

**Ethnicity in the process of state-building: A comparison of multi-ethnic borderlands in
Turkey and Romania during the interwar period**

BERK EMEK

Koç University

bemek16@ku.edu.tr

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Introduction

Southeastern Europe and Turkey share a history of nationalism cultivated by state-led initiatives. The complex ethnic mosaic of this region gave birth to considerable problems when the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires collapsed and produced multiple ethnically-based reactions to the dominance of centralized states after the First World War (hereafter WWI). As Rogers Brubaker argued, several wars from the late 19th century to the end of WWI laid the groundwork for unmixing people as many fled from their territories either voluntarily or by force. This might have helped to homogenize populations and to consolidate state authority as planned in many areas.¹ Ethnic and religious homogenization was on the agenda in many post-WWI countries with the intention of creating a common identity and a uniform state and society.² This spectrum directly affected the demographic and political dynamics in several countries that emerged after the collapse of an empire, such as Turkey, and others that underwent distinct territorial changes, such as Romania.

This paper hence attempts to examine the variance in Turkey and Romania's state-making policies in their multi-ethnic frontier regions, namely Eastern Anatolia and Transylvania, during the interwar period. The Kurds in Eastern Anatolia and the Hungarians in Transylvania are the focal points of this comparison. It varies from other studies by looking at state policies toward two compact non-dominant ethnic groups, being the largest and consolidated ones with a territorial and linguistic unity in Turkey and Romania, but still, different from each other in terms of their legal

¹ Rogers Brubaker. "Aftermaths of Empire and the unmixing of peoples: Historical and comparative perspectives." *Ethnic and racial studies* 18.2 (1995): 189-218.

² The Balkan states conducted several policies to legitimize their nations and to provide a national homogeneity under the guidance of a ruling majority. Barbara Jelavich. *History of the Balkans*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 134-190.

(minority) status.³ This legal status determines whether to exclude or include them in the definition of nation in the first place. By examining the Kurds and Hungarians in detail, the proposed research intends to reveal shifting state policies over time, and in return, the reactions toward the nationalizing Turkish and Romanian states during the interwar period.⁴

The state policies might have diverged in Turkey and Romania not only because of the different legal codification of these groups' status but also their strategic role in terms of international trajectory after WWI. On the one hand, the Kurdish community was included in the definition of the Turkish nation with the Treaty of Lausanne as well as the Constitution of 1924 along with other Muslim communities in the early years of nation-state formation but later subjected to assimilation. In practice, they were the largest minority group in Turkey, even though they were not recognized as a minority in the legal aspect.⁵ On the other hand, the Hungarian minority in Romania witnessed differing state policies between exclusion and accommodation in different periods from the 1920s onward. In the first years after unification, they tended to be excluded from the Romanian nation, but mainly external factors, such as international agreements, helped to transform this policy in time. As this schema suggests, some puzzles emerge from these cases. One must also note that the policies of inclusion and/or exclusion were not stagnant as nation-states did not always pursue a consistent policy on a particular trajectory.⁶

³ In this study, I often use the phrase of a non-dominant group since the Kurds in Turkey are not legally categorized as minorities. A minority is often referred to as a legal status, an international recognition, something which the Kurds in Eastern Anatolia lacked, unlike the Hungarians, Germans, and Jews in Transylvania.

⁴ Rogers Brubaker points out that "Nationalizing states are conceived as incomplete or unrealized nation-states, yet destined to be a nation-state, by their ruling elite. These states are mostly heterogeneous and are seen as insufficiently national in a variety of senses. The core nation is conceived as being in a weak cultural, economic, demographic position within the state, therefore the language, culture, demographic position, economic and political hegemony of the state bearing nation tended to be promoted." Rogers Brubaker. *Nationalism reframed: nationhood and the national question in the New Europe*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 63-66.

⁵ Yonca Köksal. "Minority policies in Bulgaria and Turkey: the struggle to define a nation." *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 6.4 (2006): 501-521.

⁶ Anthony W. Marx. "The nation-state and its exclusions." *Political Science Quarterly* 117.1 (2002): 103-126.

Therefore, this study seeks to explain how and why the Turkish state initially included the Kurds, but then employed assimilationist policies from the Sheikh Said rebellion (1925) onward. In parallel, it shows how the Hungarian minority in Romania tried to be accommodated after a period of exclusion in the early 1920s but lately tended to be excluded in the late 1930s. It also aims to find out why a state versus non-dominant group relationship evolved into a violent conflict in one case, whereas the other remained less tense in terms of its level of discontent. The demographic commonalities between the Kurds in Eastern Anatolia and the Hungarians in Transylvania, nationalizing state policies, and shifting internal and external political dynamics make the different outcome of their relationship with the central state puzzling.

Working on interwar Turkey and Romania is particularly illuminating considering political and demographic changes in both countries' multi-ethnic regions that help us to observe changing relations between the center and the local groups. In order to compare these cases and to measure the causal effects of their minority-related policies, this paper examines various state policies in terms of legal, administrative, economic, and international aspects. This perspective then allows us to answer how these regions became the center of state-making practices, which factors affected nationalizing policies toward non-dominant ethnic groups in these areas, and to what extent and in what ways state-building efforts differed from each other on a societal and political level.⁷

In answering these questions, the paper argues that the birth and development of state-building practices in Eastern Anatolia and Transylvania provided vital differences based on several domestic and international factors, even though Turkey and Romania shared the aim of creating a

⁷ Harris Mylonas states that "The core group refers to all the inhabitants of a country who share a common national type in several aspects. It often forms a demographic majority, whereas the non-core (non-dominant) group is the one who has been absorbed by the majority. The latter is a culturally distinct group within a national state claiming for their socio-political rights."

Harris Mylonas. *The politics of nation-building: Making co-nationals, refugees, and minorities*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 24.

monolithic nation-state during the interwar period. There were significant differences in the legal and international context between these countries despite some similarities in internal and external policy options. Thus, the political context and the relationship with selected ethnic groups have found a different momentum over time. The distinct variables, such as the definition of minority, international legal provisions, economic and socio-economic and cultural dynamics, state capacity, and the interests of external powers have directly contributed to the tide and extent of state-making policies in the multi-ethnic borderlands of Turkey and Romania.

The composition of this study is threefold. The first section discusses Turkey's state-building practices in Eastern Anatolia in the interwar years and investigates internal and external dynamics that affected the nation and state-building strategies in Eastern Anatolia at the time of continuous reform and centralization attempts. The second part focuses on Romania's effort to integrate and nationalize the newly annexed region of Transylvania after the historic unification in 1918, which roughly doubled the territories and population of the country. The third section sheds light on the differences and similarities of Eastern Anatolia in Turkey and Transylvania in Romania by comparing these cases in terms of the evolution and outcome of particular state policies targeting certain groups. It also scrutinizes the impact of the kin-state, which sets a crucial difference in the level of conflict in interwar Turkey and Romania.

