"Let the name be heard": Bulgarian Karakachan naming strategies and their spatial aspects

"Ať je jméno slyšet": Strategie pojmenování u Bulharských Karakačanů a jejich prostorový aspekt

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ABSTRAKT:

Bulharští Karakačani jsou usedlou skupinou transhumantních pastevců, která v posledních 60 letech prodělala výrazné proměny sociálního a materiálního života. Proměny jejich strategie pojmenování v průběhu 20. století jsou analyzovány na základě databáze obsahující údaje o 700 osobách. Posuny v těchto strategiích jsou zde zasazovány do kontextu probíhajících sociálních změn této nedávno usedlé populace. V kočovném období bylo běžnou strategií navazovat skrze jméno aliance s usedlou populací. Dnes je tato strategie převrstvena tendencí utužovat prostřednictvím pojmenování vazby uvnitř karakačanského společenství a utužovat tak již etablované vazby mezi příbuzenskými jednotkami. Jméno v tomto kontextu slouží nejen jako prostředek navazování vztahů a znak spřízněnosti, ale i jako etnický marker. Studie rozpracovává dynamický vývoj strategií pojmenování v rámci žitého prostoru, který jménu spoluutváření a skrze nějž se manifestují. Právě sledovaný vývoj ukazuje postupné oslabování patrilineárního principu pojmenování a nástup vyrovnanějšího sdílení jmen napříč matriliniemi a patriliniemi.

ABSTRACT:

A former transhumant group of Bulgarian Karakachans has undergone significant changes in their social and material life during the last sixty years. Karakachan naming strategies during the 20th century are analyzed on the basis of a detailed database containing data of 700 persons. Shifts in their naming strategies are put in the context of ongoing social change of this quite recently settled population. Former strategic alliances with the sedentary society was replaced by the tendency to thicken the already existing social ties within the manifold interconnected family units. The paper shows the dynamics of Karakachan naming practices and the usage of names as a social and ethnic marker. Important social relationships are signaled by name, and at the same time manifested in lived space. In this concern, the formerly dominant patriarchal principle has been replaced by a more balanced way of sharing names across the matrilateral and patrilateral kin groups.

NAMES MAKE A DIFFERENCE: NAME AS A MARKER[1]

"I finally managed the visit. I stayed with Yana in her little flat. She proudly showed me how she finally lives as an adult without parents. I expected we would go out but there was a long preparation phase for that. We had to polish our nails and we were dying the body hair on forearms blond, so it was not too visible. I thought it would be easier just to shave it but never mind. At least I learned something new. During the time we waited for our nails to dry, she showed me how she browses for young men in the city on the website www.aha.bg. She was really just browsing from profile to profile skipping very quickly and only at some of them she stopped and looked more closely. I was trying to understand what key she used for categorization. - And this one is Karakachan for sure – she says from time to time. I had no clue; all the faces look the same to me. She even had a few chat lines going on with some of those men; all of them she categorized as Karakachans. She didn't want to meet and chat with Bulgarian boys. She

wanted to find a Karakachan there. Ok, fair enough … but the profile did not say that. It usually said only a nickname, showed a profile picture and sometimes hobbies or a few words about him. I kept asking - how does she recognize them? She answered simply - by the name, of course. OK, but what part of the name? They used nicknames, usually a first name and surname weren´t known. So the nickname/first name is the marker? But not itself, it is only in combination with other subtle markers." (Author's field diary, 2010)

According to Evans-Prichard's experience from his research among the Azande (1937) there is no point in asking informants about the content or definition of complex cultural institutions, especially when their labels have been established within the Western academic discourse. The locals won´t be able to explain to us what religion or magic is; on the other hand, if we will take the trouble to carry out stationary fieldwork, we will have

the chance to observe many practical manifestations of religion or magic. We can still construct the definition, which itself is just a product of Western thinking. Similarly, I cannot expect that my young Karakachan informant will be able to explain to me exactly what her decision motives are, and what configuration of markers (like address, first name, surname, physical appearance etc.) are making her recognize other Karakachans in the virtual space of modern social networks.

Researchers have an extensive amount of data to analyze, and in this case I decided to look closely at the matter of Karakachan names and naming strategies. What was evident in my initial field stays was that Bulgarian Karakachans are able to recognize "their people" from Bulgarians, and the name can be considered one of the main markers in this process of recognition. My other informant was asked in the elementary school if she was Karakachan. The only clue was her Greek name Anastasia (a very popular name among Karakachans). For her classmates such a name can only point to 2 scenarios: she can be either a Karakachan (eventually Greek) or a Russian (and Russians are easily recognizable by their accent). This shows that the elaborated concept of recognition seems to be mutual, because even Bulgarians have their own way to recognize Karakachans by name and other subtle markers.

KARAKACHANS IN BULGARIA
Karakachans have been described as transhumant shepherds dwelling or rather moving from place to place in the regions of Roumelia (European areas of the former Ottoman Empire, or we can call this region also Southeastern Balkans) for years (Campbell 1964). Every geographical description of their former homeland has been grossly exaggerated because in historical sources they have often been confused with other shepherding groups (Balkan Vlachs, Albanian Vlachs etc.). Today Karakachans live mostly within two Balkan states – Greece (where they call themselves Sarakatsani) and Bulgaria. The representatives of the Karakachans in Bulgaria estimate the size of their group to about 20 thousand (only living in Bulgaria). The official number from a regular census is far lower (2500 in the 2011 census).

