



The Discursive Exclusion of Minorities: Narratives of the self in Israel and Moldova

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SHARON WEINBLUM

University of Oxford
sweinblu@gmail.com

JULIEN DANERO IGLESIAS

CEVIPOL, Université libre de Bruxelles
jdaneroi@ulb.ac.be

Abstract

Studies on nation-state models and state-minorities relations often draw implicitly or explicitly on the civic vs. ethnic nation-state dichotomy, where the first would include minorities in a 'civic' nation, and the second would be the state of a sole ethnic nation, hence excluding minorities from this construction. Following other authors, the main argument of this paper is that in order to enhance our understanding of the state-minorities relations, these categories need to be challenged, but also empirically deconstructed. The paper argues that in so-called civic states, similar exclusivist discursive articulations to those present in ethnic states, are at play and vice versa. The argument is articulated through the study of central political elite's narratives on the nation-state in two cases: one (self)-proclaimed 'civic nation-state', Moldova, and one 'ethnic nation-state' state, Israel. The analysis is based on an original methodology combining narrative analysis with critical discourse analysis (CDA). Through an analysis of the narrative chronological sequencing – present, future and past – the paper demonstrates that in both cases, inclusive discursive strategies are at play in the present. It then highlights that in both cases the future and past sequences of the narrative entail exclusive discursive practices leaving minorities out of the nation's boundaries.

Key words: inclusion/exclusion, minorities, nationalizing states, Israel, Moldova

1. Introduction

Nationalism can be considered as the preeminent discourse to demarcate political communities, to claim rights of self-determination and legitimate rule by reference to 'the people' of a country (Calhoun 1993: 211). Political dominant actors therefore often make use of the 'nation' in their discourse, which takes the form of a 'narrative' (Wodak et al. 1999). While these narratives of the nation-state tend to refer to a unified people, numerous authors have argued that they could at the same time exclude certain groups in the country by constructing an ethnic 'us' opposed to an internal 'other'

(Brown 1999; Yack 1996; Schnapper 1994; Spencer and Wollman 1998). Therefore, contrary to Kohn's famous classification (1946), these authors claim that a purely inclusive civic nation as opposed to a purely exclusive ethnic nation would never exist.

Following these studies, we argue in this contribution that the inclusive civic vs. exclusive ethnic nation-state dichotomy needs to be challenged and deconstructed. More specifically, the paper claims that in self-proclaimed civic inclusive states,¹ similar differentialist and exclusive discursive articulations to those present in ethnic nation-states, are at play. This argument is demonstrated through the comparison of two states in which the process of nation- and state-building are still at work and where nationalizing discursive practices (Brubaker 1996, 2011) are hence acute: Israel and the Republic of Moldova. These case studies have been chosen for their divergent self-definition. On the one hand, Israel defines itself as the state of the Jewish people – hence acknowledging its ethnic character – while granting equal status to its minorities in the name of its democratic essence. On the other hand, the Republic of Moldova defines itself as a civic nation-state conferring minority ethno-national groups the same status as the dominant group.

The article analyzes the central elites' discursive practices in these countries, through a narrative analysis using the tools of critical discourse analysis. The analysis shows that despite differences entailed in each narrative, common mechanisms in the articulation of the nation-state boundaries are at play. It shows indeed that when speaking about the present, the narrators tend to be inclusive, even in the Israeli case. However, when looking at the past and the future, the narrators all employ exclusive discursive strategies, hence excluding minorities from the boundaries of the nation-state.

2. Methodology

2.1 Studying Narratives

In order to analyze the discursive practices constructing the nation-state and its relation with minorities in Israel and the Republic of Moldova, the article uses crossed-methods: a narrative analysis combined with the analysis of discursive strategies, inspired by the Vienna School of Critical Discourse Analysis (Wodak et al. 1999). The central objective is to unpack the categories of people, citizens, regime, state, nation and their relation with minorities.