The methodology depends on both archival materials and secondary sources. The archival research has been carried out in the national archives of Turkey, Romania, and the United Kingdom. It has particularly concentrated on the examination of certain laws, constitutions, police and/or gendarmerie reports, as well as diplomatic correspondence notes. The interwar period is selected as the timeframe of this study because both countries have intensely practiced national and state-building strategies as a systematic effort to foster national integration and centralization.

Interwar Turkey: The conflictual nature of state-building in Eastern Anatolia

The Treaty of Lausanne was the marker of the new, modern, and internationally recognized Turkish Republic. Turkey gained an equal status and placed itself as a sovereign nation after reaching out a final agreement with the Entente Powers in 1923. As a result of this treaty, only non-Muslims were accepted as minorities in Turkey and entitled to have communal rights rather than other ethnic (e.g., Kurds) and religious (e.g., Alevi) groups.⁸ According to article 38 of the Lausanne Treaty, the Turkish government guaranteed the protection of life and freedom of all citizens regardless of their nationality, language, race, and religion. The articles from 37 to 45 were exclusively separated for the recognition and application of the minority rights in Turkey.⁹ The determinants of race, language, and religion criterion had changed with the term of non-Muslim (*gayrimüslim*) thanks to the endless effort of the Turkish delegation.¹⁰ The Kurdish community was not counted as a legal minority with the Lausanne agreement.¹¹ Therefore, they did not obtain international legal protection based on this treaty.

It might have argued that the non-Turkish Muslim citizens in Turkey have lacked an international protection mechanism when it came to granting the right to have a mother tongue education. In contrast, the treaty gave special rights not only to non-Muslims but also to other ethnic groups. For instance, article 39 (fraction 4 and 5) allowed all non-Turkish speaking groups

⁸https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/KANUNLAR_KARARLAR/kanuntbmmc002/kanuntbmmc002/kanuntbmmc0200340.pdf Accessed on 15.03.2021.

⁹ Ibid. Fasil 3 Ekalliyetlerin Meselesi

¹⁰ Baskın Oran. *Türkiye'de azınlıklar: kavramlar, teori, Lozan, iç mevzuat, içtihat, uygulama*. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), 63-82.

¹¹ According to Oran, the Kurdish leadership did not want to grant themselves minority status in Lausanne not only because the status was associated with non-Muslims but also because they considered themselves a separate nation, closer to the principle of self-determination. Ibid., 80

to use their native languages without any restrictions.¹² This rule was crystal clear indicating the free use of non-Turkish languages even though that principle was consistently overlooked by Ankara. The period in the wake of the Lausanne Treaty illustrated the Republican elite's nationalist political stance aimed at solidifying the Turkish society through Turkification. The term Turkification coincided with multiple state policies including social, cultural, economic, and strategic measures. Hence, the nation and state-building strategies concerning administrative reconstruction, educational reform, and the creation of a new elite class initiated right after the formation of the Turkish nation-state.¹³

The Republican ruling elite retained the Young Turk legacy of modernization and initiated a radical reform process that prioritized the secularization of the whole society. They advocated a rapid change in the religion-dominated state structure, so the abolition of the Caliphate was the first important step toward this goal. When the Caliphate was abolished in March 1924, the last remaining bond of religion vanished between the Turks and the Kurds. The significant decision of abolishing the Caliphate in March 1924, namely the last connection between two communities, led to serious unrest emerged in the already dissatisfied Kurdish region. It was first the Nasturi revolt that took place in the Hakkari region, but it did not gather much attention since the extent and duration were not that much considerable. Yet, in late 1924, the Interior Ministry reported that the British armed a few numbers of Nasturi troops to form a unit of mercenaries along the southern border of Turkey.¹⁴

¹²The Lausanne Treaty also recognized such rights (language, religious freedom, etc.) for all inhabitants of Turkey and these principles became a part of the Turkish domestic law as well.

¹³ Yeşim Bayar. "In pursuit of homogeneity: the Lausanne Conference, minorities and the Turkish nation." *Nationalities Papers* 42.1 (2014): 108-125.

¹⁴ BCA 30.10 / 112.756.15

The first large-scale revolt of the Kurds was sparked under the leadership of Sheikh Said in 1925. It was not only against the centralization attempts of the new republic but also the secular regulations aiming at dismantling the religious state structure. The Sheikh Said's uprising was the greatest challenge to the newly formed republic, and the roots of this rebellion might be traced to the formation of a Kurdish nationalist party, called Azadi, in 1923. The party's members included former Kurdish members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), who had failed or prevented to be reelected in 1923. It came into being when the constant fear of the formation of an Armenian state in Eastern Anatolia was looming large among the Kurdish population.¹⁵ Besides, as a response to being excluded from politics, they attracted support among the Zaza-speaking Kurdish tribes and also received the support of Sheikh Said. Although Sheikh Said appeared to portray a softer image after his capture in April 1925 by avoiding expressing separatist ambitions, his brother and other detainees declared that their goal was the establishment of an independent Muslim-Kurdish state.¹⁶

The post-1925 period opened a new chapter in Turkey's state-building practices in the eastern region. The provinces where the conflict erupted were seen as the centers in which the state had to establish its ultimate control and launch a reform program. The idea of a large-scale reform came to the fore with the republican mindset of expanding modernization and secularization values everywhere, particularly to less developed regions in terms of economic, social, and cultural aspects. First, the so-called troublemaker families in the East, who could be either participated in the rebellion or assisted it somehow, ordered to be exiled to the central and/or western provinces

¹⁵ Soleimani, Kamal. *Islam and Competing Nationalisms in the Middle East, 1876-1926*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 242.

¹⁶ Kemal Kirisci, and Gareth M. Winrow. *The Kurdish question and Turkey: An example of a trans-state ethnic conflict*. (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 104.

Uğur Mumcu. *Kürt-İslam Ayaklanması 1919-1925*. (İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1992), 161.

of Anatolia.¹⁷ The following plans, such as the Eastern Reform Plan, tried to be carried out by the hand of the General Inspectorates, which were responsible for the general law and order in the region. One should also note that three inspectorates out of four established in the eastern part of Turkey proved a high risk of security in this region compared to other areas in the country.¹⁸

The 1930s was a decade of intensive nationalist policies in social and political life in line with the Turkification project in Eastern Anatolia. The official reports overlooked the Kurdish ethnicity and referred to the Kurds as “*Mountain Turks*” or “*Turkic people*”, who lost their origin and identity.¹⁹ These files indicated that the Kurds were not aware that they were ethnically Turks. According to the Turkish authorities, once the locals would adopt the Turkish language and culture, it would be possible to forget their Kurdishness and accommodate them into Turkishness. As the republican regime gradually consolidated itself, the initiatives for the reform had intensified in the East. When the Turkish Hearts inspectorate Reşit Bey took an expedition tour in Dersim in 1928, he argued that even the locals wanted to be adapted themselves to Turkishness. He suggested that the Kurds would not be Turkified as long as they remained to live in small villages surrounded by mountains.²⁰ As such, the state’s non-presence in the eastern provinces seemed to be a crucial problem. That is why a comprehensive program should be carried out to revive the Turkish culture and language in a new context in the 1930s.