They speak a dialect of Greek but in Bulgaria they are completely bilingual (the younger generation have lost their ability to speak Greek completely in some cases). The Greek language has been their main distinctive marker they used to differentiate themselves from other shepherds. Today it only plays a role in the negotiation of the situational affiliation of Bulgarian Karakachans to the Greek nation, which lost its importance with the accession of Bulgaria to the EU, and ultimately the simplification of contact between Bulgaria and Greece.

Today Karakachans live quite dispersedly within the whole of Bulgaria. We can differentiate 4 regional groups. The first one is formed around the city of Sliven, and it is where the management of the Karakachan Association operates. The most visible and widely covered regional group of Bulgarian Karakachans lives in this region. The second group lives in central Bulgaria around the towns of Karlovo and Kazanläk. The third group lives in the Rila Mountains in Samokov and Dupnitsa. The fourth group can be found in the Northwestern part of Bulgaria in the Stara Planina mountain range in Vratsa, Berkovitsa, Montana, and in the surrounding villages.

After a quick research of the literature and of the daily press we can detect that there are enough sources about the Sliven group. This particular group influences the general picture of Karakachans living in Bulgaria the most. The least represented group is the fourth one from Stara Planina, which is perceived by the central group as "less-Karakachan",

and the argument of their mixed origin ("less clean/pure origin") is often mentioned in everyday communication.

In my research I tried to cover exactly those regional groups perceived by the central one as the periphery. These peripheral regions include groups two, three, and four mentioned above. As a result, I managed to produce better and deeper insight into regions two and four, because in the Rila Mountains, my relationships with informants remained very shallow, and no satisfactory rapport was established in this area. That is the alchemy of the fieldwork. Relationships and rapport cannot be planned. What was surprising for me was the fact that groups from central Bulgaria and Stara Planina were only rarely interconnected by kinship ties between each other. That is why we can conceive of them as two independent parts of one ethnic group.

FIELD AND DATA
A focus on naming strategies within the family circle is not a new topic in cultural anthropology. However, we can agree with Janet Finch that the academic attention paid to this topic has been rather small given its social significance (Finch 2008: 710). Naming practices rich analytical material, and they can play an important role in individual, kinship, confessional or ethnic recognition (cf. Bankova 2008). They are more than a classificatory tool, although this has been the primary focus of anthropology. Beside the labelling process, names also constitute a relationship (vom Bruck – Bodenhorn 2006: 5). In some contexts it is believed that the name can affect faith, health, or prosperity of the named person (Krasteva-Blagoeva 1999: 66). They can be seen as having the dual character of denoting the individuality of the person, and also marking social connections. Finch sees individuality and connectedness as the two core dimensions of a name (Finch 2008: 711).

My research focused on names and naming, and used multiple data sources. One of them was a body of genealogies I collected through my 7 years of fieldwork in central Bulgaria. The kinship network it covers spreads across the whole central Bulgarian region. The genealogies contain information about 153 interconnected persons. This material is rich in information about particular relationships between the registered individuals (especially when the family pattern was not standard – like the cases of adoption, people deceased after birth etc.).

Another rich source used in this analysis was a members list from the regional office of the Cultural and Educational Association of Karakachans in Bulgaria in Berkovitsa from the end of the 1990's. In those times the member base was rigorously registered because lists of members served as a basis for the Association's visa negotiation policy. The members list was provided by an active informant in the Association. The Association used to register names and family relationships of its members (for example people from mixed origin had also the right to became members, but their visa entitlement was different than the offsprings of "pure Karakachan" parents). Occasional marriages with other Karakachans, especially those from Rila, were contracted. We cannot track many marriages with Karakachans from central Bulgaria or from the Sliven region. The list contains only people who were still alive at the end of the 1990's (the oldest person registered was born in the 1881). It covers approximately 4 generations, and the whole material contains information about 565 persons. The genealogy created by the fieldworker has many advantages compared to such lists or databases. First, if we create genealogy it is usually time consuming, but we are able to capture a detailed context. On top of that, Karakachan genealogical memory goes up to the second half of the 19th century, so it is far deeper than other material.

Both sources mentioned go far beyond a single town or village. They cover either a broad kinship network spreading across the whole region (and even reaching abroad), or a regional unit of members including people from the whole area. If we start from the assumption that the naming practices are a widely shared cultural activity, we can consider this material, which covered quite broad social networks, sufficient for the analysis. The context of naming strategies and naming choices were also mapped by participant observation and semi-structured interviews during multiple field stays during the years 2009–2016.

NAMING IN BULGARIA

Until the end of the 19th century Bulgaria had no central policy for the usage of second names - surnames (Krasteva-Blagoeva 1999: 127). A systematic evidence of residents and an institutionalized naming strategy was established according to the development of the newly independent state's institutions. This policy followed older Ottoman and Orthodox Church registers (Budilová 2011: 189). At first, the full name of every inhabitant was formed by their first name and their father's name (father's first name with the ending -ov, -ev, -ova, -eva). The father's name functioned in this way as a surname for one generation because it was shared by only one group of siblings. From 1929 the third name started to be created and registered. It was formed on the basis of father's profession, father's nickname, or grandfather's first name (Krasteva-Blagoeva 1999: 126–132). The last option (third name originated from the grandfather's first name) is just a replicated version of the former father's name. Such a name circulated between generations, and did not work as a stable surname shared among a broad family group.

