denominational opposition between Greek Catholics and Orthodox in Transylvania easily come to mind. L. Szabó's essay traces the ways in which such regional differences translated, through the medium of the rising ethnographic science, into struggling versions of the national—the Budapest-based Hungarian ethnographic society and museum eclectically mixing the supra-national (imperial) and ethnic concepts of the national, the Transylvania-based ones shoring up an exclusivist ethnic framework for the Hungarian nation-making project centered on the unifying role of ethnography. Also revealing in this sense is the constitution of the Albanian national ideology, where long-standing religious and regional differences were mainly responsible for the emergence of, and the severe competition between, rival identity constructions. The studies of B. Bilmez and A. Puto provide a diachronic perspective to this phenomenon, allowing us to grasp also the dynamics in the process of politicization of religion that came to characterize the late 19th-century nationalist policies and discourses. For the first generation of Albanian cultural awakeners, such as Sami Frashëri, it proved relatively easy to dispense with religious differences and pursue the dictum of one of their ranks that "the religion of the Albanians is *Albanianness*" defined in terms of blood, language and customs. For the turn-of-the-century nationalist generation of the empire—Albanian, Turkish, or Macedonian—that was no longer an available option. Since the mid-19th century there had been a clear tendency of accentuating the political implications of religion in a modernity framework. Despite the acknowledged existence of four distinct confessional groups among the would-be Albanian ethnic community, the budding Albanian ethno-political nationalism was not predicated on the abandonment of religion. Even those who, like Faik Konitza, discarded religion as a force of unity, felt compelled to take a stance on the relationship between confessional and national identities. In a period of rising popular mobilization and crisis of legitimacy, they saw themselves obliged to address each confessional group and take into account, or instrumentalize, religious sensibilities. Generally speaking, two basic solutions presented themselves to the Albanian nation makers. One was to construct an abstract community based on the monotheistic faith in the singularity of God or, alternatively, on an entirely original religion—that of the Pelasgians; the other, to conceive of Albanian identity as intrinsically multi-confessional, in which case each of the four confessions would have been entitled to "*Albanization*."⁴⁰ Both of these solutions were tried,

40 For an illuminating study of the multiple identity constructions at the interface of religious/regional and national identities along these lines, see Clayer (2007).

none with overriding success, leaving their mark in the form of a strikingly large variety of constructions of the dominant discourse on the Albanianess.

Digging for its premise, A. Puto's study refers to one more source of discursive divergences: the differential presentations of the nation at home and abroad. Frequently provoked by foreign descriptions of Albanian religious dividedness and fanaticism, the discourse to the outside asserted the Albanians' a-religiosity—their fundamental indifference and tolerance in confessional matters—and inherent cohesion. The elements underscoring commonality were omnipresent in the discourse addressed to the Albanians as well, however, in this case religious differences were didactically stigmatized and a series of radical cures proposed. The interesting outcome of this "double-speak" is that, however contingent its original intentions and powerful the contention by other scenarios, the myth of the "religious indifference," as Puto points out, "remains among the most resilient ideological constructs that still inform Albanian studies."

The exertions of the Serbian "people's poet," Jovan Jovanović Zmaj, in conceiving a "Serbo-Croatian people"—yet another testimony of the plurality of nationhoods, in this case confronting the dominant identity politics among the Serbs and the Croats—were motivated by an analogous quest for political unity based on language rather than on religion or history. However, the actual stake of his and other national liberals' rampant anti-clericalism was the fight, not for a secular state, but for control over the powerful Serbian Church in the Monarchy, elimination of its political authority, and converting it into a "national institution." Yet, the long-term consequences of subordinating religious commitments to national politics, as the Albanian nation making also suggests, were not necessarily in agreement with the actual intentions of their "enlightened" architects. As B. Aleksov argues, instead of separating confession and state, the ultimate nationalization of the Serbian Church bolstered the identification of Church and nation so that "a century later Serbian nationalism is much more clericalist whereas belonging to Orthodoxy and especially the institution of the Serbian Orthodox Church make up the core of self identification."

