TURKISH IDENTITY.
ETHNIC AND CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS AND IDENTITY FORMATION

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Abstract: *Turkish identity has two fundamental pillars: ethnic identity and cultural identity. These two pillars were formed and later consolidated on a historical route of going from the presocietal ethnic groups to the tribal organisation and then to a tricontinental empire, with an ideological Islamic identity. Türkiye followed an ascending constant in its formation, and the central element of its formation as a great power was identity – the element that gave vitality, the engine that set in motion all the other component elements.*

Keywords: ethnic identity, religious identity, Türkiye, ethnogenesis

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Turkish Ethnic Identity

Introduction

The dynamic process of a people's identity formation commences from a geographic rudiment and resides in its subsequent capacity of self-identification with certain cult elements in pursuing a constant. In other words, the physical appearance finalises with the psychological features of the people, by embracing a doctrinal element and by the synthesis in the *common sense* of the elements transmitted *inter* and *intra*-generationally.

Starting from the extension of the micro-sphere, this data set through which a people introduces itself is the identity of a member of that people, to which the identity of the other members of that people is added. Ultimately, it is the *equal sign* between *who I am* and *who we are*, a filiation between singular and collective.

We can ask ourselves whether pure identity, with no external elements does exist. Positioning towards the answer to this question comes from the ideology of the respondent; however, it is certain that the multitude of ties and the similitude of the cultural elements between multiple peoples demonstrate the dissemination of certain cultural parts among them – acculturation.

Nevertheless, identity is a variable that matures into a strictly particular, multidimensional constant that determines the action axis of a state internally and externally and at the same time, creates an exclusion zone of all the manners of action that are alien to the state.

The *biological* dimension of a state's identity is *ethnicity*, while the *spiritual* dimension is *culture*, its cultural identity. Therefore, an aetiological analysis of a measure, action or policy implemented by a state reflects – in a causal rapport – the identification of the *identity constant* with that action or policy. More precisely, in order to understand a state, we need to understand *what that state is*.

In fact, Turkish identity is the result of a filiation of several incipient elements' interaction and of numerous communities' ethnic reunion.

The early Turkish ethos is marked by a profound predilection for unity. This is how we explain the fact that despite the ample transformation

process, the *pre-societal* Turkic groups followed a constant that would terminate at an empire and the ethnic reunion of numerous communities.[1]

> "There are three main factors that determine the birth of cultural vales and cultural principles: *geography*, the *human element* and *comunity, society*".[2]

The "*geographic school*" in sociology arguments in favour of the fact that the geographic element is the starting point in determining the character of a people: migratory, agricultural, inclined towards economy, culture or religion. The *human element* ties ethnicity with the adoption of certain cultural elements. Maslow's hierarchy of needs and theory of motivation highlights the five needs of an individual, according to their importance: the first one is *physiological*, the second one is *safety*, the third one is the need of *love*, the fourth is the need of *respect* and the fifth one is the need of *self-realisation*. The third determining factor of values and principles – *community, society* – intervenes within the last need – the need of *self-realisation* – taking into consideration that the *repressive mechanism* of the community draws the boundaries of national culture, which none of its members can exceed.[3]

"Turk" Ethnonym

The term *Türk,* having different variations in Chinese, Greek and Indian historical sources, comes from the verb *türemek,* meaning *to produce, create*; *türe* stands for *justice* and *töre* for *ethical principles*, *practices*, *customs*. As a geographical name, *Türkiye* (*Turkhia*) is mentioned in the Byzantine historical sources. In the sixth century, this name was used when referring to Central Asia.[4]

Along with the unification of the tribes and the formation of the Ottoman State, it receives the name of *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, translated mot-a-mot as the *Empire of Osman* or the *Empire of the Osmanli's*, a gloryfing name for Osman Bey, the founder of the Ottoman Empire. The establishment of

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[1] Mustafa Ali Mehmed, *Istoria turcilor*, București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1976, p. 14

[2] Ibrahim Kafesoğlu, *Türk Millî Kültürü*, Istanbul: Ötüken, 2020, p. 26

[3] *Ibidem*, pp. 26-30

[4] *Ibidem*, p. 45

the Republic by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk brought a new ethnonym: *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti*, the Republic of Türkiye. Linguistically, *Türkiye* represents the Turkish term for *Turkey*, a term adopted after obtaining the independence in 1923 and replacing the empire with the republic. Therefore, the change of the regime was marked by the change of the name internally, as a *socio-linguistic reform*.