¹⁷ Necmeddin Sahir Sılan. (ed. Tuğba Yıldırım) *Kürt Sorunu ve Devlet: Tedip ve Tenkil Politikaları (1925-1947)*. (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2011).

¹⁸ The first, third, and fourth inspectorates formed in the eastern provinces. Their area of jurisdiction included many provinces in eastern, northeastern, and southeastern parts of Turkey. Only the second inspectorate was responsible for Thrace in the western borderline.

Cemil Koçak. *Umumi müfettişlikler: 1927-1952*. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003), 107-122.

¹⁹ Zafer Toprak. *Cumhuriyet ve Antropoloji*. (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2012), 531-582

²⁰ The inspectorate İbrahim Tali was the first high ranking officer visiting this region ever, including the previous Ottoman rule lasted 600 years, according to Reşit Bey’s reaction.

BCA 30.10/ 115.797.16

The 1934 Resettlement Law was a giant leap forward to realize this projection.²¹ It was a comprehensive and sincere plan that was built on previous proposals, which were not applicable in an orderly manner, to transforming the eastern provinces within the modernization context of the republic.²² Then, the administrative law of Tunceli province, dated 25 December 1935, was another milestone paving the way for further measures for the sake of administrative and demographic reorganization.²³ Based on this law, followed by the Resettlement Law of 1934, the right to govern the entire region was handed over to the governor and military commander, who were loyal to the Republican People's Party (RPP) doctrines. Their undisputed and wide range of power allowed them to resettle the local population, prosecute and punish without objection, and detain people indefinitely.

As a final move, the government assumed the task of organizing a military campaign to put an end to the disorganization in Dersim and brought the non-existent state authority to the region. The stages were preparation, disarmament, and resettlement (detrribalization) if everything would be in place. The operations in Dersim and Sason had lasted for two years between 1937-38 and left many casualties behind. In the end, the state declared a total victory and succeeded to control this mountainous region. The Dersim uprising was a direct response to the centralization policies of the government in the 1930s, and, in return, the military operation planned to eliminate the impact of the tribal and religious Kurdish leadership.²⁴ The response was heavy considering

²¹ Fuat Dündar. "Deporting Demos, Militarizing Natio: Forced Migration and Conflicts in the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey (1908–1947)." *Migration to/and from Turkey: Changing Patterns and Shifting Policies*, Ed. by., Ayşem Biriz Karaçay, Ayşen Üstübcü, The Isis Press, İstanbul (2014): 15-47.

²² Ramazan Hakkı Öztan. "Settlement Law of 1934: Turkish Nationalism in the Age of Revisionism." *Journal of Migration History* 6.1 (2020): 82-103.

²³ https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/KANUNLAR_KARARLAR/kanuntbmmc016/kanuntbmmc016/kanuntbmmc01602884.pdf Accessed on 17.03.2021.

Dersim province renamed after a Turkish name of Tunceli with this law in 1935.

²⁴ Watts, Nicole. "Relocating Dersim: Turkish state-building and Kurdish resistance, 1931–1938." *New Perspectives on Turkey* 23 (2000): 5-30.

advanced military operations, including aerial bombardment, against the rebels who carried old-fashioned rifles used in WWI.²⁵ The military tactics aimed to neutralize the rebels and secure the whole region without paying attention to which group was actively engaged in the conflict. Therefore, the way of suppressing these rebellions remained controversial and gave birth to some debates regarding the use of disproportional force. In the end, the sheikdom, tribal exploitation over peasantry, the disobedient nature of the tribal leaders was claimed to be eliminated in 1938.²⁶

The period after 1938 was the time when operations against dissident Kurdish tribes in Dersim and its adjacent areas were finalized and the continuous Kurdish insurgency in Eastern Anatolia had come to an end after years of conflict. The period of silence and order started in the East by that year, but the application of numerous security-related policies, supported by the use of disciplinary measures to prevent remaining resistance, somehow affected the tide of the reform process in the region. Some parts of Dersim were declared as forbidden zone and those who considered fugitives and smugglers were ordered to be exiled to the western provinces (approximately 15.000 people) by consecutive decrees in 1939.²⁷ As such, operations continued in the post-conflict period until complete control was established over the region.²⁸ As of 1939, the central government had mostly consolidated its authority over the eastern provinces as the following period did not witness any major uprisings.²⁹

²⁵ Silan, Necmeddin Sahir. *Doğu Anadolu'da toplumsal mühendislik: Dersim-Sason, 1934-1946*. (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2010).

²⁶ The exile of problematic figures also helped to transforming the region and restore calmness. Yet, some reports written after couple of years of the operation there were still dissident people trying to oppose the government's authority. These were only individual cases as no major conflict emerged during WWII and after.

Necmeddin Sahir Silan. *Dersim Harekatı ve Cumhuriyet Bürokrasisi (1936-1953)*. Vol.4. (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2011).

²⁷ In June 1939, 1000 people from 250 households were added to previously recorded 14.000 people to be sent. BCA 30.18.1.2/ 87.51.6

²⁸ A follow-up decree was issued in September 1939 stating that an additional 1500 people were captured and ready to be sent away from the operational forbidden zone. BCA 30.18.1.2/ 88.93.18

²⁹ At this point, Kemal Kirişçi and Gareth Winrow pointed out that there was nothing much left in the name of Kurdish nationalism by the 1950s because many Kurds had been assimilated and the tribal leaders were integrated into mainstream Turkish politics.

If we consider that a nation is associated with the creation and enforcement of mythical common history, the standardization of language, and efforts to build a homogenous entity, we may conclude that the Turkish case is no exception.³⁰ The primary aim was to consolidate the state and the regime in interwar Turkey. The ruling elite in Turkey not only tried to construct a nation-state by creating a new citizenship concept in this regard but also aimed at the survival of the modern and secular country. The Turkish state's nationalizing policies marked its presence in the Kurdish populated areas because mostly the Kurds were perceived to be adapted to complete modernization and secularization.³¹ Hence, the Kurdish community was mainly regarded as an uncivilized entity that should be treated with law and order by the central government.

The security-related concerns also urged central authorities to be alerted as the government aimed at preventing banditry and lowering the crime rate in Eastern Anatolia. As this perspective, supported by the Prime Minister İnönü and Interior Minister Şükrü Kaya, prevailed in politics, the new republic embarked on a mission to break the long-standing feudal structure and permanently eliminate the dissident figures. In this conjecture, the constant state of conflict paved the way for a tense relationship in Eastern Anatolia, while a total of 21 rebellions were recorded in the eastern provinces from 1923 to the large-scale Dersim operations of 1937-38.³²

Kemal Kirişçi, and Gareth M. Winrow. *The Kurdish question and Turkey: An example of a trans-state ethnic conflict*. (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 105.