In the last analysis, the specific makeup and direction of the discrete national ideologies depended on the relative success or failure of a given nation-building project. (Similar argument can be made, by the way, with respect to the whole Southeast-European region *vis-à-vis* other peripheral regions in Europe, Scandinavia for example). From around the 1860s–1870s, the hitherto optimistic, progressivist worldview, ingeniously combining Romantic identity visions, evolutionary historicism and Western imports, began to crack

in the face of a new, critical cultural-political discourse. The challenge was not external to the national-liberal paradigm itself. As the above discussion should have shown, the nexus between the local and the universal, or nationalism and Europeanization, was anything but free of tension, and many 19th-century nationalists were deeply concerned with the deleterious effects of Western ideas and institutions on the organic national culture. The top-down enforcement of the modern “codes” unleashed sweeping dislocation of traditional structures and modes of social (self-)ascription, which brought up a series of critical questions concerning the identity of the community. On the one hand, it led to “misplaced” forms and veritable mutants of the Western civilizational framework. On the other, it spelled a growing alienation between nation-building elites and rural “peoples” and raised the question of the available modes of incorporating the latter in the national high culture. Thus the binding of the political and cultural programs of nation-statehood with the question of the “national essence” was also a consequence of the ideological and institutional import of political modernity. The paradox, again, was that the very concept of organicity or authenticity which underlay the new critical attitude had non-indigenous origin, and its validity could only be trans-nationally established.

These local trends were vitally linked to important shifts on European scale which were gathering momentum in the course of the second half of the century. A major structural transmutation, which by the end of the 19th century had become increasingly visible, was the expansion of the role of the state in almost every aspect of national life. This trend was consistent with the transformation which political liberalism was undergoing, as signaled by L.T. Hobhouse in 1911, in that it “was now reaching its apotheosis by aligning itself with the development of a newly emergent social rationality, embodied in an integrated and organic society and regulated by a benevolent and emphatically non-neutral agency—the state.”⁴¹ In the countries of the European core this transformation was primarily the result of the quest for balance between individualism and social interdependence in the face of strong corporatist movements. In the East-European periphery, the reconfiguration of the role of the state was closely related not only to the forcefully etatist modes of nation building but also to a new ideological shift.

In most of the countries in the region the period from around the 1860s–1870s onwards was marked by re-evaluation of the liberal-nationalist tradition

41 Freedon (2005), p. 21.

and the emergence of a post-Romantic anti-liberal nationalism. Again, this trend was concurrent with and reinforced by broader changes in the European intellectual milieu. The economic depression of 1873 to 1896 conjoined with what some historians have dubbed, variably, cultural crisis, intellectual revolution or a wave of “cultural despair.”⁴² While modernism in art came to interrogate what Burckhardt called “the culture of old Europe,” that in the human sciences “questioned and subverted Enlightenment ideas of reason, history, philosophy, and mastery of nature and society—and in this way perhaps the meaning of history itself.”⁴³ Currents of thought that emphasized non-rationalism and vitalist ideas as well as holistic and organic concepts drawing upon biological analogies gained a vogue. Ferdinand Tönnies’ dichotomy of “community” and “society,” Friedrich Nietzsche’s critique of rationalist modernity and canons of truths, and Social Darwinism held sway over intellectual and scientific milieus far beyond Southeastern Europe. The paradigm of *Völkerpsychologie* or *psychologie des peuples* relating the individual-psychological categories to the characteristics of the ethno-cultural community was also a product of new research in anthropology and social psychology. Underpinned by positivism, it accentuated human differences and promoted relativist attitudes.

The resonance and impact of these currents in our region reveal certain peculiarities with roots in the previous, national-Romantic phase of state-building. In its cultural and institutional dimensions the question of the “national essence” was grappled with both political and scientific means. Under the auspices of the nation-building project there emerged, in the course of the latter half of the century, the “national sciences” aimed at systematizing and institutionalizing the knowledge of different aspects of national life (folklore, history, archaeology, ethnography, geography). In this configuration, the Romantic understanding of the national community not only proved capable to withstand the positivist direction of the turn-of-the-century intellectual environment. Indeed, while infusing scientific status into the study of society, positivism became a major vehicle for the institutionalization of the Romantic narrative and the nationalization of science.

