Migration Narratives from Third Wave Bulgarian Immigrants in London, Canada: Internalization

of Balkanism and its Effects on Citizenship

by

Ivelina Petrova

A thesis

presented to the University of Waterloo

in the fulfillment of the

thesis requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Public Issues Anthropology

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2021

Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

Bai Ganio, a brash fictional character famous among Bulgarians who grew up during communism, has become something of an example of what not to do for Bulgarian immigrants to Canada aged thirty-five and up. Subconsciously, they tend to model citizenship and moral behaviour opposite to his as they work to integrate into Canadian society. Interviews with eight Bulgarian immigrants in London, Ontario who arrived between 1999 and 2005 were conducted with a focus on their migration narrative. A cross-chronotopic lens was applied to better understand how internalization of 'the Balkan other' (Bai Ganio) and their invisibility as white ethnic immigrants are presented in several scales. Bai Ganio, created by Aleko Konstantinov around the time of independence from Ottoman Rule, represents Bulgaria's longing to become a part of Europe. The figure gained popularity again in the 1990s after communism ended in 1989 when Bulgarians were free to move to wherever they wished. The participants in this research think of themselves as being among the intellectuals whose leaving caused a brain drain from Bulgaria. This thesis argues for the importance of drawing on Bulgarian history when having conversations about their migration because it reveals the internalization of their image as a non-modern "others" and how they orient to it. Analyzing their narratives through the framework of chronotopes, which tie in aspects of time, space, and figures of personhood, further reveals how the same dynamics of understanding their identity in different spaces and time is constantly being presented in multiple scales as the United States, Bulgaria and Canada are in constant relation in their narratives.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Adrienne Lo, for all her support, patience, and guidance through these precarious times. Thank you to my committee members, Dr. Seçil Dağtaş and Dr. Jennifer Liu, for providing me with invaluable feedback. Beyond that, thank you to each cohort member and the Department of Anthropology, for this remarkable journey. It has been a pleasure and an honour to learn and grow alongside you.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Iris Yuzdepski family. This research would not have been possible without your support and generosity.

And to my family and friends, there are no words to express the gratitude I have for you. Your constant encouraging words and unwavering support have been what has kept me going and I will forever be grateful for you.

Finally, a huge thank you to all the participants. Thank you for taking the time to share your time and entrusting me with your emotions, thoughts, and experiences. Your participation and kindness during the process made this research possible. I feel privileged to have you be a part of this research, and I wish everyone all the best.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1
The Importance of Borat and Bai Ganio and Their Historical Roots to Current Public Perception

A few years ago, I was very excited and nervous to start my new job working as a front desk customer service representative at a gym near my house. I was excited to meet everyone and be a part of the team but introducing myself always made me nervous because many people mispronounced my name or thought I was Russian. Nothing wrong with that, but I felt that being Bulgarian was something different and special.

As I started my shift, a man who worked in the maintenance department came up to the front desk and I figured I'd introduce myself. "Hi! I'm new and my name is Ivelina…or Ivy, or Lina, whatever is easier for you to say," I said, hoping that didn't come off as too confusing or weird. "Ivelina, hi! I'm Rikkie. Are you Russian?" He asked, and I smiled a bit because of course this was yet again the assumption. "No, Bulgarian actually."

"So kinda close to Russian?" he asked and I said, "yeah, kinda…" Then I was interrupted by him saying, "In Bulgaria!! Is nice, yeah?!" in the famous Borat accent. I laughed because I didn't know how else to respond, and the accent was a spot-on imitation anyway. "I mean Borat isn't Bulgarian, but I guess it works!" I said. I figured I'd let it go. "He's not Bulgarian but close enough, right?" Rikkie said. I remember I laughed but was left a little confused. Did he mean that Borat is Balkan? Does he know what countries are a part of the Balkans? Does everyone think Borat is Balkan? These questions stayed in my mind for a bit, but the fast-paced and bustling nature of the gym quickly distracted me. I often think back to that moment and have since noticed other people who do a Borat accent around me.

1.1 The Balkans in Public Perception

The above vignette highlights just one example of what someone who identifies as Balkan hears. Since Sacha Baron Cohen created his character Borat Sagdiyev in his 2006 Borat movie (Charles 2006), the general public has mistaken him for being Balkan even though Kazakhstan, Borat's homeland, is not near any country in the Balkans. These countries include Bulgaria, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Macedonia, Greece, and Romania. Borat represents "already existing ideas of 'otherness' and allow(s) racist, sexist, and anti-Semitic content to be acceptable" (Carpenter 2007, p. 15). As an example, when Dickie Wallace (2008), an American anthropologist, who has done ethnographic fieldwork in the Czech and Slovak Republics, watched the Borat movie in 2006, he was intrigued by how "close to home" the Borat movie made him feel rather than feeling that he was viewing "the other." Wallace points out that what makes Borat a funny character to British and North American audiences is that "Baron Cohen exploits the West's understood signs for the Balkans and eastern Europe, for its differences, for its mysteries, and for assumptions of barbarism" (p. 36). Pauline Carpenter (2007) echoes Wallace's analyses and adds that the way the character is presented and portrayed is important because it "ironically enables people to tolerate him" (p. 15). Borat does not dress like the Americans and is loud. In this way, he is similar to a widely recognized character from Bulgarian literature called Bai Ganio who has the same qualities, although the latter is a sneaky scammer. The comedy of Borat is recognized through the stereotypes of the Balkan "other" that is also presented through Bai Ganio. Many Bulgarians have internalized this image of who *not* to be and consciously act otherwise.

Many Bulgarian immigrants to the West after the fall of communism were of the educated class, and some left for better work opportunities. The century before, as the Ottoman

Empire collapsed, Aleko Konstantinov, a Bulgarian writer who first wrote about travelling to West Europe and America, created Bai Ganio. He first released a series of short stories before compiling them into a book in 1895 called 'The Incredible Tales of a Contemporary Bulgarian' (Konstantinov 1895). The compilation presents multiple stories of Bai Ganio, a rose oil salesman travelling around Europe trying to sell his product. The book opens with Bai Ganio removing his Turkish coat (emblematic of the Ottoman Empire) and putting on a Belgian mantle (emblematic of Europe). This symbolizes his attempt at becoming a part of Europe, as Bulgaria strived to do after gaining independence from the Ottoman Empire. While this symbolism is important, it is noted that he still wears his Bulgarian hat and woolen Bulgarian undergarments (Curticapean 2008). Konstantinov took care to include a lot of details about Bai Ganio's physical appearance as well, mentioning that he is "dark-eyed, dark-haired and moreover dark-skinned gentle man" (Curticapean 2008, p. 31). He also describes his shirt as not being fully white, implying it is slightly dirty or, "in a Bulgarian sense white." His lax personal hygiene leaves him smelly and sweaty, so "in the European world of hygiene, his stench marked him as different" (Curticapean 2008, p. 32). Moreover, his most important identifier is that he is an opportunist who pretends "to be naïve or stupid to take advantage of others -, greedy and superficial, yet of an exceptional vitality" (Ibid, p. 32).

Many Bulgarians perceive Bai Ganio to embody the West's views of Balkan people. He is the loud, dirty scammer that Western Europeans did not want around. As such, many Bulgarians who grew up learning about Bai Ganio, including the participants of this research, internalized this image and deliberately orient themselves by acting and presenting differently. There are those, of course, who align themselves with Bai Ganio, but in this research, the focus is on how these particular participants orient away from the figure due to their background,

Bulgarian history, and their choice of Canada as an immigration destination. This orientation away from Bai Ganio entails being quiet, clean, and responsible moral citizens because that is the perceived model of a good citizen. Bai Ganio gained renewed popularity at the start of the transition to democracy in Bulgaria in the early 1990s when Bulgarians started hearing about those who had gone to the United States and were seemingly getting rich quickly or pretending to. There were struggles during communism, but they did not compare to the struggles and chaos that followed its collapse in 1989 when the start of the transition to democracy in Bulgaria began. As a result, many Bulgarians started seeing communism as a time of security and democracy and capitalism as chaos.

