TURKEY'S SOFT POWER AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA AND SANDŽAK (2002 -2017)

JAHJA MUHASILOVIĆ

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Istanbul, 2020

Turkey's Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Sandžak (2002 -2017)

Union of Turkish World Municipalities (TDBB) Publications, No: 30

ISBN 978-605-2334-08-9

Book Design and Technical Preparation
Murat Arslan

Printing
Imak Ofset
Tel: +90 212 656 49 97

Istanbul, 2020

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- Book – "Bosna Hersek Tarih Ders Kitaplarında Osmanlılar ve Türkler", ed. Ahmet Şimşek in Dünyada Türk İmajı, Istanbul, Pegem Akademi-İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, (2018)
- Book – "Balkan ve Karadeniz Ülkelerinde Güncel Tarih Ders Kitaplarında Osmanlı-Türk İmajı", Vol. 1. İstanbul, Balkar, 2020
- Article – "Turkish Local Communities and City Diplomacy with Bosnia-Herzegovina", Journal of Balkans and Black Sea Studies, Vol. 4. (Istanbul, YTÜ, 2020) – Waiting to be published in the Vol. 4 in June 2020. Peer-reviewed, published work in reverse chronological order
- Article - "Turkey's Faith Based Diplomacy in the Western Balkans", Rising Powers Quarterly, Vol. 3, Issue 3 (2018): 63-85
- Article – "Image of the Ottomans in Bosnian Textbooks Published After 2007", Epiphany/Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, Volume 7, Number 2, 2014. P-ISSN 2303-6850
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Abstract

Turkey's Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Sandžak (2002-2017)

As an emerging regional power, Turkey's soft power and public diplomacy are attracting the attention of researchers in recent years. One of the principal elements of Turkish soft power and public diplomacy are religious diplomacy run by Diyanet, today one of the most influential religious institutions in the Islamic World, student exchange diplomacy run by Turkiye Burslari, and very vibrant city diplomacy run by the different municipalities and municipality unions, among which the most prominent is the Union of Turkish World Municipalities-TDBB.

For centuries Balkan peninsula was an area of interest for the Ottoman Empire and later for Turkey. The region serves Turkey as the only gateway to Europe. After a break during the Cold War, Turkey's active engagement in the Balkans has been restored. Today it is possible to say that Turkey is back in the region. It is the soft power that has been the main tool of Ankara's influence and public diplomacy lies at the core of that soft power. Public diplomacy institutions are serving as the visible face of Turkey's policies, ambitions, goals, and vision in the region. For that reason, analysis of Turkish public diplomacy provides a clear insight into what Turkey's aims and potentials in the Balkans are.

Özet

Türkiye'nin Bosna Hersek ve Sancak Bölgesinde Yumuşak Gücü ve Kamu Diplomasisi (2002-2017)

Gelişen bir bölgesel güç olarak, Türkiye'nin yumuşak gücü ve kamu diplomasisi son dönemlerde araştırmacıların ilgisini çekmektedir. Türkiye'nin yumuşak gücünün ve kamu diplomasisinin temel unsurlarından biri bugün İslam Dünyasında en etkili dini kurumlardan biri olan Diyanet tarafından yürütülen 'dini diplomasidir'. Türkiye Bursları tarafından yürütülen 'öğrenci değişim diplomasisi', farklı belediyeler ve Türk Dünyası Belediyeler Birliği-TDBB gibi belediye birlikleri tarafından yürütülen dinamik 'yerel diplomasi' de Türk kamu diplomasisinin önemli unsurlarını oluşturmaktadır.

Balkan yarımadası yüzyıllar boyunca Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve sonrasında Türkiye için bir ilgi alanı olmuştur. Bölge, Türkiye'nin Avrupa'ya tek giriş kapısı durumundadır. Soğuk Savaş sırasında yaşanan uzunca bir aradan sonra Türkiye'nin bölgeye yeniden döndüğünü söylemek mümkündür. Ankara'nın bölgedeki etkisinin ana aracı olan yumuşak güçtür ve kamu diplomasisi bu yumuşak gücün tam merkezinde yer almaktadır. Kamu diplomasisi kurumları, Türkiye'nin bölgedeki politikalarının, isteklerinin, hedeflerinin ve vizyonunun görünür yüzü durumundadır. Bu nedenle, Türk kamu diplomasisinin incelenmesi, Türkiye'nin Balkanlar'daki amaç ve potansiyellerine açıklık kazandıracaktır.

To my beloved family

Table of Contents

List of Tables 12
List of Figures 13
List of Graphics 14
Glossary of Non-English Terms 15
Abbreviations and Acronyms 16
Acknowledgments 19
1. INTRODUCTION 21
2. SOFT POWER AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY 25
2.1. Soft Power 25
2.2. Public Diplomacy 34
2.3. Cultural Diplomacy 45
2.4. Student Exchange Diplomacy 47
2.5. City Diplomacy (Local Diplomacy) 48
3. TURKISH SOFT POWER AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF TURKEY'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY 49
3.1. TIKA in the 1990s 51
3.2. Diyanet in the 1990s 53
3.3. Student Exchange Diplomacy: Scholarship Programs 53
3.4. Turkish Soft Power in the Western Balkans During the 1990s 55
3.5. Turkish Soft Power in the Western Balkans During the 2000s 59
3.6. The Emergence of TIKA in the Balkans (the 2000s) 70
3.7. Cultural Diplomacy Through Language-Teaching 76
3.8. Turkish Cultural Diplomacy: Yunus Emre Institute in the Balkans 82
3.9. Other Examples of Cultural Diplomacy in the Balkans 93
4. TURKISH FAITH-BASED DIPLOMACY AND THE PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS (DIYANET İŞLERI BAŞKANLIĞI) 101
4.1. Turkish Faith-based Diplomacy 103
5. TURKISH INITIATIVE FOR THE UNIFICATION OF ISLAMIC COMMUNITIES IN SERBIA 125
5.1. Sandžak Region 126
5.2. Historical Development of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina 129

5.3. Historical Developments Leading to the Schism Between the Islamic Communities in Serbia 139
5.4. Rise of the SDA Sandžak and the Situation in the Region in the Early 1990s ... 141
5.5. Rise of Sulejman Ugljanin in Sandžak 143
5.6. Rise of Mufti Muamer Zukorlić 147
5.7. Jusufspahić Family and the Islamic Community of Serbia 151
5.8. The Schism in the Mešihat in 2007 153
5.9. The Emergence of Turkey as a Mediator in the Balkans 162
5.10. Turkish Initiative for the Unification of the Islamic Communities 166
5.11. Concluding Remarks 212
6. TURKEY'S STUDENT EXCHANGE DIPLOMACY: YTB 213
6.1. Where Does the YTB Stand in Turkish Politics and Its Internal Organization?.. 215
6.2. Ministry of National Education (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı) and the International Students in Turkey 218
6.3. Student Exchange Diplomacy of the Türkiye Bursları 220
6.4. Turkey's Standing in the World in Terms of Educating International Students .. 231
6.5. Economic Obstacles in Conducting Student Exchange Diplomacy 237
6.6. Türkiye Bursları's Struggle in Building Effective Network Communication 239
6.7. YTB's Other Activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Balkans 242
6.8. Comparison of Türkiye Bursları to Other Scholarship Programs in BiH 246
6.9. Concluding Remarks 249
7. TURKEY'S CITY DIPLOMACY IN THE BALKANS: THE CASE OF THE UNION OF TURKISH WORLD MUNICIPALITIES (TDBB) 251
7.2. City diplomacy 254
7.3. Sister Cities Concept 255
7.4. Municipality Unions and Coordination Between the Local Governments 261
7.5. Turkish Domestic Municipality Unions 263
7.6. International Municipality Unions - the Case of TDBB 265
7.7. Turkey's Relations with BiH at the Municipal Level 277
7.8. City Diplomacy Activities of Other States in Bosnia and Herzegovina 281
7.9. Concluding Remarks 282
8. CONCLUSION 287
APPENDIX 293
BIBLIOGRAPHY 307

List of Tables

Table 3.1 Turkey-Balkans Trade by Year 68
Table 3.2 Largest investors in BiH (May, 1994-December, 2016) 69
Table 3.3 TIKA's international assistance by regions (%) 73
Table 3.4 Share of Western Balkans countries in TIKA's annual budget 74
Table 3.5 Cultural centers of the Yunus Emre Institute according to the region as of 2017 84
Table 3.6 Number of students attending the foreign languages in BiH in 2017-18. 91
Table 4.1 Meetings of the Eurasian Islamic Council 111
Table 4.2 List of Turkish sister cities of Bosnian towns within Diyanet's 'Sister Cities Project' 113
Table 6.1 The number of international students in Turkey before the shift to Türkiye Bursları 219
Table 6.2 Number of African students that came to Turkey as scholarship recipients by year 225
Table 6.3 The position of the best ranked Turkish university according to different ranking websites 236
Table 6.4 Amount of scholarships for higher education through years (in YTL) 238
Table 6.5 Number of students from BiH studying abroad by destination and year ... 249
Table 7.1 Local governments formed by elections 253
Table 7.2 Elected local governments after being raised to the status of Metropolitan Municipality 253
Table 7.3 Local government offices formed by the appointment from the central state authority 253
Table 7.4 Sister city relations among the European countries 257
Table 7.5 Number of sister cities of Turkish Municipalities through years 260
Table 7.6 Regional distribution of Turkey's sister cities abroad 261
Table 7.7 Number of sister cities in the Balkans region (without Greece) 261
Table 7.8 TDBB's activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (until early 2019) 272

List of Figures

Figure A1 Poster of the commemoration of the 15th of July, 2016 failed coup attempt 293
A2 Kid's Festival organized by Yunus Emre Institute 294
Figure B1 Diyanet's Organizational Scheme 295
B2 9th Eurasian Islamic Council 296
Figure C1 Geographical position of the Sandžak region in the Western Balkans 297
C2 Handshake of reconciliation between Ugljanin and Ljajić in Novi Pazar.. 298
C3 Inscription on Podgorica's Mehmet Fatih madrassah during the 1st anniversary of the 15th of July failed coup attempt 299
Figure D1 Letter of gratitude by the Turkish Embassy in Serbia to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia 301
D2 Letter of condemnation from the Mešihat of Islamic Community in Serbia to Ministry of Faiths of the Republic of Serbia 302
D3 Letter of complaint sent by the Islamic Community of Serbia to Diyanet's Eurasian Islamic Council 304
D4 Letter of the Islamic Community of Serbia to the Turkish embassy in Serbia where IC of Serbia declares its support to the Diyanet as the leading religious authority of Balkan and European Muslims 305
D5 Letter of support by the Islamic Commuinty of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Mešihat of Islamic Community in Serbia, where Reisu-l-Ulema of BiH calls Serbian institutions to recognize the Mešihat as a such 306

List of Graphics

Graphic 5.1 Hierarchical Organization of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina 139
Graphic 6.1 YTB's Organizational Scheme 217
Graphic 6.2 Number of International Students that Came to Turkey Through Türkiye Bursları Scholarship Program (2010-2013) 225
Graphic 7.1 Regional Distribution of Turkey's Sister Cities Abroad 260
Graphic 7.2 Organizational structure of the TBB 264
Graphic 7.3 Organizational Structure of the TDBB 266

Glossary of Non-English Terms

Belediye	Municipality
Diyanet	Religious
Džemat	Jamaat
Evkaf	Islamic Foundations
İl	Province
İlçe	County
Imam	Islamic religious leader
Köy	Village
Mahalle	District
Medresa	Madrasah
Medžlis	Majlis
Menşura	Certification
Mešihat	Muftiate
Muftijstvo	Muftiate
Muftiluk	Muftiate
Murasela	Permission
Musliman	Muslim
Paradžemati	Parallel Jamaats
Reisu-l-ulema	Grand Mufti
Rijaset	Chairmanship
Sancak	Flag
Şer'iye	Sharia
Ulema	Islamic scholars
Vali	Governor
Vilayet	Province
Waqf	Islamic Foundation

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AA	Anadolu Agency
AFAD	Disaster and Emergency Management Authority
AKP	Justice and Development Party
BALMED	Balkans Civilization Center
BaltMet	Baltic Metropoles Network
BBC	British Radio Television
BBG	Broadcasting Board of Governors
BDZ Sandžak	Bosniak Democratic Union of Sandžak
BİGMEV	Center for Development of Relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BİLGESAM	Wise Men Center for Strategic Studies
BKZ	Bosniak Cultural Community
BNVS	Bosniak National Council of Sandžak
BÖP	Great Student Project
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CHP	Republican People's Party
CNN	Cable News Network
CTA	City Twins Association
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service
DW	Deutsche Welle
EU	European Union
FETÖ	Fethullahist Terror Organization
GIZ	German Corporation for International Cooperation GmbH
GPDNet	Global Public Diplomacy Network
HDZ BiH	Croatian Democratic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina
IAO	Active Islamic Youth
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IHH	IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation
IRCICA	Research Center For Islamic History, Art and Culture
IULA	International Union of Local Authorities
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JNA	Yugoslav People's Army
LAMER	Latin America Studies and Research and Application Center
METREX	Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas
MNVS	Muslim National Council of Sandžak
NALAS	Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	The Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development
OHR	Office of High Representative

OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PIC	Peace Implementation Council
PKK	Kurdistan Worker's Party
RT	Russia Today
RWI	Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights
SAM	Center for Strategic Research
SDA	Sandžak Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak
SDA	Party of Democratic Action
SDA	Party of Democratic Action
SDP	Sandžak Democratic Party
SDS BiH	Serbian Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina
SETA	Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research
SFRY	Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia
SOC	Serbian Orthodox Church
SPP	Party of Justice and Recounciliation
TABİP	Turkey Scientific and Academic Cooperation Project
TBB	Union of Turkish Municipalities
TDBB	Union of Turkish World Municipalities
TDV	Turkey Diyanet Foundation
TIKA	Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency
TÖMER	Turkish and Foreign Languages Research and Application Center
TRT	Turkish Radio Television
TÜBİTAK	Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey
TÜGVA	Turkey Youth Foundation
TÜMED	Turkey Alumni Association
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UCLG-MEWA	United Cities and Local Governments Middle East and West Asia Section
UIM	Union Internationale de Maines
UNAOC	United Nations Alliance of Civilizations
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USIA	United States Information Agency
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UTO	United Towns Organization
VOA	Voice of America
YEI	Yunus Emre Institute
YÖK	Board for Higher Education
YTB	Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities
YTL	New Turkish Lira

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my beloved family who supported me during the difficult period while writing my Ph.D. dissertation and for their support and unconditional love while preparing the thesis to be published as a book. Their patience and moral support were certainly crucial in completing this work.

Also, I would like to thank my mentor Prof. Dr. Aydın Babuna, on whose proposal I decided on such a demanding, but very interesting and contemporary subject. His professionalism and patience during the writing of the thesis were certainly of great help. His expertise regarding the subject certainly made me look at all aspects of the topic and taught me a lot about academic writing. His advice helped me to learn much about international relations.

Special thanks to Süha Umar for participating in an interview and providing me important material from his private archive that served as a first-hand source enlightening the position of the Turkish Embassy in Belgrade during the crisis over Islamic Communities in Serbia. Also, thanks to Muamer Zukorlić for his six hours long interview that has enlightened me on the details of the mediation process regarding the reconciliation process between the two Islamic Communities in Serbia. Special thanks also go to Davut Nuriler for his interview, as well as to Fahri Solak and Vedad Halilović whose interviews were crucial for understanding the work of the Union of Turkish World Municipalities-TDBB in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Last but not least, special thanks goes to the Union of Turkish World Municipalities-TDBB, which decided to publish my Ph.D. I owe a special thank to everyone that works in this institution, starting from the President of the TDBB Uğur İbrahim Altay, to every single member of the Executive Board that voted in favor of this work being published, to Secretary-General of the TDBB Fahri Solak, from whom I have learned a lot about the diplomacy, as well as to other members of the staff who every day work hard to make this institution successful as it is. Once myself a member of the TDBB will remember the dedication and professionalism of this institution, from which I have learned a lot, throughout my life.

Thank you all from the bottom of my heart!

1.
Introduction

Because of Turkey's geostrategic location and the declining conditions of its neighboring countries, this country seems to be destined to play once again an important role in the vast geographical areas stretching from the Middle East to the heart of Europe. Turkey's ascension to the position of a regional power has not passed unnoticed. Thus far the ideas regarding the ambitious foreign policy under the AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) government are divided. Although some who welcome more engagement from Ankara, the number of those that watch Turkey's rise with suspicion is no less. A delicate subject as such drew the attention of the academic circles as well. Except for a few serious works on Turkish foreign policy most of the studies are not going beyond short academic articles or journalistic reporting.

Under the AKP government, soft power and public diplomacy became one of the main sources of Turkey's international appeal. Since the mid-2000s, Turkey invested more energy in the so-called "power of attraction" or soft power in its foreign policy rather than on coercion. Also, due to its hard power limitations, the Turkish government heavily invested its foreign policy energy in building up the country's soft power reputation. Because of internal and international dynamics, this approach started changing by the mid-2010s. In the last few years, the Turkish government has started shifting the direction of foreign policy and relying more on the hard power narrative. Especially after the failed coup attempt in 2016, Ankara further distanced itself from the West and slightly moved towards Russia.

Balkans is a region that holds one of the most important places in Turkish foreign policy both at the present and in the past. Once this region was at the very center of the Ottoman Empire's economic, demographic, cultural, and military life. Although it was founded in Anatolia the majority of historians agree with the fact that the Ottoman Empire was the Balkan empire more than anything else. Through time Anatolia lost significance to the Balkans. The vast majority of the Ottoman elite class and leadership of the early Turkish Republic hailed from the Balkans. After losing the region of this importance during the two Balkans Wars, almost the entire twentieth century represented a rapture regarding Turkey's active engagement in the region. With the change of global balance of power caused by the end of the Cold War and due to conflicts in former Yugoslavia, Turkey got the chance to actively participate in shaping the political landscape of the region once again. During the 1990s Turkish engagement was mainly through hard power operations. As a member of the NATO alliance, Turkey took an active role in the US-led International Coalition that brought wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo to an end. With the changing circumstances during the 2000s, Turkey's foreign policy approach changed as well. In that decade Ankara put more emphasis on soft power. More weight was given to public diplomacy. The public diplomacy institutions like Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), Yunus Emre Institute, Presidency for Turks

Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet), and others quickly became recognizable institutions throughout the region. On the other hand, Turkish series produced by the private film sector soon won the hearts of millions across the Balkans. Turkish soft power was blossoming during the 2000s. This was a decade when Turkey generally was seen as an important 'cultural power' in the region. Ankara was especially well accepted among the Muslim population in the region. On the other hand, Turkish diplomacy, although to a more limited extent, has proven that it can work with the non-Muslims as well. Thanks to a positive image created by the dynamic public diplomacy, Ankara was accepted as a relevant diplomatic power in the region. For that reason, as it will be seen in Chapter 5, countries like BiH, Serbia, and Croatia even allowed Turkey to undertake the role of a mediator in the regional disputes.

This success didn't last for long. Internal problems, like the failed coup attempt in 2016 and the revival of the conflicts with the PKK, as well as problems over the Syrian conflicts, and the tensions in relations with the West, significantly altered the attitude of Ankara's foreign policy. Balkans is among the regions where the change in foreign policy narrative was felt. While during the 2000s Turkish diplomacy was moving inside the EU and NATO frame since the mid-2010s Ankara started investing more energy in conducting independent foreign policy. Today, Turkish foreign policy appears to act more unilaterally compared to the 1990s and 2000s. This change necessarily influenced the strategy of Turkish public diplomacy institutions. Distancing from the West influenced the regional preferences of those institutions as well. The majority of them started reorienting their resources from the Balkans and Europe to other developing regions.

Public diplomacy institutions play a very important role in carrying out AKP's foreign policy agenda. They are the official line in transmitting the government's goals and policies as well as the country's political values and culture to the foreign audience. In that sense, they play a vital role in Turkey's soft power. It is not a single institution that is in charge of running public diplomacy activities, but there are many of them. Until 2017 the majority of Turkish public diplomacy institutions were coordinated by the Prime Minister's Office. With the adoption of the more centralist constitution in 2017, as it is the case with many other state institutions, public diplomacy is now mainly coordinated by the Presidential Office. Almost all public diplomacy institutions continued with their work under the new constitution, but they are now directly responding to the Turkish President.

Every public diplomacy institution is in charge of a certain domain of public diplomacy. Diyanet is responsible for Turkey's faith-based diplomacy, Yunus Emre Institute for cultural diplomacy, Kızılay for humanitarian diplomacy, YTB for student exchange diplomacy, and the list goes on. Thanks to the large volume of strategic projects that those institutions have conducted in the region during the last fifteen years Turkey's reputation in the Balkans was significantly improved. In the last two decades, a large number of academic works about the largest public diplomacy insti-

tutions like TİKA or Yunus Emre Institute were produced. Yet there are not enough serious works dealing with institutions like YTB, Kızılay, Anadolu Agency, TRT, local governments (municipalities or municipality union), or the diplomatic activities of the non-governmental sector.

The three specific models of public diplomacy are catching attention in the region. Those are Turkish "faith-based diplomacy" coordinated by the Diyanet, "student exchange diplomacy" (student exchange program) run by the YTB's Türkiye Bursları[1] department, and Turkey's "city diplomacy", where besides traditionally active municipalities in the region like Bayrampaşa or Pendik, there are municipality unions like the Union of Turkish World Municipalities (TDBB) are gaining more and more visibility in the region.

Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Sandžak region are among the places where Turkish public diplomacy is the most active. Due to close historical and cultural relations both Turkish and Bosnian diplomats have repeatedly emphasized the importance of the bilateral relations between the two countries. These claims are supported by the strong presence of the Turkish state institution on the ground in this small Balkan country. Contrary to what is constantly reminded to the public in the two countries, there are certain dynamics in Turkish public diplomacy and foreign policy in general that are often overlooked. Not only BiH but the Balkans and Europe as a whole are losing their centrality in Turkish foreign policy to other regions like Middle-East and Africa as Ankara is diversifying its regional preferences.

One of the regions that have historical and cultural ties to Turkey is the Sandžak region. It represents a border region between Serbia and Montenegro predominantly populated by the Bosniak population. In terms of its historical ties and demographic structure, this region also has close ties to Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was an integral part of the Bosnian Vilayet[2] until the Berlin Congress of 1878. In geographic terms today this region is located between the five states; Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia, thus it holds an important place in Turkey's strategy in the Balkans. On the other hand, many people with origin from BiH and Sandžak are living in Turkey today, which altogether contributes to the importance of the region for Ankara. Under the AKP government, Turkey became more active in Sandžak with its soft power and public diplomacy. It was Diyanet's mediation process in reconciling the two Islamic Communities in Serbia when the region came to the focus of Ankara. The mediation process proved that Turkey with its public diplomacy was not sufficiently prepared to undertake the task of an unbiased broker in the region, as it also had its ambitions that didn't overlap with the regional dynamics. As it is seen in Chapter 5 this case study provides what was necessary for Turkey to overcome if it was going to play a significant role in the region that would not be limited only to the promotion of Turkish culture. Until today "Islamic schism in Serbia" has remained a sensitive issue and still has the potential to create tensions in

1 Turkey Scholarships

2 Ottoman administrative unit in BiH

relations between Ankara, Belgrade, and Sarajevo.

Chapter 6 is dealing with Turkey's student exchange diplomacy, another public diplomacy area. Like many countries, Turkey recognized the importance of educating foreign students in terms of improving the country's soft power standing. Some great educators of foreign students like the United States and the United Kingdom have more than a century of experience in student exchange diplomacy. In that sense, Turkey can be considered a latecomer. The first official student exchange program was started under the Özal government in the early 1990s when Turkey pledged itself under the "Great Student Project" (GOP) to provide education for the students from the former Soviet republics in Central Asian. The GOP didn't achieve expected success. Under the AKP government, Turkey modernized its student exchange program. This task was given to the YTB. Türkiye Bursları (Turkey Scholarships), was launched in 2012 by the YTB. Türkiye Bursları is in charge of running Turkey's student exchange program. After the ambitious start, the program soon started facing similar difficulties like its predecessor. As Chapter 6 shows, both YTB and Türkiye Bursları started reorienting their focus from the regions like Balkans and Central Asia to Africa and the Middle East which altogether proves that Turkey's student exchange diplomacy lacks a consistent strategy like its more experienced counterparts like Fullbright, DAAD, and others have.

As it is seen in Chapter 7, another area where Turkey is showing significant results is the local (city) diplomacy. Under the AKP government, Turkish local governments are working hard in their city diplomacy with their foreign counterparts. This is especially true for those municipalities run by the AKP. From the public relations point of view, many successful projects were conducted in the last fifteen years. Some municipalities like Istanbul's Bayrampaşa Municipality made a positive contribution to Turkey's soft power in the Balkans. There are also dozens of municipality union in Turkey that coordinate the activities of the local governments. Some of them have national, some regional, and some local character. As its name suggests, TDBB as a union is in charge of coordinating the relations of its member municipalities with their counterparts in the "Turkish World." The majority of the Union's members are foreign municipalities. As of 2019 there are almost thirty Bosnian municipalities that are members of the TDBB. The Union became widely recognized in BiH after a Serb-majority municipality of Doboj became its member. After becoming a TDBB member Mayor of Doboj was seen as a traitor by the Bosnian Serb leadership, which strongly opposes Turkish influence in BiH. Surprisingly, tensions between the Mayor of Doboj and the political leadership of the Bosnian Serbs over Doboj's membership in a "Turkish municipality union" was responsible for the nation-wide promotion of the TDBB in BiH. Bosnian Serb political leadership unintentionally launched the TDBB into an orbit of important Turkish public diplomacy institutions in this country. The Union has conducted more than forty projects of different types in BiH afterward.

2.
Soft Power and Public Diplomacy

2.1. Soft Power

What represents the power of a country in international relations is a long-lasting debate among the political theorists. According to the definition of power that Samuel Huntington provided, power is the ability of one person or group to change the behavior of another group or person. Behavior may be changed through inducement, coercion, or exhortation, which require the power-wielder to have economic, military, institutional, demographic, political, technological, social, and other resources.

The power of a state or group is hence normally estimated by measuring the resources it has at its disposal against those of other states or groups it is trying to influence.[3]

In his definition Huntington is speaking about a specific type of power, and that is hard power. Hard power is the capacity of a country to "make" other nations to follow its steps by military or economic coercion. Economic and military strength represents the backbone of hard power. All the power "resources" that Huntington is mentioning derive either from economic or military strength or the combination of the two. For centuries economic and military power was enough for a country to be described as powerful. But, today this understanding of state power is accepted as an oversimplified view. With globalization, different types of power have emerged. Some recognized that countries could possess another type of power which also bears the potential to attract other nations to follow their steps in international politics without previously applying to the methods of coercion. This type of power is called "power of attraction," or "soft power." With the introduction of the soft power concept during the early 1990s, the power states possess are being divided into two main types, hard power, and soft power.

After Joseph Nye introduced the term "soft power" in his book *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*[4], the term rapidly settled in almost all languages of the world to describe a specific type of state power. Nye published another book, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, in which he gave a more detailed description of what soft power is. Especially after the second book, the term started being used more regularly to specify a unique type of state power. Contrary to hard power, which reflects a country's military and economic might Nye's concept of soft power represents other aspects of the state power that includes soft means in getting

3 Samuel P. Huntigton, *The Clash of Civilizations: Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone, 1996): 83, 84.

4 Joseph Nye, Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power (New York: Basic Books, 1990)

the outcomes in foreign policy rather than relying on "sticks and carrots." One of the fundamental elements of soft power is a "power of attraction", which according to Nye causes other states to "want what you want."[5] As Nye puts it,

> When you can get others to admire your ideals and to want what you want, you do not have to spend as much on sticks and carrots to move them in your direction.[6]

Nye believes that countries can obtain the same outcomes in international relations without necessarily using its military and economic force, but through the power of attraction in the eyes of foreign government or public.

> A country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries-admiring its values, emulating its examples, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness-want to follow it.
>
> In this sense, it is also important to set an agenda and attract others in world politics, and not only to force them to change by threatening military force or economic sanctions.[7]

Soft power should not be confused with influence.[8] Nye also makes a clear distinction between soft power and mere influence, as the latter can be achieved by using hard power, while soft power incorporates the power of attraction and without using any pressure make other actors wish for the same outcomes in international relations.

> Soft power is not merely the same as influence. After all, influence can also rest on the hard power of threats or payments. ... It is also the ability to attract, and attraction often leads to acquiescence. Simply put, in behavioral terms soft power is attractive power. "[9]

One of the most harmful things for soft power is the assertive foreign policy. If a country has a negative image internationally then there is no much space left for the public diplomacy institutions to counter this image. As Simon Anholt, founder the of National Brand Index and Good Country Index says,

> If the country suffers from a poor or weak reputation, especially in the area relating to the policy, then almost no amount of promotional skill or expenditure can cause that policy to be received with enthusiasm, and it will either be ignored or taken as further proof of whatever evil is currently ascribed to the country.[10]

The primary reason for Nye to write his second book on soft power was the dam-

5 Joseph Nye, Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics, p. 19, 20.
6 Ibid. 10.
7 Ibid. 5.
8 Joseph Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power", The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, Vol. 616 (2008): 95.
9 Joseph Nye, Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics, p. 6.
10 Simon Anholt, Places: Identity, Image and Reputation (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010): 97.

age that was done to the United States' international reputation by the Global War on Terror launched by the Bush administration the image of the United States was diminishing rapidly. Nye believed that more investment in soft means and public diplomacy by Washington could reverse this negative trend. To put it in Nye's metaphors, because of the United States' heavy reliance on the foreign policy of "sticks and carrots" America's "power of attraction" was rapidly diminishing. When a country has a strong soft power capacity it possesses an ability to persuade other countries to aspire for the same outcomes in international relations, For Nye, Soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others.[11] While on the other hand constant applying for hard power means in international relations bears the potential to generate a lot of enemies abroad.

> In this sense, it is also important to set the agenda and attract others in world politics, and not only to force them to change by threatening military force or economic sanctions. This soft power-getting others to want the outcomes that you want-co-opts people rather than coerces them….[12]

Many authors in the past have criticized Nye's concept of soft power for being too general and lacking a theoretical frame.[13] For Y. Fan the term is altogether "confusing."[14] Nye's response to this criticism is, "soft power is an analytical concept, not a theory."[15] Also, the originality of the soft power concept was disputed in the past. Some think that there is nothing original in Nye's soft power concept, as something similar was proposed by Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci in his concept of "Cultural Hegemony."[16] Gramsci also recognizes the force of "consent and persuasion" as a powerful tool for those who possess a hegemony.[17] Even Classical Realists known for a strong emphasis on the importance of military and economic might in the concept of state power proposed similar ideas to Nye's long before him. For instance, E.H. Carr, one of the main representatives of the Classical realists, divided state power into three groups; military power, economic power, and power over the opinion.[18] Carr's "power of opinion" to an extent resembles Nye's concept of "power of attraction." Nye was also criticized for setting the concepts of soft power solely on American experience which in terms of power is by far the strongest in the world and a

11 Joseph S. Nye, Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics, p. 5.

12 Ibid. 5.

13 Eytan Gilboa, "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy", Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 616, (2008): 55-77

14 Ying Fan, "Soft Power: Power of Attraction or Confusion?", Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, Vol: 4, No. 2 (2008): 147-158.

15 Joseph S. Nye, "Responding to My Criticism and Concluding Thoughts" in Soft Power and US Foreign Policy: Theoretical, Historical, and Contemporary Perspectives, (eds.) Inderjeet Parmar and Michael Cox (London; New York: Routledge, 2010), 219.

16 Umut Yukaruç, "A Critical Approach to Soft Power", Journal of Bitlis Eren University, Vol. 6, No. 2. (December, 2017): 493.

17 Antonio Gramsci, Selection from the Prison Notebooks, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971): 80. quoted in Umut Yukaruç, "A Critical Approach to Soft Power", Journal of Bitlis Eren University, Vol. 6, No. 2. (December, 2017): 497.