The Romanian anti-Romantic *Junimea* movement, which B. Trencsényi explores at some length, epitomizes this “critical turn” that, from around the last third of the century, began to encroach upon the intellectual landscape

42 See for example Sternhell (1978); Stern (1963).

43 Kelley (2006), p. 6.

in various countries in the region. Common to its various national manifestations were two parallel developments: an attack against the national-Romantic symbiosis between liberalism and nationalism and a new organicist understanding of nationality. Taking their cue from the reputable biological theories of the time and the critical method of positivism, the *Junimists* developed a social-scientific approach to society which was intended to offset what they considered to be the major liberal-Romantic “accomplishment”—the loss of continuity with the past and social alienation. It focused on redefining the notions of national progress, tradition, and “essence” along naturalist and organicist lines and on the need for new “national sciences.” For the most of the 19th century the contradictory articulations of the national ideology—those pursuing a European finality and those rebuking Western civilization—co-existed. After 1900 the disparate manifestations of anti-liberal ethno-nationalism came together in an expanding ideological constellation centered on appeals to continuity, idealization of the peasantry as the living canon of national character, and ethnic interpretation of social history.⁴⁴ Significantly, these trends emanated both from the organicist-conservative critique (Mihai Eminescu) and within the Romantic-liberal paradigm (Bogdan Haşdeu). Westernized visions of national fulfillment gave way to autochthonist ones.

Putting the papers of Sata, Vezenkov, Trencsényi and Marinov in a continuum allows us to grasp the scale of the transformation which the cultural-political discourses tackling the relationship between civic (or modern state-building) and ethno-cultural markers of identity had undergone between the beginning and the end of the 19th century. They can also be seen as charting, with considerable overlapping rather than in neat succession, the prevailing paradigms of conceiving the national during that century: late-Enlightenment, national-liberal, national-conservative, and ethnic supra-nationalism. The reinterpretation of Ottomanism was perhaps the most radical. Across one century, several profound shifts in the meaning of Ottoman took place: from the old regime meaning of an imperial elite based on a sustained distance and difference between sultan and subjects and completely ignoring the common “Turk,” to a secular *Tanzimat* legal citizenship and official discourse of patriotic *Osmanlılık* including all Ottoman subjects, to a more ambiguous, more Romantic, more exclusivist late-Ottoman meaning that ennobled the “Turk” and reflected in the rise of a specifically *Turkish* sensibility as the dominant

44 See also Boia (2001), pp. 59–63.

element of a Westernized Islamic Ottoman nationalism.⁴⁵ In a way, Shemseddin Sami Frashëri's *oeuvre* merges all those metamorphoses of Ottomanness while underscoring the movement away from the inclusive ideology and policies of Ottomanism and Islamism towards an increasingly "Turkish" definition. A. Puto's exploration into the political thought of Faik Konitza makes it possible to assess the noted transformation diachronically. It allows us to, on the one hand, register the change that the Albanian national ideology had undergone since the (Ottomanist) generation of Sami and, on the other, discern the characteristics of the "critical turn" in an intellectual and institutional milieu considerably different from the Romanian. Konitza appears as typifying precisely that symbiosis between post-Romantic critical outlook, positivist "realism" and "neo-Romantic" historicist approach that came to characterize other regional discourses as well.

Similar to the Romanian, the Bulgarian national ideology around the turn of the century was marked by the emergence of an "evolutionary-organicist" discourse that questioned the liberal-Romantic heritage. The above-discussed "deviation" in the interpretation of the Listian political economy can be seen in the light of this transformation. At its backdrop the Bulgarian debate on the railroads of the 1870s, in particular what Lilova defines as a switch "from the regime of the utopia into the regime of the market," appears as an early sign of counter-reaction against the confident economic liberalism prevailing in the first half of the century, in Habsburg Transylvania included. From a different angle—one that sheds light on the employments of the notion of race in the turn-of-the-century Bulgarian national discourse—S. Detchev's essay suggests the scale of departure from the earlier liberal-Romantic canon with its roots in the Enlightenment tradition. The Herderian understanding of a people, let it be reminded, implied awareness of shared culture and social milieu (transmitted by language), not a biological or racial unity; a nation for Herder was made by "changeable and empirical factors, and not by an impalpable inner essence or an unalterable factor such as race or color."⁴⁶ Yet, according to Detchev, certain latent racial elements, such as the implicit connection between language and blood, were already discernible in Romanticism and lay ready at hand for more organicist or racialist reformulations. Thus the post-Romantic turn of the second half of the century tied together "language" and