Given the fact that the *lingua franca* of international relations is, in most of the cases, English, each state is given an internationally known name. We can notice, however, some changes that appear regarding the Turkish ethnonym: the international ethnonym *Turkey* was replaced with *Türkiye* at the end of 2021. This time, we witness a linguistic reform that imposes the use of the national name in the international community. The supremacy of the national ethonym and its ubiquity in the *statal* and *supra-statal level* denotes, at a first dimension – the linguistic one – the desire to avoid possible erroneous correlations of the country with the following meanings: *bird*, *failure*, *ignorant* etc. associated to the English term *turkey*.[5]

Proceeding to the more profound dimension, regarding *ideology-identity*, there are more connotations of this nominal modification: on one hand, the very well welded Turkish-identity unity invokes the idea of *transparency* – both internally and externally there is *only one Türkiye*; on the other hand, we can attribute the connotation of the Turkish patriotism or even Turkish nationalism: Türkiye, as opposed to other countries, cannot be completely and fully internationalised. Regarding the *ideological-religious* dimension, in the Islamic tradition, the conversion to Islam requires receiving a new name, a Muslim one. Therefore, the change of a person's religious identity culminates with the change of the name.

Henceforth, through the comeback from *Turkey* to *Türkiye*, the country is willing to demonstrate that its identity is stable, steadfast and singular, both as an act of respect towards Turkish language, the central element of Turkish nationalism, but also towards the entire Turkish people, carrier and glorifier of the national symbols and emblems. Türkiye, through this "*international transparency reform*" shows that it is solely one – internally and internationally.

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[5] *** `Why Turkey is now 'Türkiye', and why that matters`, *TRT World*, 13 Decembre 2021, News/Magazine, [https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/why-turkey-is-now-turkiye-and-why-that-matters-52602], accessed in 05.11.2022

Moreover, the national brand *Made in Turkey* was replaced with *Made in Türkiye*, with strongly felt connotations in the field of *public diplomacy*. Thence, once again, through the change of the name, a superior stage in the development of the country is marked: re-launching of Türkiye in its ascension towards a *supralocal* power.

Historical Sources – Originary Hypotheses

Till the seventh century, the circle of the *Turkish ethnogenesis* encompasses numerous originary hypotheses – the Hun hypothesis, the Mongol hypothesis, the linguistic hypothesis – all of them having the constant of the Turkic element: Huns have Turkic or Mongol origins, Mongols have Turkish origins. All these anthropological abstractions blend with other originary hypotheses regarding the geographic localisation of the Turkish people.[6] The most numerous connections Turkish people developed throughout history were with the Mongols.[7]

The Turkish nomads related to the Mongols migrated to Central Asia, being present in the Chinese historical sources from the sixth century under the name of *tyu-kyu*. The presence of the Turkish element in the proximity of the Chinese space is also demonstrated by the linguistic coincidences and similitudes that lead to mutual origins: the Mongol *Kublai* or *Kubilai khan* originated from a dynasty having Turkish origins.[8]

The VIth sixth century is, therefore, *time zero* of Turks' self-affirmation as a people. It is very important to be noted that this period coincides with the birth of Prophet Muhammad, in approximately 570. The emergence of the Turkish people in history and the birth of Prophet Muhammad were two *synchronic moments*; the subsequent combination of the Islamic cult element with the ethnographic Turkish element and the abjuration of paganism will have been the fundaments of a military state, valorising the Islamic doctrine.