18 Edward Hallet Carr, The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1946), 108.

unique case that can not be applied to any other country in the world.[19] The concept especially came under the strong criticism of the neorealist political theorists. Neorealists emphasize the hard power capacity of countries refusing the argument that soft means can be seen as a power at all.[20] Nial Ferguson refused the term arguing that there is no such a thing as soft power and that the term doesn't fit the concept of power at all. For him, the problem of soft power is that it is "soft." But, Ferguson agrees with the argument that diplomacy is useful in translating a nation's economic and military robustness into effective power, but he thinks that for a country to possess a real power it is in a need of a cocktail of multiple qualities, including both hard and soft power.[21] Especially the right-leaning intellectuals in the US, which often nourish a 'Jacksonian' approach to foreign policy and emphasize the importance of hard power, think that soft power capacity can not be classified as a power at all. [22] American geostrategic analyst George Friedman sees soft power as useless if you don't have hard power behind it. For Friedman soft power is "what people (nations) who have no hard power claim is going to be very effective."[23] Nye's soft power concept was often criticized to be rooted in the Wilsonian tradition of foreign policy. But his response to those claims is how the concept of soft power fits all the foreign policy traditions whether they are "realist, liberal or constructivist" it for him represents a "form of power."[24]

On the other hand, Nye is also aware of the limitations of the soft power, saying that "if a foreigner drinks Coca-Cola doesn't mean that the US has power over him."[25] He agrees with the critics that one of the most important preconditions of soft power lay in the strong hard power capacity. The two aspects of power are related because "they are both aspects of the ability to achieve one's purpose by affecting the behavior of others."[26] Possibilities for a country in economic decline to be attractive in the eyes of the foreign audience are slim, while a country with a strong economic output has more capacity to invest in the soft means.[27] Mark Leonard, an expert on public diplomacy, thinks that the negative image of a country in terms of economic conditions creates a feeling of repulsion when it comes to soft power, thus it

19 Brian Hocking, "Rethinking the 'New' Public Diplomacy" in The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations, ed. Jan Melissen, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005): 33-35.

20 For more about the theory of Neorealism in International Relations read: Robert O. Keohane (ed)., Neorealism and Its Critics (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986)

21 Niall Ferguson, "Think Again: Power", Foreign Policy, November 3, 2009, Accessed on June 13, 2019, doi: https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/11/03/think-again-power/

22 For more about the different traditions in American foreign policy read: Walter Russell Mead, Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World, (New York: A Century Foundation Book-Alfred A. Knopf, 2001); Suzanne Nossel, "Smart Power", Foreign Affairs, March/April 2004, Accessed on June 13, 2019, doi: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2004-03-01/smart-power

23 George Friedman, "Lecture by George Friedman. Questions and Answers. December 9-11, 2014. The MGIMO Moscow", (December, 2014) YouTube video, 50:35, September 4, 2016, doi: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9fB05PnTeA

24 Joseph S. Nye, "Responding to My Criticism and Concluding Thoughts", 219.

25 Joseph S. Nye, "Think Again: Soft Power", Foreign Policy, February 23, 2006, Accessed on June 13, 2019, doi: https://foreignpolicy.com/2006/02/23/think-again-soft-power/

26 Joseph S. Nye, Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics, p. 7.

27 Ibid. 9.

is counterproductive. In the case of Britain, the fact that it was a power in decline after World War Two caused some countries to prefer others with a more favorable economic outlook, although they were not attractive by other criteria such as the condition of human rights or democracy.

> Survey data shows that even where people have positive feelings about Britain, the fact that they see it as a country in decline means that they will turn to others about whom they feel less favorable.[28]

Yet contrary to the position of most of the authors that hard and soft power are related to each other, this cannot be considered to be the rule. The two types of power are not necessarily always related to each other. There are a lot of examples where a country has a strong hard power but weak soft power, and vice versa, where a country has a weak hard power and strong soft power capacity. For instance, during the Cold-War the Soviet Union was an economic and military giant with strong ideological leverage. But, wrong policies in Eastern Europe prevented Kremlin from building-up a respected soft power capacity in the region. In some instances of the Cold-War, the US, ideological rival to the Eastern European regimes was more popular than the Soviet Union. American popular culture has created a stronger impact among the young Eastern Europeans than the Soviet hard power ever managed to do. It was primarily the youth that rose against the Socialist regimes across the region. India is another example. Today India is the fourth-largest economy in the world and a military superpower but has pretty limited soft power capacity. On the other hand, some countries like Norway and Canada, although having a marginal role in the world when it comes to hard power, managed through successful public diplomacy to create a respected soft power.[29] Both countries, but especially Norway, are accepted as forces of peacebuilding and dialogue throughout the world. Both countries are frequently invited to act as a brokering side in the various diplomatic negotiations.[30] For the countries with a limited hard power that through time have managed to become a recognizable soft power, the way they execute their public diplomacy is crucial. This, from the strategic point of view well-run type of public diplomacy, is called a 'niche diplomacy.'[31] Prioritization of the foreign audience the diplomacy would focus on is the primary precondition for running successful niche diplomacy, which many countries with a strong hard power fail to do.[32] After understanding the limitations of the soft power in the global arena, forced Nye to invent another term,

28 Mark Leonard, Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, Public Diplomacy (London: Foreign Policy Center, 2002), 6, 7.

29 Geoffrey Hayes, "Canada as a Middle Power: The Case of Peacekeeping" in Niche Diplomacy: Middle Powers After the Cold War, ed. Andrew F. Coopeer, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997), p. 73-90.

30 Kristian Stokke, "The Soft Power of a Small State: Discursive Constructions and Institutional Practices of Norway's Peace Engagement", Journal of Power, Conflict, and Democracy in South and Southeast Asia Vol. II No. 1. (2010)

31 Andrew F. Coopper, Niche Diplomacy: A Conceptual Overview in Niche Diplomacy: Middle Powers After the Cold War, ed. Andrew F. Coopeer, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997), 1-25.

32 Mark Leonard, Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, Public Diplomacy (London: Foreign Policy Center, 2002), p. 53.

the 'smart power', which is the combination of the two.[33] Ability to know how to effectively combine the two types of power Nye calls "contextual intelligence."[34] For Korb and Boorstin, the states that manage to complement the use of soft and hard power can be defined as "integrated powers."

According to both Nye and William A. Rugh soft power rests on three sources:

> country's culture (in places where it is attractive to others), country's political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and country's foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority).[35]

Countries that manage to use all the three components effectively can be considered strong soft power nations. The majority of countries lack some of the mentioned sources. In the case of the United States, both culture and political values represent soft power leverage, but in the past Washington was very often the victim of its wrong assertive foreign policy which brought many damages to the country's soft power. When it comes to Turkey, which is the subject of this work, it is a country with strong cultural leverage, but the absence of attractive political values and settled foreign policy has often been a handicap for Turkey to turn into a recognized soft power country. On the other hand, Turkey's hard power is not strong enough to persuade the neighboring countries to "want what Ankara wants."

2.1.1. Turkish Soft Power

Despite the debate in the academic circles' soft power concept was taken seriously by many governments across the world. A lot of governments in the past came out with their soft power strategies, indicating that the concept has a real foothold in the geopolitical reality. All these strategies had one thing in common, to improve the country's international reputation. The importance of reputation in international relations was understood very early. For, instance after the defeat from Germany in 1870, France invested a vast amount of energy in public diplomacy to prevent the damage that was done to its international reputation by the defeat in the Franco-German war. Holding a lot of colonial possessions outside Europe and strong neighbors like Germany and the British Empire, Paris couldn't afford to be a weak power. The United Kingdom had a similar problem after the de-colonialization period. In the second half of the 20th century, the UK was seen as a 'power in decline' both in terms of political influence and industrial performance. This perception was damaging overall economic and financial performance in Britain, as it is hard to persuade a foreign investor to invest in a declining country. This image of the UK forced the Blair government to launch *Cool Britannia*, a 're-branding' campaign aiming to reverse the negative perception.[36] Turkey is one of the countries that has

33 Joseph S. Nye, "Get Smart: Combining Hard and Sof Power", Foreign Affairs Vol. 88, No. 4, (July/August 2009): 160-163.

34 Ibid.

35 Joseph S. Nye, Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics, p. 11.

36 Mark Leonard, Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, Public Diplomacy (London: Foreign Policy Center,

achieved considerable improvements in recent years, but regressions as well, in terms of soft power. The reforms carried out within the association process with the EU, more dynamism by the Turkish public diplomacy institutions like TİKA and Yunus Emre Institute, and popularization of Turkish series in the Middle East, Balkans, and other regions have made Turkey a recognizable soft power country.

Turkey in recent years is "rediscovering" its Ottoman past, which became one of the most used themes of Turkish series, like in the case of the internationally popular TV show "The Magnificient Century" which has helped the promotion of Turkish soft power in the neighboring regions. Some other examples are "Payitaht Abdülhamid" that deal with the geopolitical power game during the late Ottoman period, or "Diriliş Ertuğrul" that focuses on the political conditions before the foundation of the Ottoman Empire. But, the Turkish TV sector is not free from politics. Some TV series, like "Payitaht Abdülhamid" and "Diriliş Ertuğrul", was praised by the government for their "positive" portrayal of the Ottoman past, while others like "The Magnificient Century" were harshly criticized for heavily focusing on the political intrigues inside the Ottoman palace. Once even Erdogan himself responded by saying how Suleyman the Magnificient was "a proud conqueror rather than the indulgent harem-lover portrayed in the show."[37] Not all Turkish series are coming from the same production background. The first two series were produced by the pious circles close to the governments, while the "The Magnificient Century" was a product of the private sector that has no serious political agenda. Besides providing a pretty apologetic view of Ottoman history, "Payitaht Abdülhamid" and "Diriliş Ertuğrul" were criticized for trying to project the government's narrative of daily politics to Ottoman history.[38] Besides the historical TV series some other Turkish series that deal with ordinary life, love stories, and other subjects became very popular in the neighboring geographies, all contributing to the promotion of Turkish culture.

Other than the Turkish series, active use of culture in public diplomacy seriously contributes to Turkish soft power. Cultural institutions like *Yunus Emre Institute* managed to become a recognizable face of Turkish cultural diplomacy in dozens of countries. Yunus Emre Institute teaches thousands of foreign students the Turkish language and organizes hundreds of events that promote Turkey's rich culture abroad.[39] TİKA's development assistance across the globe certainly creates an image of Turkey that is willing to help countries in need. Especially in the Muslim World TİKA's assistance has helped Turkey's positive rebranding from once being an indifferent NATO ally to a country that, at least in rhetoric, is pleading to the needs of Muslims in suffering.[40] TİKA's overseas activities are mainly driven by cultural

2002), 70.

37 "Turkish PM fumes over a steamy Ottoman soap opera", Reuters, 27.10.2012. Accessed on July 1, 2019. doi: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-show-suleiman/turkish-pm-fumes-over-steamy-ottoman-soap-opera-idUSBRE8AQ11H20121127

38 "Turkish TV's New-Found Love for All Things Ottoman", Middle East Eye, 15.09.2017, Accessed on July 1, 2019, doi: https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/turkish-tvs-new-found-love-all-things-ottoman

39 "Yunus Emre Institute Official Website", *Yunus Emre Institute*, doi: https://www.yee.org.tr/en

40 E. Fuat Keyman and Onur Sazak, "Turkey as a "Humanitarian State" ", Pomeas Policy Paper No. 2 (2014)

affinity, as its offices are mainly based in the countries that have a common cultural-historical background with Turkey

The AKP government was successful in the initial years of its mandate when it comes to the promotion of the "Turkish model" abroad. However, some international and domestic developments such as the Arab Spring, conflict with the FETÖ group, internal backtracking in terms of democracy, and the rule of law prevented Turkey to continue with the same success in terms of soft power.[41] This process of back and forth in terms of normalization of Turkish foreign policy Kemal Kirişçi has been described as a "demise of the Turkish trading state."[42] Especially after the 2016 failed coup attempt, Turkey seemed back on the same old track.

2.1.1.1. The Fall of Turkish Soft Power and Back to the Hard Power

After the initial success of Turkey in terms of soft power, the country's rankings started backtracking after 2015.[43] According to the *Soft Power 30* website, Turkey was ranked as the 28th most effective soft power country in 2015.[44] Three years later, in 2018, it was not even among the top 30 countries in terms of soft power. According to other agencies, the results are similar. Turkey was not among the top 15 soft power countries in *Monocle's* report for 2018-19 as well.[45] Only according to *Elcano's Soft Power Global Presence Report for 2017* Turkey was well-positioned at 14th place.[46] The reasons for the failure in continuing the soft power success can be searched in the already mentioned three sources of soft power, culture, political values, and foreign policy. Especially the latter two sources are crucial for the failure in the Turkish case.

Turkey's backtracking in soft power ranking Nye connects to the fall back in the democratization process.[47] He believes that democracy is an important political value in terms of soft power and causes the power of attraction in the eyes of the foreign public. A liberalization that was launched as part of the reform process in the first half of the 2000s started slowing down in the second half of the decade. Partly because of the internal reasons, but external ones as well, AKP lost the initial reformist spirit. Once being a Muslim-majority country that was a candidate for the EU mem-

41 Yohanan Benhaim and Kerem Öktem, "The Rise and Fall of Turkey's Soft Power Discourse: Discourse in Foreign Policy Under Davutoğlu and Erdoğan", European Journal of Turkish Studies 21, (2015)

42 "The Rise and Demise of the Turkish Trading State", Hürriyet Daily, 17.03.2015, Accessed on July 1, 2019, doi: http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/opinion/barcin-yinanc/the-rise-and-demise-of-the-turkish-trading-state-79756

43 Gönül Tol and Birol Baskan, "From "Hard Power" to "Soft Power" and Back Again: Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East", Middle East Institute, November 29, 2018, Accessed on July 2, 2019, doi: https://www.mei.edu/publications/hard-power-soft-power-and-back-again-turkish-foreign-policy-middle-east

44 The report was prepared in cooperation of Portland, agency dealing with the soft power, Facebook and USC Center on Public Diplomacy.

45 Soft Power Survey 2018/19, Monocle, 21.12,2018, Accessed on July 1, 2019, doi: https://monocle.com/film/affairs/soft-power-survey-2018-19/

46 Elcano Global Presence Report 2017, (Madrid: Royal Institute Elcano, 2017)

47 Joseph Nye, "Joseph Nye says Turkey has less soft power, less democracy", April 6, 2015, YouTube video, 6:24, doi: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FL8UfoMgfKY&t=8s

bership was the source of Turkey's soft power. However, the decreasing chance for Turkish membership negatively affected the perception of Turkey abroad.

A democratization process in another country doesn't necessarily mean that having a say in that country would be easier. Nye is giving the example of the Turkish parliament's rejection to provide military bases for the US army to invade Iraq in 2003.[48] The decreasing power of the Turkish army in the decision-making process of foreign policy has limited the American power of influence. Also, it was much hard to get European governments on board in supporting the US-led Coalition forces than convincing the autocratic regimes in the Middle East to do the same.[49] It was much easier for Washington to work with the autocratic regimes of Saudi Arabia or Bahrain during the war in Iraq. For the mentioned reasons, in the US case, the history shows that persuading non-democratic regimes to move along the US foreign policy interests can be much easier than doing the same with the countries that have stronger democratic institutions. Some other examples prove this hypothesis. For instance, it was much easier to persuade Chile under the autocratic rule of Augusto Pinochet (1915-2006) in fighting against the advent of Communism in Latin America than it was under the various democratically elected governments. Also, the Iranian Shah acted more according to the American interests in the Middle East than democratically elected Mohammad Mosaddegh (1882-1967).[50] After all, the US had to overthrow a democratically elected Salvador Allende (1908-1973) in 1973 and Mohamed Mossadegh in 1953 to achieve the strategic goals in Chile and Iran. This represents a paradox of Nye's proposition that democracy and human rights create attractiveness in the eyes of others.

The improvement of the bilateral relations with the Arab countries took another course after the Arab Spring. Much of the relations went for the worse. Especially after the failed coup attempt in 2016, a significant shift happened in Ankara's foreign policy approach. Security challenges once again became the main preoccupation. Turkey further distanced itself from the West. Relations with Russia were improved. The decision to purchase S-400 anti-ballistic systems from Russia created criticism in the West.[51] Because of the Syrian War and the struggle against the FETÖ movement, Ankara toughened its rhetoric emphasizing its hard power capabilities.

All the soft power rating agencies generally rate according to the parameters of the Western system of value. It would be interesting to see how the perception of Turkey has evolved in the Muslim World in the last few years. Foreign policy maneuvers like helping the Somali government in dealing with Al Shabab, helping the Rohingya Muslims, accepting almost four million Syrian refugees, or the assistance

48 Joseph Nye, Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics, 16.

49 Philip H. Gordon and Jeremy Shapiro, Allies at War: America, Europe and the Crisis Over Iraq (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004), 75-155.

50 Ervand Abrahamian, A History of Modern Iran (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 113-122.

51 Sinan Ülgen, "It's Not Too Late to Stop Turkey from Realigning With Russia", Foreign Policy, 11.04.2019. Accessed on July 2, 2019, doi: https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/04/11/its-not-too-late-to-stop-turkey-from-realigning-with-russia-s400-patriot-missile-putin-erdogan-trump/

to Qatar during the Saudi-led blockade should have influenced Turkish soft power in those countries.[52] The fact that soft power measuring systems are often inadequate was also confirmed by Nye.

> Of course, one must be careful not to read too much into opinion polls. They are an essential but imperfect measure of soft-power resources because answers vary depending on the way that questions are formulated, and unless the same questions are asked consistently over some period, they represent snapshots rather than a continuous picture.[53]

2.2. Public Diplomacy

Possessing mere soft power capacity is not enough to enjoy the benefits of it in foreign relations. As Rugh says, "soft power exists whether anyone makes use of it or not."[54] Soft power without the diplomatic activity that would follow the strategy aiming to take advantage of it, is deficient. To enjoy the benefits of soft power in foreign relations countries around the world have invested in public diplomacy strategies that translate soft power resources into action. In order to make others pursue the outcomes you want; the role of public diplomacy is crucial. According to Nye,

> public diplomacy is an instrument that governments use to mobilize these (soft power) resources to communicate with and attract the public of other countries....[55]

2.2.1. The Definition of Public Diplomacy

Public diplomacy holds a central position in diplomacy. Unlike classical diplomacy, which is the communication between the two governments, Public Diplomacy is the communication of a government with a foreign audience. British historian Nicholas J. Cull summarizes the difference between traditional diplomacy and public diplomacy in words, traditional diplomacy is an international actor's attempt to manage the international environment through engagement with another international actor; public diplomacy is an international actor's attempt to manage the international environment through engagement with a foreign public.[56]

According to the classical understanding, public diplomacy is the means of communicating the state's aims, values, and strategies to the foreign audience. This is "direct communication" that ultimately aims to influence the foreign government by affecting the thinking of its public.[57] For Hans Tuch, public diplomacy is an attempt

52 Jahja Muhasilović, "Turkey's Faith-based Diplomacy in the Balkans", Rising Powers Quarterly, Vol. 3, Issue 3, (2018): 67.

53 Joseph S. Nye, Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics, 40-45.

54 William A. Rugh, "The Case for Soft Power" in Toward a New Public Diplomacy: Redirecting U.S. Foreign Policy, ed. Phillip Seib (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 12.

55 Ibid. 14.

56 Nicholas J. Cull, Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past, (Los Angeles: Figueroa Press, 2009), 12.

57 Glifford D. Malone, "Managing Public Diplomacy", Washington Quarterly 8 (3), (1985): 199-213.

of a government to communicate to a foreign public nation's ideals, culture, national goals, and policies.[58] Hocking thinks that public diplomacy is not a new paradigm of international politics (diplomacy) at all, but it only replaces "earlier and older patters" (of international relations).[59] According to Nicholas J. Cull, a historian at the University of Southern California, public diplomacy is based on five elements of statecraft that complete the list of tasks that every public diplomacy should implement. These are, listening to the foreign audience; advocacy, mobilizing the consent or blunt the criticism from the foreign audience; cultural diplomacy; student exchange diplomacy (exchange of people between the two countries, students primarily); and international broadcasting. Successfully implemented public diplomacy through the mentioned contributes to a country's soft power. [60]

Public diplomacy or the attempt of the government to communicate its aims, values, and foreign policy to the foreign public through the elements Cull has mentioned are often confused with mere propaganda. Some in the past suggested that public relations are nothing more than a euphemism for government propaganda.[61] Sometimes even the highest diplomats were missing the point and could not make a clear distinction between the two methods. Famous American diplomat Richard Holbrooke after the 9/11 attacks said, "Call it public diplomacy, or public affairs, or psychological warfare, or—if you want to be blunt—propaganda."[62] Holbrooke's statement shows the lack of a real understanding of what public diplomacy is. Although the aim of both is to win the hearts of the targeted audience, the propagandist approach and public diplomacy differ in the way they are conducted. Public diplomacy involves the "two-way communication" between the government and a targeted foreign audience.[63] Public diplomacy has to listen to the audience and is in a constant effort of trying to understand the foreign audience, while the propagandist approach often ignores the message from the audience.[64] The propagandist approach doesn't have the sensitivity when it comes to the opinion of the foreign audience, so it is the "one-way flow of messages."[65]

For others, public diplomacy is nothing more than a subdivision of international relations or public affairs. Some public relations theorists described public diplomacy as how states conduct their public relations.[66] James E. Grunig, an American

58 Hans Tuch, Communicating with the World: US Public Diplomacy Overseas (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990)

59 Brian Hocking, "Rethinking the 'New' Public Diplomacy", 33.

60 Nicholas J. Cull, "How We Got Here" in Towards a New Public Diplomacy: Redirecting U.S. Foreign Policy ed. Phillip Seib (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 24.

61 Mark Leonard, et. al, Public Diplomacy, 8.

62 "Public Diplomacy and Propaganda: Rethinking Diplomacy in the Age of Persuasion", E-International Relations, December 4, 2012, Accessed on August 8, 2019, doi: e-ir.info/2012/12/04/public-diplomacy-and-propaganda-rethinking-diplomacy-in-the-age-of-persuasion/

63 Mark Leonard, et. al, Public Diplomacy, p. 49, 91, 129.

64 Ibid. 46, 47.

65 Ibid. 48.

66 Peter Van Ham, "The Rise of the Brand State", Foreign Affairs, September 1, 2001, Accessed on June 20, 2019, doi: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2001-09-01/rise-brand-state

public relations theorist, thinks that methods used in public relations can be applied to public diplomacy.[67] So, in that sense, public diplomacy can be understood as an extension of public relations. For the defenders of this view, there is not a big difference between the two concepts, except the method that two are conducted. The only difference between the two is the target audience. In the case of public diplomacy, it is the foreign audience. In his criticism of equating public diplomacy with public relations, Gilboa says,

> Experts and practitioners in public diplomacy have often ignored relevant knowledge in communication and Public Relations; while communication and Public Relations scholars and practitioners have often ignored the relevant literature in international relations, diplomatic studies, and strategic studies. Both groups have ignored the potential contributions of other social and behavioral disciplines.[68]

For some, public diplomacy is useful as part of psychological warfare against a foe government. This understanding was especially prevalent during the Cold War when public diplomacy had an important role in the global fight against the Communist ideology. It was actively used by the Western governments, particularly the US governments, as a strategy in fighting the ideological war with the Soviets. But from today's point of view this approach is anachronic, as with the fall of the Soviet Union different circumstances have emerged globally, and the US for the main part failed to restructure its public diplomacy to the newly emerged reality.[69]

There is also confusion between soft power and public diplomacy terms. So, often the success of a particular country's public diplomacy was measured through the opinion polls on soft power.[70] According to Phillip Seib, public diplomacy is "an instrument that governments use to mobilize these resources to communicate with and attract the public in other countries…."[71] In the way that Seib explains public diplomacy, it can be seen that it is interconnected with the very idea of soft power or the power of attraction, but still a different thing. For Nye successful implementation of public diplomacy is the characteristic of "smart power", or a successful combination of hard power and soft power. For authors like Nye that emphasize the combination of hard power with soft power in foreign policy, public diplomacy is an important tool in the arsenal of smart power.[72] Closely connecting public diplomacy to soft power also didn't pass without criticism. Some authors argue that if a country has already strong soft power then why a need for public diplomacy at all. This criticism brings to the conclusion that those countries that already have established

67 James E. Grunig, "Public Relations and International Affairs: Effects, Ethics and Responsibility", Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 47, No. 1, (1993): 137-162.

68 Eytan Gilboa, "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy", The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, 616 (1): 55-77

69 Carnes Lord, "The Past and Future of Public Diplomacy", Orbis Vol. 42. Issue 1, (Winter 1998), 49-73.

70 Eytan Gilboa, "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy", 56.

71 Phillip Seib, Towards a New Public Diplomacy, 14.

72 Joseph Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, Vol. 616 (2008): 94-109.

hard and soft power, like the United States, don't have to invest so much energy in public diplomacy. Contrary to this criticism Melissen argues how Washington's public diplomacy and nation-branding strategies are responsible for creating appeal in the eyes of the weaker countries.[73]

2.2.2. Theory of Public Diplomacy

One of the probable reasons for the existing confusion regarding the difference between public diplomacy and propaganda, public relations, psychological warfare, or soft power partly lays in the fact that an established theory on public diplomacy has not been developed yet. There are many propositions about what public diplomacy theory should be, but it is hard to say that any of them have settled as the dominant theory. It can be said that in the sense of lacking theoretical and methodological clarity, the theories on public diplomacy to an extent resemble the theories on soft power. Compared to many social science disciplines, the area of public diplomacy is a new field in the scholarship. Only in the last few decades, there has been an attempt to conceive a satisfactory theory and methodology. In the past, it was the subject of many social science disciplines, like history, social sciences, political sciences, diplomacy, and many others. According to Eytan Gilboa, the field of public diplomacy is probably "one of the most multidisciplinary areas" in modern scholarship.[74] He agrees that to develop the theory and methodology of public diplomacy multidisciplinary approach is necessary. Authors from different academic backgrounds have expressed their opinions about the subject, yet it can not be said that a dominant theory was ever developed.[75] All of them tried to comprehend and explain public diplomacy from the limited scope of their particular areas of expertise. Although all of them contributed to the perception of the field from different angles, it can be said that the development of a comprehensive, firm, and definite theory on public diplomacy is still in progress.

Despite the interest from different disciplines, until now most of the writings about the subject provided only a historical review of public diplomacy's development. Academic studies primarily focus on the US experience during the Cold-War and explain the reasons for Washington's failure in shifting to the new reality of the "digital age" after the Cold War.[76] Focusing on the historical review of public diplomacy didn't contribute to the development of a theory or methodology.[77]

73 Jan Melissen, "Between Theory and Practice", in *New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations* ed. Jan Melissen, *The* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005): 20.

74 Eytan Gilboa is Professor of Communications and International Relations at Bar-Ilan University in Israel and a co-founder of the Israel Public Diplomacy Forum (IPD Forum); Eytan Gilboa, "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, 616 (1): 56.

75 Eytan Gilboa, "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy", 55-77.

76 Name given by the public diplomacy theorists for the age of widespread comercial use of internet, social media, mass media and other digital means of communication.

77 Ibid.

2.2.3. Where Does the Public Diplomacy Stand in the Soft Power Concept?

As it is already said both the soft power and public diplomacy concepts lack a theoretical frame and clear methodological approach. Until now both fields have been the subject of analysis by the different social disciplines. It is pretty hard to define where exactly public diplomacy lays in the soft power concept and vice versa. Soft power is a more general term than public diplomacy and in the past, many have proposed ideas about the role played by public diplomacy for soft power. What is certain is that the two concepts are closely interrelated, but that is pretty much the only thing that is certain for now. One of the first theorists that mentioned public diplomacy in the context of soft power was Nye himself. Nye says that public diplomacy is closely related to soft power and "often does make use of soft power."[78] For him, public diplomacy is "the tool in the arsenal of smart power", and has served well the United States in promoting American soft power during the Cold War. For him, it was essential for the US ideological victory during the Cold War.[79] For Jan Melissen,

> public diplomacy is one of the soft power's key instruments, and this was recognized in diplomatic practice long before the contemporary debate on public diplomacy.[80]

As foreign policy is one of the three main sources of soft power, along with culture and political values, public diplomacy belongs to the foreign policy dimension of soft power.[81] A country' with a strong culture and attractive system has nothing much to do with the government that is ruling the country. Culture and political values are something that develops through time in a unique and historical environment. It can not be produced only by governments. As Rugh says, soft power exists whether a country "makes use of it" through public diplomacy or not.[82] Very often the example of the United States is given and the fact that it has the strongest soft power capacity in the world despite its weak public diplomacy strategy after the Cold War and heavily relying on hard power particularly under the Bush administration.

But, as public diplomacy is part of the foreign policy and one of the main sources of soft power, it has the potential to increase or decrease the overall soft power capacity. Rugh says that

> a state controls its foreign policy and that is one aspect of soft power, and if it is perceived by foreigners as beneficial to them it will be an asset, but if it is perceived as detrimental to them it will be negative. Other aspects of soft power are largely beyond the control of the state to any significant degree.[83]

78 William A. Rugh, "The Case of Soft Power", 12.
79 Joseph Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, Vol. 616 (2008): 94-109.
80 Jan Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Beteen Theory and Practice", 4.
81 Joseph Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, Vol. 616 (2008): 95.
82 William A. Rugh, "The Case for Soft Power", 12.
83 Ibid, 13.

Foreign policy, thus public diplomacy, is the only government controllable aspect of soft power. In that sense, public diplomacy holds a unique place in the concept of soft power.

Nye also believes that if a country doesn't have already soft power attractiveness, then there is not much that public diplomacy can do in that case.

> Public diplomacy tries to attract by drawing attention to these potential resources through broadcasting, subsidizing cultural exports, arranging exchanges, and so forth. But if the content of a country's culture, values, and policies are not attractive, public diplomacy that "broadcast" them cannot produce soft power.[84]

What can be concluded from Nye's and Rugh's words is that public diplomacy as an assisting element for soft power rather than something that can hold on its own. Nye's and Rugh's view in this case is opposite to those views that defend the concept of "niche diplomacy", where a country with limited soft power can increase its soft power capacity through successful public diplomacy strategy. The majority of Nye's suggestions regarding soft power are written from the perspective of the United States. There are not many countries in the world that has a soft power potential close to one of the United States. For that reason, smaller and weaker countries had to develop unique and distinctive approaches to soft power and public diplomacy. Contrary to Nye's above-mentioned view Nicholas J. Cull believes that sometimes even a country with a strong soft power capacity and good foreign policy can not use the benefits of these two characteristics if it is not "publicized or coordinated with Public Diplomacy."[85] The author of this work also believes that soft power capacity can be increased through strategic public diplomacy, as some countries in the past like Canada and Norway have proven this. So, I believe that the truth, in this case, is between the two views. Yes, soft power can exist independent of public diplomacy, but can and should be further strengthened through successful public diplomacy. But it can be created through niche diplomacy as well.