45 Makdisi (2002). Kemal Karpat (Karpat, 2001) makes the further distinction between a Romantic rediscovery of a common Turkish ethnic identity or "Turkishness" (*Türklik*) between 1839 and 1908, and the rise of Turkish statist political nationalism or "Turkism" (*Türkcülük*).

46 Berlin (2000), pp. 186; see also pp. 179–188, 206–208.

“race” whereby, as Puto’s analysis demonstrates, the notion of “natural languages” intermingled with “racial typologies.” (It is significant to note in this sense Faik Konitza’s plea for a “new organ,” i.e., language, to fit the “new [unified] body” of the nation). The deterministic theories of racial and cultural evolution boosted the tendency of using “nation” and “race” interchangeably, underscoring the bio-medical foundation of both.

Pan-European trends of both “scientific racism,” with its elaborate apparatus for categorizing ethnic and racial groups, and what George L. Mosse has aptly called “mystical racism”—such that derived not from physically observable characteristics, but from historical, cultural or linguistic distinctiveness declared to be encoded “in the blood”⁴⁷—had much to do with the ascendancy of a *sui generis* racist discourse in some regional cultures. Characteristically, it was the political and scholarly field of ethnogenesis that became its privileged area of application. For those keen to rearrange global hierarchies along “innate” racial differences Darwin’s *The Descent of Man* (1871) must have been disappointing in that it argued that “hybrid vigor,” not racial purity, was what ensured the domination of one human group over its environment. In Southeastern Europe, however, where the difficulty of claiming “racial purity” for any of the local peoples was, as a rule, deemed insurmountable, Darwin’s scientific insight served to boost rather than allay ethnogenetic scheming. In the Bulgarian case at least the assertion of vitalist superiority for the racially mixed Bulgarian nation now stood as both respectable and convenient (albeit, in the longer run, also potentially explosive) option. A complementary strategy was the subversion of the racist by the ethnic (and ethno-populist) narrative: while feeding on the arguments of “mystical racism,” the new organicist mold of national ideology remained firmly embedded in the Romantic framework. Generally speaking, unlike in Romania, the progressivist and historicist trust of the Bulgarian national-liberal project survived the post-Romantic positivist assault, together with the infatuation with the symbiosis of language, history and culture, rather than racial lineage, as the ultimate *locus* of the “national essence.” Albeit under different conditions and political circumstances, the same applies for the Macedonian and the Albanian projects.

47 Mosse (1978), pp. 94–112. Cf. Payne (2003), pp. 126–8.

THE “INTELLECTUALS’ BURDEN”: SCIENCE, CANONICITY, AND MEDIATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FOLK

Ethnogenetic and racial methodologies were intrinsic to what has been termed here “scientific definitions of the folk.” The politics of national peculiarity had, as a matter of fact, a much broader multidisciplinary genealogy and drew from far more sources than the historiography of political thought may lead us to believe. Geography, biology, anthropology/ethnology, political science, philosophy, psychology, sociology...—one can barely think of a 19th-century social science, and of any human science, that had not contributed in one way or another to the crystallization of the national discourse.