The use of a shared surname (*фамилийно име*) was not a stable practice until the 1950's. The contemporary practice in Bulgaria stabilized on the usage of 3 names (first name, father's name and surname). This practice is widely shared. We can observe only rare regional variation. In some regions Turkish surnames are popular. Those names usually originated from nicknames (for example Karamihail, Solakov, Chadzhiev etc.). In some regions surnames originating from the first names of their forefathers (for example Ivanov, Draganov, Atanasov etc.) are much more popular. For some ethnic groups, such as the Karakachans, there is a limited set of surnames which are in the popular discourse connected with the group due to the Greek sounding origin, or some appearance of the name in media. On the other hand, there is a huge variety of surnames shared by both Karakachans and Bulgarians. Therefore, a surname alone in a Bulgarian context cannot be an ethnic marker, at least not by itself.

First names were always a tool for forming an intentional link between individuals in Bulgaria (Krăsteva-Blagoeva 1999: 56). Sharing of the same first name can interlink a child with its godparent or other person related. It can associate a person with long deceased forefathers in the lineage or a particular Saint, and sometimes both at the same time. The practice of making name selection fully the responsibility of the godfather has already been almost entirely abandoned. This practice was replaced by a much more popular naming strategy focusing on the grandparents of the child. This is still being used today. Children are named after the first name of their grandparents, honoring the father's parents first, and then the mother's parents. Naming a child after someone is perceived as a great honor and commitment. If more children are born, parents can choose from other more distant relatives, which they decide to honor in this way (Krasteva-Blagoeva 1999: 61).

The only practice which can alter the widely shared strategies described above occurs when a child is been born on an important Orthodox Saint Day. In this case, it is believed that "the child brought his name into this world", and the name of the Saint is used in place of a familial name. This Saint is then perceived as a patron of the child, and a special link between the child and the Saint is taken for granted (as in case of the link between grandparents or other namesakes).

The three parts of an individual's name have different meanings within the emic perspective of my Karakachan informants. The first name should honor the parents (the child's grandparents) or other important people for the life of the child (godparents, other relatives, Saints). The esthetic preferences of the child's parents need to conform to this rule. The link between a child and an "important relative" is crucial. They serve the ancestor by fulfilling the duty to "let the name be heard again." At the same time they construct a special relationship between living namesakes (usually the grandparent is still alive when the child is born) who will remain important for each other for all of life. It is common for one of the grandparents to serve the young family as a free and unlimited babysitter.

The second name – the father's name, often serves as a tool for identification. The grandchildren in the family very often bear the name of a grandfather or a grandmother. A repetition of names could take place in those cases. In a group of first cousins the same first names could appear. During most important celebrations, a group of cousins gathered in one courtyard may include 3 children named Atanas and 4 named Marias. In this case the children are verbally differentiated by the added use of their father's name (for example Atanas Georgiev, Atanas Alexiev, Atanas Dimitrov etc.). Official communication can establish a difference even when the first names and surnames are the same. The father's name could be understood as a mechanism for dealing with the widespread tradition of circulating a limited number of first names within the kin group. In everyday informal communication those children in the courtyard are differentiated by the shortened cute versions of their first names - so called pet names. Pet names become fixed in family communication so that everyone knows which children you are refering to (for example Atanas: Nasko, Nase, Zhako or Maria: Mariyka, Maruko etc.)

On the other hand, a surname refers to their family affiliation, or rather lineage affiliation (because "family" in emic terms always means a patrilineal group). Full members of a family unit are mostly men and their wives or mothers. Other women (such as daughters) in the group are perceived as temporary members. During their life they are ambivalent to the expectation to be members of two lineages. In one of them they grow up, and to another they are going to marry (during the transhumant period, married Karakachan girls even lost contacts with their initial family). A girl is never a full member of any of these lineages until she becomes a mother. Through birth of a "true" member of a patrilineal group she legitimizes her status in a kinship group. Men are stable members of just one kinship group. The most important tie in such a regime is a son-father and brother-brother link.

However, surname can also function as a marker of ethnic Karakachan identity. By mentioning someone´s surname we automatically start to speculate about whether this particular family is historically known as Karakachan or not. There are only a few major lineages in the Karakachan community, and their names replicate and extend throughout the group. Families on the margins of the group can very easily just stop emphasizing their Karakachan identity and continue their lives under a Bulgarian identity. There is no visible clue to unveil them. To be Karakachan means to actively communicate a Karakachan identity. Some quite cold responses on an informant's "karakachanness" could be met, especially in the peripheral regions.

Family groups, or rather their surnames, carry with them the association with various positive or negative qualities. Particular names are

accompanied by the notion of success in stockbreeding, physical beauty, etc. Positive connotations are always highlighted in the case of one´s own family. However, hearing the surname of another family spoken out loud could produce a much less positive assessment. A speaker will easily describe some unrelated family, or more precisely the sound of their name, as unfaithful, licentious, disordered, or silly. The surname (which means the patrilineal affiliation) is always strongly considered when a marriage partner is being chosen. Even today parents will make recommendations based on family names, or discourage their descendants from marrying someone who is "not bearing a good name".