Niche diplomacy can work if it has a necessary source for this. It is hard for a country with a bad international reputation to improve its image without improving its foreign policies and internal condition first. Both Canada and Norway are developed and countries with significant achievements in terms of high human rights and democracy. These facts certainly were crucial for their public diplomacy strategies to succeed. As Nicholas J. Cull says,

> The most potent voice for an international actor is not what it says but what it does, and history is full of examples of international actors who found the best public diplomacy to be no substitute for bad policy."[86] It should be used to "amplify those aspects of the existing soft power that are helpful."[87]

84 Joseph Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, Vol. 616 (2008): 95.

85 Nicholas J. Cull, *Lessons from the Past*, 27.

86 Ibid.

87 William A. Rugh, "The Case for Soft Power" in *Towards a New Public Diplomacy: Redirecting U.S. Foreign Policy*,

2.2.4. Historical Development of Public Diplomacy

Although some elements of public diplomacy can be traced back to the 17th century, the very concept of its' was shaped by the needs of modern diplomacy in the last two centuries. The term was first time used during the mid-19th century. In the sense that public diplomacy as understood today was mentioned the first time in 1965 by the dean at the Tufts University Edmund Gullion.[88] In the same year, Gullion founded a center for public diplomacy.[89] Gullion described public diplomacy as "... the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries."[90]

The importance of public diplomacy in foreign policy was seen during the Cold War. In those years public diplomacy became one of the pillars of the US diplomacy's struggle against the global expansion of Communism. In that sense, Dwight D. Eisenhower established the United States Information Agency in 1953 to, "understand, inform and influence foreign publics in promotion of the national interests..."[91] Under the program of countering the Soviet influence, the US government launched various other projects. *Fullbright Scholarship Program* was launched in 1946.[92] It was part of the US cultural and student exchange diplomacy, two out of the five main elements Cull has defined as the basis of public diplomacy. Thanks to the Program millions of non-Americans had a chance to study in the United States and get direct access to American culture. Even students from some of the Communist states were allowed to study in the US.[93] According to Cull International broadcasting is another element of public diplomacy.[94] In that sense, the US government launched the *Voice of America* (VOA), an international broadcasting TV channel in 1942.[95] Soon after VOA started broadcasting in other world languages. In 1949 the US launched international radio broadcaster *Radio Free Europe*, which targeted the audience in Eastern Europe. A few years later, in 1953, *Radio Liberty* a new radio broadcaster that focused its broadcasting to the Soviet Union was launched.[96] A similar radio broadcaster to counter the influence of the Chinese Communist Party was launched in 1951, under the name of *Radio Free Asia*.[97]

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ed. Philip Seib (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009): 13-14.

88 Nicholas J. Cull, "Public Diplomacy Before Gullion: The Evolution of a Phrase", *US Center on Public Diplomacy*, April 18, 2006, Accessed on June 22, 2019, doi: https://www.uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/public-diplomacy-gullion-evolution-phrase; Phillip Seib, Towards a New Public Diplomacy, 24.

89 The full name of the center was *Edward R. Murrow Center of Public Diplomacy*

90 Nicholas J. Cull, "Public Diplomacy Before Gullion: The Evolution of a Phrase"

91 William M. Chodkowski, The United States Information Agency, *American Security Project: Fact Sheet*, November 2012, Accessed on December 11, 2019, doi: https://www.americansecurityproject.org/

92 The program was founded right before the start of the Cold War, but after the split with the Moscow was actively used as the tool in promotion of American culture and political values. For more visit: "Fullbright Scholar Program", doi: https://www.cies.org/

93 For instance, the Fullbright Program was available for Yugoslav students.

94 Nicholas J. Cull, *Lessons from the Past*, 21, 22.

95 Voice of America was launched before the Cold War, in 1942, but was extensivelly used by the United States as a public diplomacy tool through out the 20th century. For more visit: Voice of America – English, doi: https://www.voanews.com/

96 For more visit: "Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty", doi: https://www.rferl.org/

97 For more visit: "Radio Free Asia - English", doi: https://www.rfa.org/english/

Although public diplomacy conducted through media like VOA and other media was pretty successful in providing an American point during the global ideological combat against the Soviet influence, Washington didn't continue developing its public diplomacy after the Cold-War but relied rather on its hard power capacities.[98] With the vanished Soviet threat interest in soft power and public diplomacy disappeared in Washington. The budget of institutions like the United States Information Agency (USIA) was slashed down and many media channels that were created to counter Soviet influence were left on their own. After the 9/11 attacks, the US relations with the Muslim World became tense and Washington once again felt the need for public diplomacy in its relations with the Muslim-majority countries. Especially after the Bush administration heavily relied on hard power in Afghanistan and Iraq the need for a dialogue with the Muslim World became more apparent. But, unlike during the Cold War period, this time Washington failed to adequately respond to the new challenges in foreign policy. Primarily the US failed to balance its foreign policy with soft power and public diplomacy. Despite a few modifications in public diplomacy the US failed to adjust to the circumstances of the new age. Few obsolete projects like the *Alhurra* (The Free One)[99] television station and *Radio Sawa* were launched.[100] Both were broadcasting in the Arabic Language and were supposed to provide the American perspective to the Arab World both turned out to be failures. These projects were a pale imitation of their Cold War predecessors. Washington had an almost identical Cold War strategy to the Arab World during the 2000s, which was a major miscalculation. Soon Alhurra was beaten up by *Al Jazeera*, that managed to win easily the hearts of the audience throughout the Arab World.

What the United States failed to understand was the fact that international circumstances have dramatically changed. Broadcasting was not controlled by the governments anymore, but the majority of them were in the private hands, so this gave those international broadcasters enormous power over the global narrative. Like it was in the case of CNN, the broadcasting policies of the international broadcasters would often direct the government's foreign policy rather than vice versa. The times when broadcasters followed the government policies were long gone, now media conglomerates are shaping foreign policy. Broadcasting the human tragedy during the war in Bosnia and Kosovo by CNN and other big media was one of the main triggers for the Clinton Administration to decide to intervene militarily in Former Yugoslavia. The phenomenon where media is shaping the foreign policy of governments is known as the "CNN effect."[101] The failed cases of Alhurra and Radio Sawa proved that Washington was not successful in adapting its official public diplomacy to the new circumstances of the "digital age." The failure in adapting to the digital age has brought a lot of damage to Washington in the Arab World. It was Al Jazeera's

98 Nicholas J. Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

99 For More Visit: "Alhurra", doi: https://www.alhurra.com/

100 For More Visit: "Radio Sawa", doi: https://www.radiosawa.com/

101 Bahador Babak, *The CNN Effect in Action: How the News Media Pushed the West Toward War in Kosovo* (New York City, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)

Arabic service, but later English service as well, that played an important role in shaping the negative image of American imperialism in the minds of Arab masses, which reduced the influence of the US soft power. All in all, the methods used during the Cold War turned out to be outdated for the 21st century.

The United States' emphasis on hard power in foreign policy during the War on Global Terror has generated a lot of enemies for Washington. On the other hand, by ignoring soft power and public diplomacy the US did too little to counter this negative perception. Reasons for this may lay in the fact that up until recently the US was the sole superpower in the world, by far exceeding the hard power capacity of any other country in the world. Failure of Washington to create alternatives to the hard power has forced some authors, Nye in the first place, to further develop the concept of soft power, and others to provide an updated view to the public diplomacy that is arranged according to the needs of the digital age. This is where the concept of 'New public diplomacy' came into being.[102] Public diplomacy that is adjusted to the circumstances of the dynamic, decentralized, and more sophisticated digital age that Amelia Arsenault also calls "Public Diplomacy 2.0."[103] As Leonard says the new public diplomacy of the digital age needs to be "much more interactive, building long-term relationships and understanding target groups rather than delivering one-way messages."[104] This is the new reality that most governments are struggling to catch up with.

Turkey is one of the countries that is trying to adapt its public diplomacy to the circumstances of the digital age. Turkey's official broadcasting diplomacy is run by the two state-run media outlets, *Anadolu Agency* (AA)[105] and *Turkish Radio Television* (TRT).[106] Both Anadolu Agency and TRT have opened dozens of offices across the world and broadcast in many different languages. TRT passed through similar expansion. Its most ambitious project was the *TRT World*, an English-service TV channel launched in 2015.[107] After understanding the benefits of channels like BBC and CNN in transmitting US and UK narrative to the world, some other global and regional powers launched their international broadcasters. China launched *CCTV English*[108] in 2000, Russian *Russia Today*[109] launched its English-language service in 2005, France's *France 24*[110] started broadcasting in English in 2006, and in 2015 German *Deutsche Welle*[111] started its 24-hours English-language broadcasting ser-

102 Jan Melissen ed., *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)

103 Amelia Arsenault, "Public Diplomacy 2.0" in *Towards a New Public Diplomacy: Redirecting U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Philip Seib (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009): 135-153.

104 Mark Leonard, et. al, *Public Diplomacy*, p. 48.

105 Visit: "Anadolu Agency – English", doi: https://www.aa.com.tr/

106 For more visit: "TRT – Anasayfa", doi: https://www.trt.net.tr/Anasayfa/Anasayfa.aspx

107 Yusuf Devran, "Yeni Türkiye'nin Küresel Sesi TRT World: Fırsatlar ve Güçlülükler", *Devran/E-Journal of Intermedia* 2 (2), (November 2015)

108 For more visit: "CCTV News – English", doi: english.cctv.com

109 For more visit: "Russia Today (RT) – English", doi: www.rt.com

110 For more visit: "France24 – English", doi: www.france24.com/en

111 For more visit: "Deutsche Welle (DW) – English", doi: www.dw.com/en

vice. Also, the reality of globalization forced international broadcasters to launch their services in languages other than English. For a long time, CNN and BBC are broadcasting in languages like Arabic, Persian, Spanish, Turkish, and others. Big national media outlets followed the same trend and expanded their services to other global languages. For instance, besides English and Russian services, Russia-Today has service in three other world languages, Arabic, French, and Spanish. TRT also launched its Arabic-language service in 2010 aiming to reach an audience of more than 350 million people.

Things are changing faster and faster in the world. From the point of the latest technological developments, the mentioned concept of international broadcasters, although very new, became already outdated. Some channels like *Al Jazeera English* started the concept of the 'digital news' that added to the news production the latest technological achievements, speeded up the news production, and reduced the quantity of information that is provided to the public. The digital news launched the broadcasting to a brand-new level. The emergence of social media platforms like *Facebook* and *Twitter* has added a brand dimension to diplomacy. Launched for commercial purposes in the first place these platforms became very popular among the public and governments followed the trend. Today almost all world political leaders and their governments heavily rely on social media platforms to address various issues to the public. Social media has created a new type of diplomacy: "Twitter diplomacy."[112] As social media added up more to the dynamism and interactiveness of public diplomacy, which is a positive aspect, but its misuse can be also very harmful to the country's soft power.

Besides the technological advance that has changed the methods of transmitting public diplomacy, another novelty is the emergence of strong non-state actors. Non-state sectors in the digital age also conduct a certain form of public diplomacy. Non-state actors sometimes can be more effective in influencing the behaviors of the foreign public than the official public diplomacy run by the governments. In order to be able to distinguish the two forms of diplomacy the terms 'one-track public diplomacy' for official public diplomacy, and 'track-two public diplomacy' for the public diplomacy of the non-state actors were coined. One of the earliest proponents of the track-two diplomacy was John Monteville who defined such practice as,

> unofficial, informal interaction between members of adversary groups or nations aiming to develop strategies, influence public opinion, and organize human and material resources in ways that might help resolve their conflict.[113]

A strong non-governmental sector can be very useful in projecting the county's soft power. As Nye says, "much of the soft power of a country is generated by its civil

112 Olubukala S. Adesina, "Foreign Policy in an Era of Digital Diplomacy", *Cogent Social Sciences* 3 (2017), doi: 10.1080/23311886.2017.1297175

113 Muzaffer Ercan Yılmaz, "Track-Two Diplomacy as a Resolution Approach to International and Inter-Societal Conflicts", *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi* Vol. 19. No.2 (2004): 156.

society."[114] But, the role of the non-governmental sector is not necessarily useful. Like we will see in the Turkish case, the activities of the NGO sector if not synchronized with the government strategies and coordinated "from above" have the potential to turn into a disruptive factor. After all, the level of damage or benefit from the non-governmental sector depends on the government's ability to get them focused on a certain cause.[115]

2.2.5. Digital Age and the Development of New Types of Public Diplomacy

Technological advance has transformed the world. The nature of power transmission has become less vertical (hierarchical) and more horizontal. More and more 'networks of power' are evolving that possess the power to influence things in the world. Thus, the power in the global sphere is not limited only to the governments of the Western capitals anymore. The share of technology shifted the power to different actors outside the narrow circles of the Western political elite. This process was government-controlled but the side-effect of globalization. As Nye puts it, "the soft power that is becoming more important in the information age is in part a social and economic by-product rather than solely a result of official government action."[116] Because of the technological transformation, states require more soft power and public diplomacy, not less. The majority of the emerging powers are outside the Western World. Some of those states, like China or Russia, primarily act outside the strictly defined Western discourse. In the past, the majority of authors dealing with soft power and public diplomacy gave suggestions to the governments on how to catch up with the dynamics of the new world to prevent the Western states from losing their international standing. In that sense, public diplomacy theorists are suggesting more interactive public diplomacy that would include more listening to the foreign audience and using the technological advancements and less "reactive" and top-down "preaching" approach that has characterized the outdated Cold War model. Today public diplomacy should be more of a "dialogue" in its nature rather than a "monologue."[117]

Most of the provided criticism and suggestions are Western-centric or at least are limited to the needs of the advanced economies, without seriously considering the needs of those countries that are outside this narrow circle. Most of the provided suggestions are not compatible with the countries outside the West, as their historical experience, needs, and capacities are not the same as those of the developed world. On the other hand, it cannot be said that the scholars outside the West have provided any original models of public diplomacy that could be adapted to the needs of their own countries. In practice, all the developing countries until now more or less followed the Western patterns, without creating any alternatives to it.

114 Joseph S. Nye, "Responding to My Criticism and Concluding Thoughts", 222.
115 Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, 32.
116 Ibid.
117 Jan Melissen, "Beyond the New Public Diplomacy", *Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael'*, Clingendael Paper No. 3, (October 2011), 10.

Besides the emerging of the new powers, the technological development created a set of relevant non-state actors that also conduct a sort of public diplomacy. The multiplication of the different groups of international actors that conduct public diplomacy caused different types of public diplomacy to emerge as well. To mention only some of them, these are, *Religious diplomacy* or *Faith-based Diplomacy*, *Cultural Diplomacy*, *NGO Diplomacy*, *Student exchange diplomacy*, *City Diplomacy*. All of them are corresponding to a different aspect of soft power. One of the characteristics of the digital age is that all the mentioned types of diplomacy can be implemented more by the non-governmental sector. Without entering the characteristics of all the mentioned types of diplomacy, I will shortly analyze the public diplomacy areas that are relevant to this work. These are cultural diplomacy, student exchange diplomacy, and city diplomacy.

2.3. Cultural Diplomacy

According to Nye, "culture is the set of values and practices that create meaning for society."[118] For him, culture is also among the three main sources of a country's soft power. As it is already said soft power exists whether a country takes advantage of it or not. It is similar to culture. A certain country could have a strong cultural potential, but still failing to use its advantage in foreign policy. There are many examples of this phenomenon in the modern world. India and Egypt can serve as an example here. Both countries have a very rich culture, but both have failed to take advantage of this richness in foreign policy. Both countries are characterized by pretty weak soft powers. The instrumentalization of the cultural potential in foreign policy is best done through public diplomacy. It is where Nye's two sources of soft power, culture, and foreign policy, get combined through public diplomacy to build up a soft power. This strategy is called "cultural diplomacy."[119] Although the practice of turning cultural attractiveness into a foreign policy tool is a very old method, France was the first country that has systematically done this. Through time French language became a lingua Franca in many courts and became a symbol of prestige in elite circles around Europe. After the French revolution of 1789 France also used public diplomacy to spread its political values, another source of soft power, in other countries.[120] In recent years culture has become the key ingredient of a process known as "nation-branding", where countries implement different strategies to improve their international reputation.[121]

Throughout this work, I argue that in recent years Turkey is passing through a period of a "nation re-branding", where it is aiming to re-brand its image, particular-

118 Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, 11.

119 Erik Pajtinka, "Cultural Diplomacy in Theory and Practice of Contemporary International Relations", Modern History", Journal for Political Sciences, *International Relations, Security Studies – Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations*, (2014): 95-108.

120 Wally Olins, "Making a National Brand" in *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, ed. Jan Melissen (New York, Palgrave Macmillian, 2005), 170.

121 Simon Anholt, *Places: Identity, Image and Reputation* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)

ly in the Muslim World. Something similar was done by the first Turkish president Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in the early years of the Republic. Atatürk worked actively in re-branding the negative perception of Turkey in the West that was inherited from the Ottoman Empire. At the time Turkey was perceived as a "decaying eastern despotism." Atatürk tried to create the image of the Turkish Republic as a Modern European nation-state. In recent years AKP is trying to re-brand its perception in the Muslim World through public diplomacy. The Turkish government is trying to turn Turkey into a strong regional power. For achieving this goal the Turkish government relies on religious sentiment in its foreign policy. The main institution in fulfilling this objective is the Presidency for Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı), the state agency in charge of religious affairs.[122] Besides Diyanet that executes track-one diplomatic activities, Turkey also has a vibrant track-two public diplomacy, run by a large number of pious non-state actors. But, Turkey is not the only country that uses religion as a foreign policy tool. Since the mid-20th century religion is regaining its centrality in international relations.[123]

Religion is one of the main elements of a nation's culture and one of the main sources of soft power. Contrary to the predictions of the classical positivist social scientists like Auguste Comte or Emile Durkheim who very early argued how religion will gradually lose its social and political importance. But religion survived as an important factor. Moreover, in the last decades, religion is gaining ground in international relations. This trend of "religionization of politics and the politicization of religion" is especially evident in the Third and Second World countries.[124] Because of the secular reductionist attitude formed many political and social theorists in the West failed to recognize the returning importance of religion in international relations.[125] This attitude prevented the Western states to immediately understand the importance religion played in the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the rise of political Islam across the Muslim World. Because of this Western states failed to act according to the needs of realpolitik in those countries.

Some countries very actively use the religious sentiment as a tool in their foreign policy. For instance, the solidarity with the Shia population in the Middle East is probably the strongest element of Iran's soft power, which in turn contributes very much to Tehran's hard power capacities as well.[126] The Vatican is another specific example. A country without any hard power capacity is a very influential international actor. Since the fully recognized independence of the Vatican in 1929, the Holy See's

122 For more visit: "Presidency of Religious Affairs – T.C. Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı", doi: https://www.diyanet.gov.tr/en-US

123 Douglas Johnston, *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003)

124 Allen Keiswetter and Bishop John Cane, "Diplomacy and Religion: Seeking Common Interest and Engagement in a Dynamically Changing and Turbulent World" (paper presented at the U.S.-Islamic World Forum Papers 2013, entitled 'A Decade of Dialogue', Doha, 9-11 June, 2013): p. 7.

125 Douglas Johnston, *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik*, 4.

126 For more about Iranian foreign policy in the Middle East read: Arash Reisinezhad, *The Shah of Iran, the Iraqi Kurds, and the Lebanese Shia*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), and Atilla Sandıklı and Emin Salihi, Iran, *The Shia Crescent, And the Arab Spring*, Istanbul: Bilgesam Publications, Report No: 35, August, 2011. Accessed on July 3, 2019.

global influence solely lays in soft power by instrumentalizing the Catholic religion through successful public diplomacy. Turkey is another country where religion is playing a more and more important role in foreign policy. Political Islam is one of the main sources of Turkish soft power as well as one of the main inspirational forces in Ankara's public diplomacy.[127] The type of diplomacy that uses religion as a source of influence is called "religious diplomacy" or "faith-based diplomacy." As religion itself is part of the culture, this type of diplomacy can be considered as a branch of cultural diplomacy, and it will be considered as such throughout this dissertation.

2.4 Student exchange diplomacy

The motion of people between the two countries can be very influential in creating "attractiveness" in the eyes of a foreign audience. Cull sees the "exchange" of the people as one of the five pillars of public diplomacy. Thus, the exchange of people, ideas, and material wealth indirectly benefits the soft power of a country. One of the most representative examples of 'student exchange diplomacy' is the educational scholarship programs for international students. In 2017 almost 5 million students were studying in a foreign country.[128] When speaking about soft power Nye puts forward the example of his student years in the United Kingdom. Arguing how this experience has shaped his opinion of this country for good. Many people will gain a positive opinion of a certain country by spending some time there during their education. But, there is also a risk that some students may develop a negative opinion about that country. As one of the most representative examples of this is the case of Sayyid Qutb, who spent some time in the United States.[129] But, probably Qutb came to the US with an already formed view about this country. Osama bin Laden is another example. As a son of a rich Saudi family, he visited several Western countries during his teenage years.[130]

As it is already mentioned the United States instrumentalized the Student exchange diplomacy during the Cold War through Fullbright Scholarship Programs as a part of Washington's struggle against the Soviet influence. Many countries today run their student exchange diplomacy through scholarship programs. For instance, Americans have Fullbright, British *Chevening Program*[131] , and Germans *DAAD*.[132] Turkey started conducting this type of diplomacy after the Cold War. During the 1990s, Ankara tried to create closer relations with the Central Asian states by providing education for the students from that region under the *Büyük Öğrenci Projesi* (BÖP).[133] The AKP government reformed the project and launched *Türkiye Bursları* in 2012.

127 Jahja Muhasilović, "Turkey's Faith-based Diplomacy in the Balkans", 67.

128 "Which country is home to the largest international student population", *Study International News*, 02.05.2018, Accessed on July 3, 2019, doi: https://www.studyinternational.com/news/country-home-largest-international-student-population/

129 Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, 96.

130 Thomas R. Mockaitis, *Osama Bin Laden: A Biography* (Santa Barbars: Greenwood Biographies, 2010): 6,7.

131 For more visit: "Chevening Scholarship Program", doi: www.chevening.org

132 For more visit: "German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)", doi: www.daad.de

133 Meaning in Turkish is "The Great Student Project (GOP)"

2.5 City diplomacy (Local Diplomacy)

In the digital age, many actors outside the national governments that engage themselves in diplomatic activities have emerged. One of those actors is city municipalities and local governments.[134] As urbanization in the world is not losing pace, through time cities turned into important political actors. Some global cities like New York City, London, or Tokyo emerged as the real economic powerhouses. Often those cities have larger economies than most of the countries in the world. For instance, it is estimated that the combined GDP of the New York Metropolitan Area is larger than the economies of powerhouses like South Korea and Spain.[135] It is estimated that almost half of the world's trade in foreign exchange passed through London in 2009. [136] The ability to influence the currencies of other countries in turn gave this city enormous importance in the global economy.

Today local governments because of the real power they possess act often autonomously of state governments. Possession of power and globalization forced the local governments to enter the relationship-building process with the foreign local governments. This kind of diplomacy is called "city diplomacy" or "city diplomacy."[137] One of the strategies local governments follow in order to become a recognizable actor with an international reputation is the branding strategy. Because of the branding strategy today many cities are known for their specific character. For example, Singapore is known globally as a technology hub, Milano is known as the center of fashion, Jerusalem for religious tourism, London as a financial center, and so on. Successful branding of the cities is responsible for generating billions of dollars to those cities, which in turn provide them a powerful position in the international arena as well as in the countries they are located in. All these strategies have turned many cities across the world into a strong diplomatic force.[138]

134 By the term local governments, city authorities, municipalities and provinces are included.

135 *U.S. Metro Economies: Outlook – Gross Metropolitan* Product, with Metro Employement Projections, IHS Global Insight, 2013, p. 1, 9. doi: https://web.archive.org/web/20150305224230/http://www.usmayors.org/metroeconomies/2013/201311-report.pdf

136 "City of London jobs: Are growing steadily", *City of London*, March 2019, Accessed on July 3, 2019, doi: https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/business/economic-research-and-information/Documents/city-statistics-briefing.pdf

137 Michele Acuto, Global Cities, *Governance and Diplomacy* (New York: Routledge, 2013)

138 Rogier van der Pluijm and Jan Melissen, "City Diplomacy: The Expanding Role of Cities in International Relations", *Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael'*, Clingendael Papers No. 10, (April 2007)

3.

Turkish Soft Power and the Development of Turkey's Public Diplomacy

For a long time, hard power was the primary concept Turkish diplomacy was relying on in international relations. Troubling relations with the neighboring country since the early days of the Republic forced Ankara to invest more in its hard power capacities rather than soft power. Since the initial moves by the founder of the Republic Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1923-1938) who tried to introduce the new state to the world, until the mid-20th century Turkey followed a cautious and during the Cold War strictly alliance-fixed foreign policy.[1] Since entering the Western-alliance during the Cold War, Turkey defined its foreign policy according to the strategies of the NATO alliance. The strict alliances of the Cold War-era and decades-long unresolved issues with its border countries prevented Ankara to apply the strategies of "appeal and persuasion."[2]

Turkish soft power and cultural diplomacy in the modern sense will start developing with the end of the Cold War order. More precisely during Özal's era and will reach its zenith under the AKP. Some authors like Vedat Demir stretch the Turkish cultural diplomacy back to the Ottoman period.[3] It is true that the more general term of 'soft power', coined by Nye in his book *Bound to Lead* that was published in the 1990s, stretches much before Nye's book. For centuries nations are executing soft means to exert their influence Thus, some contours of the soft power in Turkish foreign policy looms to the 19th century. Culture is one of the three bases, along with foreign policy and values, that soft power lies on. Thus, it incorporates cultural attraction as one of the most fundamental aspects. Because the concept incorporates methods of persuasion and appeal in the eyes of the foreign public and diplomacy, cultural diplomacy can be understood as part of executing a soft power. That cultural diplomacy can be seen as a way of executing a soft power was confirmed by Melissen as well. According to him, "in cultural relations, the accent is increasingly on winning 'hearts and minds' and building trust."[4] Having in mind the long history of the strategy of "winning hearts and minds" by the states through excessive usage of cultural leverage, now let's take a look at the historical development of the modern Turkish soft power and public diplomacy.

With the foundation of the Turkish Republic on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire,

1 William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy Since 1774*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 31-78.

2 Gönül Tol and Birol Baskan, "From "Hard Power" to "Soft Power" and Back Again: Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East", *Middle East Institute*, November 29, 2018, Accessed on July 2, 2019, doi: https://www.mei.edu/publications/hard-power-soft-power-and-back-again-turkish-foreign-policy-middle-east

3 Vedat Demir, "Historical Perspective: Ottomans and the Republican Era", in *Turkey's Public Diplomacy*, ed. B. Senem Çevik and Philip Seib, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 43-66.

4 Jan Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice", in *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, ed. Jan Melissen (New York, Palgrave Macmillian, 2005), 21.

the new state needed promotion in the world. Much different in its organization and nature compared to the preceding Ottoman Empire, modern Turkey was organized by its founders as a modern European-like republic. It had to be presented to the international public as such.[5] This was not easy, as the image of Turks in the West was not positive. In Europe, for centuries Turks were known through the prism of Ottoman conquest in the continent. Once known as an expanding force, in the later phases for the main part Ottomans were perceived as decaying theocratic rulers. Their Islamic aspect was certainly adding to the image. With its foundation as a secular and western-oriented Republic in 1923, the political elite in Ankara aimed for the new state to be introduced in the new light. The early republican elite led by the Atatürk has launched a comprehensive campaign of rebranding Turkey as a modern and European state. The news of the Europeanization and modernization reforms had to get abroad. A foreign policy that was followed during the early Republic was proving the dedication of the Republican elite to make Turkey a modern and European state. During Atatürk's rule and a decade after Turkey was ruled by the single party, CHP (Republican People's Party). Both internal and external dynamics forced Turkey to shift to the multiparty system in 1946.[6] Circumstances of the Cold-War and Soviet threat on its borders forced Ankara to join the NATO alliance in 1952. During the whole period of the Cold-War Turkey remained one of the most loyal members of the alliance and for the main part escaped the adventurism in foreign policy.

With the end of the Cold War, new opportunities for Turkey to play a more active role evolved. Muslim-majority Turkic states won their independence from the ashes of the Soviet Union and Turkey was the first state to recognize their independence. Using this leverage and the ethnic kinship with the new republics at the time Prime Minister of Turkey Turgut Özal saw a chance to exert Turkish influence in this region.[7] Both Özal and Demirel, the two most influential Turkish politicians at the time would often repeat how an area "from the Adriatic sea to the Great Wall of China" is open for Turkey.[8] For Özal 21st century was to be a "Turkic century."[9] Balkans was another region where Turkey envisaged to achieve ambitious goals. But more Turkish engagement in the Balkans will come during the 2000s. Developments in Central Asia had drawn the attention of Turkey to this region. Wars were still raging in the Balkans, which turned away investors from much of the peninsula. On the other hand, the idea of active Turkish engagement in Central Asia was even supported by the West. Especially by the United States, Turkey's new course in foreign policy was understood through the prism of reducing the Russian influence in these countries by using a Muslim-majority secular country that is a NATO ally. Turkey's Western allies saw this as a chance to enter the region through the allied country.

5 Jan Melissen et al., *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations* (New York, Palgrave Macmillian, 2005), 3, 4.

6 Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 4th ed. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2017), 208-223.

7 Mustafa Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya ile İlişkiler", in *Türk Dış Politikası*, vol. 2. ed. Baskın Oran, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004). p. 366-439.

8 William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy Since 1774*, 221.

9 Ibid. 207-226.

During the early 1990s "Turkish model" was praised among some intelligence and security circles in the West.[10]

Soon it was understood by everyone that Turkey has neither capacity nor strategy to become an alternative to Russia in the region. Despite the expectations with the dissolution of the Soviet Union Kremlin's influence didn't disappear from the region. Even some regional countries, like Uzbekistan, became uncomfortable with Ankara's influence and decided to put to an end all the Turkish activities in their countries. Uzbekistan called back all its citizens studying in Turkey after learning that some of them engaged with the political groups that are opposing the government policies.[11] Uzbekistan also forced the closure of Turkish schools run by the Gülen movement in the country. The most influential country in the region, Russia, also recognized Ankara's presence in the region as part of American hegemonism, thus made maneuvering space narrower for Turkey.

3.1. TIKA in the 1990s

For achieving its goals Turkey needed strong public diplomacy institutions. One of the first steps in that direction was the creation of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) in 1992 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[12] Since its foundation, TİKA will serve as Turkey's official development assistance agency. Like many other countries, Turkey will use TİKA as part of its public diplomacy policy. Certainly, one of the best public diplomacy investments is delivering development assistance to the developing and poor countries. TIKA officially started its work with Law No. 21124 published on January 27, 1992, in the Official Gazette.[13] *Japan International Cooperation Agency* (JICA) was taken as a model during TİKA's launch.[14] Central Asia's Turkic republics were the primary focus during the 1990s. On the official website of the TİKA, it is stated that one of the primary reasons for setting up the agency was the need that was created in Central Asia by the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The world went through significant changes in 1991 with the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Many new nation-states emerged and these states, with whom we share common historical and cultural values, had great expectations from Turkey.

The need for an organization that can practice and coordinate the operations

10 Mustafa Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya ile İlişkiler", 366-439.

11 İdris Bal, "Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Türk Dış Politikası için Türk Cumhuriyetleri'nin Önemi", in *21. Yüzyılda Türk Dış Politikası* ed. İdris Bal, (İstanbul: Nobel Yayınları, 2004), p.375. quoted in Tuncay Kardaş and Ramazan Erdağ, "Bir Dış Politika Aracı Olarak TİKA", *Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi*, Vol.7, No.1, (2012): 171.

12 TIKA Official Website, *TİKA*, Accessed on April 29, 2019, doi: https://www.tika.gov.tr

13 Ayhan Nuri Yılmaz and Gökmen Kılıçoğlu, "Balkanlar'da YTB ve TİKA'nın Türk Kamu Diplomasisi Kurumları Olarak Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye'nin Bölgedeki Yumuşak Gücüne Etkileri", *Finans Ekonomi ve Sosyal Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Vol. 2, No. 2, (2017): 123.