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[6] Mustafa Ali Mehmed, *Istoria turcilor*, pp.17-26
[7] Ibrahim Kafesoğlu, *Türk Millî Kültürü*, Istanbul: Ötüken, 2020, p. 46
[8] Norman Stone, *Scurtă istorie a Turciei*, București: Litera, 2021, pp. 18-19

The First Forms of Administrative Organisation: the Turkish Khaganate

The initial gesture, the launch of the Turks to the identity independence was their uprising against the *Juan-Juan*. Turks become from slaves, rulers – the sixth century. The *embrio* of the Turkish identity was the defiance towards the authority of the Juan-Juan, given the fact that the defiance to a foreign organism – that empire – impregnated into the *genetics* of a conquering people. The gesture of noncompliance with the Juan-Juan led to the compliance of other peoples with Turks and, as a consequence, the Turkish Khaganate extended. The extension of Turks' Khaganate led to their organisation into regional tribal confederations: Oriental Turks and Occidental Turks – whose authority extended very much. This period was characterised by great geographic expansion and it is related to the term *göktürk* – etymologically, the word *gök* means *sky*, but informally it also means *not (yet) matured*. In other words, it signifies that Turks took over all that is under the sky.[9]

This is related to the symbol of the wolf, from which, according to the rudimentary Turkish beliefs, Turks descended. The connection between the term *göktürk* and the descent from wolf is highlighted: the wolf is the one that can see in the dark and the celestial blue wolf is the one that created the Chinese and Mongol dynasties and influenced the symbolism in the Turkish culture, aspect that is visible till today – Atatürk is the ashy wolf.[10]

Seljuk Turks

The fundament of the Seljuk Empire were the Turkmens or the Oghuz-Turks. These groups migrate to Asia Minor due to demographic and geographic considerations, but also because of other peoples. The Seljuk Dynasty was led by Selçuk, from where it took its name. Etymologically, *selçuk* is the one that has *the gift of speech* and *persuasion*.

Therefore, in the eleventh century we can already mention the Seljuk Empire. In the following period, the "political independence of the Seljuk Dynasty's adjacent groups" is announced.[11]

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[9] Mustafa Ali Mehmed, *op.cit.*, pp. 27-33
[10] Alain Gheerbrant și Jean Chevalier, *Dicționar de simboluri*, Iași: Polirom, 2009, p. 548
[11] Mustafa Ali Mehmed, *Istoria turcilor*, p. 81

The Seljuk supremacy represented the key for the Seljuk-Byzantine rapports, the peak being represented by *the 1071 moment*, when the Battle of Manzikert took place and ended with the victory of the Seljuks.[12]

Taking advantage of a strategic error of the Byzantines, Seljuk Turks enter the centre of Anatolia and gradually take over the city of Ani, Kayseri (Caesarea). In 1078, Iznik (Nicaea) is proclaimed the Turkish capital.[13]

As a consequence of the triumph against the Byzantines, Seljuk Turks continued their path to Anatolia, laying the foundation of the *Sultanate of Anatolia* or *Sultanate of Rum*, led by Süleyman Şah. Following the same constant, through this sultanate, Turks attained unity, by the homogenisation of the Turkmen-Oghuz community that had already been present on that territory. This *unity* that is specific to the Turkish identity led to the formation of a group of warriors, a veritable military elite that will be transmitted to the future Ottoman Empire: *ghazi*.[14]

The name of *ghazi* sends to the dual character of the future Ottoman army: at the base there is the military force, but the *superstructure* is one profoundly ideologically influenced by the Islamic cult: ghazi is a fighter against the *unbelievers – kâfir*, the participle of the verb *ghaza* in Arabic meaning *to make a foray*, *to launch an offensive*.

Therefore, the obligation to fight against the *kâfir*s (unbelievers) is an intrinsic and extrinsic, intimate and collective duty of Muslims, in order to follow the Prophet, to whom the following words are attributed: "There is no monasticism in Islam. The monasticism of this community is the Holy War".[15]

Thus, in order to reach the highest virtue, Omar, Prophet Muhammad's father-in-law, preaches: "The best among you is he who *takes from both*", in other words, the worldly fight is indispensable for the spiritual victory.[16]

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[12] *Ibidem*, pp. 76-83

[13] Douglas A. Howard, *The History of Turkey*, Second Edition, Santa Barbara, California: Greenwood, 2016, pp. 34-35

[14] Mustafa Ali Mehmed, *op.cit*, pp.85-88

[15] Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University press, 1981, p. 123