The narrative analysis is based on a threefold definition of the narrative. First, a narrative is understood as a spoken exchange creating and shaping social meaning. It is a distinct 'cognitive scheme', which imposes 'coherent interpretation on the whirl of events and actions that surrounds us' (Fischer 2003: 163). Narratives, place 'social phenomena in the larger patterns that attribute social and political meaning to them' (p. 179). Second, like a story, a narrative has a beginning, a middle and an end (Kaplan 1993; Roe 1994). This specific sequencing gives meaning and constructs the world in a certain way by ordering it in a specific manner. In this context, controlling the content of these narratives is of utmost importance for the actors who produce these systems of signification (White 1987: x) since the content of the narratives can be used to legitimize the actors who produce them. For example, a narrative

on history can help legitimize actors on the domestic as well as on the external arena (Noiriel 1991: 87). Finally, narratives are understood as having a temporal dimension that locates the narrator or the referent object of the narrative in a timeline. A narrative, in this sense ‘provides the practical means’ by which persons ‘can understand themselves as living through time, a human subject with a past, present, and future, made whole by the coherence of the narrative plot with a beginning, middle, and end’ (Elliott 2005: 125). As Shenhav puts it, narratives enfold present events in a time frame, which can exceed the current event and give their audience a sense of familiarity and continuity with events that they personally could never have experienced (2009).

On the basis of this definition, the methodology is deployed in two steps entailing three analytical elements. The first step consists in the identification of the narrative, which is based on two elements. The first element relates to the content or topics that the narrators knit into a plot. Since we are interested in the narratives of the nation-state, the aim is to detect which topics are articulated and sequenced when political elites address the question of the state in relation with the people living in it. The second element is the chronological sequencing of the narrative, namely how the topics of citizens, state, minorities etc. are put into a plot that has a past, a present and a future. The identification of the different topics and their sequencing by the speakers allow us to differentiate between competing narratives. The second step consists in the ‘internal’ analysis of the narrative. It analyzes each sequence of the narrative – present, future and past – based on two elements. The first is the description of the topics, which gives an overall picture of the content of the narrative. The second is the manner in which discursive strategies of unification and differentiation are used in each sequence, hence generating inclusive or exclusive narratives. In our two cases, this means scrutinizing the manner in which the nation-state, ‘us’, is connected to an exclusive or inclusive nation and if ‘them’ is external or internal to the nation-state.

Empirically, we have chosen to focus on the narratives articulated by the dominant elites. Declarations of independence and national anthems had first been considered as potential sources. While these texts are crucial in the formation of the polity, we nevertheless pushed them aside to the profit of discourses that are not fixed once and for all in a text but are currently being articulated in the political sphere. We have selected inaugural speeches, ceremonial texts and speeches, i.e., ‘commemorative speeches’ that are repetitive in nature (Wodak 2009: 70). For the analysis of narratives in Israel, 20 speeches were selected, which were all delivered by political elite such as the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign affairs and the President of the state acting during two different tenures and governments: the Olmert government (2006-2009) and the Netanyahu government (2009-2012). In the present article, seven of these speeches are quoted. For the analysis of the Moldovan narratives, 44 speeches of President Voronin during his two consecutive terms (2001-2005 and 2005-2009) and 18 speeches of Interim President Ghimpu (2009-2010) were selected. In the empirical analysis of this article, eleven of them are referred to.²

2.2 Israel and Moldova and their Minorities

Before analyzing and comparing the narratives at play in both cases, it is necessary to first set the context in which these narratives evolve. Indeed, the context is an inherent part of the analysis, as discourse cannot be considered floating. This step implies taking into account the historical dimension of discursive practices in two ways: by incorporating the historical context and the original sources and by looking for the diachronic changes of the same discourse within a given period. Discourse is thus seen as a social practice that assumes a dialectical relationship with its context: the context affects and shapes the discourse, while the discourse affects the political and social reality (Wodak et al. 1999). We will first take the context of Israel into account and then the context of the Republic of Moldova.

The State of Israel was established in 1948 as the achievement of the Zionist enterprise. In many respects, the state of Israel can be characterized as a nationalizing state (Jamal 2007; Kaufman 2010; Weinblum 2013). The aim of the Zionist movement was explicitly to give a land, a state and a shelter to the Jewish people and to promote the 'in-gathering of the exiles'. Ever since the state creation, the regime of citizenship in place in Israel has reflected these core principles, including the notable Law of Return (1950) enabling the granting of the Israeli citizenship to any Jewish immigrant to Israel. Besides, the Israeli legislation and institutions have continuously strived to guarantee that the Jewish character of the state is preserved and reinforced at the level of e.g., language, culture and land³. At the same time, the Zionist project was founded out of a desire to create a Jewish state that would be based on democratic values and respect the minorities' rights, in particular those of the Palestinian minority which today forms approximately 20% of the population. The Israeli declaration of independence hence stated that

we [...] by virtue of our natural and historic right and on the strength of the resolution of the UN General Assembly, hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz-Israel, to be known as the State of Israel [...] that will be open for Jewish immigration and for the in-gathering of the exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex... (The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, 14 May 1948)