In addition to their official naming practices, the Bulgarian Karakachans also use nicknames. We can differentiate individual and collective nicknames. Individual nicknames refer to some special feature of individual members. Since the 19th century Karakachans have had to identify themselves with documents in which whole groups were registered by the names of their male representatives. These names were often of Turkish origin because their registration was a product of the Ottoman administration. Those group names could have become a basis for later group surnames. Turkish sounding names were later widely modified, or replaced by Greek or Bulgarian sounding nicknames.

Individual personal nicknames are used only by men. Women's nicknames are derived from their husband's or father's nickname or other version of that name. Nicknames point to some distinctive feature of the person. For example the mocking nickname "tsartsal" (derived from Bulgarian "partsal" – a rag) refers to the ragged outfit of the individual. Another frequent nickname is "kehaya" which accentuates that this person used to be a leader of the seasonal herders group. Other informant bore the nickname "avdzhiya" (derived from Turkish avcı – hunter). Similar to the first example ("tsartsal"), nicknames could be derogatory, and are used behind ones' back, such as the nickname "plempalo" (babbler).

Individual Nickname	Explanation
Sirenyar	• cheese maker (derived from Bulgarian "sirene" – cheese)
Mandradzhiya	• cheese maker (derived from Turkish "*mandıra*" – the workshop where milk is evaporated
Ovtsa	• sheep (derived from Bulgarian "ovtsa" • sheep)
Galata	• milkman (derived from Greek "*galatas*" • milkman)
Deputato	• representative (derived from Bulgarian "*deputat*" – deputy, elected representative of the group)
Kostulata	• no emic explanation
Glavestiya	• no emic explanation (possibly derived from Bulgarian "*glavnya*" – torch, usual tool for providing light when Karakachans lived as shepherds)
Kătala	• no emic explanation
Piroshak	• Pirot dweller (derived from the town Pirot in South Serbia)

Table 1. Selected individual nicknames of Bulgarian Karakachans

WHAT DOES THE FIRST NAME SAY?

The famous British anthropologist John Campbell paid special attention in his research to the strategies used by the transhumant shepherds, the Sarakatsani, for establishing ties of spiritual kinship with an associated sedentary population via the institution of patronage (the relationship

between a godparent and his/her godchild) (Campbell 1964). The Sarakatsani were still living their transhumant lives when Campbell did his fieldwork in the 1950's. In those times they were habitually leaving the name choice to the child's godparent. This name would be kept as a secret until the moment of the baptism, because the name and its bearer – the child – were vulnerable, and in danger of black magic and the evil eye. The parents learned the name just on the day of baptism. To be a godparent meant not only to give a name. For the successful organization of the pastoral season, all transhumant groups had to negotiate with the sedentary population. The Sarakatsani used to build strategic social ties (for example ties based on patronage) with sedentary stakeholders. They sought a potential godparent for their child among the people involved in the decision-making processes for the pastures, milk production, and trade (Campbell 1964: 218–224).

The practice of the creation of tactical alliances with the outside sedentary society was replaced in sedentary times by the strengthening of alliances between the two Karakachan kinship groups. In this manner the person who served as a "kum" (best man) at the wedding was also intended to become a godfather. The "kum" is usually a groom's own godfather or one of his male descendants. The godmother is usually "kum's" sister or a female partner. This leads to the circulation of a limited number of people from just two kinship groups in a tight alliance built on a spiritual kinship principle. From the actor's point of view, these two kinship groups then become related, if they are not already. When asked who their "kum" is Bulgarian Karakachans usually answer "my uncle/aunt or cousin."

When we consider this principle in the light of naming practices we can see that the range of possible first names in the family is rather narrow. This trend goes parallel with the practice of naming children after the grandparents to honor them and to thank them for their expected care of the child. Ideally a young family should name their first child after the father's parents and then mother's parents. If they have more children, they could continue honoring other important relatives, for example a godfather or some popular more distant relative, especially when the person is childless ("so that the name is heard again"). Along with these practices the custom continues of naming a child after the Saint if the child was born on a particular Saint Day of the liturgical year. If that happens the child is named after the Saint despite the fact that grandparents have not been honored yet. The model described above is an ideal one. It ensures that names in a family are repeated every other generation, and so within the family group only a limited number of first names circulates.

The most common first names among Bulgarian Karakachans, especially the female names, are slightly different from the most common names of Bulgarians. The first ten most common names among Bulgarians

Female first names	Male first names
Maria	Dimitar
Ekaterina	Ivan
Christina	Georgi
Elena	Atanas
Zoya	Kosto
Yana	Christo
Penka	Vasil
Kostadinka	Todor
Dimitrina	Nikola
Panaya	Angel

Table 2. List of the most common Karakachan first names

include names as Ivanka, Yordanka, Mariyka, Rositsa, Radka, Violeta (see Ivanova–Radeva 2005: 46), which we only rarely meet among Karakachans. Contrary to Karakachans, Bulgarians use and like the names with a pre-Christian origin based on more natural motifs (names like Rositsa, Denitsa, Nadezhda, Rumyana etc.). We find a much higher equivalence when considering the most common names among Greeks, especially from rural areas (see for example Bialor 1967: 98–99). The ten most popular names among rural Greeks in the 1960´s were almost the same as their contemporaneous counterparts among the Bulgarian Karakachans.