[16] *Ibidem*, p. 121

The Mongol Domination

In 1243, the Battle of Kösedağ took place, and the victory of the Mongols meant the beginning of the Mongol supremacy over Seljuk Turks, and the territory's organisation in the form of *emirates*.[17]

However, this Mongol domination determined the Turkish expansion in Anatolia, both numerically and culturally: Yunus Emre, Mevlânâ, Shams and Haci Bektaş Veli are some examples of the mystical culture of that time.[18]

Tribal Existence and Migration. Kayı Tribe

Originally, Turks are a migratory people.[19] The wish to abandon the raw conditions determined Turks to migrate to places promising of a better life, but even more than that, of a free life – the wish to maximise their freedom prevailed over accepting nature's conditions.[20]

According to the statements of Ibn Khaldun, Arab philosopher, there are two types of communities in which people can live: the *migratory* community, in the desert – *bedevî* – and the *civilised* community – *hazerî* or *medenî*. The first one is closely related to the tribal existence and the impossibility of reaching civilisation, while the second one involves the evolution to state and urban existence.[21]

In the Islamic cultural space, there is a theory called the *Theory of Real Seven Climates*; among all the seven types of climates there are differences concerning the physical aspect of those specific communities' members, starting from the first climate, with people belonging to the Afro-American race, till the last climate, where the inhabitants belong to the Europoid race. According to this theory, the members of the fourth and fifth climate are *the most educated* people on Earth, the explanation being provided by Kâtib Çelebi, by referring to the type of climate – in those areas, the clime is temperate, the water and the air are delicate, therefore, the people are moderate and balanced.[22]

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[17] Mustafa Ali Mehmed, *Istoria turcilor*, p. 103

[18] Douglas A. Howard, *The History of Turkey*, Second Edition, Santa Barbara, California: Greenwood, 2016, p. 38-39

[19] Ibrahim Kafesoğlu, *Türk Millî Kültürü*, Istanbul: Ötüken, 2020, p. 32

[20] *Ibidem*, pp. 54-55

[21] *Ibidem*, p. 33

[22] Ilhami Danış, „İslam Coğrafyacılarından Osmanlı Coğrafyacılarına Yeryüzünün Matematiksel Taksimi: Hakiki (Yedi) İklim", *Istanbul University Press*, p. 411, [https://cdn.istanbul.edu.tr/ file/JTA6CLJ8T5/19178D4C861E4FC08E5541A6862EA6A2], accessed in 02.04.2023

The Anatolian territory on which the Turkmen tribes had settled and on which the Turkish people was later formed belongs to these two *privileged* climates and as a consequence, this theory demonstrates the natural predisposition of the Turkish people to prosperity.

As the name also indicates, the tribal organisation was conducted according to some customs and based on certain hierarchies. The model of tribal organisation, apart from its chaotic appearance, was a simplistic, but very rational one, established around the need of *military defence*, in a *hierarchical structure*. This organisation made it possible to quickly gather people and to rapidly transmit orders in time of war and crisis.[23]

There is a series of fundamental features of the tribal existence that subsequently translate into the principial organism of the Turkish people. To begin with, the *lack of private property*, the *lack of a stable territory* led to the fierce development of the military attributes – the fight for survival and for defence as compensating the lack of statal infrastructure.

In addition, the primitiveness of the tribal existence means that the human ties and interactions form the basis of *political* administration. The tribes, lacking internal finish, have very many contacts with the outside and thence, the homogeneity is given by the intrinsic, mutual element that ought to be very strongly felt at the common level – to which the extrinsic, external borrowings are added.

The genealogical route starts from the Turkic peoples, the Oghuz Turks, the Turkmes, the Seljuk Empire and then the Ottoman Empire, and it is important to be noted that Kayıg Tribe – or Kayık – thereafter called Kayı, was among the Oghuz-Turkmen tribes in the subordination of the Seljuk Turks.[24]

The equation from which the Turkish state results gather the ethnic-identity-fundament, the superstructure of the Islamic message and the political-military component. We talk about a superstructural institution

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[23] W. C. Brice, „The Turkish Colonization of Anatolia", *Escholar Manchester*, [https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/api/datastream?publicationPid=uk-ac-man-scw:1m1904&datastreamId=POST-PEER-REVIEW-PUBLISHERS-DOCUMENT.PDF], accessed in 02.04.2023, pp. 24-25

[24] Faruk Sümer, „Kayı", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/kayi, accessed in 02.04.2023

even from its very construction, thence its historical development being an inevitable necessity.