In her book, 'Imagining the Balkans', Maria Todorova (2009) states that "it would not be exaggerated to assert that this [Bai Ganio] is the one literary name and the book that every single Bulgarian knows and has read. To a great extent, the history of Bulgarian literary criticism has evolved around this literary hero because his interpretation has been rightly perceived as equivalent to national self-analysis" (p. 39). While the Bai Ganio stories are about him making a move to become European and removing himself from Turkish rule, my participants can closely relate to the urge to become part of something else. As Bai Ganio demonstrated a want to be a part of Europe, the character also reflected a want to be apart of the globalized world, or specifically 'the West'. The example of Borat in America that relates closely to Bai Ganio, shows that Balkanism extended beyond Europe.

1.2 Brief Overview of Bulgarian History

A brief history of Bulgaria is important to mention because while hidden in their narratives, it has a great impact on how many Bulgarians articulate and negotiate their identities outside of Bulgaria. It is especially impactful for the participants in my study as they grew up

4

under communism and emigrated from Bulgaria after the fall of communism. The Ottoman Empire captured Constantinople in 1453 which put Bulgarian cultural and political institutions fully under its rule (Curtis 1992) and before that, since its creation in 681 A.D., Bulgaria had struggled for independence from the Byzantine Empire. Bulgaria did not gain independence until 1878, when Russian troops helped Bulgaria because they wanted access to its trade routes.

Once Bulgaria gained independence, there were many troubles for years in deciding how to set up parliament. During this time, Russia was very closely involved in political and economic decisions. With uneasy conditions during the world wars, Bulgaria had many struggles appointing a prime minister and sticking to a political regime. In the end, Bulgaria signed a peace treaty with the United States in 1947 which gave the communist organization called Fatherland Front, to rise to power and Bulgaria officially became a communist state. One of the most known leaders of this time was Todor Zhivkov who gained popularity through boosting his alignment with his Bulgarian identity rather than with the Soviet identity. He also worked hard to create better relations with 'the West'.

My participants often referred to this history when they spoke about the transition decade. When I asked how they thought the transition period in the 1990s played out in Bulgaria, everyone answered that it was chaotic because they did not believe Bulgaria knew what democracy and capitalism meant. When asking Harry to elaborate his opinion on this, he says that other Balkan countries also did not transition well, but Bulgaria had an especially difficult time because the other countries "*had much deeper Western traditions than we ever had. And most of them are not affected by Ottoman Empire before that, so I wouldn't put a lot of blame on Bulgaria for not doing great after the collapse.*" He goes on to speculate that the 50-year period between the end of Ottoman rule and the world wars was not enough time to set up any

institutions or political traditions. Interestingly, Harry then draws a fascinating connection between Bulgarians under Ottoman rule and Indigenous in Canada.

> *"One comparison is, Bulgaria was 500 years a part of the Ottoman Empire. Think about the native Indians here. They've been only, let's say, 250 years under Western rule. Look at their state at the moment and you can probably figure it out. We stayed as the Bulgarians after twice as much time. So, if Bulgarians had any claim to their land after five centuries... Because after five centuries, if you're part of an empire, what claims do you have about your land?"*

According to Harry, Bulgarians struggled to establish institutions and did not feel they had much claim to their land, yet still hold on to their identity of 'The Bulgarians'. Thus, when figures such as Borat become popular, it only reinforces their decisions on what kind of citizens to be in opposition to those figures representing the Balkan other.

1.3 Public Issues Anthropology

This research will be adding to the growing understanding of eastern European identity in Canada and how the integration process occurs. It is specifically through figures representing the Balkan other that integration can be understood, so the findings in this thesis can grow into a bigger project that includes the participants in understanding themselves in Canada. As such, public issues anthropology offers an avenue to explore a Bulgarian public that has situated itself amongst the Canadian public, and one that understands themselves in relation to their coethnic others through an intersection of a popular Canadian narrative that will be discussed in the second chapter.

Thus, utilizing engaged anthropology, defined as using "one's anthropological knowledge and insight to contribute to public debate" (Howell 2010), I have made new findings that more studies can build on. There is not much written on Bulgarians, or even eastern Europeans in Canada, but that is why it is important to apply Canadian anthropology to this research because as Darnell (2010) states, it is "very much like Canada itself – distinct because its identity remains in flux, and open to revision" (p. 21). With my addition to the research and new findings, there will be better understanding on how Bulgarian immigrants present themselves and where this arises from, which is something that is lacking in current scholarly work, but that can also be challenged with the addition of exploring religious, class and generational factors in further explorations.

1.4 Bulgarians in the Canadian Public

One recent example that illustrates how the participants orient to Bai Ganio and alike figures such as Borat can be exemplified through the 2020 sequel to the Borat movie, 'Borat Subsequent Moviefilm' (Woliner 2020). Borat introduces his daughter who is played by a Bulgarian actress, Maria Bakalova. In the movie, she speaks in Bulgarian and adopts many of the same mannerisms as Borat. At the beginning of the movie, she is dressed in what is best described as a dirty night dress and acts inappropriately before she has a makeover where she appears to have visibly better personal hygiene and dresses modestly. Not many Bulgarians that I have spoken to were happy to see how her character was portrayed, as one of my Bulgarian friends said, there were worries that "*this is what people will think Bulgarians are like!*" Yet when the movie was released, Bakalova received much praise globally on her acting as she received big award nominations and interviewed at popular television talk shows. I then noticed that some Bulgarians on Facebook and some that I talked to were showing her interviews and

celebrating the fact that a Bulgarian was receiving so much praise on the global stage. "*Bakalova is so cute and well behaved*." We see here how through the lens of Bai Ganio, she is only celebrated when she presents herself as what the participants believe to be a put-together and well-behaved citizen, being the opposite of Bai Ganio.

More recently, I have been hearing people talk about Bakalova's appearance on talk shows with James Corden and Ellen and how she is the first Bulgarian to be nominated for an Oscar. The comments about her interviews include, "*she looks so good, and she spoke so well*." Bakalova even says in her interview with James Corden that her mother was sad after she watched the movie because of how her character acted. To everyone who is not from the Balkans, it seemed like a joke since Corden laughed, but to a lot people from there, there is an immediate understanding that her mother was embarrassed rather than sad at how this character acted. Thus, whether it is Bai Ganio or Borat, the underlying concepts and ideas that are inherent in Bai Ganio persist and are especially present in this research's participant's narratives.

In the next chapter, I will discuss how internalization of Bai Ganio can be understood through memory as history that gives rise to nostalgia and how post-socialist theory is important to help in recognizing how the end of communism is still relevant to those who lived through communism and the transition and those that emigrated such as my participants. This will all be analyzed through the use of chronotopes since Bai Ganio is a figure that has a time and place embedded into its understanding. I will then show what cross-chronotopic alignments arise from the chronotopes of security and chaos that will show a deeper understanding on how the participants orient away from Bai Ganio which comes from their experiences of living under communism, through the transition and in Canada.

1.5 Proposed Venue for Publication

I propose to publish the second chapter of my thesis in Anthropologica, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies (JEMS), and Slavic Review. Anthropologica is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes original ideas and topics that are a part of all social and cultural anthropology and I believe my chapter will be a good addition to this journal if accepted, because there are next to no scholarly work on Bulgarian immigrants in Canada. I plan on also submitting to the Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies (JEMS) because amongst the topics they publish, citizenship and policies of integration are one of the main ones. Lastly, I plan on submitting to the Slavic Review journal from Cambridge University Press as they are focused on all studies relating to eastern Europe and Russia in the past and present, which my thesis combines.

Chapter 2
How Balkanism Has Been Internalized Through Cross-Chronotopic Alignments Arising
from the Chronotopes of Chaos and Security

2.1 Introduction

This thesis will be exploring how eight middle-aged Bulgarian immigrants that moved to

Canada, who are part of the third wave of Bulgarian emigration, orient their identities and

presentation of self around being a modern and moral citizen. In other words, what they are

presenting is opposite of the 'Balkan other'. Orienting around this is what Maria Todorova

(2009) has coined Balkanism. This term arises from Edward Said's (1978) Orientalism. From

what I have experienced, much of the present Canadian public recognizes the Balkan other as the

famous 2006 movie character Borat, but for myself and many Bulgarians I have spoken to and

observed through online community platforms such as Facebook, the Balkan other is embodied

by Bai Ganio, a famous and widely known figure of the past that has persisted in present day

consciousness.