Since 1948, several Israeli Basic laws — which may be seen as the constitutional basis of the state in the absence of a constitution — were amended in order to anchor both the Jewish and the democratic character of the state in the legislation (Basic Law: the Knesset 1985 version, Basic Law: the Knesset present version, Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty 1992). In this context, nationalizing trends of the State of Israel have time and often been in tension with the proclaimed democratizing principles of the state (Weinblum 2013).

The Republic of Moldova, independent since 1991 after the break-up of the Soviet Union, also followed the nation-state model, much like all the other former Soviet republics. Nevertheless, due to the existence of Romania, a particular national vision has been put forward: a 'Moldovan' nation made of a

Moldovan people different from Romanians. Compared to the Romanian nation, this nation is set to be an inclusive nation, in which minorities (Russians, Ukrainians, Gagauz, Bulgarians, among others account for roughly 24%) are integrated and have a full say. This soviet-based nationalism, referred to as 'Moldovanism' in the literature⁴, has been at the top of Moldovan politics since 1991 and the 1992 civil war with Transnistria. It has been particularly strong between 2001 and 2009 when the Party of the Communists, led by Vladimir Voronin, was in power (March 2007; Cazacu and Trifon 2010). According to Luke March, 'the party has aimed to be a Moldovan nation builder, with an emphasis on overcoming ethnic divisions and defending statehood and territorial integrity' (2007: 601). Vladimir Voronin was not only standardizing, he was also differentiating, prolonging the Soviet process of differentiation of the Moldovans from neighboring Romanians and preserving legitimacy over the country. This strategy implied, for instance, the promotion of Moldovan as a separate language (Ciscel 2006) and a massive investment in the teaching of history (Anderson 2007; Ihrig 2007). Today, the Republic of Moldova can be seen as a 'nationalizing state' in which competitive different organizations, parties, or even individuals within the state compete to shape a particular nation. The communist authorities tend to shape a 'Moldovan' core-nation, while 'Romanianists' are opposing it and assume that Moldovans are members of the Romanian nation. For many, the Moldovanist particular identity is seen as inclusive while the competing nationalism, Romanianism, on the contrary, is seen as exclusive, for it promotes 'a homogenous identity, which excludes ethnic minorities' (Anderson 2005: 53).

Comparing these two nationalizing states and their different narratives on the nation-state is of utmost interest as both states present different ideal-types of nation: Israel is a self-proclaimed (ethnic) 'Jewish democracy' while the Republic of Moldova is a self-proclaimed civic nation. On the basis of this comparison, the paper argues that the narratives at play in both cases however produce the same effects: the reinforcement of the connection between an ethnic core-nation and the polity in the narrative and the exclusion of the ethnic minorities from the narration of the nation-state.

3. Analysis

3.1 Narratives as a Sequence of Topics: Three Nation-State Narratives

An analysis of the dominant elite's speeches at the occasion of commemorations, parliamentary opening sessions and other ceremonies leads to identify three distinct narratives: one dominant narrative in Israel and two competing narratives in Moldova. Each of these narratives has been identified on the basis of the topics and sequencing described above.

In the case of Israel, the analysis leads to the identification of a wide scope of topics on which varying emphases are put depending on the actors. For instance, the then Foreign Minister of the ultranationalist party Israel Beiteinu mobilizes more often the topic of ethnic identity than its predecessor Livni from the center party Kadima. Nevertheless, despite small variation, all

speakers, when narrating the polity of Israel mobilize primarily the following topics: the topics of history, which itself includes the topic of land, the topic of past sufferings and the topic of wars; the topic of the Jewish people and the topic of security. The topics of democracy and citizenry are present as well but in only one of the sequences of the narrative (the present). More importantly, all these topics are articulated in one common chronological sequencing (past-present-future) which will be developed below. It is this specific mobilization of topics and their particular sequencing which together form the Israeli dominant narrative.