Turkish Cultural Identity

The Turkish state, that comprises both a religious and a political-military element was, therefore, fuelled from numerous directions. The equation from which the Turkish state results brings together the identity basis and the superstructure of the Islamic message.

As human beings advance in their development stages, they set certain moral references as a fundament and support for their actions. Their positioning towards these references changes as time passes – the first support is the mother. But humans look for a *super-existential support* – and that is *the* God.[25]

Islam and the Islamic Message

Starting etymologically, Arabic language – the cult language of Islam – utilises the term *Allah*. If the term *Allah* is a contraction of the word *Al-Ilah* – through the definite article we can observe very clearly the *uniqueness of the venerated entity* – the singularity of the divinity – it is *one*, but *infinite*. All, *many*, obey *one*, *the* God – it is a paradoxical rapport. Even if all – the people – are many, they obey to one – God – that is *more than the many*. God is, thence, the more-than-the-many.

Faith involves an awakening, a permanent *stand-by condition*, that has become permanent through the societal conditions – customs and the promise of obedience, the oath of allegiance of Islam being, in fact, a confession, a testimony, a witness explained also by the linguistic argument; *shahada*, etymologically coming from the verb *to confess*, *to admit*, *to witness*: "Ashadu an la Illaha illa Allah wa ashadu an Muhammadan abduhu wa rasuluhu", meaning: "I bear witness that there is no other deity but God (*Allah*) and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Its slave and messenger (*prophet*)".

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[25] Murat Öztürk, „İslamiyet'ten Önce Türklerin Din Anlayışı ve Gök Tanrı Dini", in *History Studies International Journal of History*, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 328.

The logos and the power of verbalisation with which humans are endowed give them the duty of lucidity and awareness of the categorisation of their deeds: humans, through this verbalisation, promise obedience to the *super-existential entity*.

Following the etymological route, even the term Islam itself comprises the essence of the Mohammedan cult: the term comes from the verb *aslama*, meaning to obey, therefore Islam requires obedience.[26] The understanding and interpretation of *cult* or *worship acts* is influenced by the historic events, but more precisely we can state that the reverse is also valid. If obedience is what Islam wants to reach in educating people, the idea of obedience, reduced to the micro level and simplistically explained means: I obey the one that is superior to me, the one that is greater, stronger than me. Hence, following the idea of hierarchy, people obey the head of the tribe and all of them obey Allah, in whose name they fight.

Muhammad or *the one that deserves praise* is born in Mecca, the place of the first revelations that he shall receive under the command: "Recite!". The Islamic rhetoric starts, therefore, through Muhammad, whose unpolished prophetic, almost eclectic message, created through the receptivity to the Christian and Judaic message brought to faith, to monotheism, a rudimentary community, whose members have reached a conscious state of the wholeness of the *material* and *super-material* world. Muhammad calls them to a new faith, propagating old ideas, already existing ideas which he translates as the *divine revelation*, revelation starting with the singularity of the confession element; the more compact this divine entity is, the more compact the faith. If we think of one's faith as being limited, finite, in other words – as much as the human rationality can encompass, then if divided to more deities, it would diminish. The more concentrated it is only towards one deity, the more the rapport is tighter and the tie is more impervious.

The beginning of the Islamic era is *hegira*, and the true ancestry of Islam is the *Illuminated City of the Prophet*, Medina or *Al-Madinnah al Munawwara*, where Muhammad goes from Mecca, where prophecies bring light to the raw consciousness of people, and the Prophet became also a leader, organising the Medina community according to the cult regulations

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[26] Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University press, 1981, pp. 3-4

and *suras* of the Quran[27], the *ultimate book of education*, which, as it is mentioned in the text of the Quran, "even if mankind and djins came together to create something as this Quran, they would not be able to do something alike the Quran, even if they were to help one another".[28]