The participant's narratives are analyzed through a cross-chronotopic alignment lens

which reveals how Bulgarians orient themselves specifically away from Bai Ganio, understood

across multiple scales throughout history. These scales will be presented in the analysis through

understandings of chaos and security, after chronotopes are defined. Bai Ganio was created and

gained popularity at a time when Bulgarians gained independence from the Ottoman empire, and

everyone had their doubts and fears about being accepted into and a part of Europe. His character

and this narrative were once again restored when Bulgaria became independent from Soviet

Union communism and there were doubts about how the world would accept them as they could

now go anywhere they wanted. This figure has thus manifested in the dilemma of how

Bulgarians articulate and orient their citizenship in relation to their history when living outside of

Bulgaria. The analysis focuses on how these orientations are brought up through discussions of Bulgaria, Canada and interestingly, the United States, all in relation to one another. It is important to also understand Bai Ganio as a figure who is associated with chaos versus a separate figure who is associated with security. I found that different places were seen as either chaotic or secure, so applying chronotopes of chaos versus security with their associated figures across time and space to their narratives will reveal how my participants and many Bulgarians decide where to live and what kind of citizen to be. The figure of security, who is associated both with Bulgaria under communism and with present day Canada embodies a citizen who is motivated, responsible and living a good, quiet life. The figure of Bai Ganio, on the other hand, who is associated with post-1989 chaotic Bulgaria immediately after the transition, present day Bulgaria, and the U.S. since the 20th century, is a person who is loud, dirty, unmotivated and constantly moving around and scamming people for money.

2.2 Literature Review

Starting around 1991 in the field of anthropology, theory of post-socialism began to be applied and explored in scholarly work. This was done in an attempt to understand the changes that happened in people's everyday lives that were affected by the large-scale economic and political changes of moving from communism to democracy. Chari and Verdery (2009) describe that by the end of the twentieth century, scholars of post-socialism began employing ethnographic fieldwork to understand the processes that brought on the development of the former Eastern Bloc. I will be applying post-socialist theory to my research as I asked my participants about life in communism and after and what has been common amongst their narratives is a sense of nostalgia for Bulgaria 'back then' meaning 'under communism'. There have not been many studies of Bulgarian immigrants in Canada, thus I would like to add to the

literature on the application of chronotopes and post-socialist theory focusing on memory and nostalgia.

Exploring chronotopes and the subsequent cross-chronotopic alignments that arise is thus a useful tool for understanding "social and even political expression through the analysis of deictic reference" (Davidson 2007, p. 214). Chronotope was first introduced and defined by Mikhail Bakhtin in 1981 who was a Russian literary scholar, when he was reviewing novels. Bakhtin (1981) famously wrote, "we will give the name chronotope (literally, 'time space') to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (p. 84). Figures of personhood are also an important aspect because Bakhtin says they cannot be separated from their specific time and space. Oftentimes two chronotopes form a relationship when they are connected in meaning which creates a cross-chronotopic alignment.

One recurrent chronotope in Bulgaria that Kavalski (2004) discusses in his research on Bulgarian press publications between the end of the eighteenth century and 1878 involved "America the great." During this time period, America was presented as a place of progress and prosperity, and it was understood as a multiethnic society. I also draw upon work on chronotopes and migration including Park (2018), Rosa (2016), and Koven and Marques (2017) who have all demonstrated how figures of migration are linked to the past, present, and future, and how narrators align themselves with these figures. Park (2018) draws on Bakhtin's chronotope to highlight the importance of figures of personhood when arguing that Finland and France are put into contrast with Korea in terms of their progressive neoliberal education system. Finland and France thus represent chronotopes that embody a student that is "relaxed, efficient, and productive" versus the Korean student that is "overburdened, overworked, and underlearning" (Park 2018, p. 484). Similarly, when analyzing narratives from pop-culture representations of

language and Latina/os, Rosa (2016) argues that the identity of American and Latina/o are distinguished by their separate embodiments of modernity in which "Spanish is the language of the Latina/o past, bilingualism is the transitional language of the Latina/o present, and English is the language of the Latina/o future" (p. 109). Cross-chronotopic alignments are employed to present how these scales of modernity are understood in relation to "normative timescales of American assimilation and multiculturalism" (p. 116). In addition, focusing specifically on Portuguese identity, Koven and Marques (2017) analyze a YouTube video about Portuguese immigrants in France and how the commentators situate the image of a Portuguese migrant in a time-space framework and orient themselves to the image. They found that the commentators aligned their narrating of the present with the narrated past which allows them to represent their nostalgic and diasporic nationalism that in turn determines how they represent the figures of Portuguese immigrants and how they orient themselves to them.

For my participants, constructing their past is based off understanding times of chaos and security and how these environments affect one's behaviour. It is thus important to discuss the current literature on memory as history in anthropology and post-socialism to tie in understandings of chronotopes. Whereas Bulgaria's history that is outlined in textbooks and museums is important to gaining an understanding of what economic and political conditions my participants went through pre- and post-1989, focusing on memory as history here is key in understanding the social aspect of the conditions and it will help outline why attempting to understand the world through the Balkan Other presented in figures such as Bai Ganio is still relevant.

In exploring the anthropology of history as a whole, Palmié and Stewart (2016) note that the anthropology of history observes "the ways in which people variously conceptualize and

morally evaluate the past in its relation to the present and future" (p. 208). They draw on Bakhtin's (1981) chronotope to emphasize that the present does not exist without the past and suggest that sometimes in order to see the present, one needs to understand it through the past. In an example of this, Basso (1996) talks about how the Western Apache invoke the past to the present as a teaching and informing tool through interactionally produced stories. One way Basso learns about farming and the origins of clans is when Charles, a "veteran maker of place-worlds" (p. 8) as Basso introduces him, pretends to pick up corn from the field they were standing in that represents the place that offered their ancestors a place to settle, live and raise their children and is marked as the place they first planted and harvested corn. Charles highlights that "groups of people named themselves for the places where their women first planted corn" (p. 21). As he recounts the meaning of this place, the leader of the clan, Ellen Tessay walks into the field and begins to pick weeds. Basso brings the reader's attention to the importance of the event tied with the narrative because Charles talks while watching the woman, so he is "treating what he sees as a model of the past and transforming the figure of Ellen Tessay into a fully present symbol of what happened long ago" (p. 22). In much the same way, a lot of what my participants do is transform their present understandings with a constructed idea of the past and for example, view Canada as a secure place to live through comparing it to a remembered version of life under communism that made them feel the same security.

The example presented of Basso is how the past is used to narrate the present of stories passed down from past generations that aids in showing how experiences of living in the Ottoman Empire for 500 years manifest in the figure of Bai Ganio and continue being retold in relation to new experiences such as the end of communism that evoke the memory of their history. The memories that are tied to this figure are ones that help my participants categorize

places into chaos and security that will ultimately determine their character, just as the chaos of the Ottoman Empire is what Bai Ganio's author, Konstantinov, describes as being what made Bai Ganio act and think they way he did.

Berliner (2005) reflects on the growing interest in studying memory in anthropology. He defines memory as it referring to "the past as it is *lived* by the social agents" (p. 199). While also describing history as Palmié and Stewart do, Berliner draws on Basso to add that growing in anthropology is the interest in the relationship between memory and places and what this can reveal about shared history. In the frame of this thesis, the memory that I refer to is the nostalgia that my participants have constructed based off of their experience living under communism, of a time they understood to be secure. Nostalgia of good things was something that was of great focus in post-socialist theory, but it is not often discussed how the transition brought about memories of Bai Ganio when stories of 'opportunists' became popular. Chari and Verdery (2009) use post-socialism to refer to "whatever would follow once the means of production were privatized and the Party's political monopoly disestablished." (p. 10). The study of post-socialism continues to be relevant in today's time as it is still affecting the current economic and political situation in the Eastern Bloc and those that emigrated as they still maintain strong transnational ties to Bulgaria. Thus, exploring nostalgia through the chronotope of chaos as well as ecurity will reveal a deeper understanding of how Bulgaria's history has an impact on many Bulgarian emigrants. I argue that post-socialist theory needs to expand further into understanding how emigrants and transnational migrants are *still* affected.