From the analysis of the Moldovan empirical corpus, two different speakers and two narratives emerged. The first Moldovan narrative, the Moldovanist narrative, is structured mainly on the topics of democracy and nation. In the narrative, the topic of history is identifiable, classically used to justify the existence of the nation-state (Danero Iglesias 2013), while the topic of citizenry is nearly absent. Finally, the second Moldovan narrative, which has been referred to as 'Romanianist', is mostly articulated around the topics of history and nation. The topics of democracy and citizenry are present as well, but much less than the first topics. In this perspective, this last narrative is closer to the Israeli dominant narrative.

After looking at this first dimension of the narratives, we can now focus on the second and third dimensions of the research: the chronological sequencing and the articulation of the relationship between 'us' and 'them' in this sequencing. We will first tackle the way the present is constructed and examine the place granted to minorities in this sequence of time. We will then look at the role of minorities in the past and the future.

3.2 Analyzing the Present: The Citizens and the People as Ambiguous Signifiers

In the present, the nation-state narratives are structured along a series of topics, among which, the topics of democracy, citizens and people are preponderant. Interestingly, this mobilization of topics appears both in the cases of Israel and Moldova. The identification of these topics points to an *a priori* inclusive narrative for the minorities, which are included in the 'people' or 'citizenry' opposed to the external other. A critical analysis of their articulations however reveals that both the Israeli and Moldovan narratives convey ambiguities in the meaning of the signifiers 'citizenry' and 'people'.

In the case of Israel, the narrative is primarily bound around the topics of democracy, external other and citizenry. The state is indeed constructed as a democracy opposed to the non-democratic forms of regime:

We were always proud to state that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East, now it becomes clear that we are also an island of stability in a chaotic region. In fact, Israel's stable democracy can serve as a model for the region. (Foreign Minister Lieberman 2011)

Here, the Arab states are the external other, against which Israel as a democracy is forged as the 'us'. In terms of citizenry, this democratic 'us' is more specifically the Israeli people, which is again discursively unified against the external enemy other:

The Israeli people aspire to peace. Peace has always been our aspiration and will continue to be so but we will never relinquish our right to security, and will never permit our enemies to establish a terror base in the heart of our country, because today, terror is more dangerous than ever before. (Prime Minister Netanyahu 2009b)

The Israeli people is not only articulated in opposition to an external other, but is also constructed more specifically as an inclusive plural citizenry:

I am committed to the Declaration as a whole, including the promise for complete equality between all the citizens of the State, regardless of religion, race or gender. Our concern will be for all the citizens of Israel: Jews, Arabs, Druze, Muslims, Christians and Circassians. (Prime Minister Netanyahu 2009a)

While the narrative draws the boundary between an inclusive multinational regime opposed to an external undemocratic other, other instances in the narrative blur the meaning of the signifier 'citizens' and hence, introduce ambiguity as to whom the state of Israel actually belongs. This ambiguity occurs through the use of different discursive strategies.

Firstly, it takes place through a distinction between Israeli citizens on the one hand, and Jews on the other such as in Olmert's speech closing with the following words: 'Finally, I want to thank the people of Israel and the citizens of Israel' (Prime Minister Olmert 2009b). In this example, the Prime Minister introduces an internal boundary in the Israeli citizenry. A clear distinction is made between a 'people of Israel' (another way to refer to the Jewish people) and the 'citizens of Israel'. This distinction is also articulated in the following excerpt:

On this day of unity and commemoration, we cherish the memory of the upstanding citizens of Israel, infants and the elderly, children and youth, men and women who were murdered with premeditated evil intent by contemptible and heartless enemies, simply because they were Israelis and Jews. (Prime Minister Netanyahu 2009b)

As previously, a distinction is made between the civic component of the nation, i.e., the Israelis or the citizens of Israel, and its ethnic component, i.e., the Jews, or the people of Israel. National minorities are part of the Israeli citizens but cannot be part of the other component of the nation, namely the Jewish people.

The ambiguity of the meaning conferred to the nation-state is secondly reinforced by the distinction of the ethnic and civic component of the state which overlaps the first distinction between a civic and ethnic people:

Israel is the homeland for the Jewish people, but it is also a democracy committed to respecting the rights of all its citizens, and all minorities, even in difficult times. (Foreign Minister Livni 2008)

Here again, as in the other speeches, the Jewish people is differentiated from the other citizens. But in addition to this, the narrative makes a clear distinction, or even opposition suggested by the 'but', between two elements: on the one hand, the 'Jewish homeland', which is the first element in the

sequencing of the narrative, and on the other hand, the inclusive democratic regime, which comes as the second component of the state.