"ONE LETTER FOR GRANDMOTHER":
ADAPTATION TO CONTEMPORARY DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Rapid demographic changes were involved in shifts in naming practice beginning in the 1980´s. There are usually no more than two children in a nuclear family. However, the need to honor one's parents still persists, despite the fact that there are often not enough children in the family to honor all grandparents. New demographic trends among Karakachans produced a few adaptations. Some parents use a double first name sometimes separated with a dash (for example Yana-Maria). This practice can be also found among Bulgarians (Ivanova–Radeva 2005: 5, Radeva 2011: 17). It is mostly used among families trying to avoid conflict and remorse among family members potentially lasting many years. Such quarrels can last for a child's whole life.

The name builds a symbolic link between the grandparent and the child. It cannot be interpreted as a belief in a re-birth of a grandparent in the child, instead the Karakachans believe in a transfer of some significant features or qualities from the ancestor to the child. In some situation the child will be expected to behave like the ancestor she/he shares the name with.

„Yana bears the name of even two ancestors, grandpa Yani and great grandma Yanula. Grandpa was such an active and vigorous man. His mother Yanula was a widow. She was big and smoke a nargile. Once Yani hit a sheep, just like that without the reason, and she told him off. That is why Yana is after those two ancestors so wild and never lets anyone tell her what to do."

The link between the ancestor and a descendant could be constructed in various ways. Even the name sharing practice is highly variable. A child can bear exactly the same name as ancestor. Various name modifications are also possible. For example, the gender of the name can be changed (Nikola – Nikolina, Yani – Yana, Kosta – Kostadina, Hristo – Hristina or Hrisa, Georgi – Georgina etc.). The male name is very often changed into its female version. The opposite case (female name into male name) has not been met in the sample very often. A granddaughter is much more likely to bear the name of a grandfather than a grandson to bear his grandmother's name. It can be interpreted by the tendency to prioritize the honor to male ancestors, and this theory is also supported by the actor's explanation.

The name can be also modified in different ways. A similarly sounding name can be used instead (for example Katya – Ekaterina, Yanula – Yana, Kostadinka – Kostanda etc.). Here we can see also a different practice in the case of male and female names. Male names are less likely to be modified across generations. Female names vary quite often (they are derived from male names, or modified by aesthetic criterions of the child's parents). One of the modifications used is based on the "first letter" or the "first syllable" rule. The first letter or syllable of the ancestor's name is kept in the child's name. In those cases the relatives always know which ancestor is interconnected by the name with the child. They say "he/she has got a letter for a grandma" (буквичка за баба).

New names are sometimes made up to conform to this criterion and contain even a letter, syllable or the whole name of the ancestor. This practice is quite rare and can be used only in cases when the ancestor's names are rather simple and short (for example, from names Lambra and Yana a name Lambriyana can be creatively formed). Completely new names independent of ancestor's names are not very common among Karakachans today. There is a widespread practice across Bulgaria to name children with names taken from a favorite television series or movie. After approximately the year 2000 we can meet names like Poly, Keyt, Sabina, Denis or Gloria even among the Karakachans. On the other hand, we can say that apart from these exceptions they are rather conservative in their naming practices.

Primary male name	Transformed to	Year of birth (the child bearing the ancestor's name)
Dimo	Daniela	1969
Dimo	Diana	1975
Kosto	Kamelia	1981
Hristo	Hristina	1982
Kosto	Kamelia	1983
Pavel	Paolina	1983
Panayot	Penka	1985
Ivan	Ivanka	1990
Grigor	Gabriela	1991
Kosto	Katya	1993
Nikola	Nikoleta	1995
Primary female name	Transformed to	Year of birth (the child bearing the ancestor's name)
Maria	Michail	1983
Hristina	Hristomir	1989

Table 3. Name gender transfers, Northwestern Bulgaria, years 1969–1996

Primary name	Transformation	Year of birth (the child bearing the ancestor's name)
Panaya	Petja	1986
Panaya	Polina	1979
Panaya	Penka	1980
Panaya	Penka	1973
Goranka	Galya	1987
Goranka	Gergana	1995
Lena	Eleonora	1981
Kosto	Kostadin	1982
Maria	Mariela	1985
Kostadina	Karina	1993
Paraskeva	Poli	1996
Ivan	Ivo	1988
Stiyana	Silvia	unknown
Yanula	Yanica	1990
Yanula	Yanka	1994
Panayot	Plamen	1984
Zorka	Zoja	1979
Zorka	Zoja	1983

Table 4. Other name transformations, Northwestern Bulgaria, years 1969–1996

The whole Karakachan naming system follows the rule of honoring one's ancestors (especially children's grandparents). Along with this system, a competing rule is in place, demanding the honoring of the Saints. A child is sometimes named after a Saint even in situations when grandparents have not been honored yet. This priority is explained by the concept of divine intervention, an act of God, faith or the will of the Saint himself. The Saint can wish to be a child's patron. In those cases it is usually said "she came already with her name", "he baptized himself", or "he brought the name with him" (Krăsteva-Blagoeva 1999: 72–73). There is no clear agreement in the literature whether a birth on the Saint's day is perceived as a lucky (Krăsteva-Blagoeva 1999: 72) or unlucky occasion (Pimpireva 1995: 54–55) in this region. My informants perceived it quite neutral. They know that it reduces the chance to honor their own ancestors which is in any case considered as the best practice.