³⁰ Asa Lundgren. *The unwelcome neighbour: Turkey's Kurdish policy* (Vol. 3). (IB Tauris, 2007), 7.

³¹ In parallel with Gellner's nationalism concept, a high culture, which superseded religion, imposed on whole society. A homogenous and core identity was justified through some regulations or, namely, invented traditions. Ernest Gellner. *Nations and nationalism*. (Cornell University Press, 2008).

³² Hüseyin Yayman. "Türkiye'nin Kürt sorunu hafızası: Şark meselesinden demokratik açılıma." *SETA*, (2011): 20.

Greater Romania: State-building after unification and its application in Transylvania

When the war effort was over in Europe, Romania reached out an advantageous position in terms both strategically and politically. Allied with the Entente side from 1916 onward, Romania had suffered a lot under German occupation until the Romanian army regained the lost territories in the last period of the war. The country was able to unite with Transylvania, Bessarabia, and Bukovina, formally declared in Alba-Iulia in December 1918, shortly before the Paris Peace Conference started. At that time, both the Jewish committee and the Saxons pledged their allegiances to the rule of the Romanian state, whereas the Hungarian community did not sign the Alba-Iulia accords, refusing the Romanian rule.³³ For instance, the National German-Saxon committee for Transylvania declared their approval for the union with Romania and the accords related to national, political, economic rights, and the autonomy for confessional schools on 8 January 1919.³⁴ Since there was no concrete objection from other minorities, the Romanian administrators obtained an upper hand in the conference table against Hungary that refused to accept the Romanian annexation of Transylvania.

The incorporation of vast territories doubled the total area as well as the population of the Romanian Kingdom. After the unification, the Romanian territory expanded to 295,049 km² so that the population increased from 7.9 million in 1915 to 14.7 million, and then to 18 million according to the census of 1930.³⁵ Thus, suddenly the proportion of minorities in Romania sharply

³³ In 1918, the Jewish representatives declared that “The admission of the Jews to civil and political rights would not only be a great favor for our fellow believers but also a blessing for the Romanian state. The words of majesty as well as the politicians gave us hope.” ANIC Alexandru Marghiloman Inv.1143 Dosar nr.326 f.10

Saxons in Banat decided to unify with Romania rather than living under Serbian rule. There was also a decision of a cease-fire line in between the Serbs, Hungarians, and Romanians. ANIC Vaida-Voevod Inv.2107 Dosar nr.39

³⁴They further ratified this declaration and their allegiance to Greater Romania on 6 November 1919 in Sighisoara. ANIC Vaida-Voevod Inv.2017 Dosar nr.115 f.23

³⁵ Marcela Sălăgean. *Romania between 1919 and 1947* in Ioan Bolovan et al. *History of Romania: compendium*. (Romanian Cultural Institute, 2006), 583.

increased from 8% to approximately 30% in December 1918.³⁶ However, this expansion brought large ethnic groups under the rule of a new Romanian state, the existence of which led to discontent. In some parts of Transylvania, Romanian inhabitants were outnumbered by the Hungarian population, such as in the Szeklerland (Székelyföld), but, overall, the Romanian population was in the majority. The latter was overcrowded compared to other ethnicities in 19 out of 23 districts.³⁷ In general, the Hungarians were made up of about 9.3% of the total population based on 1920 statistics, then they dropped to 7.9% in the 1930 census, followed by the Germans (4.1%) and Jews (4.0%), which still made them the most populous minority in Greater Romania.³⁸

In order to prevent a conflict between different ethnicities concentrated on the same territories, several Minority Protection Treaties were imposed onto East-Central European countries as part of the Paris Peace Settlement. The Romanian state of affairs was bounded by this international treaty concerning minority protection in terms of civil and public rights. The Romanian Prime Minister Ion I.C. Bratianu, who used to be an influential and admired political figure of his time, had to confront the status of the minorities during the peace negotiations. The three prominent ethnic communities were the Hungarians, Germans, and the Jews of Transylvania. According to the historian Keith Hitchins, who wrote Bratianu's biography, Bratianu strongly believed that the Romanian state should have existed as a unitary state, so his idea was to consolidate a centralized state without giving extensive rights to the minorities for promoting their

³⁶ István Horváth and Alexandra Scacco. "From the unitary to the pluralistic: fine-tuning minority policy in Romania." *Diversity in action: local public management of multi-ethnic communities in Central and Eastern Europe. Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative. Open Society Institute*, 2001, 241-271.

The rate was shown as 74% Romanians and 8.4% Hungarians (total 26% minorities) as of 1930 in ANIC Vasile Stoica Inv.1771 Dosar nr.88 f.149 Les Minorities Ethniques en Romania

³⁷ Gheorghe Iancu. *The Ruling Council: The Integration of Transylvania into Romania: 1918-1920*. Vol. 8. (Center for Transylvanian Studies, 1995), 9.

³⁸ <https://insse.ro/cms/files/evenimente/RoCentenar/ROCentenar.pdf> Accessed on 20.03.2021.

However, the principal statistician Sabin Manuilă gave the ratios as follows in 1934; Hungarians 7.7%, Jews 4.6%, Germans 4%. ANIC Vasile Stoica Inv.1771 Dosar nr.XII/101

political, cultural and religious autonomy.³⁹ According to the British reports, Bratianu's viewpoint addressed that the minorities were situated in a more favorable position than the ruling nation with the post-war treaties.⁴⁰ The Romanian PM hence showed a critical stance to all outside interference and/or influence in Romania's internal affairs through the Minorities Treaty, which was designed at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.

The Treaty of Trianon in 1921 not only recognized the expansion of Romanian territories but also brought a considerable minority population under the rule of Greater Romania. At this point, Bucharest witnessed a complex situation regarding the influx of minorities and dominance of non-Romanians in bureaucracy, urban life, and the economy. Although Romanians were the majority in the population, they were underrepresented in urban centers which affected their share in middle-class occupations. The Romanians were overwhelmingly living in rural areas, whereas the urban centers were mostly populated by the Hungarians. Together with the Jews and Germans, the Hungarian minority dominated the urban life in which they formed about 88.5% of the total population based on the 1910 census.⁴¹ Due to this demographic unevenness for the Romanians in the new territories, nationalizing policies of the state were designed to come into effect varying from the public to socio-cultural affairs.

The target of centralization also required an administrative coherence in which the administrative ranks should be reorganized and purified at the expense of non-Romanians. In particular, the region of Transylvania, where Hungarians had occupied the central role in public affairs, was planned to be targeted with a national program. The utmost goal was to appoint so-

³⁹ Keith Hitchins. *Ionel Bratianu: Romania*. (Haus Publishing, 2011), 135.