In the Republic of Moldova, the two narratives put the emphasis on an inclusive citizenry which is however ambiguous as well. In the Moldovanist narrative, while the present is generally introduced as a chaos in which only the Communists can bring light and order, the emphasis is on the topic of civic unity constructed, in a Soviet-inspired way, as a Common House, 'an area of true ethnic peace and tolerance' (President Voronin 2009a), in which all the citizens of the Republic of Moldova are welcome:

Today, we, the Moldovans, the Ukrainians, the Russians, the Gagauz, the Bulgarians, the Jews, we are celebrating a new important moment in the process of acquiring our civic unity under the ancestral name of Moldova. (President Voronin 2004a)

The Republic of Moldova is presented as an island of tolerance, which has been threatened by ethnic wars. The people is 'multinational' and this is what seems to make Moldova stronger (President Voronin 2008). Indeed, as the country lacks natural resources as well as access to the sea and is in a poor economic state, unity is emphasized as the only resource for the country (President Voronin 2006). The main discursive strategy is therefore of unification, of all citizens under a civic Moldovan banner.

In the Romanianist narrative, the present is all about 'citizens', which are called to build a 'European' and 'democratic' country. The topic of nation therefore is not as important as in the Moldovanist narrative and is tackled again mainly through the topic of the citizenry. Indeed, in 2009 when the parties holding this narrative got into power after what has been sometimes described as a 'revolution', the insistence was on the end of what is called a 'communist dictatorship' and on the need to resist against the pressures of the Communists to get back to power:

Citizens of the Republic of Moldova have yet not been able to feel independence, which ultimately leads to well-being and a decent life. The difficult days that we live are the consequences of the fact that we were not free, we have been subjected to the yoke, we were put in the position to live not according to our laws but under the laws of others, Soviet, totalitarian-communist. (Interim President Ghimpu 2010)

The present as articulated in both narratives seems therefore inclusive as all the citizens, regardless of their ethnic background, are addressed. Nevertheless, like in the Israeli case, ambiguities can be discerned with respect to the proper meaning conferred to the signifiers 'people' and 'citizens'.

In the Moldovanist narrative, even though the contemporary Republic of Moldova is celebrated as a 'Common House', in reality, the 'titular' Moldovans are the only ones who made everything for national minorities. Those are tolerated thanks to the good will of ethnic Moldovans:

We adopted a law on dual citizenship; we adopted the Concept of National Policy which established the cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity of Moldova, as our main legacy. (...) We must do everything so that the need to

know thoroughly the Moldovan, Russian, Ukrainian, Gagauz, Bulgarian and other languages is associated with the liberation of personality, with a bigger competitiveness, but without repression or a new denationalization. (President Voronin 2004b)

This strategy of unification of the Moldovan civic people around the Moldovan ethnic people is recurrent. A first tension can therefore be observed with regards to the inclusive feature of the narrative.

In the second Romanianist narrative, despite the constant use of the word 'citizens', one can easily observe that the nation is ethnically Romanian and the interim president of the Republic of Moldova does not hesitate to give a speech on Romania's national day which includes 'all Romanian citizens, regardless of the place where they are' (Interim President Ghimpu 2009a). In the narrative, the paradox that remains is the maintenance of Moldova as an independent state as, if all the Moldovans are actually 'Romanian', Moldova should consequently unite with Romania:

Dear colleagues, no one can doubt that in [the Declaration of Independence] it is expected that the language that we speak is Romanian. It is time to end for once and forever discussions about our identity, what language we speak, and to provide citizens with a decent life, reviving the economy. (Interim President Ghimpu 2009a)

It is thus clear that 'our' identity is Romanian, and that all 'citizens' of the Republic speak Romanian. Especially striking in the discourse, is the non-existence of national minorities and the very absence of the mention of ethnic differences in the population. The acting president seems to only talk to 'Romanians', refers only to 'citizens' but he never addresses the issue of minorities. When Ghimpu delivers his speech at the Romanian National Day, he seems to be obliged to clarify that the 'majority' has nothing against 'minorities':

Today, on this festive day, we send our special thoughts to all who speak, feel and think in Romanian. Thinking and speaking Romanian does not mean being against those who think and speak Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Armenian, etc. (Interim President Ghimpu 2009a)

This is the only time in a year that the interim president is considering national minorities in his discourse.