The three essays assembled under this heading pinpoint some of the modes by which human- and social-science disciplines and scholarly conventions took on to legitimate national definitions so that the nation could appear, not as a program of a particular elite group, but as the apogee of the irrevocable objective forces of development. At least after the mid-19th century it was not any more sufficient that collective historical experiences were retold via folkloric rediscovery. They were subjected to scientific scrutiny and “interpretation” with the help and authority of scientific expertise. It was no coincidence that the professionalization of history in the late 19th century coincided with the general scientific view that nations were natural, inevitable, and highly evolved units of social organization, sociability, and distinct subjectivity. Some students of nationalism go as far as to see the “national disciplines,” like archeology, philology, anthropology, sociology and history as “necessary tools of modern social solidarity and citizenship [without which] there can, in a very literal sense, be no nation. [...] the ‘nation’ can only be imagined through the medium of science.”⁴⁸

Admittedly, the nationalization and professionalization of the sciences in the course of the 19th and the first decades of the 20th centuries was pursued with different intensity and had different rhythm across our region. As in most of Europe, history, linguistics and folklore, together with latter-day ethnography and biology, were the privileged resources of scientific identity building.⁴⁹ (It should nevertheless be noted that the process of professionalization of historiography and literary studies did not begin to take shape until the 1880s in Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia, the 1930s in Turkey, and after the Second World

⁴⁸ Smith (1999), pp. 171–172.

⁴⁹ On the “new scientificity” in history production, see Feldner (2003), pp. 3–22.

War in Albania and Macedonia). D. Lilova's survey unravels the connection between the Bulgarians' barbarian auto-stereotypization, the prescriptions of the European historiographical canon, and the state of geographical knowledge. Much like in the case of Hungarian ethnography a few decades later, the history of a discipline, in this case geography, proved deeply interrelated with the history of nation making. The other essays in this section, and partly also Trencsényi's analysis of the Romanian political discourses, look into different disciplinary channels through which the arguably counter-Romantic scientific trends switched the registers of national self-narration. New research in biology, ethnology, and social psychology brought these disciplines to the centre identity-politics stage. The metastases of the Bulgarian racialist and the Romanian organicist discourses highlight the way in which the advancements in biology, the paradigmatic scientific framework of the positivists, affected the notions of nationhood. For the Romanian *Junimists* and the turn-of-the-century Bulgarian ethnologists alike the assimilation of the "laws of evolution" into the new sciences of society underscored the biological determinants and naturalistic understanding of all forms of social organization, peoples and states included. It is equally symptomatic that democratically-minded intellectuals, such as Bogdan Haşdeu in Romania and Ivan Shishmanov in Bulgaria, saw an intimate connection between the democratization of the political life and the rise of the "popular sciences" like ethnography and linguistics.

L. Szabó's discussion of the ways the discourse and thinking about the folk infiltrated and transformed different types of knowledge, on the other hand, spurs important new insights into the institutional aspects of identity building. The Hungarian ethnography's thrust to intervene into and "colonize" the tourist movement appears as being driven by an intense competition among disciplines for control over the symbolic representation of the nation and the national imagination. Thus, by linking travel, popular touristic activities and ideologies of health to the (as yet infant) Hungarian ethnography, the latter expanded immensely its popular quasi-scientific base *vis-à-vis* old and new competitors such as history, literature and sociology. Remarkably, nationalized tourism, in its turn, became instrumental in assigning a special role to ethnography in economic nation making. One can thus speak of a twofold dialectical linkage affecting the narratives of the national: between the different (old and newly emerging) social and human sciences and between the various areas of knowledge which these sciences infiltrated in the process of their institutionalization and competition.

The role of science in identity formation is of course inseparable from that of intellectuals, who combined the critical functions of "the greatest agency in

the shaping of national understanding, propagating the values of the nation, disciplining the people internally, and enforcing the rules and boundaries of the constituent people.” R. Suny and M. Kennedy have defined this role “not merely as reflective of what exists, but as constitutive of the nation itself [...] Intellectuals here are the creators, not only of nationalisms, but of the more universal discourse of the nation, of the very language and universe of meaning in which nations become possible.”⁵⁰ Above and beyond joining to this broad mission, Southeast-European intellectuals were charged with, and saw it as their duty to perform, a double mediation: between archaism and modernity, and between the (authority of) Western expertise and local “knowledges.” As already mentioned, many of the essays in this collection—most pointedly those of Trencsényi, Aleksov, Puto and Bilmez—take stock of the divergent answers which various groups of intellectuals-cum-politicians gave both to the relationship between imported modernity and local tradition and to questions of historical continuity. In spite of these divergences, however, they all appear as having partaken in a common canonizing task: institutionalizing folklore as the repository of national authenticity at the same time as selecting the elements meant to flesh its canonized adaptation. Archaism was thus intimately weaved into the modern semantics of nationhood and the cultural canon.