14 Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Official Website, *JICA*, Accessed on April 29, 2019, doi: https://www.jica.go.jp/english/

to be carried out in this area and for foreign policy priorities arose and resulted in the establishment of the TİKA in 1992.[15]

The mentioned reasons were in line with the Özal government's discourse about the Turkic World. In that context, the first TİKA program office was established in Kyrgyzstan in January 1993.[16] The initial aim of launching TİKA was to make assistance in the development of the Turkic countries in Central Asia. Areas TİKA was active in Central Asia were; economic, social, cultural, social, commercial, and educational development. Until 2002 TİKA spread its network to 12 offices around the world. Until the end of 1999, TIKA conducted some 270 projects abroad.[17]

At the end of the 1990s and in the early 2000s, TIKA will pass through some organizational changes. After its foundation, it was linked to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In May 1999 TIKA will be transferred to the Prime Ministry. This change was in force for only two years. In May 2001 it became "a legal entity of the Ministry in charge."[18] Some authors who worked on TİKA like Mustafa Aydın think that one of the main reasons for TIKA's failures abroad was its transfer from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[19] Annual reports of TİKA don't match with Aydın's criticism as the agency expanded dramatically the scope of its international operations after the shift. After 2003, the number of offices and the amount of the delivered assistance rose exponentially. With the shift to the presidential system in 2018, TİKA will be moved under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism that is directly responding to the Office of President, representing another indication of the rising centralization under the AKP.[20]

During the 1990s TIKA like other initiatives from Turkey failed to meet the expectations in both Central Asia and the Balkans. Bad economic conditions at home prevented TIKA and other Turkish institutions to position themselves as relevant factors in the region. Especially after the country entered a political and economic crisis in the second half of the decade all the set ambitions became less achievable. Aydın thinks that TIKA extended itself too much in the region, thus after losing the focus it failed to reach the expected outcome.[21] Along TİKA the symptom of overstretching can be applied to other Turkish public diplomacy institutions as well. On the other hand, during the 1990s Turkey as a new player in the region didn't have many chances against established powers like Russia. Soon it became clear that even a weak Russia was a too important factor in the region and that Moscow's cultural and

15 "History of TIKA", *TİKA*, Accessed on April 29, 2019, doi: https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/page/history_of_tika-8526; "About us", *TİKA*, Accessed on April 29, 2019, doi: https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/page/about_us-14650

16 2018 TİKA Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara: TİKA, 2019): 18.

17 Mustafa Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya ile İlişkiler", 382.

18 Until 2018, TİKA was not fixed under the jurisdiction of a single ministry, but ministries that were in charge of TİKA's work were rotating.

19 Ibid.

20 "History of TİKA", TİKA, Accessed on March 14, 2019, doi: http://www.tika.gov.tr/en/page/history_of_tika-8526; 2018 TİKA Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara: TİKA, 2019): 26.

21 Mustafa Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya ile İlişkiler", in *Türk Dış Politikası*, ed. Baskın Oran, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004): 382.

historical leverage among the region's elites was not negligible.[22] Especially end of the 1998 economic crisis and Putin's rise in Russia marked the return of the Kremlin to the region. Ankara didn't have the strength to compete economically, politically, and culturally with Moscow.

Because of the internal deficiencies, Turkish institutions could not either project any significant influence in the Balkans. Turkey's presence during the 1990s in the Balkans was more of a hard power nature. Especially Turkish soft power capacities were almost nonexistent during the first half of the decade. In the republics of former Yugoslavia, the first signs of soft power activities will start with the end of the war in BiH.

3.2. Diyanet in the 1990s

Diyanet was another public diplomacy institution that became more active abroad. It has made its first steps in overseas activities during the 1970s, as part of the answer to the religious needs of the Turkish diaspora living as guest workers in Western Europe. But, later with the new opportunities created by the end of the Cold War, the Presidency will use the chance to expand its activities to Central Asia and the Balkans. Turkey will run through Diyanet a type of public diplomacy known as faith-based diplomacy or religious diplomacy. As part of projecting the influence through religion, Diyanet launched the *Eurasian Islamic Council Meetings* that since 1995 gathers religious figures "from the Adriatic Sea to the borders of China." Especially under the AKP government, Diyanet will become a recognized soft power tool in this vast geographical area. When it comes to Balkans Turkey will emerge as one of the most important Islamic factors in the 2000s and 2010s, countering Saudi and Iranian influence in Eurasia. Diyanet's role in Turkey's religious diplomacy will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

3.3. Student Exchange Diplomacy: Scholarship Programs

Turkey early understood the importance of education from the aspect of soft power. As many authors writing on soft power and public diplomacy recognize, educating foreign students is one of the best long-term investments of public diplomacy.[23] In that light, during the 1990s Turkish government started an ambitious foreign students exchange program that would provide scholarships for thousands of students from Central Asia, Balkans, and the Caucasus. In 1992, Turkey's previous international students' programs will be systematized into a new ambitious project known as "Büyük Öğrenci Projesi" (BÖP) or "Great Student Project." Under this project, many students from 'relative communities' of Central Asia and the Balkans will flock to conduct their higher education in Turkey. The BÖP scholarship program was coordinated by the Ministry of National Education (Milli Egitim Bakanlığı) until

22 Emrah Denizhan, "Türkiye'nin Kafkasya ve Orta Asya Politikası ve TİKA", *Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi*, Cilt 2, Sayı 1, (2010): 18.

23 Mark Leonard, Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy* (London: Foreign Policy Center, 2002), p. 19.

2012 when it will be handed over to YTB (Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluğu Başkanlığı).[24] The challenges Turkey with educating international students in the 1990s were almost the same as challenges YTB had two decades later. Many students returned to their home countries without finishing their education. One of the main reasons for this was the inadequate amount of scholarships that forced students to return to their countries.[25] Turkey seemed not to be prepared to host a large number of foreign students.

Besides the state-run scholarship program, the non-state sector was also active in developing educational networks. Religious groups like the Gülen movement was influential here. In the 1990s Gülen movement started creating a network of its educational facilities across the world.[26] Central Asia was under the special focus of the movement. Some countries like Uzbekistan and Russia will force the closure of the movement's school as the members of the movement were accused of being 'foreign agents' by the regional states. With the end of the wars in the former Yugoslavia, the movement will start operating schools in the Balkans as well. The movement was much more agile in spreading its operations to some countries than the official state was. Movements' expansion overseas was even encouraged by various Turkish governments. In a way with a wide network of charter schools and NGO's the movement was considered as the unofficial 'track-two' channel of Turkish public diplomacy during the 1990s.

Turkey Diyanet Foundation was also active in opening education facilities abroad. For instance, until 2000 twelve schools and seven Turkish Language courses were opened in Central Asia and the Caucasus region. Even ten universities and 2 faculties were launched with the Turkish capital.[27] But the real expansion in terms of Turkish-sponsored education facilities and scholarship programs will happen during the 2000s. Turkey's scholarship (exchange) diplomacy will be evaluated in detail in Chapter 6.

The Turkish business sector also followed the developments. Although economic capacity is part of the hard power, Ankara's relative economic presence in the former Eastern bloc had some minor effect on Turkish soft power. With the shift to a market economy by the majority of Eurasian countries many Turkish firms flocked to newly opened markets. During the transitional period, Turkish business circles acted fast and successfully adapted themselves to the hybrid markets of the post-socialist countries. Especially construction companies were successful, making the Turkish construction sector a recognizable force in this part of the world. Around 60 percent of the billions-of-dollars-worth construction projects that were constructed during the 1990s in Russia and Central Asia were constructed by the contracting Turkish firms.[28]

24 Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB)
25 Mustafa Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya ile İlişkiler", 385.
26 M. Hakan Yavuz, *Toward an Islamic Enlightenment: The Gülen Movement*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013)
27 Ibid. 384, 385.
28 "Turkish Contracting in the International Market", *TCA-Turkish International Contracting-2017*, page 5., Accessed on April 29, 2019, doi: https://www.tmb.org.tr

3.4. Turkish Soft Power in the Western Balkans During the 1990s

During the 1990s successor countries of the former Yugoslavia entered a period of ethnic conflicts. After Slovenia and Croatia decided to take the path of independence from the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in 1991, the overwhelmingly Serb-controlled Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) launched an attack on them. First under the attack of JNA was Slovenia. Because of the absence of a strong ethnic Serbian community that would support the Belgrade-regime the war ended in just ten days. Attack on Slovenia and Croatia signaled the start of a series of wars known as Yugoslav Wars, that will last for a decade. Croatia historically had a strong Serb minority. Croatian Serbs overwhelmingly supported Milošević's plan for creating a Greater Serbia and decided to side with the JNA. Soon the Republic of Serbian Krajina will be created from the areas where ethnic Serbs formed the majority of the population. The war will last until 1995. Croatia managed to defend its independence and to expel the Serb forces from the country.

Soon after Slovenia and Croatia, ethnic clashes erupted in BiH which was the most heterogeneous among the Yugoslav republics. Minor clashes led by paramilitary forces turned into violent aggression after BiH proclaimed its independence from SFRY in March 1992. The independence move came after the referendum that was supported by 99 percent of Bosniaks and Croats. The referendum was boycotted by the Bosnian Serbs, who wanted to stay in truncated Yugoslavia led by Milošević's ultranationalist regime. The majority of Bosniak and Bosnian Croat politicians understood Yugoslavia without Croatia and Slovenia as a Greater Serbia. Bosnian Serbs who didn't recognize the path of independence for BiH started forming paramilitary units that would separate parts of the country inhabited by the ethnic Serbs from the central government in Sarajevo. In January 1992 Bosnian Serbs declared Republika Srpska as a separate Republic from the Bosnian central government. Previously formed paramilitary units will merge with an organized military force of Army of the Republika Srpska. Army of Republic of Srpska supported by the Belgrade-regime started ethnic cleansing against the Bosniaks and Croats that lived in territories of the Bosnian Serb entity. In early 1992, a bloody war will erupt in BiH that will last until the signing of the Dayton Peace Accord in November 1995.

During the wars in former Yugoslavia Ankara was present in the region mainly through its hard power rather than a soft one. But Turkey's limited hard power capacity forced Ankara to exclusively act inside the strictly defined frame of its NATO allies, the US in the first place. In the first phases of the dissolution of the SFRY Turkey was promoting the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia. Despite the expectations from the Muslim communities in the former Yugoslavia for the recognition of their aim for independence, Ankara was acting according to the position of the international community regarding the crisis in Yugoslavia. In January 1992, Turkey decided to recognize the independence of all the republics that would separate themselves from Yugoslavia. This decision came only two days after the European Community

pressured by Germany recognized Slovenia and Croatia. The official recognition by Turkey will come on February 6, 1992, and all of the four newly independent republics were recognized by Ankara.[29] After that point, the Turkish position regarding the Yugoslav crisis will shift dramatically. A radical change in stance will especially come after Serb forces started openly committing atrocities against the barely armed Bosnian Muslims.

After bloodshed started in BiH Ankara became probably the staunchest promoter of the military intervention against the Serb forces. In international forums like the United Nations, European Council, OSCE[30] , and the OIC[31], Turkey was trying to gather support for more concrete action in the region. Ankara used its position of temporarily presiding over the European Council since May 1992 to internationally promote the newly won Bosnian independence.[32] There are some indications that Turkey was helping the Bosniak side with the arms.[33] The public in Turkey was also very sensitive to the horrors Bosniaks and other Muslims were passing through. Especially Turkish people with origin in the region and the Islamists were the loudest in their critics of the Turkish governments for not taking concrete actions against the Serbs. The presence of a strong Balkan diaspora in the country was making pressure for Turkish politicians to take action. But the country's political, economic, and military capacities were inadequate for unilateral action in the region. Ankara will have act according to the strategy of its NATO allies.[34] The US-backed military intervention came in 1995. The United States together with its allies decided to militarily engage against the Bosnian Serb forces that launched systematical mass killings of the civilians and attacking UN troops. Turkish Armed Forces also took an active role in the NATO-led bombardment of the Serb positions in BiH in the operation named *Operation Deliberate Force* that lasted for around 20 days from August to September 1995.[35] A similar situation happened during the Kosovo War of 1999. Turkey again took an active role in NATO-led *Operation Allied Force* against the Serbian Military positions that lasted from March to June 1999.[36] Turkey also maintained military support to the Bosnian army through US-backed 'train and equip' programs.

Behind the scene, Turkey was active in supporting the Bosniak and Albanian side during the Yugoslav Wars. But, probably the single most concrete and lasting diplomatic achievement for Turkey during the Bosnian War was the support for the process of reconciliation between Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats. The most credits for

29 Şule Kut, *Balkanlar'da Kimlik ve Egemenlik*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2005): 54, 55.
30 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
31 Organization of Islamic Conference
32 Ilhan Uzgel, "Balkanlarla İlişkiler", in *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşında Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, Cilt II. 1980-2001*, ed. Baskın Oran, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2001), p. 496.
33 Didem Ekinci, "The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Turkish Parliamentary Debates (1992-1995): A Constructivist Approach", *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Volume 6, No 22 (Summer 2009), p. 37-60.
34 Dimitar Bechev, "A Very Long Engagement: Turkey in the Balkans," in *Another Empire?: a Decade of Turkey's Foreign Policy Under the Justice and Development Party*, ed. Kerem Öktem, Ayşe Kadıoğlu and Mehmet Karlı, (Istanbul, Istanbul Bilgi University Press, 2012): 213-214.
35 Ilhan Uzgel, "Balkanlarla İlişkiler", 493-502.
36 Ibid. 508-513.

the reconciliation certainly go to the Clinton administration. But Turkish diplomats also played some role during the process of reconciliation.[37] Especially close personal relationship Turkish President Süleyman Demirel had with Croatian President Franjo Tudjman gave Ankara some leverage over Croatia and helped Ankara in convincing Zagreb to stop the disruptive role in BiH and reconcile with the Bosniak side.[38] Joint US-Turkish diplomatic effort in reconciling Bosniaks and Croats who were fighting against each other since 1993 will culminate in the signing of the Washington Agreement on March 18, 1994, after which Bosniaks and Croats will join hands to fight together against the Serbs. The agreement was signed between the Presidents, Prime Ministers, and Foreign Ministers of BiH, Croatia, and Bosnian Croat quasi Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia. Washington Agreement will lead to the formation of the Bosniak-Croat Federation, known as the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina which after the war will form 51 percent of the country's territory. Bosniak-Croat reconciliation will further strengthen the hand of both Bosniaks and Croats against the Army of Republika Srpska, which will lead to the final ceasefire and pressure on the Serb side to sit at the negotiation table. Turkey also provided some training to the army of the Bosniak-Croat Federation.[39]

Thanks to active engagement on the same side with the Western powers for the first time since the Ottoman period Turkey managed to position its military forces in the Balkans. All thanks to the loyalty and careful policy Turkey demonstrated regarding its role in the NATO alliance and the relations with the US which came out of the Cold War as a global hegemon. As a part of the peacekeeping troops after the wars in the region Turkey stationed its troops in both BiH and Kosovo. Besides obtaining military achievements Turkey received a rare opportunity to enter the club of 55 nations and agencies in charge of supervising the implementation of the Dayton Peace Accord in post-war BiH known as *Peace Implementation Council* (PIC).[40] PIC is the main body of the international community's governance in BiH. The actual power of the PIC lays in its Steering Board, which is the "executive arm of the PIC." Turkey is also part of the Board. The Steering Board of the PIC nominates the High Representative who is the main representative and the executive of the will of the Great Powers and international community organizations represented in the PIC. The High Representative is solely responsible to the PIC.[41] The Office of High Representative (OHR) is also funded by the PIC. Through time OHR received more authority than the local politicians. Eleven countries and international organizations

37 Şule Kut, *Balkanlar'da Kimlik ve Egemenlik*, 209, 210.; Misha Glenny, "Heading Off War in the Southern Balkans", Foreign Affairs, May/June, 1995, Accessed on February 28, 2019, doi: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/1995-05-01/heading-war-southern-balkans

38 Gülçin Sağır, "Türkiye'nin Bosna Hersek Savaşı'ndaki Politikası", *Political Science and Politics*, (January, 2016), 6.

39 Othon Anastasakis "Turkey's Assertive Presence in Southeast Europe: Between Identity Politics and Elite Pragmatism", in *Another Empire? A Decade of Turkey's Foreign Policy Under the Justice and Development Party*, ed. Kerem Öktem, Ayşe Kadıoğlu and Mehmet Karlı, (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University, 2012): 193.

40 "Peace Implementation Council", *OHR-Office of High Representative*, Accessed on February 21, 2019, doi: http://www.ohr.int/?page_id=1220

41 Mehmet Uğur Ekinci, "Bosna Hersek Siyasetini Anlama Kılavuzu", *SETA*, (2014): Ankara: 28.

are represented in the Steering Board. These are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Presidency of the European Union, the European Commission, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) represented by Turkey.[42] Entering the Steering Board of the PIC gave Turkey a unique chance to have a say in the international administration of BiH.

As it is already said, Turkish soft power influence in the region during the 1990s was minor. Ankara was still in the early phases of increasing its soft capacities. This was a decade when Turkey just started investing in the public diplomacy infrastructure. Although many ideological and political circles from Turkey were active during the Bosnian War, soft power organizations that were most active were those gathered around the Islamist circles. The first among them that entered the country during the war was IHH (İnsani Yardım Vakfı), an Islamist NGO founded in 1992 to help the civilian victims of the war with humanitarian help.[43] IHH will be raised to the status of foundation in 1995.[44] After the Bosnian War, IHH continued with the humanitarian assistance in other crisis-driven regions like Chechnya, Kosovo, and Palestine. It can be said that the Bosnian War served as the first serious international experience for the pious Turkish NGOs like IHH. It was not only Özal and the Turkish political establishment that benefitted from the post-Cold War situation but various Turkish Islamist groups build-up their networks during this period.

Another pious group that used the opportunity of the end of the Cold-War was the Gülen movement. Like the state itself, the Gülen movement was also inspired by the ideas of Turkish-Islamic synthesis during the 1990s, thus conducted its first international steps in post-Soviet Central Asia. On the other hand, contrary to the official state, the movement was primarily successful in building-up its overseas infrastructure. In a very fast manner, the movement managed to position itself as a relevant non-state actor and became probably the most influential Turkish non-governmental group overseas. Through unusual self-financing operations, it managed to open a wide network of educational facilities across Central Asia, Balkans, and beyond. As it was the case for the government itself the primary focus of the movement during the 1990s was Central Asia. But the Balkans was significant to the movement as well. Like it was the case with other Islamist groups, the geopolitics of the Balkans was understood through the prism of the Ottoman legacy in the region and helping the 'Muslim brothers' suffering from the hands of non-Muslims. The first steps came with starting the foundations and opening the charter schools across the region. The first educational facility that was opened in the Balkans was a school in Albania founded in 1993. Soon after Albania, schools were established in Macedonia

42 Ibid.

43 Meaning of the name in English is "Humanitarian Aid Foundation."

44 IHH is an offshoot of the Islamist Milli Görüş movement. It also worth mentioning that Milli Görüş gave rise to Islamist *Refah Party* (Welfare Party) (1983-1998) led by an engineer Necmettin Erbakan (1926-2011). AKP will also emerge from Milli Görüş and the Refah Party. Refah Party included politicians such as Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Abdullah Gül, Bülent Arınç, Numan Kurtulmuş and others who would play a major role in Turkish politics and serve under various positions after 2003. "Tarihçe", *IHH*, Accessed on April 29, 2019, doi: https://www.ihh.org.tr/tarihce

in 1996, BiH in 1997, and Kosovo in 2000.[45] As of 2016, while the movement was still strong in the region, the number of schools in the Western Balkans, excluding Croatia and Slovenia, was around forty. According to the study conducted by the Turkish state news agency only in BiH, there were 15 educational facilities linked to the movement.[46] Except for Albania where some madrasahs upon the request from the Islamic Community of Albania are taken over by the Gülenist umbrella organization *Sema Foundation*, the majority of movement's schools in the region are gymnasium-like secular schools.[47] Education in the Gülenist schools is provided primarily in local languages combined with English and Turkish as a foreign language.[48]

Besides educational facilities, the movement has created a well-connected network of affiliated people that often hail from the rich and elite circles from the region. One of the distinctive strategies of the movement was educating the children of the elites in foreign countries. Many of the Balkan politicians and businesspeople had their children educated in the Gülenist schools. Even some of the former students in the movement schools will later come to important positions in the regional institutions. The best known is the present Grand Mufti of Albania Skender Bruçaj who is closely affiliated with the movement.[49]

. It is possible to say that after the political rift between the movement and the Turkish government Gülenists started losing much of the previous power they had in this part of the world, while other pious groups still enjoy the blessings from the government.

3.5. Turkish Soft Power in the Western Balkans During the 2000s

As the Yugoslav crisis was approaching an end with NATO interventions in 1995 and 1999 the region started slowly opening to the global market. During the Cold War, all Balkan countries except Greece were managed by planned economic models. The 2000s represented a decade of transition for the regional countries. This was a slow process. Many regional economies had tough times adjusting to the open market economy. Especially Western Balkans that besides the shift to a new economic model were thorn by a decade-long war. Western states that followed a comprehensive strategy in the region, by building up a presence in political, economic, military, and soft power, tried to integrate the region into the Western sphere of influence.

45 Kerem Öktem, "Global Diyanet and Multiple Networks: Turkey's New Presence in the Balkans", *Journal of Muslims in Europe*, (2012): 47.

46 "FETÖ'nün Batı Balkanlar'daki yapılanması", *Anadolu Ajansı*, 28.07.2016, Accessed on March 4, 2019, doi: https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/fetonun-bati-balkanlardaki-yapilanmasi/617149

47 Gülenists were asked to take over religious madrashas that were previously financed by the foundations from oil-rich Gulf-Arab states. Some of the transfers under the control of the movement came amid the intensified pressure from the US to shutdown the Salafi networks in the region as a part of Bush-administration's fight on 'Global Terror.'

48 Kerem Öktem, "Global Diyanet and Multiple Networks: Turkey's New Presence in the Balkans", *Journal of Muslims in Europe*, (2012): 47, 48.

49 Jahja Muhasilović, "Turkey's Faith-based Diplomacy in the Balkans", *Rising Powers Quarterly*, vol. 3, Issue 3, (2018), p. 77, 78.

Western domination in the Balkans was complemented with Milošević's overthrow in 2000. The coronation of West's victory in the Balkans, especially of the EU, came in 2003 when all the countries of the Western Balkans pledged to join the EU and NATO and proclaimed Euro-Atlantic integration as their strategic priority number one. Especially with the US hard power victory in the region by ending the last of the dictatorial rules in the region, the Western Balkans entered a period of adjusting its laws according to the EU standards. European Union became omnipresent with the set of its sophisticated soft power instruments.

That EU has demonstrated greater soft power capacity than the United States was confirmed by Joseph Nye. Throughout his writings, Nye criticized the United States for relying too much on hard power, and ignoring the soft approaches in foreign policy, while on the other hand, he praises Europeans for effectively applying the soft power in foreign policy and being more eager to work in the frame of international institutions.[50] According to him, the US under the Bush administration became even more reluctant in undertaking the hard task of nation-building abroad but invested much of its foreign policy energy in hard power operations under the goal of fighting international terrorism. The role of nation-building in the Balkans was undertaken by the European states and the EU institutions.

> Europeans have been less likely to shrink from the hard tasks of nation-building that America initially eschewed under the Bush administration. In many ways, Europeans are more adept and comfortable than the United States in deploying the civilian resources that enhance soft power.
>
> The EU tends to exert its influence overseas via the promotion of democracy and development through trade and aid."[51]

According to Nye, the results of nation-building and promotion of democracy by the EU "has been impressive in central and eastern Europe."[52]

Turkey was governed by weak coalition governments during the late 1990s and the early 2000s. Also, a serious economic crisis struck Turkey at the turn of the millennium. Internal weaknesses harmed Ankara's ability to achieve significant economic opening in the region. Without economic backing, Turkey's soft power remained invisible in the region. On the other hand, from the perspective of hard power, Turkey was active in the Balkans. After the NATO-led military operation against the Bosnian Serb forces in 1995, Turkey also participated in another NATO-led operation against the Milošević regime in 1999. The bombing campaign of Serbia by NATO in 1999 paved a way for Kosovo's independence from Belgrade in 2008. When it comes to the question of Kosovo, in the early phases of the crisis Turkey was careful with the Albanian separatism, as the country was struggling with the Kurdish

50 For more about the differences between the American and European approaches in foreign policy see: Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004)

51 Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 81.

52 bid.

separatism back home. But, as the Western powers mobilized their energy towards supporting the Kosovo Albanians, Turkey followed.[53] In the long-run Turkey saw a lot of benefits for making this decision. If Turkish territory in Europe (Eastern Thrace) is excluded, NATO operations provided a chance for Turkey to build-up its military presence in the region for the first time since the Balkan Wars. Participating in NATO's operations allowed Turkey to open its military bases in BiH and Kosovo.

During the transition from the 1990s to the 2000s, Turkey's diplomacy was run by Ismail Cem (1940-2007), another interesting diplomatic figure, who also followed a pro-active foreign policy. Cem served as a Turkish Foreign Minister from 1997 to 2002. Some authors like Serbian orientalist Darko Tanasković believe that Cem was following a 'Neo-Ottomanist' foreign policy. Unlike the majority of Neo-Ottomanist, Cem didn't hail from the Nationalistic-Islamist circles of Anatolian Turks but was a social-democrat coming from a Kemalist elite circle.[54] He was underlining the importance of Turkey's historical and cultural roots in foreign policy. Unlike the majority of Foreign Ministers before him, Cem emphasized the continuity with the Ottoman imperial legacy. For Cem, the Ottoman past represented a richness and strength regarding the country's international standing.[55] Turkey's rich history and culture was a great asset to be instrumentalized as soft power. During his mandate, Cem was part of some important developments in the region. He was also responsible for the normalization of bilateral ties with Greece. The relations were normalized with the so-called "earthquake diplomacy."[56] The common cultural heritage between the two countries was emphasized throughout the Greco-Turkish dialogue.

Another important foreign policy engagement during Cem's mandate was Turkey's military participation in the NATO-led intervention in Serbia and Kosovo. Cem believed that Turkish and US interests in the region intersects, calling the US-Turkish relations a "necessary symbiosis."[57] With this understanding, Ankara used the momentum of US support for the Turkish engagement in the Balkans. Thanks to the participation in NATO operations Turkey entered the club of nations who were guarantors of regional stability. But, despite Cem's successful diplomatic maneuvers, partly because of the internal weaknesses, Turkey was not ready to follow his dynamic diplomatic vision.

At the turn of the millennium internal situation in Turkey was not rosy. In the second half of the 1990s country entered a chaotic period marked by a series of crises. In 1997 a soft military coup swept Islamist politicians from the political scene. In the next 1999, a destructive earthquake struck the Marmara region, the heartland

53 Turkey was among the first countries to recognize Kosovo's independence in 2008.

54 It is believed that İsmail Cem's ancestry hails from the Balkans. For more about Ismail Cem: Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim: İsmail Cem Anlatıyor*, (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 2012)

55 İsmail Cem, *Türkiye, Avrupa, Avrasya: Strateji, Yunanistan, Kıbrıs* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2009); Ozan Örmeci, "Ismail Cem's Foreign Policy (1997-2002)", *SDU Faculty of Arts and Sciences-Journal of Social Sciences*, No. 23, (2011), p. 223-245.

56 James Ker-Lindsay, "Greek-Turkish Rapprochement: The Impact of Disaster Diplomacy?", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* Vol. 14 No. 1, (2000): 215-232.

57 Ozan Örmeci, "Ismail Cem's Foreign Policy (1997-2002)", 227.

of the Turkish economy and the most populous region. The same year a serious financial crisis hit the country. The earthquake of 1999 and the political crisis within the weak coalition led by Bülent Ecevit (1925-2006) unleashed a serious economic crisis, paving the way for the rise of a new party that will rule Turkey for the next few decades.

The 1990s represented an experimental phase for Turkish foreign policy. After Turgut Özal in the first half of the decade and Ismail Cem in the second half, it was clear that Turkey left behind the strictly alliance-indexed and passive Cold-War era foreign policy. The two tried to correspond to the changing nature of the international relations, but unfortunately for both Turkey seemed not ready to follow their foreign policy vision. The Turkish economy, rule of law, and infrastructure were not up to the task. After the country entered an economic crisis at the turn of the millennium it seemed less likely than ever that it might conduct an ambitious foreign policy.

Justice and Development Party (AKP), an Islamist party formed by the younger generation of Islamists that detached from Necmettin Erbakan's (1926-2011) banned Refah Party, won the 2002 Turkish general elections, by getting 34.28 percent of votes. The second came to Republican People's Party (CHP) with 19.39 percent of votes. Because of the ten percent threshold only these two parties managed to enter the parliament dividing among themselves votes of other parties that left below the threshold.[58] This system gave AKP a strong say in the parliament despite receiving only a third of the popular votes.

After AKP came to power, the party tried to follow a compromising policy, rather than the one of the older generation of Milli Görüş politicians. In their statements the party leadership distanced themselves from the type of Islamism advocated by Erbakan and circle around him, promising a reconciled approach between Islam and democracy. AKP was careful with their statements regarding secularism because of the fresh experience with a military coup in 1997. As soon as the new government came to power it promised more reforms at home and determination regarding the Euro-Atlantic path of the country. This foreign policy rhetoric differed from the one used by Erbakan, who during the short period as the President of Turkey tried to make more collaboration with the Islamic world rather than with the West.[59] AKP started with a more Western-friendly foreign policy. To conduct reforms at home, the government needed to enforce a more determined EU integration process for Turkey. Advocating EU membership for the country, these statements soothed the military that since the early days of the Republic was seen as a guardian of secularism in Turkey.[60]

58 "22. Dönem Milletvekili Genel Seçimleri", *YSK*, Accessed on May 31 2019, doi: http://www.ysk.gov.tr

59 Erbakan's Islamist Refah Party was highly critical of Turkey's EU integration process calling the European Union a 'Christian-Union.' Instead of joining EU Erbakan proposed the creation of a 'Muslim-Union.' During his presidency he promoted the formation of *D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation* in 1996, that was composed of eight most populous Muslim-majority countries. This was an unusual foreign policy move for a Western-oriented and secular country like Turkey.

60 Ziya Öniş and Suhnaz Yılmaz, "Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey During the AKP Era", *Turkish Studies*, 10 (1), (2009)

In the period from 2002 to 2009 for the main part, AKP followed careful foreign policy. Unlike Özal or Erbakan and contrary to the fears of the secularists there was not adventurism in AKP's foreign policy. Many reforms that were previously promised by the party were delivered. Many of the reforms were in line with the EU integration process. After receiving the status of the candidate in 1999, Turkey was awarded by the start of the EU membership negotiation process in October 2005.[61] If everything went as planned, there were speculations that Turkey might become a full member of the EU by October 2015. But after the initial enthusiasm, some developments in Turkey and Europe will slow down Turkey's EU-negotiations process. Because of the internal and international development after opening 16 chapters and closing only one the reformist spirit in Turkey and enthusiasm over joining the Union will start steaming down around 2007 and 2008, after which the whole process entered a period of standby. Even the support for EU membership among the citizens will fall. For example, before 2008 more than half of the Turkish population was supporting the country's membership in the union, but since then rates have fallen.[62] As EU negotiations were moving from the top of the agenda Ankara will start searching for alternatives in the foreign policy.[63]

The model AKP was promoting in the first two mandates (2002-2007 and 2007-2011) has found many supporters in the West. Turkey under the AKP was seen as a successful model that has managed to reconcile Islamism with Democracy. Turkey was praised as such. There was even an enthusiasm in the US that the 'Turkish model' should be exported to the rest of the Muslim world.[64] This was especially popular among the circles in the US interested in reconciliation with the Islamic World. AKP's rule came in the same period while the United States was conducting a series of wars in the Muslim World under the Bush administration's Global War on Terror. Because of the series of terrorist attacks by Al-Qaeda like the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, the July 7, 2005, London bombing attacks, 2004 Madrid train bombings, Islamism was seen as a radical ideology in the West.

Besides EU integration that for the government in the first place meant limiting the influence of the military at home through the reform agenda, authors like Kemal Kirişçi link the normalization of Turkish foreign policy to the emergence of Turkey

61 Atila Eralp and **Çiğdem Üstün,** *Turkey and the EU: the Process of Change and Neighborhood*, (Ankara: Center for European Studeies, Middle East Technical University, 2010), 14, 15.