3.3 The Past and Future: From Ambiguity to Discursive Exclusion

While the present constructs an ambiguous citizenry and categories of 'us' and 'them' the analysis of the past and future presented in the next section permits to disambiguate these categories. Scrutinizing the articulation of the future and past 'us' with the present 'citizenry' or 'people' reveals in fact that the minorities are either implicitly neglected or explicitly kept out of 'our' nation-state.

In the Israeli case, the future is articulated around the topics of hope and of the Jewish people. The topics of democracy and citizenry have for their part disappeared from the sequence. When articulated in the future, the nation-state is hence clearly linked to an *ethnos*:

Since its inception Israel has had to grapple with complex issues and has always prevailed. Also today Israel will prevail. Its human resources abound and its creativity flourishes. Our vision of a bright and hopeful tomorrow for the Jewish people has not faltered. (President Peres 2009)

In this excerpt, not only is Israel identified with the Jewish people, but the use of 'our' makes explicit that the narrator, namely the President of Israel, is part of this people. While in the present, the State of Israel was constructed as the state of a multinational 'us' – although ambiguous – opposed to the enemy others, in the future, the strategies of unification and exclusion create an external other that is this time opposed to a Jewish 'us':

I wholeheartedly believe that the State of Israel must continue striving for peace with its neighbors. Today I can say what I have not expressed enough over the past 30 years: there can be no Jewish state without a solid and secure Jewish majority for generations, and there is no secure or expected Jewish majority in Greater Israel, populated by millions of Palestinians who yearn for their own country, or who would be willing to accept one state for all its residents, Jews and Palestinians. (Prime Minister Olmert 2009a)

This differentiation of the Jewish 'us' and the Palestinian 'they' is reinforced by the articulations of topics and discursive strategies at play in the past where the Israeli state is connected directly through the topics of history to the Jewish people, to which the narrator belongs:

Israelis celebrate each and every year of independence because each and every year is a gift of our own making. Each year we celebrate the return to our ancient homeland after 2000 years of exile. (Foreign Minister Livni 2008)

The topic of past sufferings of the Jews and the explicit link between this topic and the topic of state disentangle the ambiguity of the 'us' that was observed in the present. When connected to the past, the 'us' and its state is clear-cut:

It is a mark of disgrace for humanity that several decades after the Holocaust the world's response to the calls by Iran's leader to destroy the State of Israel is weak, there is no firm condemnation and decisive measures – almost as if dismissed as routine. However, the Jewish people has learnt its lesson. We cannot afford to take lightly megalomaniac tyrants who threaten to annihilate us. Contrary to the terrible trauma we experienced during the last century when we stood helpless and stateless, today we are not defenseless. We have a state, and we know how to defend it. (Prime Minister Netanyahu 2009a)

The topic of history creates a very clear unification/differentiation effect. The narrator belongs to the Jewish people, which is also the one that actually owns the State of Israel. Hence, while in the present, the place of national minorities in the state and the citizenry was ambiguous, the narration of the future and the past not only differentiates the Jewish people from the rest of the Israeli population, but actually excludes the minorities from the story. Under those circumstances, the democratic inclusive pattern of the Israeli polity is only one temporary characteristic of a state (the present situation), and the latter is first and foremost meant to be the state of the Jews.

The same process applies to narratives in Moldova, which shows the repetitive nature of such discursive strategies. Indeed, the future in the Romanianist narrative is articulated around the topic of citizenry, democracy and Europe:

I assure you, on behalf of the [government], that we will not cultivate differences and that we will work for the good of all our citizens and our prosperous state, the Republic of Moldova. (Interim President Ghimpu 2009b)

However, as in the Israeli narrative, the sequence of the past unambiguously connects the topic of history to one unique people: the Romanian people. For example, the interim president does not hesitate to construct an only negative Soviet Union and an only positive Greater Romania:

History has shown that the events of 1 December 1918 opened a period of modernization of Romania, on the road to consolidating the rule of law, based on democratic values, in accordance with European standards and principles, with a functioning market economy. (Interim President Ghimpu 2009a)

The Soviet and Greater Romanian periods are perceived differently by the majority and the minorities: indeed, as Moldova has been under Romanian rule between the two World Wars, under Soviet rule after the Second World War, and under Romanian and then Soviet rule during this last war, 'liberations' and 'occupations' have impacted differently on the population and more specifically on those who served in either army, in a context of destruction and of social, economic, and health disasters (Negura 2009: 75). In this excerpt, the main strategy consists therefore in unifying the majority by imposing an unbalanced vision of history. Soviet rule is denounced as an occupation and all those who perceive it positively are excluded.