The Quran, etymologically, the *recitation*, the fundament of the Islamic religion, is the bridge between sky and earth, between God and mankind, which ties and brings together all the Arabs that used to be dispersed in tribes.[29] This is materialised in the form of a book, structured in 114 suras (chapters), encompassing both the Meccan and the Medina period suras, positioning *humans* in the centre of the teachings.[30]

The stabilisation of Arabs in the forms of a state is realised through the means of the Quran, which brings them together through its discourse and teachings. The Meccan discourse has a philosophical style of awareness of the humans' soul origins and represents the cult genesis of Islam – it is a *theological discourse*, providing the theoretical fundament of the religious dogmas for the understanding of mankind's spiritual substance's origins. Mecca designs, therefore, the personality or the *persona* of Islam, the *immaterial part*, the moral part of Islam and Medina – the *material part*, the action and therefore the application in practice of the dogmas.[31]

Islam constitutes itself following the form of an individual – an organism formed in a first phase, spiritually contoured, then translated into a precise material form by instrumentalising the Islamic message of obedience. As it is the case of every religion, the theological fundament of Islam – its teachings – is *fixed*. But the aspect that differs is the way in which these teachings are translated, interpreted and incorporated into people's religious manifestations and practices.

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[27] *Ibidem*, pp. 5-8

[28] ***, *Coranul și traducerea explicativă*, Ankara: Departamentul pentru servicii confesionale, 2015, p. 290

[29] Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University press, 1981, p. 12

[30] Mustafa Ali Mehmed, „Introducere" in *** *Coranul și traducerea explicativă*, Ankara: Departamentul pentru servicii confesionale, 2015, p. XVII

[31] Ignaz Goldziher, *op.cit.*, p.11

Sunna represents the sum of the sacred customs, and *hadith* represents the documentation of sunna. *Shari'a* or the Islamic divine law has as its fundament the Quran and the hadith – the base of the ethical thinking in Islam.[32]

Sharia edifies a just lifestyle from an Islamic point of view, setting legislative norms that regulate the accepted and unaccepted actions in Islam. The consolidation of the legislative element began when Muhammad took the role of the leader in Medina, where he set some obligations; for example, *zakat* (charity acts) was materialised in charging several taxes, and since there was a permanent state of conflict, norms were necessary in order to regulate warfare.[33]

Conversion of Turks to Islam – aslama – and the Formation of an Ideological State

Similar to Arabs, primitive Turks were a pagan people, believing in different animals or objects which they idolatrised. Pre-Mohammedan Mecca was a space of the fetishist cult and its sanctuary was believed to be Kaaba, "the black rock".[34]

The same was valid in the case of old Turks – different animist beliefs, the cult of nature, shamanist customs and the belief in *Tangri* or *Gök-Tangri*, the *God of the Skies*, from which later on the term *Tanrı* appears and nowadays, it means God.[35]

Therefore, we can affirm that the base of the Islamic society is a rudimentary community, with weakly developed beliefs, primary and incipient beliefs in terms of the doctrine.

The chronological framing of the "*coming to faith*" of the Turks – as it literally means in Turkish: *imana gelmek* – coincides with the seventh century, but especially the eighth and the tenth centuries.[36] Given the very clearly contoured Turkish identity, Turks did not embrace Islam in its entirety – they kept very important cultural elements, such as the Turkish language and other Turkish traditions, legitimised afterwards by *Kanunnâme*, legal codes

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[32] *Ibidem*, p. 40

[33] *Ibidem*, p. 32

[34] *Ibidem*, p. 6

[35] Mustafa Ali Mehmed, *Istoria turcilor*, pp. 61-63

[36] *Ibidem*, p. 66

from the Ottoman period, expressing the decisions and resolutions of the padishah or his reforms.[37]

If we consider religion as an extension of the social consciousness or social psychology, then we can admit that it is understood and interpreted differently by each people, at a macro level; each people acclimates and adapts differently to religious teachings. This is also the case of Turks, who understood and interpreted the religious acts under the influence of the geopolitical perspectives and historical circumstances.

That was possible as a consequence of the *receptive character* of Islam[38]; the cult element – Islam – is added to the already existing ethnological element, identity element and language.