Szabó’s survey of the Hungarian ethnographic versions of nationhood points to the strikingly broad range of “national life” spheres, including the supposedly least amenable to ideologization—industry, which the ethnographic discourse had turned into *nexi* of modernity and archaism. He shows us how the touristic movement in late 19th-century Hungary, once absorbed by the rising Hungarian ethnography, was able to radically reverse the dominant narrative about the destructive impact of modernity on “primitive” folk culture and turn the symbiosis of the two into the foundation for the nation’s “wealth, power and independence.” By converting ethnographic objects into market-oriented commodities intended for mass domestic consumption and foreign export (“setting the standards of the latest fashion in Paris”), and supporting industrial-sized handicraftsmanship (“domestic industry”), it produced a double ideological *volte-face*. It endowed the folk culture with the potential to wreak “an organic rebirth and modernization of the allegedly destroyed character of the nation” and, simultaneously, turned the taxonomy of modernity on its head by converting ancient authenticity into an engine of modern

50 Suny and Kennedy (1999), pp. 2–3.

industrialization. Jovan Jovanović Zmaj's input into Serbian linguistic and literary "modernization" is another case in point. Not only did he push further the codification of the modern "Serbo-Croatian" language by purging it of foreign (albeit, curiously, not "archaic" Turkish) imports and indulging into "re-creating" and glorifying its original beauty. He was also instrumental in imposing a normative notion of Serbian "national poetry" devised as a replica of the poetic tradition of the people—of folklore, that is to say.

The professionalizing itineraries of Sami Frashëri and Faik Konitza, much as those of the *fin-de-siècle* Bulgarian and Hungarian ethnographers, bring to light, on the other hand, the intellectuals' mediating role as "importers" of ethnocentric knowledge from the Western sciences: in these instances Albanology, Turkology, biologized social theories and models of ethnographic musealization. National myths of antiquity and indigenizing representations apparently profited the most from this transfer, adding scholarly and international respectability to ethnic definitions. Remarkably, it was the Scandinavian "example" of exhibiting national ethnography that set the standards and the model for a separate Transylvanian ethnographic museum (opened in 1898). It stressed the exclusivist ethnocultural character of the Transylvanian-Hungarian nation-building project in opposition to the Budapest-based museum which was seen as "Western" and non-national. Thus, Szabó shows us, the "cleavages inside the different ethnographies of the national within the emerging discipline [of ethnography]"—cleavages that underlay and bolstered the rival conceptions of the national and the divergent answers to the relationship between the ethnic and the modern—were supported by different (and differently interpreted) yet unquestionably "Western" foreign models of exhibiting the folk.

A privileged place in the national pantheons was predictably bestowed on the figure of the national poet as the embodiment of the "living conscience" of the nation. "A poet," Herder maintained, "is the creator of the nation around him, he gives them a world to see and has their souls in his hand to lead them to that world."⁵¹ The centrality and visibility of the poet's creative exertions were largely derived from the pivotal place of language and literature in the process of national revival, which in essence implied the movement from oral to written discourse. In our collection, this mission is exemplified by the Serbian "people's poet" Jovan Jovanović Zmaj. Perhaps even more exemplary, in a regional perspective, is the range of political functions which intellectuals