62 "Support for EU membership in Turkey at over 50%", *Delegation of the European Union to Turkey*, 11.07.2007, Accessed on April 30, 2019, doi: https://www.avrupa.info.tr/en/news/support-eu-membership-turkey-over-50-2899; For more about the Turkish public opinion about Turkey's EU membership: Max Hoffman, "A Snapshot of Turkish Public Opinion Toward the European Union", *Center for American Progress*, September 27, 2018, doi: https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2018/09/27/458537/snapshot-turkish-public-opinion-toward-european-union/

63 In the recent years reversed process is taking place where there is a slight rise in support for the EU membership among the Turkish citizens. "Turkish Citizens' Support for EU Membership on the Rise: Poll", Hurriyet Daily, 09.01.2018, Accessed on April 30, 2019, doi: http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-citizens-support-for-eu-membership-on-the-rise-poll-125402

64 Graham Fuller, The New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World (Washington DC, United States Institute of Peace Press, 2008)

as a 'trading nation.'[65] The rise of economic interconnectedness forced the normalization of ties with the bordering countries.

The best example of normalizing ties was the improvement of bilateral relations with the immediate neighbor Syria. After tense relations between the two countries during the 1990s caused by Damascus' protection of Abdullah Öcalan, supporting PKK, issue of annexation of Hatay province by Turkey, and decades-long disputes over the flow of Euphrates into Syria, the two countries entered a phase of normalizing the ties in 2000s. After AKP came to power two countries quickly normalized relations after a long period of strained bilateral ties, opened the border, signed various trade and military cooperation agreements, marking the radical shift in approach towards each other.[66]

Some developments in both countries were responsible for paving the way for the improvement of relations. The rise of AKP in Turkey corresponded to the rise of Bashar al-Assad, son of Hafez al-Assad (1970-2000), in Syria. After taking the power from his father in 2000 Bashar al-Assad launched some reforms in the same period when AKP also had reforms on its agenda. In a very quick manner, the two countries improved strained relations and started cooperating on all levels.[67] Turkey was even interested in brokering peace negotiations between Damascus and Tel Aviv, but the attempt ended without reaching any significant success.

The emergence of Turkey as a trading nation is best seen in the Turkish economic engagement in the Kurdish-inhabited Northern Iraq where the business from Turkey flourished enormously since the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. Northern parts of Iraq mainly remained out of the US military intervention. This part of Iraq for a long time was seen as an unfriendly territory by Ankara, where Turkish armed forces launched military operations against the PKK whose militants were crossing the border into Turkey for years.[68] But, the weakening of the Iraqi central government has created a vacuum in the Kurdish-inhabited northern provinces that provided Turkey a chance to enter the local economic market.

Domestic and international factors contributed to Turkey to outperform in the economy during the 2000s. Especially under Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu (2009-2015) AKP tried to improve the political and economic climate across the neighboring regions by implementing more synchronized foreign policy. This foreign policy was popularly called the "Zero problem policy." The change in the mentality of the Turkish diplomacy and the improvement of other circumstances forced AKP to invest more in soft power means and strengthen the institutions that would carry out the new ambitious foreign policy.

65 Kemal Kirişçi, "The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy: The Rise of the Trading State", *New Perspectives on Turkey*, no. 40 (2009): 29-57.

66 Francesco D'Alema, "The Evolution of Turkey's Syria Policy", Istituto Affari Internazionali, IAI Working Papers 17, October 28, 2017

67 Michael B. Bishku, "Turkish-Syrian Relations: A Checked History", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 19, No. 3, (2012)

68 Kurdistan Worker's Party

Besides strengthening public diplomacy institutions like TİKA and Diyanet, the Turkish government launched the Office of Public Diplomacy in 2010.[69] The Office was created to coordinate all the public diplomacy institutions. In the initial phase, it was founded within the Office of Prime Ministry. With the new Turkish presidential system task of coordinating the public diplomacy institutions was transferred to the President's Office. In 2018, the Directorate of Communication of the Turkish Presidency was founded under the authority of the Presidential Office.[70] It is not possible to say that both Office of Public Diplomacy and its later version the Directorate of Communications of the Turkish Presidency has achieved their foundational goals. Like many state institutions, they remained pretty much 'empty shell institutions.'

When it comes to the Balkans in the period from 2002 to 2009, Turkish influence both in terms of economic and soft power presence was on the rise. As soft power theorists put forward, one of the important preconditions for a strong soft power capacity lays in economic strength. Although economic might is considered to be an integral part of hard power, for Joseph Nye economic capacity is interconnected with the concept of soft power. As Nye points out in his book how "a strong economy not only provides resources for sanctions and payments but can also be a source of attractiveness."[71] Turkey's economic interest in the region is best reflected in trade relations with the Balkan countries. In 2002 trade volume between Turkey and the Balkans as a whole was 3.6 billion USD. In the six years, the amount of trade increased more than fivefold to 18.6 billion in 2008. (See Table 3.1) Turkey's trade with BiH also rose significantly. In 2002 bilateral trade between the two countries was 49 million USD, while in 2008 it was 597 million USD.[72] In the six years, a twelvefold increase was recorded. A similar development can be observed with the other Western Balkans countries as well. But despite the growth in trade Turkey never managed to become a top trading partner for the Balkan countries.

In some countries, Turkey managed to achieve some small short-lived successes. Turkey was best ranked in Albania where Turkey for years was positioned 2nd or 3rd in terms of imports. Some regional countries export extensively to Turkey. Turkey was the second-largest market for Greek export in the period between 2012 and 2014. In 2017, the Turkish market fell to third place in terms of Greek exports. When it comes to imports of Turkish products to Greece, Turkey was not ranked even among the top eight countries in 2017.[73] The situation is similar when it comes to trade with Bulgaria. Turkey was the second-largest export market for Bulgarian

69 İbrahim Kalın, "Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Turkey", Center for Strategic Research-SAM, Vol. XVI. No. 3 (Autumn, 2011), 5-23.

70 "About DoC", Presidency of the Republic of Turkey: Directorate of Communications, Accessed on July 7, 2019, doi: https://www.iletisim.gov.tr/english/kurum-hakkinda

71 Joseph Nye, Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics, 7,8.

72 "Foreign Trade by Countries", Turkish Statistical Institute-TÜIK, Accessed on November 22, 2019, doi: http://www.turkstat.gov.tr

73 "Greece", CIA World Factbook 2017, Accessed on March 9 2019, doi: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gr.html

products in 2012.[74] After a short jump in that year, Turkey will move back to its traditional position being the third or fourth-largest export market for Bulgaria. In terms of exporting Turkish products to Bulgaria, Turkey was even less present.[75]

The largest trade markets for Turkey in the Balkans are not in the Western parts of the peninsula, but Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece. Almost 80 percent of all Turkish export to Balkans as a whole and almost third of all imports from the region in the period from 2006 to 2013 was with these three countries.[76] The share of Western Balkans in the total trade between Turkey and the Balkans as a whole was only 20 percent of all the imports and two-thirds of all the exports in the period between 2006 and 2013.[77] But, despite the small significance, an imposing increase in the trade between Turkey and the Western Balkans was recorded in the last decade and a half. The trade expanded almost seven-fold in the decade under the AKP increasing from 435 million USD in 2002 to around 3 billion USD in 2012. Despite this significant growth, the share of the Western Balkans in Turkish foreign trade remained under 1 percent.[78] Although having a small share in the overall trade with the region, Western Balkans is becoming more and more represented in Turkey's trade in the region.

A country in the Western Balkans with whom Turkey has the largest trade volume is Serbia, representing 5.6 percent of Turkish exports to the Balkans and 2.2 percent of imports from the region in 2013.[79] This is not surprising as Serbia has the largest market in the western part of the peninsula. On the other hand, BiH with whom Ankara has 'brotherly relations' received only 3.5 percent of Turkish exports to the region and provided 1.1 percent of imports from the region to Turkey in 2013 Even in a small market like BiH, Turkey was not among the top trading partners.[80] According to the last available data from 2017 Turkey was not among the top five trade partners for BiH neither in export nor import.[81] For years the share of Turkey in Bosnia's trade was well below the level of countries like Germany, Italy, Serbia, or Croatia. The absence of Turkey in the Bosnian economy has created some criticism in BiH. Ankara was criticized by the local opponents for trying to play a more active role in the internal Bosnian politics without having achieved any significant

74 "Bulgaria", CIA World Factbook 2014, Accessed on March 9 2019, doi: https://workmall.com/world_fact_book_2014/bulgaria/index.html

75 "Bulgaria", CIA World Factbooks 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019, Accessed on November 23, 2019, dio: https://theodora.com/wfbcurrent/bulgaria/index.html

76 Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat), 2014

77 Croatia is included in the statistics.

78 Ülke Gruplarına Göre Dış Ticaret, TÜİK, Accessed on March10, 2019, doi: 1996-2012, http://www.tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?alt_id=12.; Fatma Aslı Kelkitli, "Turkey and the Western Balkans During the AKP Period", Avrasya Etüdleri 44 (2013): 100.

79 Ibid.

80 Ülke Gruplarına Göre Dış Ticaret, TÜİK, Accessed on March10, 2019, doi: 1996-2012, http://www.tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?alt_id=12.; Fatma Aslı Kelkitli, "Turkey and the Western Balkans During the AKP Period", Avrasya Etüdleri 44 (2013): 100.; "Karakteristika vanjske trgovine BiH", FIPA, Accessed on June 1, 2019, doi: http://www.fipa.gov.ba

81 Ekonomske statistike-statistika robne razmjene BiH s inozemstvom (siječanj-prosinac 2017. godine), Agencija za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine, god. 13, br. 12, 2018.

economic footprint.[82] But, despite the criticism especially in the period from 2002 to 2008, the trend of increasing trade with Turkey that was evident in other Balkan countries was seen in BiH as well. Since 2002 there was a twelvefold increase in bilateral trade volume between the two countries. In 2002 the bilateral trade volume was 49 million USD, while in 2018 it reached 661 million USD. The growth in Bosnian-Turkish trade slowed down significantly after 2008.[83]

The exponential rise in trade with the Balkans lasted only six years from 2002 to 2008. In this period, the trade volume with the region grew more than fivefold and stabilized after 2008 between 18 and 21 billion USD a year. (See Table 3.1) The growth in trade after 2008, the year of the global financial crisis, will be almost flat, rising from 18.6 billion USD in 2008 to only 21.2 billion USD in 2018. After raising more than fivefold in just six years period, the growth significantly slowed down to increase only 14 percent in ten years period or 1.4 per annum. If the four years from 2014 to 2018 are isolated from the bigger picture then the annual growth was even lower, representing less than one percent growth a year or more precisely very slim 0.56 percent. (See Table 3.1) The increase in trade with BiH also started slowing down after 2008. The exponential growth didn't continue after 2008, and in a decade afterward, trade increased only 11 percent or 1.1 annually.[84]

The overall share of the Balkans in Turkey's foreign trade over the 16 years (2002-2018) remained pretty modest. The share of Balkans in Turkish foreign trade rose in the period from 2002 to 2008, from 4.6 percent to 6.1 percent. After reaching its peak around 2008, in the decade after the financial crisis, the share was reduced from 6.1 percent to 5.4. percent. (See Table 3.1) It can be concluded that under the AKP the importance of Balkans in Turkey's foreign trade relations remained limited as it was before 2002. In that sense, except for the overall volume of trade, the share or the importance of the region in Turkish foreign trade didn't change substantially. On the other side, the EU and the rest of the Western European countries remained the top trading partners in the region.

In 2017, the share of the Western Balkans was less than one percent in Turkey's total foreign trade.[85] For the Western Balkans Turkey is also a minor economic factor. European Union was and remained the top trading partner in the region.[86] According to the latest data from 2017 more than 70 percent of trade in the Western Balkans was with the EU, while the trade with Turkey represented around 4 percent.[87] When analyzed on the level of particular countries EU-member states by far dominate the scene. Germany, Italy, Slovenia, and Austria are the leaders in trading with

82 "Dormant Power Revival", The Economist, November 5-11, 2011, 64.

83 "Foreign Trade", Turkish Statistical Institute-TÜIK, Accessed on April 31, 2019, doi: http://www.turkstat.gov.tr

84 Ibid.

85 Ibid.

86 Selma Aytüre and Ömer Berki, "Avrupa Birliği, Türkiye ve Balkan Ülkeleri Ticaret İlişkileri", İstanbul Ticaret Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimleri Dergisi, Year:14 Special edition: 28, 2015, p. 202.

87 European Union, Trade in goods with Western Balkans (2017), European Commission, 2018, Accessed on November 23, 2019, doi: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20180517-1?inheritRedirect=true

the region. Turkey's share in Western Balkans' trade relations remains behind the Western countries, Russia, or even China.[88]

Table 3.1 Turkey-Balkans Trade by Year[89]

Year	Trade with Balkans	Share of Balkans in Turkish Trade	Turkey's Total Trade
2002	3 580 986	4.08	87 612 886
2003	5 341 809	4.58	116 592 528
2004	7 888 046	4.9	160 706 918
2005	9 686 476	5.03	192 250 559
2006	12 822 989	5.69	225 110 850
2007	16 935 449	6.1	277 334 464
2008	18 553 620	5.55	333 990 769
2009	12 452 441	5.12	243 071 033
2010	15 050 292	5.02	299 427 551
2011	18 450 812	4.91	375 748 545
2012	18 375 475	4.72	389 006 878
2013	20 094 227	4.98	403 463 887
2014	20 753 647	5.19	399 787 274
2015	16 458 382	4.68	351 073 229
2016	16 239 602	4.76	341 147 818
2017	19 746 974	5.05	390 792 591
2018	21 222 569	5.42	391 013 699

In terms of FDI Turkey is not among the largest investors in the region as a whole. In the period from 1994 to 2016 Turkey was not even among the top-ten largest investors in BiH.[90] (See Table 3.2) For years Turkey was standing around 10th place when it comes to foreign investments in BiH. Even the fact that Turkey invests more in Serbia than BiH has created many frustrations among Muslims in BiH, who famously criticize Ankara by saying that, "Turkey sends kisses to Bosnians, but invests in Serbia."[91] After 2015 Turkey's standing among the investor countries slightly improved. But on the other hand, the crisis over the fall of the value of the Turkish Lira against the USD that has started in 2018 might further challenge Turkey's ability to become a major investor in the region.[92] Loss of economic prominence might

88 "Western Balkans-EU-International Trade in Goods Statistics", Eurostat, Accessed on November 23, 2019, doi: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Western_Balkan_countries-EU_-_international_trade_in_goods_statistics

89 "Foreign Trade", Turkish Statistical Institute-TÜIK, Accessed on April 31, 2019, doi: http://www.turkstat.gov.tr

90 Foreign Direct Investments

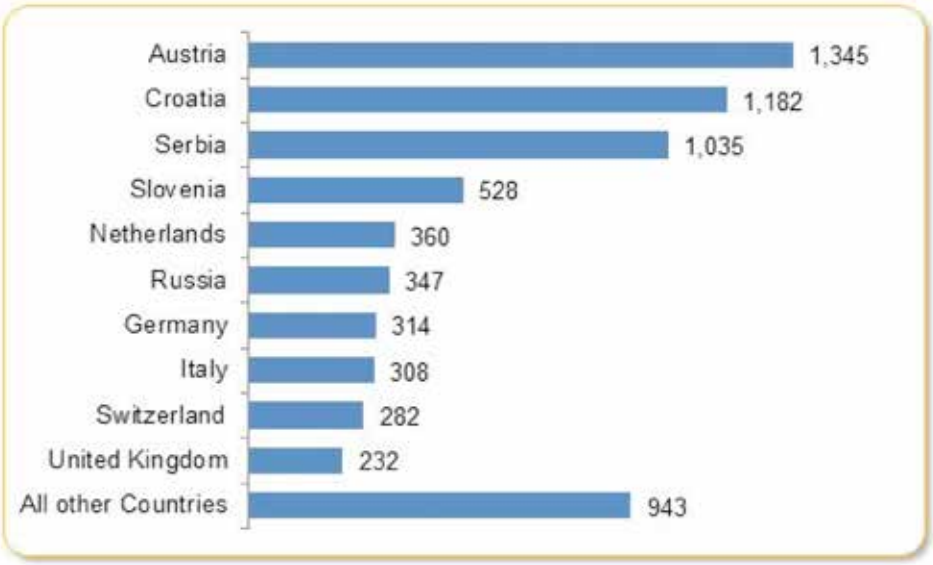
91 "Dormant Power Revival", The Economist, November 5-11, 2011, 64.

92 "Will Turkey cut investment to the Balkans", Central European Financial Observer, Accessed on March 10, 2019, doi: https://financialobserver.eu/cse-and-cis/will-turkey-cut-investment-to-the-balkans/

negatively influence Turkey's soft power ability in the region. As Nye puts it,

a country that suffers economic and military decline is likely to lose not only its hard-power resources but also some of its ability to shape the international agenda and some of its attractiveness.[93]

Table 3.2 Largest investors in BiH (May 1994-December, 2016)[94]



Besides the economy, which is not the stronger part of Turkish policy in the Balkans and BiH, Turkey is mainly considered in the region as a country with its soft power rather than an economic giant. Turkish soft power is felt asymmetrically in the region compared to her weak economic presence. The existence of Turkish military capacity in the Balkans that was built during the 1990s is less than those such as the US, Germany, or Italy, which have a much larger presence in the region in terms of military.[95] Even Russia, which acts as a rival power to the Western-backed order in the region has more capacity to project its military power compared to Turkey.[96] Besides trying to become an influential economic factor, since 1990s Turkey worked on building-up its soft power capacity in the region. The cultural aspect was an important driving force behind Turkish foreign policy since the times of Özal. Among the conservative circles, but some secularist ones as well, Balkans are often seen through the prism of the region's Ottoman past. Thus, the proactive approach started in the sphere of soft power under president Özal during the 1990s, and the Foreign Minister Cem in the 2000s will continue with the AKP after 2002.

93 Joseph Nye, Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics, 9.
94 Source: Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Accessed on November 30, 2019.
95 Beverly Crawford, Power and German Foreign Policy: Embedded Hegemony in Europe (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 57.
96 Dimitar Bechev, Rival Power: Russia's Influence in Southeast Europe (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017)

3.6. The Emergence of TIKA in the Balkans (the 2000s)

After AKP came to power existing soft power institutions like TIKA and Diyanet will extensively expand their operations, while some new institutions like Yunus Emre Institute and YTB will be formed by the government. At the end of the decade, the new soft power tool in the form of the Turkish series swept the region.

The period from 1992 to 2002 were years when TİKA and other Turkish public diplomacy institutions were gaining their first international experience.[97] After TİKA failed to meet its expectations in Central Asia during the 1990s the agency will pass through certain organizational changes. In 1999 agency will be transferred from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Office of Prime Minister. Two years later TİKA became "a legal entity of the Ministry in charge."[98] AKP won the Turkish general elections in 2002 and took charge of TİKA and other public diplomacy institution. Since the new government took over, the agency's previous strategies were be rethought, and even more ambitious goals were set, focusing not only on one region but on several ones, Balkans included. Parallel to the new ambition, after 2003 the number of TİKA offices abroad and the volume of the delivered assistance increased exponentially.[99]

After 2002 TİKA's operation capacity in the Balkans expanded significantly. Except for the Coordination Office in BiH, until 1999 TİKA's all foreign coordination offices were in Central Asia and the Caucasus region. While during the 1990s TİKA had only one coordination office in the region, in 2018 this number was eight offices in all countries in the region except Greece and Slovenia.[100] The fact that only foreign office beside Central Asian republics was in BiH shows the important place this country holds for Turkey. During the 2000s TİKA opened coordination offices in other Balkan countries as well.

Expansion in the mentioned period was not limited only to the Balkans, but similar trends happened in other regions as well. While until 2002 only 12 coordination offices were active around the world, in 2018 there were 61 coordination offices in 60 different countries. During the same period, the number of projects increased as well. For instance, in the period from 1992 to 2002 TİKA conducted 2346 projects, around 235 projects annually. Under the AKP government TİKA enormously expanded the amount of its foreign assistance. The dynamics that came with the AKP have found its reflection in the number of projects conducted after 2002. In the first

97 Tuncay Kardaş and Ramazan Erdağ, "Bir Dış Politika Aracı Olarak TİKA", *Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi*, Vol.7, No.1, (2012): 171.

98 With the shift to the Presidential system TIKA came under the authority of Ministry of Culture and Toursim of Republic of Turkey. For more see: "Tarihçe", *TİKA*, Accessed on November 23, 2019, doi: https://www.tika.gov.tr/tr/sayfa/tarihce-222

99 Hakan Fidan and Rahman Nurdun, "Turkey's Role in the Global Development Assistance Community: The Case of TIKA (Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency)", *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans* 10 (1), (2008): 93-111.

100 Coordination Office for Bulgaria was in the stage of opening.; 2018 TİKA Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara: TİKA, 2019): 18, 19.

three years of the AKP government, TİKA conducted 2800 projects or 700 projects per year.[101] This was three times more projects conducted annually compared to the previous period. In the whole decade from 1992 to 2002 little over 2 thousand projects were conducted. While in the period from 2003 to 2017 over 20 thousand projects were conducted in more than 160 countries around the world.[102] This means that after 2003 an equal number of projects were conducted annually as in the whole period from 1992 to 2002, or ten times more projects annually than before 2002.

Turkey's standing among the development assisting countries also improved through the years. Today Turkey is among the global leaders in delivering development assistance. While in 2002 only 85 million USD of development assistance was delivered abroad, in nine years this number increased almost fifteen times to a value of 1.3 billion USD in 2011.[103] The amount from 2011 will triple in the next four years to reach 3.9 billion USD of development assistance in 2015 positioning Turkey to high 13th place among the largest official development assistance (ODA) sender countries. In terms of sending ODA as a percentage of the gross national income (GNI), Turkey was ranked 11th in the same year. [104] If the period from 2002 to 2015 is taken into account Turkey increased the amount of delivered ODA more than forty-five-fold.

Although TİKA is a development agency many of its projects can be described as humanitarian help. When it comes to humanitarian help, Turkey is even better ranked than in providing development assistance. In the last years, Turkey managed to become one of the largest donors of humanitarian help in the world. Many Turkish state and non-state institutions are involved in humanitarian actions around the globe. According to the *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report* from 2018 which evaluates humanitarian assistance by states for 2017, Turkey was ranked as the most generous country in the world in terms of humanitarian help. Turkey topped the list with 8.1 billion USD of humanitarian help, followed by the US which delivered 6.7 billion USD. Germany was third with 3 billion USD and the United Kingdom fourth with 2.5 billion USD of humanitarian assistance. The majority of the humanitarian help assisted by Turkey went to Syrian refugees that reside in Turkey and the Turkish-controlled parts of Syria. In 2019, around 3.8 million Syrians were living in Turkey, among whom many still have the status of "Temporary protection."[105] Syria was the top country where international humanitarian assistance went in 2017, receiving 2.6 billion USD or 14 percent of the total global humanitarian assistance.[106]

As it is already said, TİKA significantly increased the number of international operations after 2002. In the period from 2002 to 2011, the increase was four-fold.

101 Tuncay Kardaş and Ramazan Erdağ, "Bir Dış Politika Aracı Olarak TİKA", 171.
102 2017 TİKA Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara: TİKA, 2018): 18.
103 Soner Karagül, "Türkiye'nin Balkanlardaki "Yumuşak Güç" Perspektifi", 89.
104 "2016 Preliminary ODA Figures", *OECD 2016*, April 11, 2017, Accessed on May 6, 2019, p. 5., doi: https://www.oecd.org
105 'Geçici koruma' in Turkish
106 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2018, doi: http://devinit.org/

When the period from 2005 to 2008 is taken into account, the "Balkans-Eastern Europe region" was ranked as the third-highest place, after Middle East-Africa and Central Asia-Caucasus region, where TİKA's most development assistance went. In the mentioned period around 1/5 of TİKA's all projects were conducted in the Balkans. As the share of Balkans in TİKA's overseas projects remained stable, backtracking of the Central Asia region launched Balkans to the second most active region for TİKA. (See Table 3.3) According to the latest available annual report, in 2018, 23.8 percent of all foreign development assistance went to the Balkans-Eastern Europe region.[107] The majority of projects in the Balkans-Eastern Europe region were conducted in the Balkans as the share of projects conducted in Eastern Europe is insignificant.

Like other Turkish public diplomacy institutions through the years TİKA expanded its activities much beyond Central Asia. In TİKA's first decade Central Asia was the top region in terms of activities. Since the mid-2000s share of Central Asia slowly lost its significance. The amount of development assistance started declining over the years. (See Table 3.3) The share of Central Asia was reduced from 55.52 percent in 2005 to only 11.33 percent in 2018, being overpassed by both Middle East-Africa and Balkans-Eastern Europe regions.[108] Parallel to the strategy of other Turkish public diplomacy institutions, in recent years, Africa is gaining greater importance in TİKA's overseas operations. The share of the Middle East-Africa region is rising every year, growing from slim 8.0 percent of development assistance in 2005 to 55.44 percent of development assistance in 2013.[109] (See Table 3.3) The share of the distant regions like Latin America and Pacific-Region also has risen in recent years, indicating TİKA's global ambitions. (See Table 3.3)

Together with Kosovo and North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina is among the regional countries that benefit the most from TİKA's assistance. With a devastated economy after a bloody war, weak institutions, crumbling infrastructure, and chronic unemployment, along with Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina is probably the country that is most in need of development assistance. According to the latest available data from 2014, BiH was the third top beneficiary of TİKA's development assistance with 14.2 million USD, behind the State of Palestine that has received 31.22 million USD and Afghanistan with 24.70 million USD. In the same year, 7.4 percent of assistance went to the BiH.[110] This was the highest share in the period from 2009 to 2014. In 2014, the amount of received help was unusually high as this was the year of floods across the region. Usually, the share of development assistance delivered to BiH is much lower but still relatively high, like it is the case with the rest of the regional countries. In terms of region, BiH was the second largest receiver

107 2018 TİKA Faaliyet Raporu

108 In the annual reports published in the previous years, assistance delivered to Afghanistan was counted in the same category with the Central Asian region, which might slightly increased the overall share of the assistance delivered to this region.

109 Data after 2014 for Africa is not available, because since that year TİKA in its annual reports started counting Africa together with the Middle East. The dominance of Africa and Middle East in terms of receiving development assistance continued after 2014.

110 2014 TİKA Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara: TİKA), 85.

of development assistance after North Macedonia in the period between 2009 and 2014. In this period BiH on average received 4 percent of TİKA's annual budget, while North Macedonia received 4.8 percent.[111] If the year 2010 is excluded, when North Macedonia received an unusually high 15 percent of TİKA's annual budget, BiH is the regional champion.[112] (See Table 3.4) As an individual country, states that are passing through a war, like the State of Palestine, Afghanistan, or Somalia, receive the most development assistance from TİKA.

Table 3.3 TIKA's International Assistance by Region (%)[113]

Year	Balkans[114]	Middle East-Africa	Central Asia-Caucasus	South-Southeast Asia, Pacific Region-Latin America	External Relations and Partnerships Department
2005	35.05	8.0	55.51		
2006					
2007	26.83	12.87	56.63		
2008	24.58	15.43	53.89		
2009	26.85	24.68	44.44		
2010	29.79	31.63	36.65		
2011	6.3	23.87	46.6		
2012	3.0	77.0	18.0		
2013	21.4	55.44	21.83		
2014	21.25	44.96	28.6		
2015					
2016	11.04	44.51	9.92	2.43	8.95
2017	26.95	22.55	11.35	5.58	8.08
2018	23.80	27.93	11.33	5.26	6.86
Average	21.40	32.40	32.89	4.42	7.96

111 Ibid. 85, 111.

112 Ibid. 111.

113 2018 TİKA Faaliyet Raporu, 2017 TİKA Annual Report, (Ankara: TİKA), 2016 TİKA İdare Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara, TİKA), 2014 TİKA Annual Report, (Ankara: TİKA), 2013 TİKA Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara: TİKA-Strateji Geliştirme Dairesi Başkanlığı), 2012 Türkiye Kalkınma Yardımları Raporu, (Ankara: TİKA-Strateji Geliştirme Dairesi Başkanlığı, 2013), 2011 Development Assistance Report Kalkınma, (Ankara: TİKA,Strategiv Development Agency Reporting and Coordination Unit, 2012), 2010 Türkiye Kalkınma Yardımları Raporu, (TİKA-Strateji Geliştirme Dairesi Başkanlığı, 2010), 2009 Kalkınma Yardımları Raporu (Ankara: Raporlama ve Koordinasyon Birimi, 2010), 2008 TİKA Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara, TİKA), 2007 TİKA Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara: TİKA, 2008), 2006 TİKA Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara: TİKA), 2005 TİKA Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara: TİKA)

114 Defined as 'Balkans-Eastern Europe Region' in the TİKA's annual reports

Table 3.4 Share of Western Balkans Countries in TIKA's Annual Budget[115]

Year	Bih	N. Macedonia	Montenegro	Kosovo	Albania
2009	6.5	2.3	1.4	3.2	1.5
2010	2.1	15	5.7	2.1	1.3
2011	1.3	2.2	1.3	2.3	0.8
2012	2.6	3.5	0.9	1	1.2
2013	4.1	2.3	3.6	0.8	1.8
2014	7.4	3.5	1.3	2.3	2.0
Average	4.0	4.8	2.4	2.0	1.4

Without mentioning all the areas and the projects on which TİKA actively works let's mention only some of them. TİKA's development assistance programs include a wide spectrum of areas from restoring historical legacy, helping the agriculture, delivering technical equipment, helping educational facilities, and many other fields. TİKA coordinates education and training programs as well. These programs are a chance for the promotion of Turkey, thus are in the service of Turkey's soft power in countries where TİKA is active. TİKA introduced the education-training programs as early as the 1990s in Central Asia. A decade later education programs will be introduced in other regions as well.

One of those programs started in Central Asia but later was applied in the Balkans as the "International Young Diplomats Education Program." "School of Leadership Program" is another education-training program for the professionals working in regional public institutions. The program is conducted in cooperation with other Turkish institutions like TÜBİTAK[116] and TÜBİTAK-TÜSSİDE.[117] Dozens of professionals working in the public sector of the regional states have passed through this program. TİKA also has education and training programs for people with disabilities. One such program was conducted in 2018 for the disabled citizens in BiH.[118]

It is important also to say that many projects are conducted in cooperation with other Turkish state and non-state institutions. It would not be wrong to say that TİKA is successful in working in cooperation with other Turkish public diplomacy institutions. For instance, one of the cooperation programs was the few-days long training and education program that was conducted together with TRT[119] for the journalists from the Balkans, Middle-East, Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, and other regions, in the Turkish resort town of Antalya. The program is organized for many years in a row and serves as an opportunity to present Turkey to the professionals working in the foreign media sector. For decades Turkey has been criticized by

115 TİKA 2014 Annual Report, (Ankara: TİKA, 2015): 64-100
116 Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey
117 Turkish Management Sciences Institute of TÜBİTAK
118 2018 TİKA Faaliyet Raporu, 59.
119 Turkish Radio Television

the Western states for the bad condition regarding the freedom of media. Programs like the mentioned ones are a unique chance for Ankara to present "Turkey's point of view" to the foreign press. TİKA also invested in the development of media infrastructure in BiH. Together with TRT equipment for the six radio stations and TV channels of six Bosnian Cantons[120] were granted.[121] TİKA also actively cooperates with state agency *Anadolu Ajansı*. In 2018 a program for the education of war-correspondents was held together in cooperation with the Anadolu Agency. As the main theme of the program was security and war the program included many related state institutions like Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD)[122], Turkish Armed Forces, General Directorate of Security, and Police Academy.

Through times TİKA developed a successful model of cooperation with other state institutions. One of the main preconditions for successful public diplomacy is to build an effective "strategic co-ordination" between the different public diplomacy institutions.[123] TİKA has managed to improve the art of strategic coordination' through time.