Powerful Saint days which can name the child operate despite the tradition to pass the name across generations. If the child's life is interconnected with a Saint or a martyr in this way, the child's life, personality or behavior is expected to be similar to the Saint's. He is perceived as a role model, an example leading one's life. Inevitably, pictures of Saints are a part of the Karakachan home environment. Pictures of Jesus or of the crucifixion are not so common. Saints are perceived as the gatekeepers and the negotiators mediating the contact between the God and a human. When Karakachans pray, they do so usually to the Saint or a God's mother, perceived as a good ally in case of family matters.

DEVELOPMENT OF NAMING STRATEGIES

Naming strategies are influenced by many things. Our sample shows how in both of the observed regions some names were gradually abandoned, that is to say they ceased to be passed from one generation to another. In Northwestern Bulgaria names like Velika, Krastena, Zorka, Lambra, Anastasia, Grafitsa, Ekaterina or Goranka were excluded from the transfer to subsequent generations and in central Bulgaria names like Morfa, Sultana, Spiro and Vangel were gradually abandoned. The latest generation of Karakachans does not prefer names which sound too Greek (Morfa, Lambra, Anastasia, Spiro) and names that sound "too old" or "names for old people" (Velika, Grafitsa, Goranka, Sultana, Vangel).

The data from central Bulgaria can be used for an analysis of recent development in the naming strategies thanks to detailed genealogy. We can study more than just names, since we have also a detailed picture of kinship relationships. I had asked for the specific naming motivations ("Who's name is he/she bearing?", "Who did you name him/her for?") for all individuals in the genealogy. The Karakachan genealogical memory is relatively deep; my informants were able to explain the reason why he/she was named with a particular name even in the case of people who were born at the beginning of the 20th century.

The various strategies in the naming process were detected, and by adding a time dimension we can see how some of the strategies weakened while others were progressively overruled.

The 20th century has been separated into 3 periods in the Table 5 (see below). The periods are not even but follow a general historical continuity in Bulgarian history. The first is the transhumant period (1920–1959), the second the period of sedentarization and the life under the socialist rule (1960–1989), and the third is the post-social period (1989–2000). The analysis ends in the year 2000. Because of the declining birthrates in Bulgaria there is a small number of newborn children in the analyzed kinship group in the period after 2000. The last column can be taken as a sketch of the ongoing development. Because of the uneven periods the main focus should be on the columns with the percentage of detected cases. In the analysis we did not observe name transformations, but the link between individuals. The numbers show who was the child named after.

In Figure 1. we can see a visible decline of the relevance of the godfather, Saints and distant relatives in the naming practices during the periods observed. As the main practice the naming after the grandparents (maternal or paternal) persists. Actors often accented that the father's parents need to be honored first, but we can see that in fact the maternal parents have been continually incorporated into the naming circle. We can see a slow and unsuspected balancing of the influence of the father's and the mother's ancestors. As a result the patrilineal ancestors and the authority of male ancestors in general is slightly declining. It is understandable when we consider the contemporary conditions. A significant part of Bulgarian Karakachans work, or used to work, in Greece (for more see Fatková 2011). Work migration did not allow parents to be at home with their children very often. The children born in the post-socialist period were
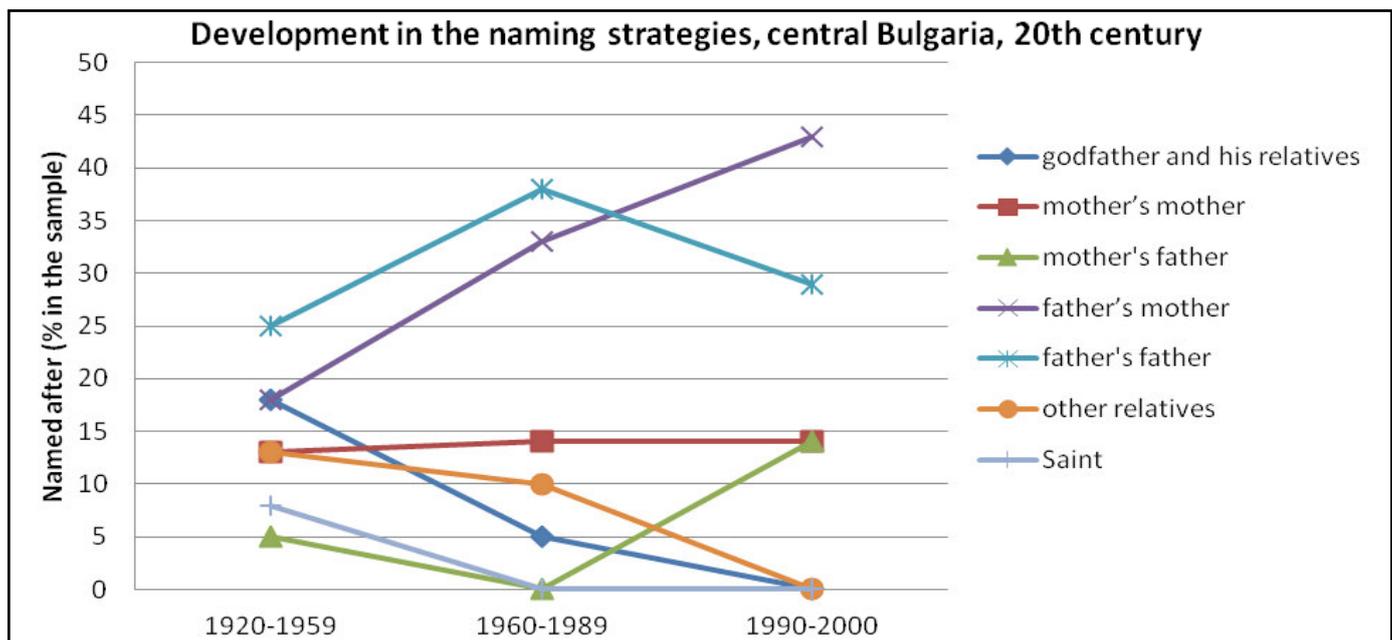

Figure 1. Development in the naming strategies, central Bulgaria, 20th century

most likely (at least for some period of their lives) brought up by female relatives, most often grandmothers (paternal or maternal). The growing importance of female family members has continually shaped the naming practices and intergenerational dynamics.