To understand how nostalgia and the figure of Bai Ganio are relevant to my participants, it is important to also turn to Pyke and Dang's (2003) concept of intraethnic othering. They conducted interviews amongst Korean and Vietnamese immigrants in California to analyze how

certain terms were used as a way of diminishing members of their coethnic group. They make a point that "ethnic identities are formed not only along borders with national, racial, and ethnic outsiders, but also along the internal boundaries that mark cultural struggles and differences within ethnic groups" (p. 148). Pyke and Dang introduce how 'intraethnic othering' works to isolate a certain cohort, or coethnics, within a community by assigning negative traits that have the potential to influence their social behaviour. Their example is how terms such as "whitewashed" are used amongst Vietnamese and Korean immigrants toward their fellow immigrants. There is thus a group within the community that believes they are above the isolated group and are conscious of not adopting their behaviour.

Lastly, there have been many studies of Bulgarian immigrants in America in relation to their socio-demographic profile (Robila 2007) and culture (Ivanova 2015 & Vukov and Borisova 2017), but there have not been many studies about Bulgarians in Canada. The major topics that have been discussed thus far though, include Bulgarian language, oral histories, identity, and the role of ethno-organizations in integration. Yankova and Andreev (2012) conducted a study on Bulgarians who live in Canada to see if there have been changes in the perception of their own national and self-identities. In their concluding remarks, they found that most of their participants did not feel fully accepted by Canadians and so had a "belated sense of ethnic belonging" (p. 55) and thus integration. This however did not mean that they wanted to be amongst Bulgarians to feel belonging. Even when there is access to Bulgarian social organizations, not many Bulgarians wanted to participate in it. Jurkova (2014) found that only twenty percent of the Bulgarian immigrants she studied in Vancouver participated in an ethno-cultural organization. Yankova and Andreev (2012) did however, conclude that Bulgarians maintain close ties with relatives and friends in Bulgaria and with a small circle of close

16

Bulgarian friends in Canada (Yankova and Andreev 2012, p. 55; see also Jurkova (2014), Vassileva and Yankova (2015), and Glavanakova-Yaneva and Andreev (2010) on Bulgarian immigrants in Canada).

What these studies lack however, is the acknowledgement of Bulgarian history that carries the weight of the past figures that are still relevant in present day orientations of Bulgarian identity. While there are those that proudly orient to the Bai Ganio identity, my participants along with many Bulgarians I have observed in Canada are conscious of not adopting Bai Ganio's traits and by doing this, they decide what kind of citizen to be. What my contribution to this literature is aiming to do then, is to add an understanding of history as it contributes to identity. Specifically, I hope to show how participants orient around Bulgaria's history of always being under the shadow of a ruling empire and the following doubts of acceptance when independence is gained. Understanding how this history manifests in a figure such as Bai Ganio associated with chaos and the figure associated with security reveals how Bulgarians orient themselves around the Balkan Other and how they interact with other Bulgarians and Canadians.

2.3 Description of Community

The participants of this study consist of eight Bulgarians currently living in London, Ontario who arrived in Canada from 1999 to 2005. They were all born between 1955 and 1976. The youngest participant is 45 and the eldest is 66. During communism there was not much class distinction, but my participants had a certain level of privilege that meant they had all had homes, cars, food, and their parents had good job security. When they became young adults and left to study in university in Sofia, these participants were doing well financially to support themselves in the city. They are also privileged in that they are Orthodox Christian, which makes

them apart of the majority, as opposed to the Muslim minority that struggled to even move to Sofia. All have at least two children and are either working for the local university or are married to someone who is. Five of the participants were born in the capital Sofia, one was born in a town near the east coast and two were born in Plovdiv, the second largest city. Three participants moved to Sofia to attend university. All participants are university graduates who have degrees that combine undergraduate and master's degrees from studying sciences and maths and were working in Sofia as researchers and actuaries until they left in their mid-twenties to mid-thirties. Six of the participants had at least one toddler at the time of migration and the other two were unmarried and childless at that time. Four of the participants are males and the remaining four are females. All of the participants are close friends that see each other frequently for coffee and sometimes dinners. According to Statistics Canada from 2006, there were between 18,575 and 150,000 Bulgarian migrants living in Canada (Yankova and Andreev 2012). There are communities of Bulgarians in many Canadian cities such as Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal.

The participants in my study are part of the third wave of Bulgarian immigration to Western Europe and North America which began after 1989 (Yankova and Andreev 2012). During this time, well-educated scientists went to the United States and some to Canada (Stretenova 2007, & Rangelova and Vladimirova 2004). This brain drain was prompted and supported by the government in order to send remittances home and boost the economy. Since there were many financial struggles and this cohort of Bulgarians had high degrees of education, they became apart of the brain drain and decided to go where they could use and apply these skills. Canada at the time of my participant's migration had placed a lot of importance on

educational skills through high-level degrees according to the Points System that was put into effect in 1967.

In the early 20th century, Canadian immigration authorities were pressured by businesses to increase immigration, so they created a list of preferred settlers where Bulgarians, or South Slavs, were "in both the public and government's minds, less assimilable and less desirable" (Troper 2013, p. 6) to immigrants from Britain and America. The Bulgarians allowed into Canada during this period were apart of the first wave of Bulgarian immigration and those that could work for cheap labour or be skilled factory and construction workers. Some who arrived in Canada were thinking of only staying temporarily, but many could not return because of political issues, so they began to establish themselves in Canada. Bulgarians who arrived during this time were also "confronted by ethnic and religious anxieties and prejudices previously only reserved for the Irish" (Troper 2013, p. 8). After the end of World War II, Canada was still accepting Eastern European immigrants until the start of the Cold War when they closed their doors to the Soviet Union and any country allied to them which included Bulgaria. During this time, Canada started flourishing as an urban and industrial power. Within the government, there was a push from both federal and provincial governments for human rights reform which led to Canadian immigration to slowly lift racial, religious, and ethnic barriers.

Prior to human rights reforms of 1945, Bulgarians, Ukrainians, Macedonians and other Eastern Europeans were exemplified as "problems involved in the Canadianization of an alien race from Europe" (Mackey 1999, p. 64). This view began to change in the 1960s when requirements for immigration became focused on "questions about skills, education and training" (Mackey 1999, p.66). Canada once again started accepting a large amount of Eastern European immigrants in the 1990s. The Immigration Act of 1978 was aimed at promoting Canada's

economic, cultural, social and demographic goals. The Act accepted immigrants from five categories and my participants applied under the Economic category that was for people with highly desirable employment skills (Dirks 2006).

Throughout their time in Canada, my participants maintained transnational ties, making connections across time and space to Bulgaria, Canada and America. All participants consume some form of Bulgarian media, including, a popular online newspaper that reports on all news about Bulgaria called 24chasa. Many of the women look to Bulgarian Youtube creators to watch recipes or learn how to do traditional Bulgarian dances. Some have access to Bulgarian TV through satellite or streaming services and they watch shows that currently air in Bulgaria and they discuss it with family and friends in Bulgaria and the United States. All participants also have family in Bulgaria that they talk to on a weekly basis. They stay connected to them through social media platforms such as Viber and WhatsApp. Most continue to maintain contact with friends from Bulgaria as well, through Facebook or texting on Viber and WhatsApp. Conversations often include topics such as Bulgarian politics, healthcare as most talk to their elder parents, and discussion about their jobs. Many also have friends and family in the United States that they talk to on a monthly basis and some even make time to visit them once a year.

2.3.1 Experiences of the 1990s in Bulgaria

The participants described the 1990s as a decade of chaos. They emphasized small businesses like cafes opening everywhere, shortages of goods, and inflation. They also spoke about how the government was also not funding much scientific or mathematics research and thus most realized there would be no advancing in their careers if they stayed. Joy, one of the female participants, said she had just turned thirty and applying to jobs in the 1990s, when employers would tell her she was too old and would ask her if she had children. She had a two-

year-old son at the time, and she remembers interviewers telling her that they cannot hire her because she would be taking too many sick days to care for her child. She outlines this story as her "*biggest outrage*."