51 Cited in Suny (2000), p. 576.

such as Zmaj attributed to (folk) poetry. In addition to turning literary activities into a political weapon in his self-conscious nation-making crusade, Zmaj's poetic contrivances, B. Aleksov tells us, had done a lot to shape the peculiar ethno-populist profile of Serbian political liberalism and, later, radicalism. Curiously, that was accomplished in a reverse act, joined by several other literary giants of the age, of reducing Serbian literature to popular oral culture, thus obstructing the consolidation of an encompassing vision of the national heritage and accentuating its *völkisch*, populist and anti-intellectualist, overtones. Even so, Zmaj's posthumous place amidst the fathers of the Serbian nation, much like Faik Konitza's for the Albanian, ultimately depended on the exigencies of the political, each empowered current adding its own reading and valuation of his *oeuvre*. Aleksov traces minutely the conflicting interpretations, instrumentalizations and canonization of the people's poet in order to highlight the "constructivist, manipulative and historically contingent appropriation of literature as part of national identity politics."

The media, through which such politics were pursued, changed over time. In the early phases of nation building, as Sata's and Lilova's contributions suggest, popular productions of narratives of the nation, like textbooks, newspaper articles, and commemorations, were more influential in constructing the imagined community than the work of professionals. Intellectual politics and elite ideologies had a broader range of application and consequence during the initial conception of the nation and codification of its culture. Szabó and Detchev, on the other hand, spotlight the tendency towards professionalization of identity (re-)production and dissemination once the nation became the naturalized form of political community. Concurrently the professional milieu of this production was being increasingly differentiated into new "national" disciplines, and the intellectuality involved was becoming more widely dispersed. Together with the advent of mass politics and "social" nationness, this reduced the freedom of intellectuals to legislate with impunity on the incipient nation,⁵² yet they remained as convinced as before of the political value of scholarship.

The dislocations caused by the First World War completed all these institutional and intellectual conversions and brought the 19th-century *belle époque* to an end. The subsequent cultural, spiritual and social "crisis of Europe," and of modernity in general, coalesced with a crisis of collective identity resulting in a feverish search for new political and cultural models that would have fitted the "national specificities." The interwar attempts at reformulating the national

⁵² Suny and Kennedy (1999), pp. 404–405.

identity in many ways diverged from the tradition this volume deals with. During the long 19th century, the politics of national peculiarity, dominated by the hegemonic Western concepts of evolution and progress as it was, oscillated between the warring projects of preserving “folk tradition” and importing “Western modernity,” and the civic connotations of belonging permeated the ethnic ones. In the face of the crisis of liberalism and the evolutionary vision of history after 1918, a new discourse emerged in these countries featuring an alternative, profoundly anti-historicist and autochthonist notion of national community and uniqueness. Yet, despite the claim of a radical rupture with the erstwhile normative notions of nationhood, it was to the pre-existent romantic discursive tradition underlying the national canons and shaping the master-narratives of identity that this new discourse turned for inspiration. Re-filtering the basic concepts of “folk,” “nation” and “people” through a new “morphology of culture,” it spurred the recurrence of others, such as myth, rebirth, organicity, or prehistory, which were thematized in the Romantic period, submerged in the period of positivist attacks, and resurfaced in the interwar period. Mircea Eliade’s reading of the legacy of Bogdan Haşdeu, which B. Trencsényi discusses in his essay, sheds some light on this complex relationship between the old nationalism and the new. The two, all the same, did not belong to the same world: they stood for not only different temporalities of the national but also different concepts of and attitudes to modernity, conjuring up opposite projections of the national self onto time and space.

It would be grossly overstretched to claim that this collection comes up with anything approaching a comprehensive typology of the regional identity discourses in the 19th century. We believe, however, that both conceptually and as research “topography” it charts the outlines of an interpretative model which could improve our capacity to deal with the issues of Southeast-European modernities and identities in a more meaningful way. As a scholarly advisor to this endeavor and staunch champion of cross-national and comparative research, I for one have been reassured of the heuristic and cognitive benefits from looking into one’s own tradition from the vantage point of other traditions. A truly comparativist endeavor would of course entail more than that. Yet the very shift of perspective can already make us aware of aspects whose existence we didn’t suspect, perhaps even alter the questions whose answers we deem it worthwhile searching for.⁵³

⁵³ The full versions of the contributions presented here have been published electronically in the *CAS Working Paper Series* and are accessible via the homepage of the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia, see www.cas.bg

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