Along with this ample rooting process of the Turkish collective consciousness into the Mohammedan borders, Turks and Arabs begin to establish tighter interactions, Turks ending up monopolising the army of the Abbasid Caliphate in the posture of *memluk*, meaning *slaves* – the military force.[39] Accordingly, we can now mention a Turkish military force that helped the spiritual force – Islam – to survive, through the caliphate.

Therefore, by adopting the Islamic discourse, the Turkish state goes from a prolix, diffused state and becomes a strong state embraced by the Islamic doctrinal element, that by fixing its ideology, it also gives it a direction of action. This shall become more and more visible in the future military actions of territorial conquest in the name of the expansion of Islam; the conquest of Anatolia by Turks in the immediate centuries ideologically translated by the suppression of the Christian Church and its institutions. If in the past building churches on the old pagan temples had meant the victory of Christianity against the idols, the following transformation of churches in mosques meant the subordination of the Christian institution to Islam.[40]

At the same time, the Islamic doctrinal component and the Turkish self-identification with the missionary duty for the expansion of the Mohammedan cult by the military instrumentalisation of the Islamic

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[37] Halil Inalcık, „Kanunnâme", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/kanunname , accessed in 12.08.2022

[38] Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University press, 1981, p. 5

[39] Mustafa Ali Mehmed, *Istoria turcilor*, pp. 69-71

[40] Douglas A. Howard, *The History of Turkey*, Second Edition, Santa Barbara, California: Greenwood, 2016, p. 37

teachings led to the "*Turkish exceptionalism*" - the presence of the caliphate in the Ottoman Empire led to its self-glorification as "the centre of the Muslim political power and presence in international relations".[41]

This *feeling* of Turkish exceptionalism in the collective consciousness, along with embracing Islam by adapting it to the Turkish element, defined as *Turkishness*, will give birth to a very *strong national feeling* – a study of the *Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation*, *TESEV*, from 2006 demonstrated that Muslim identity became part of the Turkish identity.[42]

The Sociology of the Turkish State

The fundaments of the traditional Turkish state are *family* and *army*. One indicator of this aspect is Turkish language, very rich in terms that specifically refer to each degree of kinship.[43]

From a *sociological standpoint*, family represents a *social group of belonging*, more precisely, a group in which a person is a member, of small dimensions, but which has several rapports with other entities within the society, thus becoming an *institution*. *Primary socialisation*, as the name indicates, represents the incipient stage of an individual's socialisation and it takes place inside the family – environment in which the cultural structure and the ideational constitution of values, principles and behavioural norms that an individual takes and assumes are modelled. In a first stage, the primary socialisation is conducted through the means of *imitation* – children take the *verbal* and *behavioural model* of their parents – this cultural reproduction assures continuity and re-distribution of values, behaviour norms and beliefs within the community. Family is also the environment from which certain customs embark.

A central place in the Turkish society is occupied by *marriage* – means to founding a family; *evlenme*, *evlendirme* or *someone's arrival or coming from one house to another house* – intersocietal migration takes place *horizontally* – from one home to another.[44]

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[41] Angel Rabasa şi F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*, Santa Monica: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2008, p. 4

[42] *Ibidem*, pp. 22-23

[43] Ibrahim Kafesoğlu, *Türk Millî Kültürü*, Istanbul: Ötüken, 2020, p. 221

[44] *Ibidem*, p. 220

According to the old understanding, marriage was complete only after the *birth of the first child*.[45] Before the conversion of Turks to Islam, within the proto-Turkic communities, only the paternal family was considered legitimate: the father, the son and the grandsons represented the nucleus of the Turkish society. Moreover, another characteristic of the Turkish family is monogamy.[46]

At the symbolic level, the concept of family cumulates the idea of unity, devotement, respecting the loyalty promise – therefore not the singular individual, but the individual included in this societal micro-component is valued as the nucleus of the Turkish society – this translates into a collectivistic culture. In an extended understanding, we can accept that the Turkish family is the Turkish society, *all Turks are one family* – thence the dependence and interdependence of individuals that constitute the Turkish people.

To conclude, we can understand that family is a central element in the sociology of the Turkish state, since Turkish identity springs from the familial identity and ultimately resides in the political identity, i.e. in the political actions, decisions and policy of the Turkish state.