Another usually used cliché about Turkish foreign policy is that Ankara is working only with the Muslims in the Balkans. Although activities of TİKA and other public diplomacy institutions are primarily focused on the so-called "kinship communities", the agency is having some level of cooperation with the non-Muslims as well.[124] Upon the request from the National Conservation Center of the Republic of North Macedonia to conduct measurement and field studies on Macedonia's Saint George Church near Kumanovo TİKA sent a restoration team. In BiH, TİKA established an alarm system against the fires in a Franciscan Monastery in the town of Fojnica and conducted landscape works in an Orthodox Church.[125]

Although there are a lot of Turkish institutions that deal with humanitarian help, TİKA has also conducted several humanitarian operations across the region in the past. One of the most significant humanitarian actions of TİKA took place during May 2014 when the floods swept several countries in the region. Floods were responsible for the death of 86 people and left dozens of thousands of people without homes. Only in Serbia, some 30 thousand people were evacuated from their homes. After the floods, TİKA has undertaken the task of repairing the damaged infrastructure. Even after the floods, TİKA helped thousands of victims with the reconstruc-

120 Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (aka Bosnian-Croat Federation) is composed of ten administrative units known as Cantons. Cantons themselves are consisted of municipalities. Cantons enjoy high level of autonomy, have their own governments, ministries and are headed by a prime minster.

121 Soner Karagül, "Türkiye'nin Balkanlardaki "Yumuşak Güç" Perspektifi: Türk İşbirliği ve Kordinasyon Ajansı", *Girişimcilik ve Kalkınma Dergisi*, 8, 1, (2013): 96.

122 Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı in Turkish. For more visit: https://www.afad.gov.tr

123 For kinship communities see: Mark Leonard et. al, *Public Diplomacy*, 85-87.

124 '*Akraba topluluklar'* in Turkish or the communities that right-leaning circles in Turkey traditionally consider close because of historical, religious, cultural, or geographical relations.

125 Selin Çalık Muhasiloviç, "Turkey's Balkan Policy not Interest-oriented", *Anadolu Ajansı-Analysis*, 23.01.2016. Accessed on March 15, 2019, doi: https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/analysis-turkey-s-balkan-policy-not-interest-oriented/509237

tion of their damaged houses. TİKA's help and assistance were not limited only to regions where Muslims live predominantly but were randomly distributed across the settlements that needed help without making a distinction based on ethnicity or religion. Helping those in need through TİKA helped the formation of a positive image of Turkey.[126]

TİKA is also very active in preserving the historical legacy in the region. Especially when it comes to the restoration of the Ottoman legacy in the Balkans. With the new concept that came to power with the Decree-Law No. 656 published in the Official Gazette No. 28103. TİKA became more active in preserving the Ottoman culture abroad. The new law came into effect in 2011 after which TİKA would become more active in the restoration projects.[127] Among the projects in BiH that have historical and cultural significance, TİKA is responsible for the restoration of the famous Mehmet Pasha Sokolovic Bridge in Visegrad, the revival of the Ottoman-era bridge in Konjic and the construction of the complex around the bridge, as well as the restoration of two madrassah buildings in Mostar and Travnik.[128] Similar projects of cultural and historical significance are conducted in the other regional countries, like the restoration of the Tomb of Sultan Murat in Kosovo by TİKA that besides historical and cultural significance bears symbolic importance for the history of the Balkans, as well as dozens of other projects across the region.[129]

Certainly, development assistance is one of the best ways to conduct public diplomacy and serves in the best interest of a country's soft power. TİKA is one of the best proofs of this. In a short period through dynamic performance in the region, TİKA has managed to become a recognizable institution. But, TİKA is not the only development assistance agency that is active in BiH and the Western Balkans. Other countries that see this region as a part of foreign policy hinterland have development agencies that are operative in the Balkans. Among those agencies are USAID, the development agency of the United States, and the German cooperation agency (GIZ)[130], as well as some other agencies from different countries. Activities of other public diplomacy institutions from Turkey, like YTB, Diyanet, and the work of local governments (municipalities) and non-state actors in the region will be mentioned in more detail in the next chapters.

3.7. Cultural Diplomacy Through Language-Teaching

A strong cultural appeal is one of the main elements of effective soft power. Culture provides the backbone of a country's identity. It is hard to define the culture as

126 "TİKA'dan Bosnalı sel mağdurlarına yardım", Anadolu Ajansı, 06.12.2014. Accessed on June 1, 2019, doi: https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/tikadan-bosnali-sel-magdurlarina-yardim/94923

127 Ayhan Nuri Yılmaz and Gökmen Kılıçoğlu, "Balkanlar'da YTB ve TİKA'nın Türk Kamu Diplomasisi Kurumları Olarak Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye'nin Bölgedeki Yumuşak Gücüne Etkileri", 123.

128 "Balkanlar ve Doğu Avrupa-Proje ve Faaliyetler", *TİKA*, Accessed on March 18, 2019, doi: https://www.tika.gov.tr; 2018 TİKA Faaliyet Raporu, 90, 91.

129 Tuncay Kardaş and Ramazan Erdağ, "Bir Dış Politika Aracı Olarak TİKA", 174, 175.

130 Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

it touches almost all the fields of daily life whether it is the case with an individual or a society in general. According to the UNESCO' Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, the culture is

> a set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and in addition to art and literature culture, it encompasses lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs.[131]

According to Nye culture is "the set of values and practices that create meaning for society."[132] For Nye culture itself lies at the very center of the soft power.[133] It represents one of the three main sources of the country's soft power, as it rests "on a country's culture, values and policies."[134] The cultural aspect of society, if followed with adequate public diplomacy, can provide a very powerful element for foreign policy objectives. Culture provides important elements for the "nation-branding", a process that nations pursue in their quest of creating a prominent international reputation. On the other hand, brands are important in shaping a culture. Today multinational brands like Coca Cola, Volkswagen, Google, or Apple represent an important part of various national images. They are more efficient in promoting the national identity of a country than traditional diplomacy.[135] For instance, many more people around the globe know American culture through Hollywood, McDonald's, or Apple's products rather than through the addressing of the US diplomacy. Turkish series certainly have done more for the promotion of the Turkish culture in the Balkans than the traditional one-way public diplomacy has done. Understanding the importance of the brands for diplomacy the term "brand diplomacy" was coined.[136]

The power of the cultural appeal was understood very early by the European states. Long before the term soft power was coined some states worked actively on promoting their national cultures abroad. To promote culture special type of diplomacy was developed known as a "Cultural Diplomacy."[137] According to Nicholas J. Cull, cultural diplomacy may be defined as an "actor's attempt to manage the international environment through making its cultural resources and achievements known overseas and/or facilitating cultural transmission abroad."[138] In the modern era first comprehensive cultural diplomacy was followed by France. Since the Revolution of 1789, French diplomacy worked actively on spreading the ideas of the revolution in foreign lands. France was also the first country to follow a nation-branding campaign.[139] Even before the Revolution of 1879, French culture was seen as an issue

131 *UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, Records of the General Conference, 31st session, Paris, 15 October to 3 November 2001, v. 1: Resolutions, page 62., 2002, doi: https://unesdoc.unesco.org
132 Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, p. 11.
133 Ibid. 44-55.
134 Joseph Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, (2008): 94-95.
135 Simon Anholt, *Places: Identity, Image and Reputation*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)
136 Mark Leonard, et. al, *Public Diplomacy*, 65.
137 For more about Cultural Diplomacy: Kirsten Bound et al., *Cultural Diplomacy*, (London, Demos, 2007)
138 Nicholas J. Cull, *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past*, (Los Angeles: University of Southern California 2009): 19.
139 Wally Olins, "Making a National Brand", 170.

of prestige in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth-century, Being able to speak French or using French cultural manners in daily life was seen as belonging to an upper class. French culture was also influential in the development of modern diplomacy. French served as a *Lingua Franca* of diplomacy up until the early Cold-War era when it was taken over by English thanks to the global cultural hegemony of the United States. French was even used in the foreign courts of Prussia and Russia.[140] The fact that English took over the role of the international language of communication thanks to the US cultural hegemony shows the importance culture has in international relations.

The language of a nation as a means of communication between its people also can be a tool used by public diplomacy to communicate the national culture to a foreign audience. Some global languages like English or French, serve as a recognizable national brand. European nations were first to recognize the importance of a language in terms of building a geopolitical influence. The first comprehensive attempt to promote the language abroad was started by the French during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Very quickly the French Language became a Lingua Franca of European diplomacy. It will remain as such for the next three hundred years.

After the defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, France's international reputation was damaged by the quick and easy German victory. To reverse the view of France as a weak country a program known as *Alliance française pour la propagation de la langue nationale dans les colonies et à l'étranger* (French alliance for the propagation of the national language in the colonies and abroad) was launched in 1883. This program will become an institute for the cultural promotion of France that today is known under the name *Alliance Française*.[141] The Alliance today works on promoting French culture through its cultural-language centers. It is focused on teaching French as a second language with almost a thousand language-centers in more than a hundred countries around the globe. French Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched *Institut Français*[142], another similar organization for the promotion of French culture abroad, in 1907. Institute is also active globally and works closely with the Alliance Française. Italy was also one of the countries that very early recognized the importance of cultural diplomacy. Shortly after the country was unified in the movement of *Risorgimento*[143]*, Dante Alighieri Institute* for the promotion of Italian culture and language around the world will be founded in 1889.[144]

During the early 20th century other European states started forming their institutions for cultural promotion. Works on cultural diplomacy intensified, especially

140 Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, 114.

141 Ibid. 100.

142 https://www.institutfrancais.com

143 Meaning "Resurgence" in Italian. Name for the movement of Italian unification that began in 1815 with the Congress of Vienna and lasted until 1871 when the process of Italian unification was finalized.

144 Italy also has Istituto Italiano di Cultura (Italian Culture Institute), non-profit organization created by the Italian government to promote Italian culture and language abroad. Italian Culture Institute has 85 centers around the world.; For more see: https://ladante.it

between the two World Wars. Britain founded the *British Council* in 1934 to counter propaganda from Nazi Germany. During the same period, the US Department of State created the *Division of Cultural Relations* in 1938 as a part of Roosevelt's strategy against the Fascist influence in Latin America.

After the Second World War culture become even more important for international relations as the propaganda war between the US and the Soviet Union intensified. The United States actively used cultural diplomacy to promote democracy and values of freedom abroad. The Cold War was the period when US popular culture spread across the world. American cultural appeal was an important weapon during the ideological rivalry with the Soviet Union. In that sense, the government agency United States Information Agency (USIA) was created in 1953. USIA was in charge of coordinating cultural-diplomatic activities. In Germany and Austria, the US initiated the opening of cultural houses known in *Amerikan Haus* (American House) that served as culture-houses for the promotion of American culture as well as the counter-balancing any potential revival of Nazi ideologies or communism.

Germany that inherited a negative image because of its Nazi past during the Second World War also invested much energy in changing this perception. For this reason, Goethe-Institute was founded in 1951, replacing the previous *Deutsche Akademie that the government had to reinstitute with newly founded Goethe-Institute because of the previous one's connections to the Nazi government.*[145] Today Goethe Institute is present in ninety-eight countries around the globe with 159 cultural centers.[146]

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union failed to create a cultural appeal in the Eastern Bloc in a way the US did among its Western allies. Because of the ideological myopia of the Soviet regime, Kremlin failed to use the cultural appeal of the rich Russian culture to project soft power. Soviet cultural diplomacy was preoccupied with running the ideological war against the United States.[147] Sometimes this forced Moscow to apply for hard power which in turn brought damage to the country's appeal among the foreign public. Few bad political decisions by the Kremlin, like the suppression of the Prague spring in 1968 or the military intervention in Hungary in 1956 were responsible for the distortion of the Soviet image among its Eastern European allies.

Unlike the United States, the Soviets didn't develop a popular culture to balance the discomfort created by military interventions. Even in many countries of Eastern Europe American culture was more appealing during the Cold War than the Soviet one was. Contrary to a negative perception of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe and beyond, the US-financed Marshall Plan for Europe's recovery from the Second World War helped not only economic recovery in Western Europe but certainly helped the promotion of the American soft power.

145 "Goethe Institute", https://www.goethe.de

146 2017/2018 Annual Report, Digitisation: A Question of Credibility, (Munich: Goethe Institut, 2018), 2.

147 Nigel Gould-Davies, "The Logic of Soviet Cultural Diplomacy", *Diplomatic History-Oxford University Press*, Vol. 27, No. 2, (April 2003), p. 193-214.

After the Cold War cultural diplomacy didn't lose its significance but passed through various restructurings. US Foreign Affairs and Restructuring Act has abolished the USIA in 1999 and transferred some of its activities to the newly founded *Broadcasting Board of Governors* (BBG). The non-broadcasting public diplomacy activities of the BBG were given to the *Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs*. Among the public diplomacy activities of the BBG is the *American Spaces Program*. Among the first steps of the US public diplomacy in the post-Cold War era was the modernization of public diplomacy means by using more frequent use of modern digitalized materials. In this regard, the BBG program launched the American Spaces program across the world, that are hosted in US embassies overseas, schools, libraries, and other foreign institutions. The program is present in foreign countries in different forms like libraries or high-tech cultural centers. As the United States Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Tara Sonenshine said,

> Sometimes they (American Spaces) are just a corner in a library or an embassy. Sometimes they are a binational center. Sometimes they are a stand-alone facility.[148]

As of 2013, there were 849 American Spaces across the 169 countries of the world reaching more than 16 million visits annually.[149] American Spaces are active in providing information about the American way of life, culture, values, foreign policy, supporting learning English-language, as well as sharing information about the US scholarship programs to the foreign audience.

US State Department has created four different types of American spaces to more efficiently reach the different types of foreign audiences. These are:

- American Centers are focused on providing the general public with material about the US. These centers help the foreign audience with materials like books, lectures, books videos, and other materials.
- Information Resource Centers target influential people in foreign societies like opinion leaders or policymakers and provide them with information about US policies.
- American Corners focus on the younger population and provide them the material about American culture.
- Bi-national Centers are based in the Latin American countries and focus primarily on English language training and promotion of American culture in those countries.[150]

148 Tara Sonenshine, " Tara Sonenshine-Public Diplomacy" Filmed (June, 2012). YouTube video, Duration: 13:12, Posted (June 29, 2012): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKU7b0FwLnU

149 Lívia Pontes Fialho, The U.S. State Department's American Space Programs: Fact Sheet, February 2013, Accessed on April 14, 2019, doi: http://www.americansecurityproject.org

150 Ibid.

One of those models that the US developed is *American Corners* that primarily target younger audiences to make them easier access to multimedia materials about American culture. American Corners mainly function as American-styled libraries equipped with the material about the American culture and are primarily active in former Socialist countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. In BiH, nine of these centers are active in different cities across the country. Some of the American Corners operate inside the national libraries or university campuses in those countries. Much of the US cultural diplomacy that was previously run by the American embassies was partly delegated to the American Corners. These libraries with their activities are part of cultural diplomacy that aims to promote the American culture and American lifestyle in the post-Socialist countries (Russo-sphere) which in turn counterbalances the Russian influence in these countries. But, as the United States lost its main ideological rival the interest for cultural diplomacy in Washington was reduced after the Cold War.[151] The absence of a global competitor led to the fall in the enthusiasm for spreading American values abroad. With the Bush Administration taking over in 2001 the United States applied even more for hard power in foreign policy and invaded various countries under the pretext of the Global War on Terror leaving behind the strategy of investing in cultural appeal and other soft power means.[152]

Spain's *Cervantes Institute is also another cultural institution with global outreach.*[153] Along with English, the Spanish language is one of the most spoken languages in the world having around 500 million speakers. Cervantes Institute was launched in 1991, immediately after the Cold-War. Today around 130 thousand students study the Spanish language in the Cervantes Institute every year.[154] Without mentioning all of the cultural institutions it is important to know that today many global, regional even the middle powers have their institutions that are in charge of cultural diplomacy. Some of them have thousand or more cultural and language centers around the world.

The capacity of cultural institutions to a large extent depends on the attractiveness of the language it teaches. Primarily because of the colonial past many European languages attract millions of new learners. Because of European colonialism, today languages like English French, or Spanish are spoken by hundreds of millions across all the continents. As these languages prevailed as the global Lingua Francas interest for them didn't disappear with the end of colonialism. Today languages like English, French, or German provide a chance for easier employment in many parts of the world. For instance, as of 2000, there were 390 million English-learners only in China.[155] Millions of others in the developing world are learning English as a second lan-

151 Erik Pajtinka, "Cultural Diplomacy in Theory and Practice of Contemporary International Relations", *Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations-UMB Banská Bystrica* (2014): 98.

152 Joseph Nye, "In Fighting Terrorism, Bush Has Forgotten to Use 'Soft Power", *Harvard Kennedy School for Science and International Relations-Belfer Center*, October 25, 2005, Accessed on November 23, 2019, doi: belfercenter.org/publication/fighting-terrorism-bush-has-forgotten-use-soft-power

153 "Instituto Cervantes", doi: www.cervantes.es

154 Guía del Instituto Cervantes, (Instituto Cervantes, 2012), 10.

155 Rining Wei and Jinzhi Su, "The Statistics of English in China", English Today 28 (3), (2012), 10-14.

guage to raise their competitiveness in the global market. It is estimated that around 1.5 billion people or 1/5 of humanity today learn English as a second language.[156] There are also 82 million learners of French and around 30 million learners of the Chinese language in the world.[157] In recent years, the attractiveness of the German language is on the rise in the Balkans. Knowing the German language provides a chance for the youth in the region struggling with chronic unemployment to easier enter the German labor market which faces shortages in the working population.[158]

When it comes to the Balkans learning second-languages through formal or informal education has a long history. Once languages like German, Russian, French or Turkish were administrative languages of the various former Empires, or at least the second language of the small educated elite during the 19th and early 20th century. With the end of the Cold War, it was apparent that the English Language has passed all other languages as the most learned second language. Also, one of the first four offices the British Council opened overseas was in the Balkans. This process of Anglicization in the region was completed with the end of the Soviet Union.[159] Today, three decades after the Cold War, English is the compulsory foreign language in schools all over the region. The rate of English speakers is very high.

Interest in English as a second language in the region is much older than American global cultural hegemony. The institution that is the leader in teaching English-language is probably the British Council. It is today a global player. Its language courses claim to reach 75 million people directly and 738 million people overall in 2017 and 2018. Four hundred thousand students passed through the British Council's English teaching offices.[160]

3.8. Turkish Cultural Diplomacy: Yunus Emre Institute in the Balkans

The Turkish government launched the country's first cultural diplomacy institution Yunus Emre Foundation in 2009 under law number 5653 from 05.05.2007 as a "public foundation." The aim of launching the foundation was to,

> promote Turkey, the Turkish language, the country's history, culture, and art, make such related information and documents available for use in the world, provide services abroad to people who want to have an education in fields of Turkish language, culture, and art, to improve the friendship between Turkey and other countries and increase the cultural exchange.[161]

The first thing the foundation did was launching the institute that would fulfill

156 Kenneth Beare, "How Many People Learn English?", Thought Co., Accessed on November 23, 2019, doi: https://www.thoughtco.com/how-many-people-learn-english-globally-1210367

157 "The world's languages, in 7 maps and charts", The Washington Post, April 23, 2015, Accessed on March 28, 2019, doi: https://www.washingtonpost.com

158 "Balkan uči njemački", DW, 07.10.2016, Accessed on November 23, 2019, doi: https://www.dw.com/bs/balkan-u%C4%8Di-njema%C4%8Dki/a-35989960

159 During the Cold War, Russian was taught in schools across the Eastern Bloc.

160 Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18, (British Council, 2018), p. 6.

161 "Yunus Emre Institute", Yunus Emre Enstitüsü, Accessed on March 31, 2019, doi: https://www.yee.org.tr

the foundation's goals. The institute was named after the foundation as Yunus Emre Institute (YEI). It will be Turkey's first cultural diplomacy institution. The name of both foundation and the institute was taken from a renowned Turkish Sufi mystic Yunus Emre (1238-1320). Contrary to the majority of Turkic writers in the Middle Ages who primarily wrote in the Persian language which at the time was the language of poetry, educated elite as well as the lingua franca of the administration in Anatolia, Yunus Emre was one of the first to write poems in local Turkish dialects. In administrative terms, the Yunus Emre Institute is attached to the Board of Trustees of the Yunus Emre Foundation, which is the decision-making body.[162] Board of Trustees is composed of "Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Finance, Minister of National Education, Minister of Culture and Tourism, Minister in charge of the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) and Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) and the president of Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey."[163]

According to the latest data from the 2017 annual report, Yunus Emre Institute has 56 cultural centers in 46 countries of the world. If the hundred Turcology departments in fifty countries with whom the Institute has cooperation are included, then Yunus Emre Institute has 154 contact centers in 70 countries.[164] Although numbers are impressive, it remains pretty minor when compared to the number of offices Institute Français or Goethe Institute have abroad. Yet, on the other hand, a decade-long balance sheet of Yunus Emre Institute's growth is relatively impressive as it was founded only ten years ago, which makes the increase in the number of overseas centers more than five new centers per year. Institute plans to have a hundred cultural centers abroad.[165]

YEI's first overseas office was opened in Sarajevo in 2009. With the new cultural center in Sarajevo, the Institute officially launched its first overseas operations. Before Yunus Emre Institute launched the office in BiH, the Turkish Embassy already had a cultural center in Sarajevo, that in 2009 was transferred to the YEI. Over time two more Bosnian offices will be opened in Mostar and Fojnica. Along with Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the rare countries that have three Yunus Emer centers. Even in Germany where more than three million Turks live there are only two centers.[166] (See Table 3.5) In the Balkans, there were 15 active centers in nine countries.[167] Only three countries in the region where Yunus Emre Institute doesn't have an active center are Bulgaria, Greece, and Slovenia. According to the regional distribution of all cultural centers, Balkans leads with 27 percent, followed by the rest of Europe which has 25 percent of all overseas centers. The combined share of

162 "Mütevelli heyeti" in Turkish

163 Yunus Emre İkibindört Faaliyet Raporu, Ankara 16.

164 2017 Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara: Yunus Emre Enstitüsü): 9.

165 Yunus Emre Enstitüsü 2017-2018 Stratejik Planı, (Ankara: Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Strateji Geliştirme Müdürlüğü, 2017): 11.

166 2017 Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Faaliyet Raporu, 14.

167 Moldova is included; 2017 Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Faaliyet Raporu, 14.

the two shows that more than half of all overseas offices is on the European continent.[168] The number and the share of operational centers in the Balkans show the importance the region has for Turkey's cultural diplomacy. But the trend of shifting to other regions is also evident within the strategy of the Yunus Emre Institute. In Institute's latest annual report, it is stated that in the vision of reaching a hundred overseas centers until 2023 focus will be primarily on opening new centers in North America, South America, Africa, and Central Asia.[169] The primacy Balkans enjoy in Yunus Emre's international operations might be coming to an end soon.

Table 3.5 Cultural Centers of the Yunus Emre Institute According to the Region as of 2017[170]

Europe	Balkans	Asia	Middle East	East Asia	Africa	North America
Amsterdam	Belgrade	Astana	Amman	Kuala Lumpur	Algiers	Mexico City
Berlin	Bucharest	Baku	Beirut	Melbourne	Cairo	Washing-ton DC
Brussels	Comrat	Kabul	Doha	Tokyo	Dakar	
Budapest	Constanta	Karachi	Jerusalem		Johannes-burg	
Cologne	Fojnica	Lahore	Manama		Khartoum	
Kazan	Mostar	Tbilisi	Nicosia		Mogadishu	
Kiev	Pec		Ramallah		Rabat	
London	Podgorica		Tehran		Tunis	
Madrid	Pristina					
Moscow	Prizren					
Paris	Sarajevo					
Rome	Skopje					
Vienna	Skhoder					
Warsaw	Tirana					
	Zagreb					
14	15	6	8	3	8	2

The activities of the Yunus Emre Institute can be divided into four main groups:[171]

- Turkish Language Teaching

168 Ibid.
169 2017 Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Faaliyet Raporu, 9.
170 2017 Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Faaliyet Raporu, 14.
171 Ibid, 19.

- Art-Culture Activities
- Scientific-Academic Activities
- Cultural Diplomacy

Although teaching the Turkish language is a primary occupation of the Institute, Yunus Emre centers have a very wide scope of art and cultural activities abroad. Among the 'Art and Cultural' activities Yunus Emre centers provide are art exhibitions, conferences, and panels on various subjects, festivals for kids[172], nights of poems, showing Turkish movies to the foreign audience, translates Turkish books into foreign languages and to foreign books into Turkish, and conducts set of other cultural projects. Yunus Emre actively supports the preservation of the Ottoman-Turkish cultural legacy all over the former Ottoman lands. Unlike TİKA which is focused on preserving buildings, Yunus Emre is especially active in the preservation of the written legacy and archives.

Besides applying for the assistance of the Turkish experts in these fields, the institute also provides support to the foreign institution that works on the preservation of the Ottoman cultural legacy. In 2017, Yunus Emre Institute gave support to the "Catalogue of the Ottoman Records Project" run by the Gazi Husrev Bey Library in Sarajevo. Not all activities supported by the Institute are part of the Ottoman-Turkish cultural legacy. For instance, providing support for the Sarajevo Jazz Festival in 2017 is one of the examples.[173]

The Institute also organizes a set of courses in traditional Turkish art of Ebru painting, Turkish cuisine, Ottoman Turkish language, Ottoman history, Miniature and Illumination, Ceramics, Ney musical instrument, traditional Turkish archery, and many others. In some countries, courses are not strictly limited to Anatolian Turkish culture and language, and Yunus Emre centers provide courses in Hittite language and history, Uyghur language, ancient Göktürk language, Tatar language, and some others. As part of the government's aim to raise awareness about the recent coup d'état attempt in Turkey, in 2017 the Institute organized a rally in the Bosnian capital commemorating the event.[174]

Under the field of 'Scientific-Academic' activities, Yunus Emre Institute runs the "scientific diplomacy." In that sense, with the sponsorship of the Turkish Presidential Office, the Institute has launched Turkey Scientific and Academic Cooperation Project (TABİP)[175], "to promote in the world Turkey's scientific and academic capacity, the potential and the possibilities the country has reached", as well as "explaining

172 "Çocuk Bayramı" in Turkish is a national holiday in Turkey celebrated every year on 23rd of April. In Bosnia-Herzegovina Yunus Emre Institute every year on April 23 organizes a mass celebration of the Kid's festival where thousands of school children that take Turkish language as an elective class in their schools attend the festival. Mass celebration of the Turkish national holiday has raised some criticism in Bosnian media. Especially the fact tht Bosnian kids were given Turkish flags to wave during the festivals has created some uncomfort in BiH.

173 2017 Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara, Yunus Emre Enstitüsü), 71.

174 Ibid, 71.

175 Türkiye Bilimsel ve Akademik İş Birliği Projesi (TABİP) in Turkish.

Turkey in the right way to the world."[176] Under the project, Yunus Emre delegates a "scientific representative" to a foreign country. Among the duties of the scientific representative are,

> to follow scientific developments in the country where he/she is sent, … to join scientific and academic works, to detect the most successful universities, science centers, technoparks and to report them,
>
> as well *as* to, detect the positive and negative images about Turkey in a foreign country and to report them with the suggestions.[177]

Yunus Emre Institute is active in Cultural Diplomacy activities. Under cultural diplomacy activities, Yunus Emre participates and organizes cultural tours, panels, conferences, and other activities that work on the promotion of Turkish culture. The institute is part of the network called *Global Public Diplomacy Network* (GPDNet) created in 2014 in the South Korean capital Seoul, that is composed of cultural and public diplomacy institutions of ten countries including, South Korea, Philippines, Singapore, Sweden, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Nigeria, and Turkey. This platform was created for sharing knowledge and experience among the cultural and public diplomacy institutions of the member countries. Member countries also use the network to promote their cultures among the other member countries, as Turkey did in 2016 by organizing "Tour of Anatolian civilizations" where guests from the member states were invited to Turkey and had an opportunity to explore Turkish culture. "Cultural Diplomacy Talks" a "chat session" about cultural diplomacy was organized by the institute aiming to produce cultural diplomats. Whether it is possible to produce a cultural diplomat through "chats" is another question.[178]

Various activities commemorating and promoting the commemoration of the "15th of July coup attempt" in the scope of cultural diplomacy were organized by Yunus Emre in its centers around the world. One of these events was organized in BiH as well. (See Figure A1) Series of events organized for the sake of commemorating the failed coup attempt was done in cooperation with many Turkish public diplomacy institutions. Evidently, after the failed coup attempt in 2016, the Turkish government actively uses diplomatic channels to promote the memory of the coup d'état. Like other Turkish public diplomacy institutions, Yunus Emre Institute has also 'committed' itself to fight the influence of the Gülen network. Sometimes this struggle against the movement continues even in distant regions like Latin America. In the contest of fighting the Gülenist influence, the Institute has even entered a cooperation with Ankara University's Latin America Studies and Research and Application Center (LAMER)[179] to prevent the influence the Gülen movement has on the Turkish language classes in the Latin American universities.[180]

176 2017 Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Faaliyet Raporu, 128.
177 Ibid, 131.
178 2017 Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Faaliyet Raporu, 136-139.
179 Latin Amerika Çalışmaları Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi in Turkish
180 "FETÖ'ye karşı Latin Amerika'da işbirliği", *Sabah*, 27.06.2017, Accessed on April 5, 2019, doi: https://www.

The primary focus of the Yunus Emre Institute is the promotion of the Turkish language. Turkish language program can be divided into three main areas:[181]

- Turkish language courses
- Turcology program
- Turkish as an elective class

Through its 56 cultural centers in 46 countries, the Institute has provided Turkish language courses to 12.323 foreign students in 2017. The year Institute was founded the number of attendees at the Turkish language courses was only 219. Since then every year there is a significant rise in the number of attendees. In the period since 2014, the growth in the number of students has slowed down though.[182] According to the regional distribution of the foreign students Balkans lead by providing 1/3 of all foreign students, followed by Asia with 22 percent, Africa 19 percent, and the Middle East with 18 percent. This means that the number of attendees of the Turkish language courses in the Balkans was slightly above 4 thousand.[183] As annual reports don't provide detailed information about the regional distribution of the Turkish course attendees before 2016 it is hard to see whether there is a shift in regional preferences like it is the case with other Turkish public diplomacy institutions. What is for sure is the fact that Balkans secured the leadership until 2017 when it comes to the regional distribution. Before moving to other aspects of the Turkish language activities of the Institute, let's take a look at the cultural centers of the other countries and their language teaching programs.

3.8.1. Turcology Programs

The second leg of Yunus Emre's Turkish language teaching program is the 'Turcology program.' Cooperation between Yunus Emre and the Turcology departments is established after the signing of the so-called "Turcology Project Cooperation Protocol." After establishing the cooperation, Yunus Emre assisted the Turcology departments, like organizing conferences or promotion of translated works, and other similar activities regarding linguistics. As a part of the Turcology program, a Turkish language teacher from Turkey is delegated to coordinate the project and serve as a connection between the Institute and the Turcology departments. Since 2019 the right to assign Turkish language teacher to Turcology departments was delegated from Yunus Emre Institute to the Turkish Ministry of Education, which is now under the control of the Presidential Office. As of 2017, the Yunus Emre Insitute was present with the Turcology program in hundred universities across fifty countries in the world.

Out of the hundred Turcology departments that Yunus Emre cooperates with seventeen are in the Balkans. Most of the Turcology departments are found in Asia,

sabah.com.tr/gundem/2017/06/27/fetoye-karsi-latin-amerikada-isbirligi

181 2017 Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Faaliyet Raporu, 82-128.