The Moldovanist narrative presents a much more complex story. Whereas the present was constantly constructed as chaos, the future is brighter thanks to the Party of the Communists and President Voronin. To reach this *locus amoenus*, the president advocates again the unification of all citizens (President Voronin 2005) in a country which will become 'the place where nations, cultures and civilizations meet (...) the most comfortable place in Europe' (President Voronin 2006). The future thus seems perfectly inclusive at first.

However, the construction of the past shows that the present and future state is actually rather an ethnic *Moldova* than the *Republic of Moldova*. In the first narrative, national history, as constructed in the president's discourse, can be summarized as follows: the Moldovan state reached its height during the Middle-Ages, mainly during the reign of Stephen the Great, who helped preserve the grandeur of a citadel of orthodoxy. Already under attack at that time, the citadel fell under the Ottoman yoke and then Russian rule. It was reborn from its ashes when, after the October Revolution, independence was proclaimed. Despite centuries of foreign rule, Moldovans have preserved their dignity as a people. The great heroes struggled and pursued the same goal of independence as current authorities:

(...) today we need to remember the distant and legendary origins of Moldovan statehood, we must honor the memory of the great precursors: Bogdan the First, Stephen the Great, and Dimitrie Cantemir . As a result of their efforts

and commitment, the name 'Moldova' and the Moldovan state overcame the resistance of centuries, returning to us as our legacy, citizens of a sovereign and independent state, living in the era of computers and information technologies. (President Voronin 2001)

Looking at this excerpt, one could claim that the construction of the past is 'inclusive'. Indeed, the periods of Moldova's inclusion in Greater Romania between the two World Wars or the Soviet Union after the Second World War are never mentioned, as they could raise different feelings depending on majority or minorities' experience of the two periods. Nevertheless, a closer look to discourses reveals that the end of the Soviet Union is described as an 'earthquake that destroyed a unique cultural and economic space which spawned a wave of local ethnic conflicts and social confrontations' (President Voronin 2001). Even if the assertion about the Soviet period does not confer any particular legitimacy to it, it illustrates implicitly that the 'earthquake' rattled a place where hope and stability were parts of everyday life. At the same time there is no mention, either positive or negative, of the inclusion of Moldova in Greater Romania between the First and the Second World Wars, which reinforces the positive image of the Soviet period. Hence, in this 'civic' inclusive narrative, an exclusive tendency is never far away, as confirms the following example where the president very clearly establishes the successors of the historical nation:

We must be proud to belong to a people that has successfully demonstrated its ability to be the continuation of this unique state tradition whose foundations were laid 650 years ago. (President Voronin 2009b)

If 'we' are articulated as the continuation of a 'tradition' which emerged '650 years ago', 'we' are the successors of 1359, Moldova's founding year, in which, according to documents highlighted in Moldovan historiography, the existence of a Moldovan state is first attested. 'We' are thus ethnically 'Moldovan', the Moldovan state of 1359 being understood by Moldovanist historians as a 'supreme' form of 'political, military, and administrative' organization. According to them, the Moldovan state differs from Romania and consists of a proper ethnic community (Stepaniuc 2005: 64-65).

By referring to major figures and by emphasizing their ethnic Moldovan identity, Voronin creates inconsistency with respect to his inclusive nation. Indeed, the president gives Moldova a proper history but if the past is only 'Moldovan', then minorities can hardly find a place in the present and the future and a role to play in the country. At the same time, if the president puts forward an 'orthodox' Moldovan nation, it can be as difficult to consider that Jews belong to the national body. The president takes care to avoid mentioning episodes that would cause problems of interpretation, such as the inclusion of Moldova in Greater Romania. However, by implicitly giving a positive assessment of the Soviet period, the president indirectly creates an 'other': the Romanians.