Osman's Dream – the First Ideological Fundment of the Ottoman State

In the Quran there are many examples referring to dreams – such as the dreams of Prophet Muhammad, Prophet Ibrahim and Prophet Yusuf and the Islamic cult teachings categorise dreams in: dreams that come from Allah – *sent from Allah*, also called *authentic, genuine* – dreams *sent by the evil* and *ordinary dreams*, influenced by the events that had happened throughout the day. The authentic dreams represent, according to the prophecy, the only way to receive information from the *suprahuman world* that belongs only to Allah, because those dreams are closest to truth.[47]

History relates two dreams of Osman, two unnatural, contrived poles, or even supranatural poles, of *ideological-military extraction* – one dream about Islam and one dream about military conquests and expansion –

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[45] Mahmut Tezcan, *Türk Ailesi Antropolojisi*, Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2000, p. 17

[46] *Ibidem*, pp. 14-16

[47] Halil Çetin, „Ağaç Motifli Osmanlı Saltanat Rüyasının Tabir İlmi Açısından Değerlendirilmesi" in *Akademik Bakış Dergisi*, Vol. 5, No. 10, 2012, [https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/73909], accessed in 02.04.2023

that give coherence to the future direction of what the Ottoman Empire shall be.

The first dream foreshadows the veneration of Osman's descendants as a consequence of devotement to Islamic values – Osman reads from the Holy Book, the Quran, and then an angel appears to him in his dream. The second dream, by an extraordinary event, announced Osman bey the future role of *sultan*, envisioning the territory he would rule from a pantheistic perspective: the crescent comes down in Osman's chest, that had risen from the chest of Edebali Sheikh, and from Osman's back a tree rises, then the image spreads all over the mountains and rivers – the crescent watching over all of these elements: "all crowned with the crescent" and from "the terraces a call to prayer rises, a call intertwined with the song of the nightingale".[48] The divine sound does not monopolise the surrounding physical world, but both of them merge in a horizontal plane.

The sheikh tells Osman: "God gave you and your children the sultanate. May you be protected by the sons of the entire world".[49]

The dreams of Osman and Ertuğrul, his father, contain symbolic elements for what will later be the Sultanate of the Ottoman Empire: the tree that grows from the womb, the spring, the moon and the Holy Book – the Quran.[50]

The crescent is, in the Islamic pictography, the most valuable symbol, that starts its road by being a guide and a guard: the crescent is the guide of those who fast – because Ramadan, fasting in Islam – begins as soon as the crescent is visible on the sky: "That who witnesses, that who sees the crescent in this month, that is the one who shall fast!".[51] The crescent is a guide become permanent in a "porte-bonheur" of Islam.[52]

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[48] Lord Kinross, *Istoria Imperiului Otoman. Mărirea şi decăderea Imperiului Turc*, Bucureşti: Orizonturi, 2019, pp. 12-13

[49] Halil Çetin, „Osmanlı Saltanat Rüyaları ve Tarihî Bağlam", in *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi*, Vol. XXVII, No. 1, 2012, p. 52, [https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/58814], accessed in 02.04.2023

[50] Halil Çetin, „Ağaç Motifli Osmanlı Saltanat Rüyasının Tabir İlmi Açısından Değerlendirilmesi" in *Akademik Bakış Dergisi*, Vol. 5, No. 10, 2012, https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/73909 , accessed in 02.04.2023

[51] *** *Coranul şi traducerea explicativă*, Ankara: Departamentul pentru servicii confesionale, 2015, p. 27

[52] Malek Chebel, *Dicționar de simboluri musulmane*, Piteşti: Paralela 45, 2005, p.381

The importance of dreams can be understood both in relation with the religious, spiritual dimension, but also with their figurate meaning: Osman's dream became a *self-fulfilling prophecy* that fuelled action for its own confirmation. The dream became a *dream* (motivation) for Turks.

Conclusions

If ethnic identity was formed after several changes in the forms of organisation and the geographic positioning – with a direct influence on the evolving direction, the cultural identity was added to the ethnic basis, by adopting the Islamic message, but keeping Turkish language and some of the Turkish customs. Through that adoption, the state became an *ideological state*.

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