The slow extinction of the naming after a Saint could be a result of a slow secularization and a transfer of the Karakachan religiosity into their private and domestic space (see Fatková 2015). The decline of the naming after other relatives has been explained by actors themselves: "When you don't know how to name your eighth child, you can give him the name after some aunt". It has always been a supplemental method of choosing a child's name. The decline in birthrates has shifted this method. The weakening of godfathers´ influence in the Karakachan society is continual, and it is one of many consequences of the sedentary life. The need to form strategic alliances outside one's family is not crucial today (compared with the former periods, see Campbell 1964).

the naming practices differ from the actor's presented expectations. My informants often state that maternal parents have to be honored in the naming procedure after the paternal ones. During the last century we can observe various practices which do not always follow this strict rule prioritizing the patrilineal ancestors.

NAME AND SPACE: HOUSE PRINCIPLE

All three names (first name, second name – father's name, and surname) used by Bulgarian Karakachans somehow point to the patrilineal family group, although in the case of the first names we observed a growing influence of matrilateral ancestors. The surname ranks an individual into his father's family. The father's name links him or her with a specific male in a family unit and the first name links the bearer with someone outside the father's family (or not, and by doing so confirms the patriarchal family organization rule).

Name sharing at all 3 levels manifests in this space. People bearing the same name live

usually close to each other. In Karakachan neighborhoods, brothers and their wives usually live next to each other. We can find these brother groups, which are cousins to the original group of brothers, in close vicinity to each other. The houses are usually shared with aging parents and unmarried sisters. All those people usually share the same surname. Individual brothers could be recognized by the first name, but very often we can meet the same configuration of first names in a sibling group because the shared grandparents were honored by the giving of the same name. So in a wider group of cousins the first name is not a good distinctive marker. A combination of the first name and the second name (father's name) works as a clearer marker. Again, people who share more than just a surname live closer to each other. The immediate neighbors are usually brothers, and share the surname and the father's name.

A male's name does not change through their lives, and integrates them solidly into a wider family unit. A name can link people in a horizontal way (people of the same generation) but also grandparents and grandchildren (i. e., the people of every other generation). Outside a close family circle, names build a huge network of namesakes in the Karakachan society; people who live in the same neighborhood and celebrate the name day on the same day.

If someone comes into a house (marries into a lineage) there is usually a corresponding change in the name. A name can also incorporate people from the outside into the group. The logic of the name could be easily replaced with the logic of the house. In common opinion,

naming after	1920–1959	1960–1989	1990–2000			
		%		%		%
godfather and his relatives	7	18	1	5	0	0
mother's mother	5	13	3	14	2	14
mother's father	2	5	0	0	2	14
father's mother	7	18	7	33	6	43
father's father	10	25	8	38	4	29
other relatives	5	13	2	10	0	0
Saint	3	8	0	0	0	0
	39	100	21	100	14	100

Table 5. Development in the naming strategies, central Bulgaria, 20th century

The emic descriptions of the Karakachan kinship model accent its strict patriarchal organization (in marriage patterns, post-marital residence, naming practices). We can see that this model has not worked in practice during the last decades. The actor's practice shows that the patriarchal order was possibly bound to the transhumant life, and today's sedentary organization has lead to its fragmentation. For example, the persistently repeated rule says: "A daughter has to marry out of the house", i. e. that all daughters have to marry and leave the parental house. However, the structure of family households does not confirm that the contemporary generation of parents still follow this custom. Houses with a "daughter's wing" have been built, including all facilities for a young family, and there are some married daughters living with their husbands and children in their parents´ house. Similarly,
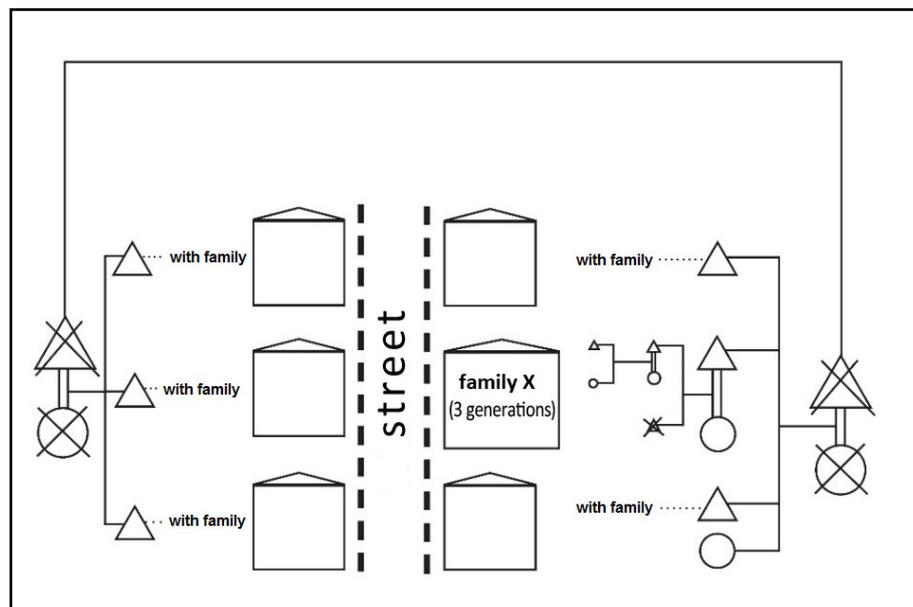