My participants left Bulgaria when they did because they were hoping Bulgaria would adjust to being a democratic and capitalist country that provided a stable livelihood, but unfortunately things kept getting worse. Sarah Lampert, who was Second Secretary Political in Bulgaria's capital, Sofia, from 1991 to 1994, outlined the living conditions during this time. Stores barely had food, almost never any meat and people would get stuck in elevators because of no electricity (Lampert 2014). The incomes per capita in Bulgaria at this time were 28% of the average in other European Union countries (Rangelova and Vladimirova 2004). Compared with those who moved to Western Europe and the United States, my participants had higher education and language skills that allowed them to move to Canada. When deciding to move, my participants relied upon the stories they heard about other Bulgarians who had moved to North America. Eleanor Smollet (1993) recalls being surprised to read the president of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in an interview saying, "Right now, the American is the ideal. Bulgarians believe that Americans never lie, they never steal, they never throw rubbish on the streets" (p.9) when she was in Sofia in 1992. She also recalls one of her Bulgarian peers saying to her, "here in Bulgaria, business men buy cheap goods and sell them at high prices to the population to make a big profit; in America, business men are more intelligent and would never do such things" (p.12). This statement illustrates how the imaginations of 'the West' and the figures imagined living there drove migration. The underlining internalization of Bai Ganio in the 1990s is also demonstrated here because it shows that Bulgarians think of themselves as not moral the way Americans were thought to be.

2.4 Researcher Positionality

I, myself, am a Bulgarian immigrant who was born in Bulgaria in 1997. My parents arrived in Canada in 2005 when I was eight years old. The participants include my mother and father, as well as six of their friends which total four married couples. I have known them for over a decade. This means that I met them when I was in elementary school and have grown around them as we had many gatherings throughout the years. They are my friends, but there is a certain degree of respect that is needed to uphold due to how youth are taught to behave and speak around those older than them.

It is also important to delve further into what it means to conduct research in one's own community. Like Colic-Peisker (2004), a migrant from Croatia who conducts research amongst Croatian immigrants in Australia, I was a "linguistic insider", and I was able to rely upon already established networks and contacts. Speaking and understanding Bulgarian fluently allowed me to deliver some of the interviews in Bulgarian, translate questions, and understand the cultural context without needing explanation. I was however aware of being careful not to insert myself into their narratives and experiences. I thus tried to listen to the participants and analyze their narratives with a certain amount of distance.

While I tried not to guide their narratives, me being the audience is imperative to the observations discussed in this thesis because there are many implications made that I understand because I am Bulgarian. A lot of my understanding comes from a culmination of years of observing how Bulgarians interact together in groups and from what I learned in these interviews. As an example, when I asked Eva about her initial thoughts of Canada, she said,

"I go to [college] so there, people are friendly, they also was in favor to help voluntarily. Very patient, which just impressed me because we Bulgarians have a little bit different temperaments and...(laughs) here people also have...- We are more emotional. Right? Bulgarians are more emotional. People here, they just to handle their emotions pretty well because they're more practical. So, very patient and friendly."

While someone who is not Bulgarian, or from the Balkans, would not understand what is meant by emotional here, I understand it because when we visit Bulgaria, everyone comments on how loud, angry, impersonal and rude Bulgarians are. Stella also reminds me that Bulgarians are "very emotional" when telling me why she would not want to go back to live in Bulgaria. Thus, I am the audience that is also bringing in my own understandings of Bulgaria's history, current situation and observations from past gatherings.

I must also note that because I am the daughter of my participant's friends, the narratives they express to me and what information they reveal and conceal is based on a relationship where they chose to present a socially desirable narrative. From conversations I have had in my past with my Bulgarian friends around my age, we have all noticed that we may overhear our parents talking about their struggles living in the transition and the difficult move to a new country, but these stories are not typically recounted to us. I believe this is because they want to set an example through a neoliberal narrative of "we worked hard and we succeeded because of it." I believe this may have affected some of the responses I received in my interviews as I think they would have withheld many details about their struggles in their lives.

2.5 Methodology

The information in this research was obtained through semi-structured interviews over Zoom. They were set up at the participant's availability and were each about an hour long. In these interviews, I asked about their lives growing up, their thoughts and experiences of the transition decade in Bulgaria starting from 1990, and about moving to and living in Canada. The order of the questions was randomized, to either begin discussion from the past to the present or reverse, to see if this would yield different narratives. However, all narratives seemed similar no matter the order.

Semi-structured interviews allowed for discussion of key topics, and allowed participants to feel comfortable enough to discuss other important subjects if they wished to. Having a more natural conversation rather than a structured interview was important because the questions asked evoked sensitive emotions and memories from the participants. I determined that having to follow a strict interview guide would have hindered participants from feeling comfortable enough to reveal other important information.

2.6 Analysis

Ivelina: Who would represent Bai Ganio here? Is that a thing?

Vikki: (Laughs) Maybe you remember, we saw him at a Bulgarian gathering, "tapichen Bai Ganio" ("typical Bai Ganio")! But you know, he never tried to hide it! He said, "I'm dumb, I'm lazy, I want to stay at home while someone makes money for me." At least he didn't hide it but so many Bulgarians are big "terekati" [Bulgarian term used to describe Bai Ganio's character], *they think they hide it but I see through it... as much as it pains me to say it, both Mary and Tyler are the kind of people who will only cling to someone if they can benefit from it.*

The above excerpt is the only time Bai Ganio explicitly came up in interviews, but it

clearly defines who Bai Ganio represents to the participants. In this excerpt we can see how

Vikki outlines the things they do not want to be, such as dumb or lazy while presenting

themselves as educated and motivated citizens. When she uses the term 'terekati', she is

speaking about Bai Ganio's character. This is a term that embodies all the bad qualities that

stemmed from people's understanding of Bai Ganio, such as him being sneaky, dumb, self-

centered and lazy. Through 'intraethnic othering' (Pyke and Dang 2003), being a citizen who

places importance on education and stays motivated is someone who is above those they

categorize as Bai Ganio. Additionally, according to my participants, if one lives in chaos, it is

difficult, if not impossible, to be a moral modern citizen.

To outline the alignments, or scales, that arise from the participant's narratives the first is

comparing the participant's youth in communism (security) to their tough young adulthood

during the transition (chaos). The second is comparing their lives in Bulgaria during two

different times, to Canada. The comparisons are life in communism (security) and life in

transition (chaos) to their lives now in Canada (security). The third alignment presents Canada

(security) compared to the United States (chaos) where the United States is understood as similar

to Bulgaria during transition and in present day. These multiple scales of security versus chaos

have been brought up several times throughout history and continue to be manifested in present

day.

Examining the participant's narratives in the frames of security versus chaos chronotopes

is important because that is how the world around them is framed based off their past

experiences. Recognizing Bai Ganio as a key figure in the role a chaotic and secure environment

play in my participant's identity and citizenship orientations will be further discussed in the three cross-chronotopic frameworks discussed below.

2.6.1 Communist Bulgaria (Security) > Transition Bulgaria (Chaos)

It is firstly important to note that communist Bulgaria thrives in these participant's memories as a time where they were care-free and having good times. Kristen Ghodsee (2011) has studied this nostalgia at length in post-socialist countries and states that job security along with personal and family security are factors that contribute to their nostalgia. This vision of Bulgaria, however, is presented through the participant's experiences in their youth where they lived out good childhoods spent outside, teenage years having fun with friends and young adulthood with a steady job that provided for their new families. This nostalgia is rooted in stability as well as security and has become embedded in their minds as something they compare their current living situations to.

Deanna Davidson (2007) discusses the modernist chronotope in her work on Germany which focuses on how "the moral ranking of states, in which West is superior to East, is fundamental cultural knowledge that underlies mainstream discursive norms" (p. 215). In this context, the modernist chronotope relates to what I am calling the chronotope of security because 'the West', whether it is western Europe or North America, was seen as an idealized peaceful place that did not have the hardships that the Balkans experienced. There were hardships under communism, but when I asked the participants about this time, they all commented on how they could safely play outside and from their recollection, it was a good time in their lives when they did not notice any violence or financial struggles. The participants note having jobs, savings, and an idea of a good future for themselves and their children during this time. Eva notes:

26

"*The plan was just settled with the kids, like every young family, we had our parents to help. We had plans about the expenses and how life is going, and we had all these habits settled through time. When all these changes started, we were young, almost 30, so we had already part of our career level developed and, ten years of experience with long term contract of employment and all these benefits.*"

This is where we see the first cross-chronotopic alignment come up. When discussing the benefits and nostalgia of this time, the participants discuss it in relation to the transition, to chaos. The chronotope of chaos is one that entails hardships, lack of feeling safe and doubts about the future. From this perspective, the West can represent security versus chaotic Bulgaria.