⁴⁰ TNA FO 371/9967 Sir Herbert Derring to Mr. Mac Donald 18 July 1924, f. 129.

⁴¹ Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building and Ethnic Struggle, 1918–930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 135.

called ethnic Romanians who embraced the Romanian culture and language.⁴² There was a tendency to see minorities as foreigners as in many other states at the time, therefore the government could not be placed its trust in the non-Romanian population in the administration. This tendency paved the way for state-led efforts for reshaping the state and society. Yet, the capacity of these practices remained limited in application and controversial in terms of the results. Although the state aimed to modify the administration, the problem of having a lack of qualified Romanian personnel impeded the desired change to a certain extent.⁴³

Transylvania was indeed at the core of centralization practices. It was an indispensable region for Romania since Romanian nationalism sought a unified Transylvania with the Old Kingdom (Wallachia and Moldavia). When describing new Romania in 1920, Simion Mehedinți classified the country as a heterogeneous European nation. Then, he proposed that it could be possible to Romanize the cities in Transylvania as the Hungarians had done previously. At this point, he argued that immigration had to be stopped from foreign lands because it might be slowed down the process of Romanianization.⁴⁴ An article in the *Universul* newspaper, dated 15 May 1921, suggested that unification must be accomplished through purification in Transylvania. The Old Kingdom should embrace the good aspects of Transylvania and throw the bad parts away

⁴² ANIC Sabin Manuilă Inv.614 Dosar nr.V/1

The term ethnic Romanian can be originated with Romanian speaking people, derived from Latin language, who shared Romanian culture and heritage. Europeans had called the Romanians as Vlachs (Wallachians) since the Middle Ages. However, historian Ion-Aurel Pop objected this usage by stating Romanians themselves did not familiar with the term Wallachian. Rather, Romanian had always been the widely accepted terminology.

Ioan Aurel Pop. "Mărturii medievale privind numele românilor și al graiului lor în limba română." *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie George Barițiu Series Historica* 57.57 (2018): 347-363.

⁴³ Most of the public officials, who failed to pass the language exam, retained their position and only 15 to 20 percent of them lost their jobs, which was a low ratio considering Bucharest's target to nationalize the public posts.

Gábor Egry. "Phantom Menaces? Ethnic Categorization, Loyalty and State Security in Interwar Romania." *The Hungarian Historical Review* (2014): 650-682.

⁴⁴ Mehedinți gave the example of Timișoara where in its German descendent inhabitants were targeted with a Magyarization program during the Hungarian rule. He also defined two categories based on political preferences. The first group, including Hungarians and Serbians, was the one with centrist tendencies, whereas Saxons, Turks, and Jews had a decentralized outlook. ANIC Sabin Manuilă Inv.614 Dosar nr.XII/77 bis, f.2-5.

according to this article.⁴⁵ Indeed, the reference to “bad parts” included some unwanted groups and/or particular people in Transylvania. The Transylvanian politician Iuliu Maniu highlighted the delicate situation by addressing the creation of new values to restore the damage of Hungarians. Yet, he was certainly against any destructive methods while doing this.⁴⁶ Centralization was a crucial task for Bucharest, but the method of application, as well as its limits, were vague in the first years of unification.

There were quite obvious reasons why the government called for administrative centralization and unification. For instance, in August 1919, the justice department of the provincial council in Sibiu revealed the need for Romanian personnel to take the control of magistrate courts and the judicial system as a whole. Yet, all the ranks were previously dominated by the Hungarians who were denied taking the oath of allegiance required for the maintenance of public service. The council reported that the courts remained without judges after dismissals and the course of justice stopped. It was certainly the greatest damage for the law and order. According to the same report, the previous Hungarian rule had approximately 1000 judges and prosecutors as well as 700 practicing notaries, whereas the new administration had only 120 district judges in active service.⁴⁷ That situation might lead to a weak system of law enforcement since the magistrate system was poorly paid as well. Although the report addressed the imminent bankruptcy of the justice system, it still proposed the dismissal of officials, who seemed to be against Greater Romania, at any material costs sacrificed. It stated that there were only 100 people who would be eligible to work without jeopardizing the state’s interests. The remaining personnel after multiple removals from the bureaucratic ranks was neither qualified to maintain the necessary service

⁴⁵ “Bune și rele din Ardeal”, *Universul*, 15 May 1921.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ ANIC Emil Hatieganu Inv.1635 Dosar nr.17, f.14-16.

compared to its predecessor nor sufficient in numbers.⁴⁸ However, the nationalizing tendency of the state prevailed at all costs.⁴⁹

Numerous reports were penned by the local security forces to the Interior Ministry regarding the irredentist actions of the Hungarians throughout the interwar years. The reports, stored at the Romanian Foreign Ministry, were dedicated exclusively to Hungarian irredentism for Transylvania. The dispute over Transylvania mainly concentrated on the issue of irredentism which showed itself through both political and cultural ways. These reports suggested that the cultural clubs and libraries in Transylvanian villages served as the center of irredentist propaganda for Hungary. In some libraries, the Hungarian maps displayed the pre-WWI borders in which Transylvania used to be a part of Hungarian territory. It was quite common to see a Hungarian flag on the wall as well. People here were told that Transylvania always remained as a Hungarian territory.⁵⁰ According to Romanian authorities, Hungarian intelligence must not be overlooked because it was operating everywhere including in the villages, train stations, etc. It was noted that even in some villages the Hungarian families did not want to send their children to the Romanian schools because of these dissident voices. The common belief that Transylvania belonged to Hungary contributed to reunification propaganda and all Hungarian organizations were driven by the idea of irredentism according to the Romanian authorities' subsequent reports.⁵¹

The contest over Transylvania had lasted for the entire interwar period. The Hungarian demands as well as international affairs shaped the intensity of the negotiations. The Hungarians and Romanians claimed the ancestral rights over Transylvania so that the question of Transylvania

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ The oath of allegiance issue, which stimulated the nationalist pride for many public servants, and the enforced language exams, which created an obstacle for non-native Romanian speakers, were both served to Romanianizing the administration. However, this move might also lead to slow-down ineffective management in state affairs. For this reason, the applicability of it remained limited and partial.

⁵⁰ AMAE Fond Transylvania 71 Vol.1, 28 November 1920, f.89-92.