Figure 2. Scheme of the kinship links in a street inhabited by Karakachans

coming into the house should be signaled by the name change. Until today the Karakachans lived in big multigenerational houses, which they shared with their growing children and often with aging parents as well. In an ideal case the bride follows the husband into the house of his parents.

However, there are exceptions known in the Balkans. Husbands joining the wife's family group do not traditionally have a high status, and there are various labels for those husbands (in Bulgaria and Macedonia *zet na kăshta/doma zet* – a son-in-law of the house or *zavryan zet* and by Greek Karakachans εσώγαμπρος- jammed son-in-law). All those labels point to the space dimension. The last two examples particularly emphasize the husband's enclosure in the house. The reason for this type of marriage could be the husband's poverty, or the case that his wife is an only child who needs to take care of her parents, while the husband can shift this duty to his brothers. In all these cases the new relationships are manifested in the name change. The person coming into the house bears the name of the house.

A bride coming into a new house accepts the name of the house. In Macedonia, she in fact loses her first name and starts to be called by a name derived from her husband's first name (if her husband is Ivan, for example, she is called Ivanica). A newborn receives the first name of a relative (usually a grandparent) who shares the house with the parents. The case of the "son-in-law of the house" is not conversely the case of an in-married bride. For example the bride bears her husband's surname even in a situation where they live with the bride's family. However, in this case the husband loses the right to name his children after his ancestors (Krăsteva-Blagoeva 1999: 61). In some regions he even changes his name according the wife's family, similar to brides in Macedonia, by adding a special ending "-in." He continues to bear his original first name, but his wife's name will be attached to it as a second name (if the wife is Penka, for example, he will be called Kosta Penin) and this second name (instead of habitual father's name) will be used by their children (Krăsteva-Blagoeva 1999: 123).

The case of the "son-in law of the house" points to a common misunderstanding that there are patrilineal preferences in name giving in the Balkans and in particular among the Karakachans. A child does not bear the name of a lineage, but of the house. In other words children will more likely bear the name of the grandparents with whom they share one roof and who will most likely baby-sit them. The informants explain: „I give names from this house, because I live here." In Bulgarian they say „детето трябва да получи къщно име," (the child has to bear the name of the house) or „името на първото трябва да си е от къщата" (the firstborn has to be called by the name from the house) (Krăsteva-Blagoeva 1999: 61). We can consider the paternal lineage as a reference unit, but it will prove wrong in cases when the ideal expected pattern is broken. A much better analytical concept seems to be the "house" as a social unit (c.f. Lévi-Strauss 1982 and 1987, and Carsten 1995).

CONCLUSION

The name among the Karakachans serves together with other features as an ethnic marker differentiating them from the surrounding population. Naming is a functional process of the negotiation of relations with "the Others". Because Karakachan groups are relatively big and their members often do not know each other in person, naming works as a strategy to detect co-members, and in some context also to communicate the group membership towards "the Others". At the same time, name also affects relations inside the group. It links namesakes and people with the material world – their houses.

The kinship system of the Greek Sarakatsani (Karakachans in Bulgaria) has been a main topic of few texts since the 1960s (Campbell 1964, 1970, 2002). Meanwhile, this former transhumant population settled, and their kinship, spatial, and symbolic organization had to adapt to new conditions. The former strategy of networking with the settled population via the institution of spiritual kinship was replaced with a new tendency of tightening and thickening the already established social bonds within one extended kinship group. The kinship relations overlap in this type of tight network. One person can be an uncle, a "kum" and a godfather to a particular person at the same time. The naming system reflects this development in its strategies which similarly hold a limited number of names within the narrow family unit.

Name as a marker of social and ethnic identity bears a number of meanings. Name reflects important social relationships which are at the same time manifested in a lived space. The housing organization commonly corresponds to the structure of the shared names. Relatives sharing names live closer to each other. The immediate male neighbors usually share the second name (their father's name) and a surname. The three parts of the name (first name, father's name and surname) function together to communicate meanings of closeness and difference in specific contexts.

By first names Karakachans (as well as Bulgarians) create or strengthen social links between two people. Name bearers do not only celebrate name day on the same day, but, if the name was intentionally given after a particular relative, the link created by this extends into other spheres of social life. The most common practice is to name a child after its grandparents, especially those who are expected to care about the child in the parent's absence. Bulgarian Karakachans consider themselves a very conservative, patriarchally organized group. On the level of everyday practice the strict patriarchal principle has been slowly balanced by the growing influence of matrilateral relatives which is visible in the naming strategies as well as in the organization of the house space.

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