Most families around Eva's age, were in the same situation where they had already developed a way of living that felt secure. Joy, for example, notes that prior to 1989, life was without worries "*because in the sense that all people were relaxed because everyone had jobs.*" Participants noted that they were hopeful for the future, Eva thought that "*rights will be much more accessible,*" but the participants described the transition to democracy and capitalism as very messy. They told me about the infrastructure being subpar ("*too many potholes that never get fixed,*" Stella), the corrupted political system ("*the communists just changed their name to BSP,*" Vikki), and the worsening economic situation ("*I couldn't afford milk for my baby,*" Eva). In this understanding, this thinking still persists in contemporary Bulgaria. When the participants are asked if they would move back to Bulgaria, the response is no, "*nothing is ever going to improve there.*"

Of my participants, three of them moved to the United Sates before they moved to Canada. Vikki is one of these participants and when I asked her, "how do you think the transition from communism to democracy played out overall in the whole decade," she notes

"You start realizing that western Europe was cleaning out their garbage, Bulgaria was

taking them in, and then started reselling them, and of course the mafia started a lot,

their business boomed because they started with the cars, weapons, now everyone had

the right to enter Bulgaria, leave Bulgaria... I did not find it to be a good time, to me it

was more calm during communism."

Thus, form this excerpt we come to see how the calm of communism is put in contrast with the chaos of the transition. During communism, there were many restrictions on choices and freedoms, but when restrictions and rules ended when communism did, this freedom is described as chaotic. When I asked Vikki to explain the changes she noticed after communism ended, she said, "*The uniforms got dropped at school, which everyone thought was really good...but, it actually turned out that it started fights with kids because some had money, some of their parents had money to buy them clothes and shoes and for some others, they didn't.*" At first then, everyone seemed to be excited about democracy and capitalism, but as it started to fail some, those that could not envision a good future for themselves, they declared it as chaos as describe again by Vikki who states, "*it became a big chaos because no one knew how to handle a democracy! Everyone thought that it was free for all and that they could do everything they want, could go anywhere, buy everything, and they became completely out of control.*" While communism is not mentioned directly here, it is implied that during communism, one could not do everything they wanted, yet it is understood to be calm, and thus secure.

2.6.2 Transition Bulgaria (Chaos) < Canada Now = Communist Bulgaria (Security)

In the second cross-chronotopic alignment living in Canada now reminds the participants of the good aspects of security from pre-1989 Bulgaria and has better living conditions than post-1989 Bulgaria in transition. Vikki, Michael, and Harry first moved to the United States because

they became infatuated with America through the movies they consumed. After living in the United States for five years, Vikki and Michael stated that "*things would not get better in Bulgaria*" so they decided to move to Canada. Harry on the other hand, speaks about his experience differently,

> *"I liked it here much better than in the States. From the very beginning, to tell you honestly. So, in the United States, I managed to collect a circle of friends, but they were all foreigners like me. Very rarely there was an American showing up. And in Canada, the first week of classes on a Thursday night, I remember this vividly, a Canadian guy moved along the hallways there on the fourth floor of our building and knocked on everybody's door and collected us all and we went partying. This never happened in the US, and I said, 'wow, I mean, these guys are like us in Bulgaria.' Plus, the healthcare arrangements made a huge difference for me. In Canada, the moment I found out that I can go to the doctor like under communism, I say hi, I say bye and I never worry about anything after that!"*

Here Canada offered that idealistic vision of 'the West' that Bulgarians came to have from American movies. Canada's healthcare system is also a major factor to the participant's sense of security, as Harry mentions. Towards the end of our talk with Joy, she even brings up, "*Oh, I forgot, look, the healthcare system. It is at much higher level here*." Along with better healthcare, crime is brought up. According to my participants, during communism there was not much criminal activity. When describing his childhood, Harry says, "*it was safe for children almost no criminal rate. No drugs. Oh, we knew of drugs, every neighborhood had one drug user that was known. But, they were not everywhere*." This is again put in contrast to his understanding of chaotic post-communist Bulgaria and in relation to his life in Canada now. So, it is these good qualities of Canada that participants enjoy and want to remain here because of

the policies that remind them of communism and thus their youth. When I discussed this with Stella, she added,

> "*Yeah, socialism. The country was very- I can see peace for as long as you are not in a conflict with the main doctrine. So, there was very little criminal activity. It was very safe place. And I think Canada in general is like that as well.*"

While I was mainly pointing out the aspects of Canada that others have mentioned like healthcare and unemployment insurance, Stella here adds that she feels safety from this.

According to my participants, the transition decade in Bulgaria has persisted into the present day. Many Bulgarians also believe Bulgaria is not a good place to live, even if they admit there have been improvements. Harry and his family visited Bulgaria within the last five years, and he comments:

> "*You see cars driving through the sidewalks. Potholes everywhere. You literally don't know, when something and where and when something's going to fall on your head. So, the random events there, and the instability caused by these random events in life there, is way higher than here. Here you can plan for the future kind of quite well. And there, I think the randomness is larger than my taste now. I think corruption and the judiciary system are still in horrible state.*"

When Harry says "here," he is referring to Canada. *Here* the participants do not have to worry about random bad events happening so they can live secure lives. However, *there,* corruption in businesses and in the judicial system were a product of chaos. In Canada, the participants are able to be citizens who are motivated, responsible and living a good, quiet life. This narrative is reinforced in Stella recounting of a time when she had a Canadian friend visit Bulgaria:

"You need to know the culture to know that if people are yelling, it doesn't mean necessarily they're angry. We had a Canadian friend who came visit Bulgaria and he said, you Bulgarians are very strange people. You shouted at each other, you shouted, and then you smile. Like, what's wrong with you? This is actually, this is typical for the Balkans. That's how people communicate."

The Canadian friend only noticed that Bulgarians were "strange" in Bulgaria and not from Stella and her husband who he had met in Canada, thus they are "different" Bulgarians. Due to Stella even saying that this is typical for the Balkans, she is aligning Bulgaria with the Balkans, but also creating distance to this identity as she says, "that's how *people* communicate," using *people* instead of *us/we*, like she had in previous comments. So, while Bai Ganio is not explicitly mentioned, it is implied here and especially in this alignment that he encapsulates those Bulgarians who shout at each other (loud) and are strange. The understanding of what kind of citizen to be in Canada thus again, arises from the fact that "strange and typical" Bulgarians live in Bulgaria which is still as chaotic as when the transition started and those Bulgarians that live in Canada live in a secure place where they are not strange and loud.

Bai Ganio is placed by his author, Aleko Konstantiov himself, as a product of his history and circumstances. Friedman (2010) notes that "Aleko is arguably participating in a Balkan orientalizing discourse that blames negative characteristics on the clichéd '500 years under the Turkish yoke'" (p. 53). To illustrate how this comes up in present-day narratives, when Harry and I were talking about Bulgaria in the present, he brought up that there were a lot of conspiracy theories circulating. When I asked why he thinks that is he says, "*probably because life is uncertain. And a lot of random things can happen to you at any moment. They try to find explanations for things happening to them or just seek some security*." This conversation started

from him telling me about a specific example of someone he knew in Bulgaria when he visited a few years ago.

Ivelina: What the most unbelievable conspiracy theory you've heard?

Harry: All of them are crazy. So, here, an educated person from the Institute of mathematics took us for lunch, and only after one beer, he started talking about the missing millennium. I said, 'okay, so what does it matter that 1000 years of missing at the end of the day, right?' He says, 'no, it matters because there is this very important cycle on earth, cycle of intelligence that goes up and down every 25,000 years. So, it's very important to know if this 1000 years are missing, because this will give us an idea where on the cycle of intelligence we are.