⁵¹ Ibid.

evolved into a much broader international problem concerning the strategic interests of third parties, namely Italy and Germany. These states also considered his intentions in terms of increasing the sphere of influence in Central and Eastern Europe in which Transylvania was at the center of this power struggle. That is why the multi-ethnic structure, primarily the Hungarians, was used as a tool to intervene in this region's internal affairs. Indeed, Hungary's close relations with Italy and Nazi Germany allowed them to take advantage of changing power dynamics in Europe on their behalf. In the end, Romania was forced to give enormous territorial concessions in Transylvania with the Vienna Arbitration or *Diktat* in 1940.⁵²

A comparative aspect of state-building in interwar Eastern Anatolia and Transylvania

Although the minority question came to light in different contexts in Turkey and Romania, as there was no separate international minority protection treaty imposed on Turkey unlike Romania, the transition from a pluralist structure to a more uniform model is intertwined when we look at the political developments in the early 1920s.⁵³ According to Rogers Brubaker, WWI itself paved the way for the intense politicization of ethnicity, the polarization of ethnonational allegiances, and global ethnonational discontent.⁵⁴ Hence, the collapse of dynastic empires at the expense of nation-states did not resolve the national question, rather escalated during the interwar period. Turkey and Romania also experienced this struggle in their contested territories. As

⁵² According to the Second Vienna Arbitration, signed on 30 August 1940, Hungary annexed Northern Transylvania. Nazi Germany tried to solve the conflict by an arbitration that divided Transylvania between Romania and Hungary. In this respect, Romania ceded a territory of 43,493 km², with a population of more than 2,667,000 of which more than half of it were Romanians. Ioan Bolovan et al., *Ibid.*, 606-606.

⁵³ Romania was subjected to sign a Minority Protection Treaty as other Central-Eastern European countries did after the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. The provisions regarding the legal status of the minorities in Turkey were dealt with the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.

⁵⁴ Rogers Brubaker et al. *Nationalist politics and everyday ethnicity in a Transylvanian town*. (Princeton University Press, 2018), 43.

explained in the previous chapters, the delicate situation between the central state authority and local powerholders was primarily at stake in Eastern Anatolia of Turkey and Transylvania of Greater Romania. The populous Kurdish and Hungarian communities located in these regions were not just effective in a demographic aspect, but they were also dominant in the economic and administrative arena.

These contested territories, in which state-making practices had continuously applied throughout the interwar period, were strategically important regions in Turkey and Romania. In Eastern Anatolia, the Kurdish community was the overwhelming majority and dispersed between towns and countryside depending on their economic interests. In Transylvania, the urban centers were mostly dominated by the Hungarians and they were overcrowded by the Hungarians in the inner Szekler region.⁵⁵ Considering this structure, the attempt of centralization emerged as an urgent matter for controlling these regions.⁵⁶ While elaborating on centralization, the administrative adjustment and redistribution of economic means should be taken into consideration altogether. Yet, foremost, it should be stated that centralization in Turkey and Romania was stimulated by providing national security and stability in the first place.

The idea of assimilation was on the agenda both in Turkey and Romania, but the extent and application of the policies created divergences in opinion. Some suggested peaceful assimilation of non-dominant ethnicities, such as the plan of the demographer Sabin Manuilă for

⁵⁵ Stefano Bottoni. "National Projects, Regional Identities, Everyday Compromises. Szeklerland in Greater Romania (1919–1940)." *The Hungarian historical review: new series of Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 2.3 (2013): 477-511.

⁵⁶ In 1910, only 17.6% of the Romanians settled in urban areas, whereas it was 53.4% for the Hungarians. To overcome this uneven position, Romanian government embarked on a nationalist program after 1918 to create a Romanian urban middle class, thereby appointing them to cultural, economic, and administrative institutions of the cities. Ioan Scurtu and Liviu Boar, eds. *Minoritățile naționale din România, 1918–1925. Documente*, București, 1995; (National minorities in Romania, 1918-1925) Vol 1. București: Arhivele Nationale, 1995, 35.

Romania in the 1920s,⁵⁷ and the statesman Celal Bayar's proposal for Turkey in the late 1930s.⁵⁸ Some others believed in the extended power of the central state and dreamed of complete assimilation of all ethnicities. For instance, the Turkish Interior Minister Şükrü Kaya and the Romanian Liberal Party leader, and the renowned PM Bratianu could be counted as the prominent figures who favored the latter model.

There were indeed some similarities and differences in the process of constructing a new administration. Stemming from the French model of unitary administration, the general inspectorates in Turkey and the Romanian prefects were similar in terms of concentrating state power in reliable hands in certain provinces. By doing this, the ruling party's hegemony aimed to function in every domain of the respective regions. This initiative could be a step for keeping the non-dominant ethnic groups out of power to prevent them from taking an active role in state and/or local administration. In Turkey, the stance of the single party was different from that of the Romanian case because of the lack of an organized movement of the Kurdish community at the national level in politics. In contrast, as Gabor Egry shows that the Transylvanian Hungarians were much better organized and represented by influential political figures.⁵⁹

The most visible change came with the adoption of new constitutions aimed at strengthening the unitary and centralized model of Turkey and Romania. One thing was crucial that both Eastern Anatolia and Transylvania could not be integrated into national states completely

⁵⁷ Irina Livezeanu, *Ibid.*, 139.

⁵⁸ In his report sent directly to the PM İnönü on 12 December 1936, Bayar pointed out that alienating the Kurdish citizens was against the interests of the republic since the result would only be a negative reaction against the state. He further stated that the Kurds kept out of public administration just because of their ethnicity, but the state should declare its actual intention with a systematic policy to prevent spreading disinformation. In fact, the Kurds should be attached to the republic with constructive policies according to Bayar.

Celal Bayar, and Nejat Bayramoğlu. *Şark raporu*. (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2006), 64.

⁵⁹ Gabor Egry. *Minority Elite, Continuity, and Identity Politics in Northern Transylvania: The Case of the Transylvanian Party* in Viktor Karády and Borbála Zsuzsanna Török, eds. *Cultural dimensions of elite formation in Transylvania: (1770-1950)*. (EDRC Foundation, 2008), 187.

in the first place. The national constitutions aimed to serve the integration of these provinces into the nation-state. There was a constant belief that Transylvania would have brought back into Hungarian rule so that the Hungarian minority was motivated by the idea of reunification.⁶⁰ Moreover, the young republic in Turkey was still an infant entity so that it was not clear whether it would survive in its large area of control. To that end, the authorities of both countries tended to embrace a cautious position for the maintenance of national security and territorial integrity. At that stage, centralization seemed a viable option to hold the country together. It brought further plans for what to do or how to deal with the people who were not seen as trustworthy by the state.

In both Romania and Turkey, regional inquiries were mostly ignored since any counter-demand would constitute a challenge to territorial integrity and national unity. The idea against regionalism or decentralization addressed the fear of dissolution. For instance, the ruling circles in Romania believed that without administrative centralization, centrifugal tendencies would be fueled, therefore the state's integrity would be jeopardized.⁶¹ Indeed, the campaign for the agrarian reform might be the most wide-scaled attempt to break the dominance of the Hungarian landowner families, whose influence had shaped the economic and political dynamics of the region for many years.⁶² The next blow to the Hungarian domination in Transylvania came in the form of this land reform that helped to change the demographics throughout the interwar period. A similar reform project could not be achieved in Eastern Anatolia of Turkey since the feudal/tribal structure could not be dismantled because of the social relations and the political dynamics, namely alliances between tribal leaders and the ruling RPP.