182 Ibid, 85.

183 Ibid. 86.

thirty of them. In BiH, Yunus Emre Institute has cooperation with Turcology departments in four different universities. These are Turkish departments at the University of Sarajevo, University of Zenica, University of Tuzla, and the University of Dzemal Bijedic in Mostar. Turcology departments provide training for professional Turcologs. Students that graduate from these departments are eligible to teach the Turkish language as professionals. Much of the Bosnian personnel that teaches the Turkish language in the cultural centers are graduates from these departments.[184]

3.8.2. "My Choice is Turkish" - Turkish as an Elective Class

Teaching, coordinating, providing material support, educating the teaching staff of the primary and high schools in countries where the Turkish language is an elective class is one of the most important aspects of promoting Turkish languages by the Yunus Emre Institute. All of these activities are done under the "My Choice is Turkish Project" launched in 2011. Thanks to the program, as of 2017, 164 schools in five different countries have adopted the Turkish language as an elective class in their curriculums. The absolute majority of those schools are in BiH, some 150 of them.[185] The number of schools that adopted the classes varies from country to country. For example, while in BiH 150 schools have adopted the project, only one school in Romania did the same.[186] The number of students that were part of the program was 8770 in 2017.[187] The project is not implemented in all schools in the mentioned countries, but only in schools that have articulated interest in having the Turkish language in their schools. In BiH, Georgia, Romania, Japan, and Poland, the Turkish language is an elective class in some primary and highs schools, while activities on making Turkish as an elective class in some universities in Montenegro and Japan are underway.[188]

BiH was the first country where "My Choice is Turkish Project" was implemented in the 2011-12 school year. Today Turkish is taught in 150 Bosnian schools. Since the launching in 2011, the number of students that learn Turkish as an elective class has risen rapidly to 8.243 in 2017. When compared to other countries Bosnian students provide an absolute majority, constituting 94 percent of the overall student body the Project has.[189] Second, comes Georgia with 361 students in 2017, or almost twenty-three times less than BiH. When it comes to an increase in the number of schools and students, it is not the case in all countries. In Jordan "My Choice is Turkish" program didn't continue, while the number of schools that implement the program in Romania was reduced compared to previous years, from three schools to only one in 2017.[190]

184 Compared to the initial years of the Yunus Emre Institute when majority of the Turkish language teachers were from Turkey, according to the information provided by the former employees the Institute in the last years YEI is more and more rellying on local Turkish language teachers.

185 Ibid, 92.

186 Ibid.

187 Ibid.

188 Ibid, 91.

189 Ibid, 92.

190 2015 Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Faaliyet Raporu, 131., and 2017 Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Faaliyet Raporu, 92.

All the schools where Turkish is an elective subject are located in the Bosniak-majority parts of the Federation of BiH. There is neither a Serb nor Croat-majority school that has asked for the program to be implemented in their school. In 2015, the Ministry of Federation of BiH and the National Ministry of Education of Turkey signed a protocol to make Bosnian language elective language in some schools in Turkey. According to the agreement, the Bosnian language would be taught in primary schools from fifth to eighth grade. After signing the protocol Bosnian language started being taught in schools where there is a high concentration of *muhacirs*[191] of Bosnian origin, especially in some areas of Istanbul and Izmir. A similar right was given to the Albanian language in Turkish schools.[192] The number of students that learn Bosnian in Turkish schools is not known.

Through the "My Choice is Turkish" project, Yunus Emre equips Bosnian schools with the working material, books, educates Turkish teachers and other supports. Yunus Emre in cooperation with the Union of Turkish World Municipalities (TDBB) even modernized the Turkish-language classes for more than twenty schools.[193] Unlike countries like North Macedonia or Kosovo where a significant Turkish minority traditionally lives as a national minority and where the Turkish language is already taught to the students of Turkish origin, in Bosnia and Herzegovina Turkish people do not enjoy special legal status as a minority group.[194] In BiH, the Turkish language is not taught in the schools as a language of minorities, but only Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian languages, as the languages of the three constitutive ethnic groups.[195] For the mentioned reasons countries like BiH or Jordan didn't have Turkish either as a compulsory or elective language in the educational schools before Yunus Emre's "My Choice is Turkish" project.[196]

The Turkish language is not the only elective language in Bosnian schools. Besides the English language that for the main part is compulsory in primary and high schools, students have a chance to select German, Arabic, Spanish, French, Italian, and Greek languages as a second elective language.[197] Some students, primarily in

191 Common name in Turkish for the emigrees from the former Ottoman provinces in the Balkans.

192 "Veliko interesovanje za bosanski jezik u Turskoj", *N1*, 03.01.2018. Accessed on April 17, 2019, doi: http://ba.n1info.com/Vijesti/a235849/Veliko-interesovanje-za-bosanski-jezik-u-Turskoj.html

193 2017 TDBB Faaliyet Raporu, (Istanbul: Türk Dünyası Belediyeler Birliği-TDBB, 2018): p. 24, 25.

194 Turks are recognized as one of the seventeen national minority groups in BiH. According to the last census in 2013, there were 1.108 Turks living in BiH representing about 0.03 percent of population. For more: *Nacionalne manjine u Bosni i Hercegovini, Izvještaj Vijeća nacionalnih manjina Bosne i Hercegovine o položaju nacionalnih manjina 2010.-2015.* "Turci", Parlamentarna skupština Bosne i Hercegovine Vijeće nacionalnih manjina BiH, Sarajevo, 2015, 137-148.

195 The right to be elected to the Presidency of BiH or House of People of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina that is reserved only for the three constitutive peoples, Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats, by the Bosnian constitution, has created tensions in BiH, when the minority representative of Bosnian Jews and Roma appealed to the European Court of Human Rights in 2006 in the famous "Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina case." Two representatives of the minority groups claimed that the rights reserved only for the constitutive peoples by the Bosnian constitution is violating the European Convention on Human Rights and asked for the same right to be granted to the minorities as well. Although the Court decided in favor of the plaintiffs, the controversial articles from Bosnian constitution were not changed.

196 2015 Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Faaliyet Raporu, 131., and 2017 Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Faaliyet Raporu, 92.

197 Bosnian education law allows high school students to select third language as elective class as well.

Republika Srpska, learn Russian as a second language.[198] After the English language, which is compulsory in schools, the German language is by far the most elected. According to the Bosnian state statistics in the 2017/18 school year, in total 155.801 students were learning German as a compulsory, second, or third elective language. (See Table 3.6) When both compulsory and elective foreign language classes are taken into account, German was the second most popular foreign language in schools after the English language which was attended by 355.176 students. As a second or third choice, German was by far the most popular language by attracting 140.501 students in total. Seventy-nine percent of all primary school and seventy-four percent of high school students have chosen German as a second language.[199] (See Table 3.6) As more and more Bosnian citizens are emigrating to work in the German labor market the interest for the German language is rising in the country. Many that want to go to work in Germany pass through Goethe Institute's language courses and training programs. The economic appeal of Germany has positively impacted the popularity of the German language in Bosnian schools. Compared to 8.243 students from BiH that took part in "My Choice is Turkish" the gap between the two languages was seventeen-fold in favor of the German language. Despite the large gap between the popularity of two languages, in recent years, there is an unofficial rivalry when it comes to teaching these two languages in the schools.

In 2017, a group of parents through the *Association of Parents in the Canton of Sarajevo* complained to the Cantonal Minister of Education in Sarajevo regarding the promotion of the Turkish language in some schools without the previous consultations with the parents.[200] The negative reaction was caused after Yunus Emre conducted a poll among the students about the Turkish language in their schools. This move was interpreted as a "lobbying attempt" by the parent's association. There are some speculations that the group of parents that have complained might be of those children that already learn the German language in the schools. Local media financed by the Turkish capital and the *Association of Professors and the teachers of Turkish Language in BiH*[201] reacted to these accusations defending the promotion of the Turkish language in Bosnian schools.[202]

Bosnia and Herzegovina is not the only country where the German language is taught in schools. German is being taught in 95 thousand schools worldwide, all reached by the Goethe Institute.[203] The institute supervises some 600 schools around

198 *Demografija i socijalne statistike*, *Statistika obrazovanja*, Agencija za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine, god. XIII, br. 2, 2018: p. 6, 19.

199 97.919 in primary schools and 42.207 in high schools. See: *Demografija i socijalne statistike*, *Statistika obrazovanja*, 6, 19.

200 Jahja Muhasilović, "Bosnia's Turkish Debate", *Anadolu Agency-Analysis News*, 20.06.2017, Accessed on April 18, 2019, doi: https://www.aa.com.tr/en/analysis-news/bosnias-turkish-debate/845487

201 Original name in Bosnian language is "Aktiv profesora i nastavnika turskog jezika"

202 "Nastavnici turskog jezika u BiH: Ne lobiramo, već informišemo učenike i roditelje o aktivnostima", *Agencija Anadolija*, 16.06.2017, Accessed on April 21, 2019, doi: https://www.aa.com.tr/ba/obrazovanje/nastavnici-turskog-jezika-u-bih-ne-lobiramo-ve%C4%87-informi%C5%A1emo-u%C4%8Denike-i-roditelje-o-aktivnostima/842739

203 2017/2018 Annual Report, (Munich: Goethe Institut, 2018), 30, 31.

the world.[204] According to the data provided by the Goethe Institute 15.4 million people in the world learn the German language. Out of this number, 9.4 million learners or more than 60 percent are on the European continent. When it comes to BiH, the Russian language also is popular as a second or third choice, claiming more than twelve thousand students in Bosnian primary and high schools. (See Table 3.6)

Table 3.6 Number of Students Attending the Foreign Languages in BiH in 2017-18[205]

Primary Schools	English	German	French	Russian	Other	Total
I. Choice	233,511	6,688	36	None	56	240,291
II. Choice	7,291	97,919	3,189	7,995	7,633	124,027
Total	240,802	104,607	3,225	7,995	7,689	364,318

High Schools	English	German	French	Russian	Other	Total
I. Choice	109,531	8,612	91	371	1,624	120,229
II. Choice	4,843	42,207	2,762	3,921	3,228	56,961
III. Choice	None	375	674	None	1,282	2,331
Total	114,374	51,194	3,527	4,292	6,134	179,521

Some cultural programs that the Institute organized in the past didn't pass without controversies. Every year on April 24, Institute organizes the "Kid's Festival" in BiH.[206] Six kid's festivals were organized in BiH until 2018. The festival resembles a Turkish national holiday called Çocuk Bayramı, as it was organized mainly in the last days of April. The festival brings together in one place around 6-7 thousand school children that are studying Turkish as an elective class in their schools. Kid's festival has created some outrage in BiH for being hegemonic. Critiques say that it is the Turkish national holiday that is celebrated by the Bosnian kids. The outrage became even louder when local media published images of a few thousand Bosnian schoolchildren waving with Turkish flags. (See Figure A2)

204 Ibid. 28.

205 *Demografija i socijalne statistike*, *Statistika obrazovanja*, 6, 19.; In the table provided by the Statistical Agency of BiH information for Turkish Language were not provided. According to the data provided in the 2017 Annual Report of Yunus Emre Institute 8.243 students were learning Turkish as an elective class in 2017. This makes Turkish ranked third in terms of popularity, behind both German and Russian Languages. For more see: 2017 Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Faaliyet Raporu, 92.

206 "Dječiji festival" in Bosnian. Although the Festival is celebrated on April 23 in Turkey, the gathering in BiH is held one day later on April 24.

Mass celebration of kid's festival is certainly a bad example of public and cultural diplomacy as it has created widespread criticism. It projected Turkey as a hegemonic factor in BiH, that plays a cultural card in its ambitions. Yet despite widespread criticism from some local media didn't stop Yunus Emre Institute from organizing the festival seven times in a row. Creating an image of hegemonic power is probably the last image public agents of cultural diplomacy would like to project upon a foreign public. As Neal M. Rosendorf puts it,

> Cultural diplomacy cannot undo or paper over poorly conceived, poorly implemented, and/or poorly received policies.[207]

Another event that has created widespread criticism of Turkish policies in BiH is the ceremonial mass circumcision of Bosnian boys according to the Anatolian tradition that has been held every year since 2014. The event is organized in cooperation with the Institute with Turkish pious NGO's. Local media negatively reacted to the mass circumcision. Even Bosnian politicians criticized the event.[208] Despite the widespread criticism mass circumcisions are organized every year. That Turkish cultural diplomacy is not sensitive as it should be to the issues of celebrating the Turkish national holidays or promoting abroad national traditions in a way that creates discontent is seen as a serious problem.

Yunus Emre Institute and other Turkish institutions recently started organizing the public and mass anniversaries of the victory in the Battle of Gallipoli of 1915 in BiH.[209] Besides Yunus Emre Institute, the Turkish embassy, Turkish Armed Forces, and other organizations are involved in the organization of the event. Commemoration of the Battle of Gallipoli has slowly turned into another 'Turkish national event' that is becoming traditionally organized by the public diplomacy circles, and yet another one that has created an outrage in BiH.

Turkish public diplomacy should defiantly be more sensitive to the reactions of the foreign audience as it is the *milieu* it aims to win over. As Leonard says,

> If we are to move beyond propaganda, the first challenge is to understand the target audience and start from where they are… But it is difficult to carry out successful diplomacy if you do not have ears for things that you don't want to hear….[210]

That public diplomacy is not only about one-way delivering a message, but about listening to the feedback from the foreign audience is also confirmed by other experts on the subject,

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207 Neal M. Rosendorf, "A Cultural Public Diplomacy Strategy" in *Toward a New Public Diplomacy: Redirecting U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Philip Seib, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009): 174.

208 Fahrudin Radončić, "Radončić o koaliciji sa SDA: Neću koalirati sa onima koji organiziraju masovno I javno obrezivanje djece" *Republika*, May 14, 2014. doi: http://www.republikainfo.com/index.php/izdvojeno/13337-radoncic-o-koaliciji-s-sda-necu-koalirati-s-onima-koji-organiziraju-masovno-i-javno-obrezivanje-djece

209 2017 Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Faaliyet Raporu, 320.

210 Mark Leonard et. al., *Public Diplomacy*, 46.

> In other words, public diplomacy is not simply delivering a message to an audience – it is about getting a result. And to get a result, you need to take account of the fact that the listener's views and experience matter as much as the message that the speaker is sending… a one-way flow of messages is likely to be counter-productive.[211]

Philip Seib thinks that listening to the foreign audience should be a "cornerstone of public diplomacy."[212] For Nicholas J. Cull, "listening is the foundation for all effective public diplomacy."[213] Writing about the principles of the new (modern) public diplomacy Melissen also confirms that listening to what foreign audience has to say is fundamental for the new public diplomacy and this quality distinguishes it from mere propaganda.

> Public diplomacy is similar to propaganda in that it tries to persuade people what to think, but it is fundamentally different from it in the sense that public diplomacy also listens to what people have to say.[214]

For Mark Leonard listening to the foreign audience is about "building long-term relationships and understanding target groups." Because of the newly emerged circumstances that came with technological advancement, public diplomacy "needs to be much more interactive" to achieve its goals. To cut it short, it seems apparent that Turkish public diplomacy institutions failed to adjust their working behaviors according to the principles of the new public diplomacy. A persistent organization of some past ceremonies by the Turkish public diplomacy institutions shows that Ankara for the main part has failed to listen to the national and other sensitivities of the Bosnians, which altogether brings to the question the success of the Turkish public diplomacy on the long run.

3.9 Other Examples of Cultural Diplomacy in the Balkans

Turkey is not the only country that is interested in spreading its culture and language in the Balkans. Both Germany and Turkey are unofficially rivals in the region when it comes to cultural diplomacy. Both countries have historical ties and expectations from the region. German and Austrian interest in the region is not new. Since the 19th century Austrian and later German expansion into the southeastern Europe Balkans plays an important role in German foreign policy. As rapidly industrializing unified Germany was left without colonies outside Europe, much of the foreign policy energy during the 19th century was invested into an economic, political and cultural expansion to the East under the idea of the *Drang Nach Osten*.[215] This for-

211 Ibid. 46, 48.

212 Philip Seib, "Conclusion: The Task for Policy Makers", in *Toward a New Public Diplomacy: Redirecting U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Philip Seib, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009): 241.

213 Nicholas J. Cull, *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past*, 10.

214 Jan Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice", in *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, 18.

215 Meaning "Drive toward the East" in German language.; "Drang Nach Osten", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, doi: https://www.britannica.com/event/Drang-nach-Osten

eign policy course will occupy an important place in the mindset of the German political elite much beyond the nineteenth century. Interest for Eastern and Southeastern Europe was transmitted through various regimes that ruled Germany and Austria throughout the 20th century. It will be revived in Adolph Hitler's infamous *Lebensraum*[216] concept.[217]

Although the central 'hinterland' of the German expansionism was Eastern Europe, for the Austrian Empire the expansion into the Ottoman Balkans was occupying the central place in its foreign policy. Austria's interest in the region even predates Germany's and can be traced back to the 16th or 17th century and the period of Ottoman-Habsburg Wars. Austrian and German interest in the region for the main part of the modern history overlapped when it comes to the Balkans. This was not limited only to the political class but found its reflection among the academic circles as well. Many pioneer scientific institutions in the region were founded by German and Austrian scientists. Like the Turkish culture itself, German culture still has strong traces in the region. Both Austria and Germany left a strong cultural impact in the region. Alliance-attached and passive foreign policy Germany followed during the Cold War would change after the unification of the East and West Germany in 1993. The end of the Cold-War order and Germany's revival as an economic powerhouse of Europe encouraged Berlin to start playing more active foreign policy.[218]

Today Germany is one of the most influential countries in Europe. The first serious foreign policy challenge for Germany after the Cold War was the crisis in the former Yugoslavia. Berlin was one of the first capitals in the world that recognized the independence of Slovenia and Croatia. Atrocities committed by the Serb forces even opened up a debate in Germany about the use of force in the Western Balkans.[219] The interest of both Germany and Austria will continue after the Yugoslav wars. This special interest of these two countries for the Balkans is best reflected through the economic and political parameters in the region that clearly shows the domination of the two German-speaking countries. In the last decades, Germany was actively using the EU integration process to project its influence. Today, both German-speaking countries are among the strongest advocates for the region's future in the EU.

Goethe Institute is the official cultural diplomacy institution of Germany. This institute is active in every regional country except in Montenegro. In 2017, there were in total 18 Goethe institutes across the "Southeastern-Europe."[220] That Balkans occupy an important place in German cultural diplomacy is seen in the fact that the first foreign office ever Goethe Institute opened in 1952 was in the Greek capital.

216 Meaning "Living space" in German language.

217 Joseph W. Bendersky, *A Concise History of Nazi Germany*, 4th ed. (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.,2014), 150-153.

218 For more see: Dietrich Orlow, *Modern Germany: 1871 to Pre*sent, 8th ed. (New York: Routledge, 2018)

219 Douglas Webber, "Introduction: German European and Foreign Policy Before and After Unification" in *German Politics*. 10. (2001), 1-18.

220 Unlike in the Turkish literature where the term "Balkanlar", meaning Balkans, is widely used, in German and other European literature the term Southeastern-Europe is also used.

The Bosnian branch located in Sarajevo started to work in 2000.[221]

As it is the case with the Yunus Emre Institute, the Goethe Institute also provides language courses. In recent years because of the rise in the interest for the German language, it seems that its German counterpart beats the Yunus Emre Institute when it comes to the number of attendees at the German language courses. Although official data about the Bosnian students are not available, in 2017 there were 28.573 language course participants from the region. In 2017 region of "Southeastern-Europe" was ahead of all other regions when it comes to taking German language exams.[222] That Goethe Institute outperforms its Turkish counterpart in the region is seen from the official statistics. For instance, the number of those who attended German language courses in the Balkans provided by the Goethe Institute was larger than the number of all the participants Yunus Emre had in 2017 around the world whether they attended the regular language courses, Turcology departments or had Turkish as an elective class in their schools.[223] If Turkish language learners though Turcology departments and those studying the language as an elective class in their schools are excluded, then the number of students from the Balkans region that took Turkish language courses from the Yunus Emre Institute was just slightly above 4 thousand in 2017.[224] This was approximately seven times lower number compared to German language learners in the region.

Goethe Institute also provides an opportunity to study and practice German online. Institute's web-platform *Deutsch für Dich* (German for you) for learning the German language was used by 360 thousand people in 2018.[225] Yunus Emre Institute might also consider putting effort to provide online courses to raise the number of students.

Besides cultural activities like teaching the German language to Bosnian students, the center provides information for those who would like to continue their life in Germany. The Institute advises face-to-face sessions, via telephone or email for those wanting to move to Germany. But, Goethe Institute's strategies in the last few years are creating some concerns. In the last years, the migration of professionals from the region to Germany is creating great concern for the Balkan countries. It is estimated that in four years from 2013 to 2017 only from BiH around 150 thousand people left for the EU countries.[226] The majority of them moved to Germany. Especially after Berlin made participation in the local job market easier there is great interest across the region for continuing professional life in Germany. The emigration of the professional class is speeding up the already alarming depopulation of the Balkans. Amid the demographic catastrophe, Goethe Institute has decided to provide the ad-

221 "Zadaci i ciljevi", *Goethe Institut*, Accessed on April 8, 2019, doi: https://www.goethe.de
222 2017/2018 Annual Report, Digitisation: A Question of Credibility, (Munich: Goethe Institut, 2018), 31.
223 2017 Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Faaliyet Raporu, 7.
224 Ibid, 86.
225 2017/2018 Annual Report, (Munich: Goethe Institut, 2018), 31.
226 "Od 2013 do danas iz BiH iselilo 150 hiljada ljudi", *Klix*, 30.10.2017, Accessed on June 3, 2019, doi: https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/od-2013-godine-do-danas-iz-bih-iselilo-150-hiljada-ljudi/171030011

visory service for the growing need of the German labor market under the web-section "Advises about life and working in Germany."[227] Although recent migrations to Germany are creating great harm to the regional economies Goethe Institute's move with opening advisory channels for the migrating workers can serve as an example of the complementary cultural diplomacy that follows the trends and the needs of the home country.

Russia is also one of the countries that actively work on creating a stronger impact in the region.[228] Russian influence had its ups and downs throughout history. After playing a very important role in regional politics during the 19th and 20th centuries, Russian influence significantly diminished with the end of the Cold War.[229] Although Kremlin primarily supported the Serbian side during the wars in Yugoslavia, its weakened position prevented Moscow to achieve any significant success in the region during the 1990s.[230] After losing a decade, during the 2000s Russia's internal conditions changed for the better. With the rise of Vladimir Putin[231] Kremlin will once again start playing an important role in the international arena.

After the period of restoration, Russia's rising international prominence will be felt in the Balkans as well. Although recent Russian influence mainly goes through so-called "energy policy", under the leadership of Putin Kremlin started investing in cultural diplomacy as well. The Russian language is one of the main assets in the Kremlin's cultural diplomacy.[232] In that sense, by the decree of the Russian president *Ruskiyy Mir Foundation*[233], a government-sponsored organization for the promotion of the Russian language and culture abroad was founded in 2007.[234] Ruskiyy Mir promotes Russian culture abroad and actively works on the preservation of the Russian language in the countries of the Former Soviet Union and beyond. The Institute has strong cooperation with the Orthodox Church, as under the Putin regime Orthodox Christianity is accepted to be one of the main pillars of the Russian culture and shelter against the assertiveness of the "Western materialism." Ruskiyy Mir is active in the Balkan countries as well. In BiH, the foundation has an office at the *Pan-european University with headquarters in Republika Srpska's largest town Banja Luka.*

Besides Ruskiyy Mir, during the official visit of Foreign Minister of Russia Sergei Lavrov in 2018, foundations were laid for the construction of the "Serbian-Russia temple and spiritual-culture center" in the honor of the "Russian imperial dynasty of Romanovs."[235] The center will serve as the religious and cultural sight for the pro-

227 "Savjetovanje o zivotu i radu u Njemackoj", Goethe Institut, Accessed on April 11, 2019, doi: https://www.goethe.de

228 Dimitar Bechev, *Rival Power: Russia's Influence in Southeast Europe*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017)

229 Barbara Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements, 1806-1914*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

230 James Headley, *Russia and the Balkans: Foreign Policy from Yeltsin to Putin*, (London: Hurst, 2008)

231 Prime Minister of Russia (1999-2000), (2008-2012), and President of Russia (2000-2008), (2012-).

232 Anna Klyueva and Anna Mikhaylova, "Building the Russian World: Cultural Diplomacy of the Russian Language and Cultural Identity", JOMEC Journal: Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies 11, (2017), 127-143.

233 Meaning "Russian World Foundation" in Russian language.

234 "About Ruskiyy Mir Foundation", *Russkiy Mir*, Accessed on April 12, 2019, doi: https://russkiymir.ru

235 "Lavrov u zvaničnoj posjeti BiH: Sastanak sa članovima Predsjedništva BiH i posjeta Banja Luci", *Agencija*

motion of Serbian and Russian friendship. The construction of the center is another indication of the close ties the Kremlin has under Putin not only with the Russian Orthodox Church at home but to other Orthodox Churches around the world as well. Instrumentalizing the bond of Orthodox Christianity and Orthodox churches across the region by Moscow is not a new phenomenon. During the 19th century, Imperial Russia was projecting its influence in the region by using Orthodox Christianity to spread the idea of 'Orthodox solidarity' among the 'brothers' in the Balkans. Similar strategies are followed today by 'Putin's Russia' as a part of Kremlin's cultural diplomacy.[236] Russophiles among the local political elite primarily hail from conservative and traditionalist backgrounds, while Western-oriented elites represent an opposite side of the elite specter. For that reason, it is not surprising that the promotion of Russian culture in the region involves a lot of religious and traditionalist motives.

Through track-two cultural diplomacy operations, Russia is very active in the region. Sometimes the way Russia conducts its unofficial cultural diplomacy is described in the West as a "hybrid war" against Western influence. Namely, through third parties, Russia actively supports pro-Russian NGO's in the region and conducts a 'propaganda war' by actively 'trolling' at the social media or promoting an anti-Western sentiment through various media channels.[237] Much of the unofficial propaganda wars are conducted through local Russophiles, rather than Russian nationals.

In BiH, Russia is active mainly through Bosnian Serbs. Russia's unofficial culture diplomacy in BiH is characterized as malicious, as by openly supporting the positions of the Republika Srpska it actively works in direction of undermining Bosnian national integrity and preventing the country in its further Euro-Atlantic integrations.[238] Nationalist politicians among the Bosnian Serbs are using relations with Russia to undermine the functionality and the territorial integrity of BiH, while Russia uses anti-Western sentiment among some of the Bosnian Serbs to create a headache for the West in the region. In the last years in all the forms of diplomacy, Kremlin works in direction of supporting the secessionism of the Bosnian Serbs. Much of the Russia-backed operations in BiH go through recently elected Bosnian Serb President Milorad Dodik, who for years is the primary dissolver of the Bosnian national unity.

One of the harmful cases of Russian cultural diplomacy happened during Dodik's mandate as a President of the Serb-majority entity of Republika Srpska. Before the 2014 general elections, a group of 'Russian Cossacks' paraded in the largest Serb-ma-

Anadolija, 21.09.2018, Accessed on April 12, 2019, doi: https://www.aa.com.tr/ba

236 Robert C. Blitt, "Russia's 'Orthodox' Foreign Policy: The Growing Influence of the Russian Orthodox Church in Shaping Russia's Policies Abroad", *SSRN Electronic Journal* 33 (22), (May, 2011)

237 Beside many marginal media channels that Russia supports through so-called third parties, Russian state news agency *Sputnik* is active in the region, with the office in Serbia that covers all Western Balkans.

238 Steven Erlanger, "In a New Cold War With Russia, Balkans Become a Testing Ground", *The New York Times*, April 10, 2018, Accessed on November 23, 2019, doi: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/10/world/europe/european-union-balkans.html

jority town of Banja Luka, displaying elements of pro-Orthodox and Serb-Russian solidarity. The event was organized by the "Organization of Serb-Russian ties" from neighboring Serbia and was supported by the leadership of Republika Srpska. The band was described as a folklore group by the leadership of Republika Srpska, while the government is Sarajevo accused Republika Srpska of political provocation before the general elections. Dodik made a similar move a few months before the 2018 general elections when he invited Republika Srpska the motorcycle club from Russia known as 'Night wolves', despite the fact that the leaders of the group were banned from entering BiH. The group visited Republika Srpska as a part of their regional tour named 'Russian Balkans.' The government in Sarajevo reacted again by claiming Night wolves are a paramilitary group involved in the Ukrainian war as Kremlin's proxies.[239]

Russian support for the cultural activities run by the network of third parties is creating more and more tensions in the region. Russia's active use of culture card to support the Orthodox-solidarity, Slavophil or Russophile elements are creating serious distress in this fragile region. Almost all recent Russian-rooted activities in BiH are indicating the Kremlin's recent strategy of "hybrid war" against the Western-backed system, that Russia openly follows since the eruption of conflict in Ukraine. Although since 2016 Turkey and Russia have very close bilateral ties there is not evident cooperation on the field of cultural diplomacy between the two countries in the Balkans. The reason for this is the fact that Kremlin is more interested to work with Bosnian Serbs, while Turkey primarily focused its activities on Bosniaks when it comes to cultural diplomacy.

Besides Turkey, Germany, and Russia that historically have a strong influence in the region, other countries for whom Balkans historically had more of marginal importance have their cultural centers across the region as well. One of those countries is the United Kingdom whose official cultural diplomacy center is the British Council (BC). Thanks to the planetary interest for English-language, British Council today is a global player. Its language courses claim to reach outstanding 75 million people directly and 738 million people overall in 2017 and 2018. Around two million people annually enter English-language exams in ninety countries around the world.[240] British Council has active offices in all countries in the region. Even one of the first four foreign offices ever to be opened was in Romanian capital Bucharest back in 1938.[241] The Bosnian office located in the capital city is active since 1996. Like other cultural centers, British Council provides English language exams like IELTS, organizes cultural activities for the promotion of British culture, serves as a channel for those interested to study in the UK and similar activities.

239 "Russia's 'Night Wolves' to Tour Bosnia Despite Ban", *Balkan Insight*, 21.03.2018, Accessed on April 12, 2019, doi: https://balkaninsight.com/2018/03/20/night-wolves-to-continue-their-tour-in-serbia-and-republika-srpska-03-19-2018/

240 British Council-Bosna i Hercegovina, British Council, Accessed on April 11, 2019, doi: https://www.britishcouncil.ba

241 "British Council", Accessed on November 23, 2019, doi: https://eub.ac/the-british-council/

Compared to Turkey's Yunus Emre Institute that has three cultural centers in BiH, the US has nine American Corners in nine different cities across BiH. Branches of American Corners are present in both entities of BiH as well as in the Brčko District. There are even offices in smaller Bosnian cities like Doboj, Bihać, or Trebinje. The first American Corner in BiH was opened in town Zenica in 2004. American Corners function as bridge institutions between the Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy in BiH and local institutions, primarily libraries. The financing of the American Corners comes from two sources, the US Embassy in BiH and local institutions. Certainly, this is a unique financing model when compared to the cultural institutions of other states. All the branches in BiH function as American-style libraries with specific content about American culture. American Corners also provide information and serve as an advisory body for the students that wish to study in the US. Unlike other cultural diplomacy institutions such as Yunus Emre or Goethe Institute which are teaching a language as their primary activity, American Corners serve as library and culture corners for the promotion of American culture, history, political system, judiciary, and other aspects.[242]

In BiH, there are two active Institut Français, one in the capital Sarajevo, another in Banja Luka. There is also, College International Français de Sarajevo (CIFS), a French-language school in Sarajevo providing education for 225 students on all levels of education from elementary to high school. Besides the French language, the school also provides classes in Bosnian and English languages.[243] When it comes to Turkish schools in BiH, for decades schools of the Gülen movement were active across the country. With the rift between the Turkish government and the movement, Gülenist schools came under suspicion and much of its international activities were limited afterward. Although BiH didn't extract the members of the movement like some countries in the region did, much of the influence the movement had in this country was lost after 2016. Turkish government founded a *Maarif Foundation* in 2016 that is focused on fighting the influence the Gülen movement created through education in the foreign countries. This foundation works in creating an alternative to the Gülen movement's schools abroad and "to represent Turkey as an only legitimate educational foundation abroad."[244] Since 2018 Maarif school is operational in BiH.[245]

The Italian cultural center based in Sarajevo is active as a *Society for the Promotion of Italian culture, Dante Alighieri. The society provides Italian language courses, culinary courses on Italian and Mediterranean cuisine, and other activities. Italy's cultural influence goes much beyond the mentioned society, as many other institutions are based in*

242 "American Spaces", U.S. Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Accessed on April 15, 2019, doi: https://ba.usembassy.gov/education-culture/american-spaces/

243 For more visit: https://cifs.edu.ba

244 "Maarif Foundation", *Maarif Vakfı*, Accessed on December 11, 2019, https://turkiyemaarif.org/page/50-turkiye-maarif-vakfi-12

245 "O nama", *Maarif Schools of Sarajevo*, Accessed on April 15, 2019, doi: https://www.maarifschools.edu.ba/o-nama/

Italy and have strong ties to the Catholic Church or even the Vatican itself. Among those organizations is Caritas, a Catholic relief organization, that played a significant role in providing humanitarian help to the civilians during the Bosnian War. Detailed analysis of the Vatican's cultural influence in BiH through the network of local Catholic Churches and sister organizations certainly is important in understanding the cultural influence of the foreign countries in BiH, but it goes much beyond this work and should be the subject of a more detailed and comprehensive study.[246]

246 Matteo Albertini and Chris Deliso, *The Vatican's Challenges in the Balkans: Bolstering the Catholic Church in 2015 and Beyond* (Balkananalysis, 2015)

4.