Ivelina: That doesn't make sense!

Harry: Another one! So, another educated guy. His wife read a series of books that he was very impressed with. They're great books, because they give you advice for life. And I asked him to give me a few examples. And he said... Well, again, this is a guy that I've known for ages. You know, he's not dumb. He's successful in life. He has university degrees, and then specializations after that, and whatnot. And he says, 'well, it's very important that you grow your own tomatoes.'

In this brief conversation, we can see the importance placed on being well-educated with degrees that will be brought up again later on, but that alone does not determine how one acts. It is because Bulgaria post-1989 is described as chaotic that holds "a lot of random things" that even if one is well-educated, over time, they are not accepted as such. What we can begin to understand is that Harry sees himself as an intellectual along with his friends, but because Harry

is in a secure environment and he believes they are in a chaotic one, no matter their education, they believe in outrageous things in Harry's opinion. In the way Harry would pause at certain times during his narration, I understood that he was silently saying, "can you believe these people?" This is the same sense I experienced when Vikki was specifically telling me about another member of the community who she said was like Bai Ganio. Knowing and understanding that Bai Ganio is a figure who seems to become bold with being loud and dumb among other traits in chaotic environments, we can view this excerpt as an example of how this figure still comes up in present day. Thus, the figure of Bai Ganio is directly understood in relation to a chaotic environment and these narratives of chaos versus security are constantly brought up.

In another example, Stella and I were talking about how in my other interviews and past discussions with Bulgarian friends, not many knew much about Canada before immigrating, but when they arrive to Canada, they decide to stay and are happy with their decision to have gone there. In our conversation, I speculated that maybe it was this aspect of seeking security after the chaos of Bulgaria in the 1990s and perhaps that is why Bulgarians are happy here. She agrees, but adds,

> "*That applies to Russians and to Serbians. They come from countries where education was accessible, and it was highly valued. So being a nerd in Bulgaria was not a negative. It was actually quite positive. So, these are well-educated people who can adapt and find employment in the area of their education so they can have a very good life*."

Again, while Bai Ganio is not explicitly mentioned here, there is importance placed on being educated in order to be living a "very good life," and what may not be obvious from this excerpt is that the value that was placed on education came from growing up under communism. Since

during that time was seen as secure because of job security and low crime rate, being well-educated is especially important in living a good life. Michael noted that with the transition came a loss in funding for education, especially in the science and math fields my participants were in, so when they arrived in Canada and they were valued for their education and were able to secure stable jobs, so this importance on being well-educated in order to live a good life became more prominent.

2.6.3 Transition Bulgaria = America (Chaos) < Canada (Security)

The third and final cross-chronotopic alignment is observed when the participants, surprisingly, brought up the United States many times. Only three of the participants lived there prior to living in Canada, yet almost all brought it up. Eva brings it up when she is discussing how bad the transition was,

> *"On the other hand, the crime was very high. We compare this period of time, it's like in U.S. Every day, every kind of this situation was new for every people and some people are just very violent, very aggressive in situation to use all these conditions to get rich. So, they didn't use some peaceful way. Some of them, they just use the crime way to get rich and they just ignore other people."*

Here again by saying "*they just use the crime way to get rich*," Eva is referring to a scammer like Bai Ganio. Because this is seen as being like the United States, we can see clearly how Bulgaria post-1989 is being made comparable to America. Stella also brings up the United States when I had asked her what her thoughts on Canada relating to socialism were, "*Yeah, the States, I have been there. For personal visits, for work visits, etcetera, but I really don't feel safe like in Canada.*" Again, we see how the participant's understandings of where they feel secure

34

(communist Bulgaria and Canada), and where they feel is chaotic (post-1989 Bulgaria and America) shows how the figure of Bai Ganio reproduced in multiple scales and manifests in the participant's subconscious on how to orient their behaviour and thus citizenship.

Michael brings up an interesting story about what it means to be a moral Bulgarian in Canada that is in relation to others such as Americans or Canadians. He tells me about the stories he heard about Bulgarians in Canada,

> *"So anyway, they* [Bulgarian immigrants] *did a lot of shady things, they did a lot of stealing, a lot of loans so after that, when the second or third wave of real good immigrants from Bulgaria came, they already- All the banks, all the lenders, all the car dealers, they were prepared. So, they know when they see the name when it finishes on '-ov', they have to be extra cautious. So, we had to deal with that. We... we knew that we have to accept that, that this is because of how they acted, all the Bulgarians that acted when- All of this criminal type Bulgarians they acted, we have to deal with that. But in the same time, maybe we felt sometimes tired that you have been... Profiled? Yeah, when we have been profiled… So, either you can be really offended and go back to Bulgaria, or we have to accept that and show that you're better than these people and they can accept you, and they don't have to worry about you."*

To Michael and the other participants, these were stories everyone knew about. A key point here is when he describes the newer immigrants as "real good immigrants" in contrast to the immigrants who came earlier who had done "a lot of shady things." Here we see how there is a distinction amongst Bulgarian immigrants. Drawing on Pyke and Dang's (2003) 'intraethnic othering' again, we come to see how Michael aligns with the "real good immigrants" by putting those who did bad things in a subordinate positioning amongst all Bulgarian immigrants.

Throughout my interview with Michael, I came to understand that before moving to America and then Canada, he had heard these stories of both Americans and Canadians thinking Bulgarians were bad in the sense that they stole things, but it was not until he moved to America that he experienced what he called 'being profiled' and solidifying the distinction between Bulgarian immigrants which he continued to be conscious of when he moved to Canada. Considering this story was brought up again in the present day, it is an indication that this is still something they are constantly aware of and grapple with.

As briefly mentioned before, there were three participants who first moved to the United States before Canada. Vikki was one of these participants and states:

> *"For Canada we already heard when were in America and didn't want to return to Bulgaria and that was the only chance right? And I tell myself, why didn't we know this before we went to America? Because if we knew about Canada before that, directly to come home to Canada would have been so much better than going to America. Because in America there wasn't- what was more different from Bulgaria? Nothing. Capitalism."*

The strict tone of her voice when she said "*nothing. Capitalism,*" indicates that again, capitalism is tied to chaos. It would seem from this excerpt that Vikki sees no difference between America and Bulgaria post-1989 because full capitalism is not something that my participants felt would offer them a secure future.

In the way that my participants understand themselves and their coethnic others in relation to Bai Ganio is an intersection with a popular Canadian narrative of Canada being superior to the United States. Mackey (1999) notes this narrative arises from Canada presenting itself as multicultural and describing themselves as "a 'cultural mosaic' in order to differentiate it

from the American cultural 'melting pot'" (p. 15). In this way, a narrative of nationhood is presented where Canada continues to present itself as a multicultural nation through the idea of celebrating differences. Thobani (2007) further adds that multiculturalism "created a form through which the nation could be imagined as distinct and differentiated from external others such as the United States" (p. 145). Multiculturalism takes the form of many figures in different scenarios, but there is an intersection with the figure of Bai Ganio and the understandings and orientations away from it. My participants are creating an image of 'the Bulgarian' which is used to distinguish themselves from those they label as Bai Ganio and this figure is greatly tied to post-1989 Bulgaria and America which has been shown through these various excerpts.

2.7 Conclusion

The studies that have been conducted on Bulgarians in Canada so far have found that Bulgarians seemingly integrate well into Canadian society, yet they do not feel a sense of belonging to their host country and do not seek out many other Bulgarians to feel connected. I argue that in current scholarly work there is a lack in understanding why this is, due to not acknowledging the importance of Bulgaria's history on Bulgarian immigrant's identity. Through the application of chronotopes I was able to draw out the figure of Bai Ganio that is key to understanding what it means to be a transnational citizen through the placing of chaos and what my participants view as secure and how the dynamic of chaos versus security is reproduced in multiple scales across time and space, viewed through the three cross-chronotopic alignments.