⁶⁰ AMAE Fond Transilvania 71 Vol.1, 20 February 1921, f.140 & Vol.6, 5 January 1929, f.1-5.

⁶¹ Only the National Peasants embraced the contrary stance in this period as they tried to apply decentralization when they took the government in 1929.

Hans-Christian Maner. *Parlamentarismul în România:(1930-1940)*. (Editura Enciclopedică, 2004), 319.

⁶² Keith Hitchins. *Rumania, 1866-1947*. (London: Clarendon Press, 1994), 347.

Indeed, the primary focus of the various state policies for centralization was the groups who could be a threat to the central rule. Thus, for those who opposed the central authority in Eastern Anatolia and Transylvania, several precautionary measures were put into practice such as replacement or transfer of public officials and other security policies that might have installed a constant surveillance mechanism on people. In this process, there were some fluctuations or changing policy options in state strategies as the policies did not follow a linear path.⁶³ Both countries faced their limits due to the limited capacity of the state. The pressing issue of finding a sufficient number of qualified personnel/ civil servants to be employed in the local administration seemed to be the major obstacle. Both countries had a scarcity of resources to conduct the proposed reform program, and when it encountered the limitation of its power, the impact of the local elites came into force. At this stage, co-optation and local alliances were other dimensions that both states advocated from time to time.

All these initiatives were aimed at changing the existing structure of the targeted regions. The central governments referred to it as a complete reform process, but yet, it was also a way to install reliable public officials and redesign the entire socio-economic structure in accordance with the security concerns of the center. In Transylvania, the class differences between noble landowner Hungarians, who hold much of the professional classes and bureaucracy, and the Romanians, who were mostly landless peasants, triggered Bucharest's policies in dismantling the political and economic power of the Hungarians. The Turkish state also aimed to block the efficiency of the Kurdish landlords, of those who were not sided with Ankara, in Eastern Anatolia by removing their economic and political power through various state policies including exile, detribalization,

⁶³ As Rogers Brubaker pointed out, one cannot think of a fixed political orientation in a nationalizing state. The policy options are rather composed of a dynamically changing field of differentiated and competitive positions in order to create so-called a real nation-state. Rogers Brubaker. *Nationalism reframed....*, 66.

and disarmament, administrative replacements, and so on. Those who did not object to Ankara's policies and remained obedient had the chance to save themselves from these measures.

The 1930s was the time when the Turkish and Romanian political life witnessed increasing nationalist rhetoric. The rising tide of nationalism came in the form of different contexts in Turkey and Romania during the 1930s. On the one hand, the single-party regime of Turkey strengthened the consolidation of the single-party regime while dealing with the challenge between party officials and state bureaucrats as well as the societal discontent in particular areas.⁶⁴ On the other hand, Romania experienced an increasing far-right movement and anti-Semitism in politics under the controversial kingship of Carol II, who himself inclined to pursue his authoritarian ambitions.⁶⁵ The growing tendency to right-wing nationalism was the zeitgeist of the 1930s that showed its impact on state-minority relations in the regions where the constant tension remained at stake. The response of the state to the existing and/or escalating tension in Eastern Anatolia and Transylvania differed in some respects in the 1930s peculiar atmosphere, but yet, one thing was in common that these regions continued to be the primary target of nationalist state policies for the ultimate control and authority over the local population.

In addition, a potential mass-scale conflict could have prevented in Romania due to an intimidating kin-state for the Hungarians in Transylvania and deterrent international relations. The minority status of the Hungarians has allowed them to raise their grievances in the international avenues, such as at the League of Nations, through petitioning and/or with the help of Hungary's diplomats. In contrast, strained communal relations and long-lasting clashes might have been more likely to occur in Turkey without the existence of these two particular deterring conditions. The

⁶⁴ Mahmut Goloğlu. *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi 1931-1938 Tek Partili Cumhuriyet*. (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2009), 3-12.

⁶⁵ Larry Watts. *Romanian Cassandra*. Vol. 358. (East European Monographs, 1993), 196.

existence of the revisionist Hungarian kin-state and its increasing irredentist pressure for its co-ethnics resulted in three prominent outcomes in Romania.

First, it led to an intense security policy and intolerant attitude of the Romanian state through strict monitoring and pressure over political figures and ordinary citizens in the Hungarian community. Second, the Hungarians in Romania were able to raise their concerns and grievances with the support of Hungary at the League of Nations that elevated the problem to an international stage. Third, the Romanian state might have refrained from openly targeting the Hungarian community with an excessive force (military measures) that could have led to a serious and wide-scale conflict with Hungary, which was not desired for the stability in East-Central Europe.⁶⁶ Conversely, the Kurds in Turkey seemed to have lacked considerable external aid and lobbying power because no powerful kin-state existed abroad, which would help to ratchet up their claims against the Turkish government abroad. This position might have put additional pressure on them and led to strained relations with the central authority apart from various forms of nationalist state-making policies that also contributed to a tense atmosphere in Turkey.

The influence of a kin-state should not be overlooked while comparing the state-building effort and its consequences. Lacking a kin-state abroad, which was unconditionally supporting its cause, the Kurds might have alienated more easily and targeted by a superior force compared to the Hungarians in Romania. Therefore, the kin-state had an important factor that sets the Turkish and Romanian cases apart to some extent. In the international scene, inter-state relations also played a considerable role for the host state abstaining from harsh treatment. The international

⁶⁶ In the early 1920s, the Hungarian elite (landlords, bureaucrats etc.) was tended to be excluded by the nationalizing Romanian state, but many Hungarians remained in their places in Transylvania. This kind of conflict was neither welcomed by any parties in the region nor the great powers that had direct political and economic interests. Even in the late 1930s, there were proposals for a Danubian union for the trade affairs between Hungary and Romania. Due to the continuous border frictions and disagreements, as a solution, some proposals made for a political union by forming a state like the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. CNSAS Fond Documentar, 12873-002 16 April 1939, f.262-265.

context and the need for stable regional relations in Central-Eastern Europe in the 1930s contributed to decreasing the tension regarding the Transylvanian question unlike what happened in Eastern Anatolia.

Conclusion

This paper scrutinized state-making strategies, the reasons for their implementation, and their consequences in the multi-ethnic borderlands of Eastern Anatolia (Turkey) and Transylvania (Romania) during the interwar period. It then demonstrated the multiple state-making policies in political, economic, and social domains that targeted non-dominant ethnic groups in these frontier regions, where tensions between the central government and local elements ran high. Drawing on different strategies of the respective countries, this study not only showed the scope of the central government's plans in political, economic, and demographic fields but also explained whether or to what extent nationalizing policies were applicable. The outcome would shed light on interwar Turkey and Romania's political trajectory from the early 1920s to the late 1930s and the varied results of the state-making strategies at the political and social level. It would therefore present a detailed analysis of the state-making process in multi-ethnic regions, aimed at encouraging a centralized and homogeneous state structure at the expense of particular groups, considered as a threat to territorial integrity.