4. Conclusion

The paper demonstrates through an analysis of the narrative chronological sequencing – present, future and past – that, in Israel and the Republic of Moldova, inclusive discursive strategies are at play in the present while the future and past sequences of the narratives entail clear-cut exclusionist discursive practices which leave minorities out of the nation-state. This holds true even though both nation-states are supposedly based on a different conception of the ‘nation’: Israel as an ethnic Jewish democracy and the Republic of Moldova as a multiethnic civic nation-state.

This conclusion has been reached thanks to an innovative methodology based on narrative analysis and critical discourse analysis. This methodological approach permits to show how the nation-state is constructed, not only in the present but on a continuous axis with a past and a future. This methodology indeed allows unpacking the construction of signifiers such as people, citizens and nation. In the three narratives identified in our research, these notions appear and their meaning varies depending on their location in the chronological sequencing. In the present, the nation and nation-state are inclusive with however an ambiguity as to who the people is. The boundaries of the regime are nevertheless more flexible and the minorities are included in the nation-state, even if it is along with another people that constitutes the majority. When turning to the future, and to the past, the signifiers ‘people’ or ‘citizens’ are conferred another meaning and become anchored in a very specific history and culture always linked to an *ethnos*.

The location of the topics in the timeline thus affects the meaning of the signifier, and consequently the construction of the ‘us’ versus ‘them’. For instance, in the Israeli case, while in the present, the ‘us’ is constructed as in opposition to a ‘them’, which is external, in the future and the past, the ‘us’ is clearly articulated in relation to a single *ethnos*, the Jewish people. In these conditions, the minorities disappear from the narrative of the nation-state, and left out of its boundaries. The same applies to the Moldovan case. The way the past is constructed in both narratives shows that even though the nation, the ‘us’, is not built against national minorities and is rather inclusive, minorities are not the owner of the territory, as they did not participate to the great moments of the country’s history and they seem to be only tolerated in the nation-state.

The inclusive, or *more* inclusive, character of the present in comparison to the past in the three cases can be explained by two different legitimization strategies targeted at different audiences. The past can be seen as the sequence legitimizing the position of the group that constructs its narrative while in the present, the story aims at unifying the polity in order to legitimize democratically the position of the elite either vis-à-vis the minorities or toward the international community. This seems particularly obvious in the Moldovan case where President Voronin uses a strategy of differentiation of Moldovans from Romanians, aiming at legitimizing the very existence of Moldova as a separate and independent state. At the same time, the president legitimizes his party’s power and his own as head of this independent state. In the Israeli case too, the inclusive dimension of the present sequence allows reinforcing the identity of Israel as ‘the only democratic state’ in the region,

which constitutes an essential discursive strategy employed to legitimize itself both toward the international community and toward its minorities. The differentiation strategies deployed in the sequence of the past and future, are for their part used to give legitimacy to the existence of the state as Jewish and to its continued nationalizing practices.

Our contribution ultimately demonstrates through the empirical analysis of two different nationalizing states, that the civic inclusive vs. ethnic exclusive nation-state dichotomy appears to fall when we scrutinize the narratives produced by the elites of these states. The analysis reveals the same discursive mechanisms in the 'civic' inclusive nationalizing state of Moldova and in the 'ethnic' exclusive Israeli nationalizing state: at one sequence of the narrative at least, a narrator identifies itself with an 'us' which is different from a 'them' – the national minorities - absent or excluded from the narrative. In the line of Wodak *et al.* (2009), the paper shows therefore empirically what Brown (1999), Yack (1996) or Wollman (1998), among others, have demonstrated theoretically.

Notes

- ¹ While 'nationalizing' can be seen as a simplistic and western-centred concept (Kuzio), the term has been here maintained as it shows that constructing a nation is a dynamic and constantly evolving process.
- ² These speeches were delivered in Romanian and/or Russian. They are available in Romanian and Russian on the website of the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova (www.presedinte.md). The translations are all literal translations by the author.
- ³ See on this topic Rouhana (1997), Yiftachel (2006), Ghanem (2011).
- ⁴ 'Moldovanism' has been created in 1924 when Besarabia was under Romanian rule and Soviet authorities made use of a logic of national liberation to destabilize 'bourgeois states' and created the Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic inside the territory of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Ukraine. 'Moldovanism' appeared at this moment understood first as a linguistic doctrine made to differentiate Romanians from Moldovans. This is the most common term used in the literature, and the term 'Romanianis' has been forged after 'Moldovanism' for expressing the opposite vision of Moldovan nationhood.

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