Drawing on post-socialist theory, I was able to show why the figure of Bai Ganio is relevant and keeping in mind still, as it is constantly reproduced and re-popularized in characters like Borat. I have similarly expanded on Pyke and Dang's (2003) concept of 'intraethnic othering' to show how Bai Ganio is a figure that becomes relevant in determining behavior when

Bulgarians leave Bulgaria, and for my participants, carves an understanding of two distinct groups of Bulgarian immigrants in which the well-educated ones see themselves as being above the Bai Ganios. This deeper insight and understanding of Bulgarian immigrant's identities in Canada was made possible through my position within the community, as my position allowed me to draw on my knowledge of Bulgarian history. This became a key finding as this history is quite concealed, but important in my participant's narratives. Understanding that Bulgaria has just recently gained independence from the Ottoman Empire, only to echo this history in a smaller scale by being under the rule of the Soviet Union until 1989, it has had a large impact on Bulgarian national consciousness overall, but it also explains why Bai Ganio stays relevant.

My findings further suggest that continuing to apply post-socialist theory, especially to studies about eastern European immigrants in Canada, remains relevant as it can reveal a lot about how history is important to their identities and understandings of the world around them. Understanding further that the history of what actually happened is just as important as the remembered and constructed history in the participant's memory is key because chronotopes can then be applied to reveal the important figures that bridge our understanding of how the participants understand themselves and those around them. Similarly, it can further reveal what their understandings of politics and economics are, as well as many other social aspects. With the twenty-first century being highly globalized and people being connected through platforms that place a focus on visuals, applying chronotopes and paying attention to figures relevant to the participant's histories is important in forming a holistic understanding of what it is like to be an eastern European immigrant in Canada and beyond.

References

Bakhtin, M.M.(1981). *The Dialogic Imagination*. University of Texas Press.

Basso, Keith H. 1996. *Wisdom sits in places: Landscape and language among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Berliner, D. (2005). Social Thought and Commentary: The Abuses of Memory: Reflections on the Memory Boom in Anthropology. *Anthropological Quarterly*. 78(1), 197-211.

Carpenter, P. (2007). Examining Borat and His Influence on Society. *Taboo: The Journal of Culture of Education*. 11(1), 15-26.

Chari, S., and Verdery, K. (2009). Thinking Between the Posts: Postcolonialism, Postsocialism, and Ethnography after the Cold War. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 51(1): 6-34.

Charles, L. (Director). (2006). *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious*. [Film]. Everyman Pictures.

Colic-Peisker, V. (2004). Doing Ethnography in "One's Own Ethnic Community": The Experience of an Awkward Insider. In Hume, L. and Mulcock, J. (eds.), Anthropologists in the Field: Cases in Participant Observation. *Columbia University Press*, 82 – 94.

Curticapean, A. (2008). Bai Ganio and Other Men's Journeys to Europe: the Boundaries of Balkanism in Bulgarian EU-Accession Discourses. *Perspectives*. 16(1), 23-56.

Curtis, G. (1992). *Bulgaria: A Country Study*. U.S. Government Printing Office.

Darnell,R. (2010). National and Transnational Anthropology: The Canadian Exemplar. *Histories of Anthropology Annual.* 6, 18-30.

Davidson, D. (2007). East spaces in West times: Deictic Reference and Political Self-Positioning

        in a Post-Socialist East German Chronotope. *Language & Communication*. 27, 212–226

Dirks, G. (2006). Immigration Policy in Canada. *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. 1-11.

Du Bois, W.E.B. (1903). *The Souls of Black Folk*. A.C. McClurg & Co.Ferguson (2001)

Dunn, E.C. and Verdery, K. (2011). Dead ends in the critique of (post)socialist anthropology:

        Reply to Thelen. *Critique of Anthropology,* 31(3), 251–255.

Friedman, V. (2010). Violence in Bai Ganyo: From Balkan to Universal. *The Slavic Review of*

        Columbia University. 13, 52-63.

Ghodsee, K. (2011). *Lost in Transition: Ethnographies of Everyday Life After Communism*.

        USA: Duke University Press.

Glavanakova-Yaneva, A. and Andreev, A. (2010). Bulgarian Diaspora in Canada: Stories of

        Immigration. In Albu, R. (*ed*.), *Migrating Memories: Central Europe in Canada*. Volume

        2 – Oral Histories.

Howell, S. (2010). Norwegian Academic Anthropologists in Public Spaces. *The University of*

        Chicago Press. 51(52), 269-277.

Ivanova, D. (2015). Socialist Legacy and Transformations of Cultural Heritage in the

        Contemporary Forms of Community Gatherings of the Bulgarian Diaspora in the USA.

        331-358.

Jurkova, S. (2014). The Role of Ethno-Cultural Organizations in Immigrant Integration: A Case

        Study of the Bulgarian Society in Western Canada. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 46(1), 23-

        44.

Kavalski, E. (2004). The Balkan America? The Myth of America in the Creation of Bulgarian

     National Identity. *New Zealand Slavonic Journal*. 38, 131-157.

Konstantinov, A. (1895). *Bai Ganyo: Incredible Tales of a Contemporary Bulgarian*. Pencho V

     Spasov.

Koven, M. and Marques, I.S. (2017). Enacting the Multiple Spaces and Times of Portuguese

     Migration to France in YouTube Humor: Chronotopic Analysis of Ro et Cut's Vamos a

     Portugal. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Portuguese Diaspora Studies*. 6, 95-119.

Lampert, S. (2015). Bulgaria – The Golden Period in My Life. *Foreign, Commonwealth &*

     Development Office Blogs. Foreign Office Blogs.

     https://blogs.fcdo.gov.uk/britishembassysofia/2014/05/31/bulgaria-the-golden-period-in-

     my-life/.

Mackey, E. (1999). The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada.

     *Routledg*e, London.

Ong, A.(1996). Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making: Immigrants Negotiate Racial and

     Cultural Boundaries in the United States. *Current Anthropology*. 37(5), 737-762.

Palmié, S. and Stewart, C. (2016). Introduction: For an Anthropology of History. *HAU: Journal*

     of Ethnographic Theory. 6(1), 207-236.

Park, J. (2018). Mediatizing Neoliberalism: The Discursive Construction of Education's 'Future'.

     Language and Intercultural Communication. 18(5), 478-489.

Pyke, K.and Dang, T. (2003). "FOB" and "Whitewashed": Identity and Internalized Racism

     Among Second Generation Asian Americans. *Qualitative Sociology*. 26(2), 147-172.

Rangelova, R., and Vladimirova, K. (2004). Migration from Central and Eastern Europe: The

   Case of Bulgaria. *Journal for Labour and Social Affairs in Eastern Europe*, 7(3), pp. 7-

   30.

Ringel, F. (2022). The Time of Postsocialism: On the Future of an Anthropological Concept.

   Critique of Anthropology. 1-23.

Robila, M. (2007). Eastern EuropeanImmigrants in the United States: A Socio-demographic

   Profile. *The Social Science Journal*. 44(1), 113-125.

Rosa, J. (2016). Racializing Language, Regimenting Latinas/os: Chronotope, Social Tense, and

   American Raciolinguistic Futures. *Language & Communication*. 46, 106-117.

Said, E.(1978). *Orientalism*. Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.

Smollet, E. (1993). America the Beautiful: Made in Bulgaria. *Anthropology Today*. 9(2), 9-13.

Stretenova, N. (2007). The Bulgarian Scientists on the Move: Brain Drain and Brain Circulation.

   VNR.

Thobani, S. (2007). Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada.

   University of Toronto Press, Canada.

Todorova, M. (2009). *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford University Press.

Troper, H. (2013). Immigration to Canada. *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. 1-23.

Vassileva, I. and Yankova, D. (2015). Observations on the Language of First-Generation

   Bulgarian Immigrants to Canada. *International Journal of Canadian Studies*.

Vukov, N. and Borisova, M. (2017). The Festive Days of The Bulgarian Community in Chicago

   – Models Of Cultural Heritage In Migration. *Humanities and Social Sciences*. 4(1), 18-

   37.

Wallace, D. (2008). Hyperrealizing "Borat" with the Map of the European "Other". *Slavic Review*. 67(1), 35-49.

Woliner, J. (Director). (2020). *Borat Subsequent Moviefilm.* [Film]. Amazon Studios.

Yankova, D. and Andreev, A. (2012). Cross-cultural and transnational identity: A case study of Bulgarian immigrants in Canada. *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, 25 (1).