The Turkish and Romanian state policies manifested how the nation and the state-building processes entailed a variety of interactions between central states and the non-dominant communities in different periods instead of being dichotomous as either inclusive or exclusive all the time. As Rogers Brubaker suggested, states may endorse a mixture of civil and/or ethnic policies of nationhood to different degrees, thereby undertaking contradictory and non-linear

policies that may lead to both inclusive and exclusive stances toward the targeted groups.⁶⁷ While some policies may take an inclusive approach, others adopt exclusive agendas. Likewise, this study indicated that the nation and state-building processes in Turkey and Romania included oscillating approaches when dealing with the selected groups during the interwar years. The applicability of these policies sometimes looked alike in both countries, but at times diverged.

In both countries, internal and external factors affected the tide of multiple state policies and shaped the relationship between the central administration and certain local groups. The latter's response to the central regulations in Turkey and Romania diverted from each other due to economic, political, socio-cultural, and international factors. However, it sometimes coincided with each other, as we could observe similar political and/or social developments in these states. One must also note that there were some people among these targeted groups, who did not oppose increasing state authority and instead chose to cooperate with the central authorities. Thus, various dimensions helped to explain why Eastern Anatolia and Transylvania were singled out in terms of being the center of nationalizing state-building strategies during the interwar period.

In general, we could draw three major conclusions from this study. First, despite some similarities between nationalist state policies aimed at creating a centralized nation-state in Turkey and Romania, state-making practices emerged under different circumstances and developed in different contexts. Historical legacies and the definition of a "minority" based on international provisions, as well as political, economic, and cultural differences were significant in assessing the difference. In a way, the new Turkish republic retained the imperial legacy of the Ottoman Empire through the *millet system*. This logic reflected the definition of a minority at the Lausanne negotiations in which only non-Muslims were considered to be minorities.⁶⁸ As explained, the

⁶⁷ Rogers Brubaker. *Ethnicity without groups*. (Harvard University Press, 2004).

⁶⁸ See more in Seha L. Meray. *Lozan Barış Konferansı: Tutanaklar-Belgeler*. (İstanbul: YKY, 2001).

definition of Turkishness included the Kurds as a Muslim community, thus the newly drafted national constitution in 1924 followed this understanding. In legal terms, the Romanian example was different because Hungarians, Germans, and Jews were allowed to enjoy internationally defined protection mechanisms, and they were entitled to secure minority rights. However, the applicability of minority rights/protection remained highly contested with the promulgation of the national constitution of Romania in 1923 and the following decrees, which reinforced the tide of Romanianization of the country.

Second, both Turkey and Romania could not apply and/or finalize some proposed projects in Eastern Anatolia and Transylvania because of their limited state capacities. Turkey had a dilemma of finding enough civil servants to be employed in the eastern provinces, so the creation of a new administrative mechanism was not an easy task in a region where the existing decentralized structure had to be dismantled. Moreover, the desire to work in the far eastern provinces was limited, so the government tried to encourage civil servants with additional incentives, mainly through monetary support and degree privileges. The constant state of rebellion might have put more pressure on officials serving in the region. The Inspectorates-General has emerged in such an atmosphere to provide an effective security mechanism as well as to support reform programs.

Similar to the Turkish case, controlling and reforming the administration were quite difficult tasks for Romania due to the limited capacity of the newly enlarged state. The pressing issue of finding a sufficient number of qualified Romanian personnel to be employed in the local administration was the major obstacle.⁶⁹ The local administration had still an important role despite

⁶⁹ According to Harris Mylonas' interpretation, state capacity is related to measures of administrative, policing, and military capabilities of a state. It may influence the nation-building strategies in relative and absolute ways. The former advocates the power balance between the external powers (kin-state) supporting its co-ethnics and the host state, whereas the latter is associated with whether a state has the capacity to implement its nation-building policies or not.

all the centralizing policies of Bucharest because of the limited resources based on human capital. There was no guarantee that the policies of the center were precisely followed by the local prefects in other regions, such as in Transylvania.⁷⁰ The traces of previous administration were still present in Transylvania, as the interwar Romanian state went through a challenging period of transformation.

Third, the situation with the Kurds in Turkey and the Hungarians in Romania emerged as a security risk and thus tried to be solved by using precautionary measures linked to security-related policies. However, the threat of revisionism and the interests of great powers played an integral role in respective states' policies in Eastern Anatolia and Transylvania. The degree of these policies differed thanks to the existence of a kin-state which was crucial in bringing a third party on stage as a deterrent power. The possibility of direct kin-state intervention in favor of a non-dominant group may help to prevent the risk of a serious conflict, as the comparison part shows how a kin-state as an external power can be a deterrent element.

Comparing interwar Romania and Turkey in this regard, the Turkish state's use of military power against Kurdish tribes in the eastern provinces, as opposed to the Romanian state's actions in Transylvania, introduces a vital difference. Indeed, Turkey had maneuverability when using its armed force against some dissident Kurdish tribes due to the absence of direct external pressure preventing such action. However, the revisionist Hungarian kin-state's endless support for its co-ethnics in Transylvania might have led Romania to be more cautious in its relationship with the local figures, thereby curtailing the level of conflict in the region.⁷¹ The Hungarian state's

Harris Mylonas. *Ibid.*, 25.

⁷⁰ Gábor Egry. "The World Between Us: State Security and the Negotiation of Social Categories in Interwar Romania." *East Central Europe* 44.1 (2017): 17-46.

⁷¹ The same can be argued for the Germans of Transylvania, especially when Nazi Germany became much more interested in them as of the mid-1930s since the Reich regarded the Germans in Central-Eastern Europe as a fifth-column in its further enlargement policy to the East.

diplomatic activeness at the League of Nations level, as well as its propaganda network in European parliaments, allowed a consistent and solid backing for the cause of Hungarians in Transylvania. This effort brought the attention of the European public to the seriousness of the Transylvanian dispute between Romania and Hungary. In other words, the existence of a kin-state and the international regulations prevented the exclusion of the Hungarian minority in Romania despite some attempts toward this policy in different periods. Overall, this comparison would offer new horizons to understand the extent of shifting political dynamics based on social, cultural, and economic politics, inter-state relations, and kin-state politics, and their influence on the shifting internal and external political agenda in Turkey and Romania.

See more in MacAlister Brown. *The Third Reich's mobilization of the German fifth column in eastern Europe*. (Boulder, CO: University of Colorado, 1959).