Turkish Faith-Based Diplomacy and the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı)

As the secularization of international relations went hand in hand with the modernization and globalization process, some social scientists were suggesting that religion will gradually lose the importance of international relations. Eighteen-century French sociologist August Comte was even suggesting that religion as a primary source of ethics and morality will be eventually supplanted by positivist principles. Despite the modernization and globalization, in the last decades, religion started to re-emerge as an important constituent of international relations. The process of "religionization of politics and the politicization of religion" is becoming more and more evident.[1] Religion is not perceived only as a cultural and civilizational frame to which certain country and its political establishment belong but is slowly becoming a force shaping the global political arena. Even Western countries are not immune to the trend. But, the re-emergence of religiously inspired politics is most evident in developing countries. Outside the Western world, religion is often a shelter against the assertive Western-like modernization.[2] Political ideology inspired by the religion of Islam, known as political Islam, today is one of the most important political options in the Islamic World. This is true in the case of Turkey as well where AKP is dominating the political scene for seventeen years.[3]

For many authors, the cocktail of religion and politics is seen as unhealthy and destructive. Those who defend this position point to previous historical experience where religion served as an inspiration for many wars. Some authors like Samuel P. Huntington were suggesting that the world would eventually enter into a period of 'clash of civilizations.'[4] On the other hand, for other authors like Douglas Johnston, this outcome isn't inevitable. Re-emerging importance of the religion in international politics can be redirected beneficially. Especially the moral and ethical dimension of religion has a great potential in peacebuilding and dialogue efforts. He believes that religion has much to offer diplomacy in terms of interfaith dialogue as a part of conflict resolution. For the fact that many conflicts of the twenty and twenty-first century are caused by religious intolerance, this is the space where religious morals and

1 Allen Keiswetter and Bishop John Cane, "Diplomacy and Religion: Seeking Common Interest and Engagement in a Dynamically Changing and Turbulent World" (paper presented at the U.S.-Islamic World Forum Papers 2013, entitled 'A Decade of Dialogue', Doha, 9-11 June, 2013): 7.

2 Barry Rubin, "Religion and International Affairs", in Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft, ed. Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson (New York, Oxford University Press, 1994), 20-34.

3 Gareth Jenkins, Political Islam in Turkey: Running West, Heading East?, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)

4 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order*, (New York: Touchstone books, 1998)

tolerance comes into play.[5] Johnston sees Begin's and Sadat's religiosity as a common ground in reaching the dialogue. For Jimmy Carter, the success of the diplomatic effort at Camp David was not possible without the ability to appeal to the religious convictions of two leaders.[6] During the wars in the former Yugoslavia religion and religious authorities played one of the central roles.[7] Religious authorities had both types, destructive and constructive influences. Serb paramilitary troops were blessed by the Serbian Orthodox Chuch before going into action where various atrocities were committed, while on the other side a positive example was the constant calls by the Islamic authorities warning Muslims not to commit crimes.

In 2005 at the 59th General Assembly of the United Nations (UN), Spanish President Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero (2004-2011) proposed an initiative called *The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations* (UNAOC). Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkish Prime Minister at that time, decided to co-sponsor the initiative. Thus Spain and Turkey together launched an initiative for inter-cultural, inter-faith, inter-civilizational dialogue amid a very tense global political climate that was straining relations between the West and the Muslim World.[8] Turkey's state institution in charge of the religious affair, Presidency of Religious Affairs has its department that deals with inter-faith dialogue known as Presidency of Department for Relations between Religions and Cultures under the General Directorate for Foreign Relations.[9]

Both the Bush and Obama administration recognized the rising importance of religion in international relations and formed different offices for running faith-based diplomacy. After the Bush administration's inflamed foreign policy rhetoric, the Obama administration worked to fix the damaging effects created by his predecessor. US Department of State launched an initiative to systematize the relations with the religious figures by creating a body called, "the Religion and Foreign Policy Working Group" composed of 100 religious leaders and State Department officials that were supposed to guide and advise the U.S. Secretary of State on issues concerning the religion. Obama administration proceeded with this strategy under the Secretary of State John Kerry when the Office of Faith-Based Community Initiatives was launched.[10]

Among the Middle-Eastern countries, a similar initiative was started by Iran, under the country's moderate President Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005). During

5 Douglas Johnston and Brian Cox, "Faith-Based Diplomacy and Preventive Engagement", in *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik*, ed. Douglas Johnston (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 11-30.

6 Allen Keiswetter and Bishop John Cane, "Diplomacy and Religion: Seeking Common Interest and Engagement in a Dynamically Changing and Turbulent World", 4.

7 Sabrina P. Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milošević*, 4th ed. (Oxford, Westview Press, 2002), p. 253-275.

8 Anoushiravan Ehteshami, "The Middle East: between ideology and geo-politics", in *The Bush Doctrine and the War on Terrorism: Global reaponses, global consequences*, ed. Mary Buckley and Robert Singh, (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 104-121.

9 http://www2.diyanet.gov.tr

10 Belgica M. Cucalon, "The U.S. Department of State Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives: What Does the U.S. Engage When They Engage 'Religion'", (Master Theses, University of South Florida, 2014)

the 1990s he launched a 'Dialogue of Civilizations', that was supposed to normalize US-Iranian relations. Even Saudi Arabia started its interfaith dialogue initiatives under King Abdullah (2005-2015).[11] It cannot be said that these initiatives had any significant impact on de-escalating the tensions in the region given the post-Arab Spring religious conflicts in the Middle-East.

4.1. Turkish Faith-based Diplomacy

Turkey's faith-based diplomacy slightly differs from the traditional understanding of faith-based diplomacy in the Western World. In the developed countries of the West which are run by secular principles, religion represents a supplemental element of diplomacy. Yet in Turkey, especially under the AKP, religious-driven politics has become the loudest voice on the political spectrum in general. Even though Turkey is still a secular country, many of its diplomatic undertakings under the AKP have religious connotations. As it is already said, Ankara has participated in the UN's multilateral faith-based initiatives since 2005. Besides the Track two channels, much of the faith-based diplomacy is executed through official state institutions, or more precisely through state public diplomacy institutions. A central role here belongs to the Presidency of Religious Affairs or Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı (after this point the institutions will be mentioned as Diyanet). Diyanet is the main state institution in charge of religious affairs. At the same time, Diyanet is among the most powerful Turkish public diplomacy institution when it comes to influencing the public overseas.

Diyanet's influence both domestically and abroad started rising during the 1990s, with Turkey's opening to Muslim countries of Central Asia. After AKP came to power in 2003, Diyanet was turned into a strong diplomatic channel for stronger promotion of Islam along with Turkey's influence. This, in turn, made Turkey following rather a Middle-Eastern style of 'First-Track' faith-based diplomacy that evokes Saudi Arabia and Iran, than Track Two faith-based diplomacy as it is the case in more secular countries of the West. Having a strong religious institution at its disposal, the AKP government turned Turkey into reckoned faith-based diplomacy power. This capacity was recognized even in the Balkans, where Diyanet would be asked to broker negotiations in the intra-Muslim splits.

4.1.1. Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı)

Diyanet is one of the oldest public institutions Turkey has. With a century-long tradition today the Presidency is among the strongest state institutions, both in Turkey and abroad. As Diyanet represents Turkey's official faith-based diplomacy its activities are subject to a specific branch of public diplomacy known as religious diplomacy or faith-based diplomacy.

11 Turan Kayaoğlu, "Explaining Interfaith Dialogue in the Muslim World", *Politics and Religion*, vol. 8, issue 2, 236-262, doi: 10.1017/S1755048315000267

Creating Diyanet at the dawn of the Turkish Republic during the 1920s was exclusively a matter of internal politics. Diyanet was designed to become a state institution for the promotion of Islam that would be more in tune with the republican paradigm that was taking shape. But, Diyanet is not an institution that came from nowhere. There is a historical continuity between the Diyanet and the organization of religious authority within the Ottoman state system.

The relationship between state and religion and the institution of Sheikh-al Islam during the late Ottoman period are important to explain the preconditions on which Diyanet will be founded. Iştar Gözaydın summarizes the three prevalent opinions in the academic circles regarding the state-religion relations in Ottoman and Republican Turkey. The first position suggests that duality was existing in the state authority of the Ottoman Empire. There was a distinction between Sharia law; and the legal acts of the Sultans.[12] The second view sees the Ottoman state as a theocracy governed by a Sultan who was an absolute religious authority or the Caliph; the embodiment of the Sharia.[13] According to the third view, there is a historical continuity with the Ottoman period when it comes to the state's control over religious issues.[14] For Hakan Yavuz,

> the institutionalization of Islam prevented the autonomy of religion, and Islam always remained under the control of the state. This tradition of institutional control continued under the Republican regime with the establishment of Diyanet.[15]

Diyanet was established by Act no. 429 on the "Abolishment of the Ministries of *Şer'iye and Evkaf" from* 3 March 1924."[16] By the act of forming a separate state institution that would look after the religious affairs, at that time it was decided for Diyanet to be under the Prime Minister's Office. The president of Diyanet is appointed to the position by the President of the Republic after being suggested by Prime Minister. Being under the authority of the Prime Minister's Office gave various Turkish governments strong influence over Diyanet's policies.

The Constitution of 1924 was explicit in what role should Diyanet play in society, by stating that Presidency's role is "taking the necessary steps to secure the loyalty of Muslims to the national ideas (of the Republic)."[17] İştar Gözaydın believes that Act 429. was "very significant in the construction of a secular system in Republican Turkey."[18] As governments were changing, new constitutions were adopted, thus Di-

12 İştar Gözaydın, Religion, "Politics and the Politics of Religion in Turkey", *Liberal Institute Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftungfür die Freiheit*, (Berlin, 2013): 5. doi: http://edoc.vifapol.de/opus/volltexte/2015/5694/pdf/Religion_Politics.pdf

13 Ibid, 6.

14 Ibid.

15 M. Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.), page. 153.

16 With the Law no. 5634 *Diyanet İşleri Reisliği* will be renamed as *Diyanet Işleri Başkanlığı* in 1950.1924 Anayasası, Şeriye ve Evkaf ve Erkanı harbiyei umumiye vekaletlerinin ilgasına dair kanun, No. 429.

17 M. Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, 24.

18 İştar Gözaydın, "Management of Religion in Turkey: The *Diyanet* and Beyond" in *Freedom of Religion and Belief*

yanet's role was changing accordingly. With the Constitution from 1961, known as Turkey's most liberal constitution, the role of Diyanet will be redefined by Law 633 that was passed in 1965 to; "enlight the society in religious issues and the moral aspects of the Islamic religion…."[19] In terms of Diyanet, the post-1961 constitutional period was less patronizing compared to the early Republican era. The Constitution of 1982 that was prepared by the dictate of the military stated that Diyanet should "carry out its mission within the framework of secularism, to achieve national solidarity…."[20]

The end of the Cold War and the rise of Turgut Özal will bring new dynamism in Diyanet's foreign policies. The first evidence of the change was the more active role of the Presidency outside Turkey. Like the state's other public diplomacy institutions, Diyanet tried to fill the vacuum that was created by the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the creation of new Muslim-majority states in Central Asia and the Balkans. Under the AKP, religion will regain its centrality in public and political life.[21] The number of personnel working in Diyanet and its share in the state budget doubled under the AKP.[22] Erdoğan even once publicly said that they (AKP) "will create a pious generation."[23] As Gözaydın recognizes that;

> the extensive network of the Diyanet all over Turkey and abroad, which no other administrative body enjoys in the Turkish system, is a great opportunity for all governments, regardless of their positions in the political spectrum.[24]

Before Turkey shifted to the new 'presidential system' in 2018 the direct link between the government and Diyanet was provided through the Office of Prime Minister. One of the Deputy Prime Ministers from the Prime Minister's Office at the time was delegated to supervise the Diyanet. Each of the assigned Deputies of the Prime Minister was in charge of another set of public diplomacy institutions.[25]
Institutional Organization of the Presidency for Religious Affairs

The internal organizational structure of Diyanet went through a restructuring on many occasions throughout the Republic's history.[26] As conditions required adaptation, the organizational scheme evolved from simple structures in the early years to more complex ones. Constitutional changes almost as a rule meant changes in the or-

in Turkey, ed. Özgür Heval Çınar and Mine Yıldırım, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 15.

19 Kanun No. 633, Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Kuruluş ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun, Madde 1, Resmi Gazete 2/7/1965, Sayı: 12038

20 M. Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, 24.; Binnaz Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981)

21 David Lepeska, "Turkey Casts the Diyanet: Ankara's Religious Directorate Takes Off," *Foreign Affairs*, May 17, 2015, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2015-05-17/turkey-casts-diyanet

22 Salim Çevik, "Erdoğan's Comprehensive Religious Policy: Management of the Religious Realm in Turkey", *SWP- German Institute for International and Security Affairs*, (2019): 2.

23 Daren Butler, "A Pious Generation", *Reuters*, January 25, 2018, Accessed on August 29, 2019, doi: https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/turkey-erdogan-education/

24 İştar Gözaydın, Religion, "Politics and the Politics of Religion in Turkey", p. 21

25 https://www.basbakanlik.gov.tr/Forms/_Global/_Government/pg_CabinetTasks.aspx

26 İştar Gözaydın, *Diyanet: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Dinin Tanzimi*, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009), 307-322.

ganizational scheme of the Presidency. The present organizational scheme is defined by Law No. 6002 dated 01.07.2010 which brought large changes to Law No. 633 of 1963.[27] This was a change that raised the Presidency to the level of the Undersecretariat. The mandate of Diyanet's president was limited to five years. The same person is allowed to be selected for two mandates only.28 (See Figure B1) With the new constitution, Diyanet came under the supervision of the President's Office in 2018.[29]

Thanks to its wide geographical dispersion, Diyanet today operates with a complex organizational structure composed of a large number of departments and sub-departments. From top to down its internal structure is made of the President of Diyanet at the top and the three Deputy Presidents beneath him. In total Diyanet has sixteen head-departments which have a large number of sub-departments. Of these head-departments, five are defined as presidencies, nine as general directorates, and two as consultancies. Diyanet's field operations are divided into two general groups according to the geographical scope they cover. These are branches for domestic and international operations.[30] (See Figure B1)

Of all the head-departments eight are of great importance for Diyanet's work on the field, as other departments serve more as bodies for the internal audit or defining the strategies to be followed. Departments that are in charge of operations on the field are referred to as 'General Directorates.' Those General Directorates are; General Directorate of Religious Services, General Directorate of Education Services, General Directorate of Hajj and Budget Services, General Directorate of Religious Publications, General Directorate of Foreign Relations, General Directorate of Human Resources, General Directorate of Management Services, Directorate for Administration of Circulating Capital. As its name suggests, General Directorate that is responsible for external relations is the General Directorate of Foreign Relations. (See Figure B1)

EMERGENCE OF DIYANET AS AN INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC DIPLOMACY INSTITUTION

Diyanet's first steps in establishing external operations came in the 1970s with the growing needs of the Turkish community in Western Europe. Founding themselves in non-Muslim majority countries Turkish guest workers lacked religious service. At the same time by sending imams to European countries Ankara saw a chance to preserve the communication of Turkish diaspora with the motherland. The first organizational step was creating the General Directorate of Foreign Relations in 1971.

Today the Directorate has five departments that are responsible for Diyanet's foreign affairs. These departments are Department for Turks Abroad, Department

27 The previous Law No. 633 from 1963 was defining the duties of the Diyanet. "Kurumsal Tarihçe", Diyanet, Accessed on November 24, 2019, doi: https://www.diyanet.gov.tr/tr-TR/Kurumsal/Detay/1

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 2012 Diyanet Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara, T.C. Diyanet Işleri Başkanlığı, 2013), p. 8.

for Eurasian Countries, Foreign Education and Guidance Department, Department of Muslim Countries and Communities, and Department for Relations between Religions and Cultures.[31] As it is understood from their names each of the departments is responsible for the different aspects of foreign affairs. All the Departments except the Department for Turks Abroad that is responsible for the religious services of Turkish citizens living abroad are more or less in charge of managing the relations with Balkan countries. Especially of great importance for the relations with Muslim communities in the Balkans is Department for Eurasian Countries. This department works with a wide geographical area, stretching from the Balkans to Central Asia. Department for Eurasian Countries runs a set of different tasks on behalf of Diyanet. Among some of those tasks are*;*

> to conduct the work regarding the selection, planning, assignment, sending, extending the mandate, or withdrawing of the officers that are permanently assigned or officers that are assigned as a contractor or have a temporary duty in the countries that are under the responsibility of the Department. To carry out work related to the appointment and assignment of officers that are planned to work on manifestations, during the month of Ramadan, Feast of Sacrifice[32], the Week of the Blessed Birth, … in the countries that are under the responsibility.
>
> To carry out the work regarding the investigation and researches related to the Presidency's area of service, and to conduct procedures regarding the selection and appointment of persons and delegations that are required to attend the meetings. To carry out the work, transactions and serve as a guide to persons and delegations that are coming from these countries to the Presidency.
>
> To make necessary studies with the related institutions and organizations to meet religious needs in terms of publications of compatriots and coreligionists.[33]

Mentioned duties represent only one part of the wide range of duties that is prescribed to the Department. Among other responsibilities of the Department are;

to examine and evaluate the structures, activities, and service areas of the countries of responsibility; and to develop the relations and to carry out joint works.[34]

The department is responsible for running the specific projects and operations that Diyanet is conducting overseas. Among other duties of the Department on behalf of Diyanet are;

> to lead the activities that the Presidency (Diyanet) is conducting under the "Project for Protection of the Turkish Cultural Presence", to manage the works of the "Sister Cities Project."

Besides these two projects that are launched by Diyanet, of great importance for

31 Ibid. 8.
32 *Kurban Bayramı* in Turkish
33 http://www2.diyanet.gov.tr/DisIliskilerGenelMudurlugu/Sayfalar/AvrasyaUlkeleri.aspx
34 Ibid.

Bosnia and Herzegovina and its wider region are the two international meetings that Diyanet organizes. "These are "Eurasian Islamic Council Meetings" and "Meetings of Religious Administration Presidents of Balkan Countries." Duty of the Department for Eurasian Countries;

> is to organize the meetings of the Eurasian Islamic Council and meetings of the Religious Administration Presidents of Balkan Countries, and to conduct the necessary work for the realization of the decisions taken at those meetings.[35]

The first steps in addressing the needs of the Turkish diaspora during the 1970s were limited only to Europe. With the end of the Cold War Diyanet will start playing active foreign policy in the other regions as well. Operations will spread to former Eastern bloc countries. Turkey will benefit from the transitional weakness of Russia, once a dominant power, to build up the infrastructure for its public diplomacy institutions like TIKA and Diyanet. The dissolution of the Soviet Union was an opportunity for Turkey to play a pro-active foreign policy.[36] Özal's liberal economic policies brought quick economic rise to the Turkish economy. Encouraged by the economic expansion and the vacuum left by the dissolution of the USSR, Ankara saw a chance to built its area of influence. The political elite in Ankara started rethinking the traditionally prescribed role of Turkey as NATO's 'easternmost guardian.' The political doctrine created around Özal was in favor of building Turkey as a new macro-regional power. During the 1990s the idea of "Turkish-Islamic"[37] synthesis was very popular in Turkey. The idea that tries to synthesize the religion with nationalism was one of the leading ideological guidance for the right-leaning population.[38] Turkish-Islamic synthesis seemed appealing both to Özal and the AKP, as it offers an alternative and response for Turkey's painful and long-lasting struggle of being accepted as a member of the European family.

Serbian right-wing writer Darko Tanasković see AKP's foreign policy as a continuation of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis. For Tanasković Neo-Ottomanism, that AKP allegedly follows, is not simply a pure form of Islamism but a mixture of different ideologies, the Turkish nationalism foremost.[39] Ideas of nationalism with Islamist connotations were even systematically encouraged by the Military junta after the 1980s coup, which is subject to another discussion.[40] For Mehmet Özkan in general terms, there is a continuity between the policies of Özal and the AKP government, but for Özal "the economy was the principal component" of the foreign policy, while AKP is trying to develop a new regional and global perspective based primarily on "historical and cultural components."[41] Thus Özal used the cultural dimension more

35 Ibid.

36 Şule Kut, "The Contours of Turkish Foreign Policy in the 1990s", in *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power*, ed. Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişçi, (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University Press, 2002): p. 7-17.

37 Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi, *Prof. Dr. İbrahim Kafesoğlu Hatıra Sayısı*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1987)

38 Ana Mratinković, "Vreme ekonomije i neoosmanizma-Özalovo političko nasleđe", *Politeia*, vol. 4, no. 7, p. 231-242.

39 Darko Tanasković, Neoosmanizam: Povratak Turske na Balkan, 2nd ed. (Belgrade, Sluzbeni Glasnik, 2011)

40 Banu Eligür, *The Mobilization of Political Islam*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

41 Mehmet Özkan, "Turkey's Religious Diplomacy," *Arab World Geographer /Le Géographe du monde arabe* Vol 17,

as a means of pragmatism in foreign policy.

Before any serious engagement in the Balkans, Central Asia was the first region where Turkey tried to project its influence.[42] This came with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Compared to the Balkans where bloody wars were raging throughout the 1990s, Central Asia was more open. In this region sustainability of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis will be tested. Even the expectation from the Western allies was in line with stronger Turkish engagement. As a NATO member newly established relations between Turkey and its Turkic brothers in Central Asia had the potential to counterbalance Russia's influence from the strategic point of view very important region. But the euphoria about building strong ties with the "brothers in Central Asia" will soon encounter difficulties. Ankara's influence today looks far from euphoric expectations. The idea of Turkish-Islamic synthesis didn't meet the expectations when it comes to boosting the ties with "Turkic brothers" of Central Asia.

Pro-active policies of the government will impact Diyanet's overseas as well. New opportunities of the post-Cold War era gave a strong push in transforming Diyanet into a public diplomacy organization rather than an ordinary domestic institution in charge of carrying out the "mission of achieving national solidarity."[43] These were the times when Turkey's official religious diplomacy will start taking shape. Yet for a secular country, it was a novelty to encourage faith-based diplomacy through a state institution. As it is already mentioned the change in Diyanet's foreign policy understanding will be first felt in Central Asia, and more evidently in the Balkans with the rise of the AKP, where Turkey will emerge as a source of an alternative face of Islam. The rise of Diyanet as religious diplomacy power was responsible for the introduction of so-called "Turkish Islam" to these regions. This was represented as a moderate interpretation of Islam compared to those promoted by Saudi Arabia and Iran, two rivals of Turkish faith-based diplomacy. After 2003, the religion of Islam will start to play an even more important role in Turkey's foreign policy. Paradigmatic shifts are not unusual in Turkey's modern history. As Hakan Yavuz recognizes "fluctuations" in foreign policy are the "reflection of internal debate over the identity."[44]

EURASIAN ISLAMIC COUNCIL

By founding the *Department for Eurasian Countries* in 1994 Diyanet tried to respond to the opportunities of the post-Cold War. Department for Eurasian Countries is a sub-department of the General Directorate of Foreign Relations, responsible for relations with Eurasian Muslim communities.[45] The main task of the Department for Eurasian Countries is organizing the Eurasian Islamic Council, which is an international meeting bringing together religious representatives from Central Asia to

no 3 (2014), 225, doi: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281344192_Turkey's_Religious_Diplomacy

42 William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy Since 1774*, 220-225.

43 Obligation of Diyanet proscribed by the Constitution of 1982.

44 Hakan M. Yavuz, "The Trifurcated Islam of Central Asia: A Turkish Perspective" in Asian Islam in the 21st Century, ed. John L. Esposito, John O. Voll and Osman Bakar (New York; Oxford University Press, 2008)

45 Balkan countriesare included in this category.

Balkans. President of the Diyanet serves as a permanent director of the Council. (See Figure B2) The first meeting of the Council was organized in 1995.

The Eurasian Council meetings are events that bring together religious administrations of vast geographical scope. Among the participants from the Balkans are religious representatives of Turkey, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Vojvodina, Slovenia, Romania, Western Thrace (Greece). From Central Asia, religious organizations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and from the Caucasus region, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Nakhchivan send their representatives to the Council.[46] Russia is represented in the Council meetings both by the Grand Mufti who operates at the state level, as well as by the Federative Republics. Russian Federative Republics that delegate representatives are; Bashkortostan, Chechnya, Chuvashia, Crimea, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachai-Cherkessia, Omsk Region, and Tatarstan. Eastern European countries of Belarus, Lithuania, Poland send their representatives to the Council meetings as well.[47] In (Table 4.1) is the list of Eurasian Islamic Council Meetings that were organized from the first Council meeting in 1995 until November 2017. Through years meetings of the Eurasian Council becomes an important magnet for the religious communities across Eurasia, thus an important tool for Turkey's religious diplomacy.

The religious authorities from the Balkans are participating at the Council meetings as well. For example, the Fourth Eurasian Islamic Council Meeting of 2000 was held in Sarajevo.[48] Meeting held in the Bosnian capital was the first one to be organized outside Turkey. Another indication demonstrating the importance Diyanet gives to Islamic institutions from the region is the fact that second to Council's president was Mustafa ef. Cerić while he was serving as a Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Cerić held the position of the Assistant President, thus was second in the hierarchy to Diyanet's president who holds the permanent presidential position. At the times Cerić shared this position with the President of Spiritual Board of Muslims of the South Caucasus Allahshukur Pashazade from Azerbaijan. Another indication proving the importance of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Turkish religious diplomacy.[49]

Besides organizing the Eurasian Council Meetings, the Directorate for Relations with the Eurasian Countries is active in tasks of construction and restoration of the

46 Uzbekistan is not sending the representative Eurasian Islamic Council.

47 Şenol Korkut, "The Diyanet of Turkey and its Activities in Eurasia after the Cold War," Acta Slavica Iaponica 28, (2010): 117-139.

48 One of the measures adopted at the 4th Eurasian Islamic Council Meeting in Sarajevo was the adoption of Turkish Language, "*as the common langiage in Eurasian Islamic Council Organization Meetings.*"

49 It is important from the fact that Azerbaijan is the closest Turkic majority state to Turkey in geographical terms, while Bosnia and Herzegovina is not a Turkic state but Slavic majority state. Azerbaijan in Turkey is known as maybe the closest cultural and political ally of Turkey. There is a famous motto that is used in Turkey in describing the relations with Azerbaijan saying that Azeris and Turks are "the same people living in two countries."In Turkish; "*Tek millet iki devlet*." This word was first time used by Azerbaijan's Pan-Turkist politician Abulfaz Elchibey (1938-2000) who served as the president of Azerbaijan between 1992 and 1993. For more see: Murad Ismayilov and Norman A. Graham, *Turkish-Azerbaijani Relations: One Nation-Two States?*, (New York: Routledge, 2016)

mosques and the management of religious education for students. Construction of the mosques is conducted under the "Project for Protection of the Turkish Cultural Presence."[50] Diyanet sends imams across Eurasia to perform religious duties during the Holy Month of Ramadan. In 2010 in total 150 imams were sent, of which 99 to Eurasian counties.[51] After the opening to Eurasian Muslims during the AKP rule, Diyanet revived its activism in regions like Asia and Africa as well.

Table 4.1 Meetings of the Eurasian Islamic Council[52]

Date	Place	Number of the Meeting	Main Subjects of the Meeting
23-27 October 1995	Ankara, Turkey	I. Eurasian Islamic Council Meeting	Necessary steps to continue the cooperation between the religious organizations that are participating at the meeting. The conclusion is that Diyanet should continue sending the representatives to Eurasian countries. Cooperation in the construction and restoration of mosques.
21-24 October 1996	Istanbul, Turkey	II. Eurasian Islamic Council Meeting	The religious publications that are based on scientific methods. Types of religious work. The kinds of religious education should be given in this era.
25-29 May 1998	Ankara, Turkey	III. Eurasian Islamic Council Meeting	Informing the public of the participating countries about the activities of the Eurasian Islamic Council. Continuation of sending students to study theology in Turkey. Reviving historical, religious, and cultural ties between the participant countries.
24-28 July 2000	Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina	IV. Eurasian Islamic Council Meeting	"Islam and Democracy", "Democracy and Freedom", "Strategies of Religious Service", "Tolerance and the Inter-faith Dialogue." The decision was adopted to make Turkish the official language of the Council Meetings.
15-19 April 2002	Famagusta, TRNC	V. Eurasian Islamic Council Meeting	"Missionary activities that have intensified in the Countries where Our (Turkish/Muslim) Communities Live", "A Look to the terrorism from the Perspective of Islamic Cosmopolitism, Peace and Tolerance", "Inter-faith Dialogue and Tolerance", "Evaluation of the Religious Institutions and Religious Activities in Our Countries and Communities." It was decided to conduct necessary work to improve the ties with the Muslims of TRNC, whose people are exposed to "39 years of inhumane sanctions."
05-09 September 2005	Istanbul, Turkey	VI. Eurasian Islamic Council Meeting	"Religion, Culture, and Identity from Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic", "Religion, Culture, Identity in Central Asia", "Religion, Culture, and Identity in the Balkans", "Muslim Identity in the Modern World-Problems and Interpretations." Regarding the Balkans, it was decided that an inventory of the lost Vaqfs (pious foundations) should be created. It was also decided to conduct necessary efforts to make Eurasian Islamic Council more visible in the international arena, as well as publishing a bulletin named 'Eurasian Report', and a book-set named 'Family Serie.'

50 Mehmet Özkan, "Turkey's Religious Diplomacy," *Arab World Geographer /Le Géographe du monde arabe*Vol 17, no 3 (2014), 233, doi:https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281344192_Turkey's_Religious_Diplomacy

51 http://www2.diyanet.gov.tr/DisIliskilerGenelMudurlugu/Sayfalar/DinHizmetleri.aspx

52 2017 Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Faaliyet Raporu, 14.

12-15 May 2009	Istanbul, Turkey	VII. Eurasian Islamic Council Meeting	"Condition and the Position of Eurasian Religious Institutions Regarding the Sources of Religious Knowledge", "Ancient Religious Sources in Eurasia and Their Value", "Current Sources of Religious Knowledge in Eurasia", "Production and Renewal Methods of Religious Knowledge in Eurasia", "Institutions That Produce Religious Knowledge: Madrasah, Faculties, Research Centers-Methods, Vision, Goals, and Contributions." 'Avrasya Web Page' was launched.
19-22 November 2012	Istanbul, Turkey	VIII. Eurasian Islamic Council Meeting	"Eurasia's Islamic Horizon From Tradition to the Future", "Ancient Knowledge and the Foundations of the Wisdom in Eurasia", "Islamic Tradition and New Perceptions in Eurasia", "Religious Institutions in Eurasia from Past to the Future", "The Experience of Living Together in Eurasia", "Future of the Muslims in Eurasia"
11-14 October 2016	Istanbul, Turkey	IX. Eurasian Islamic Council Meeting	"Future of Islam in Eurasia and Movements that Exploit Religion", "Institutions that Produce Religious Knowledge in Eurasia", "The New Media and the Exploitation of Religion", "Global Threat and the Movement of Violence/ISIS", "Reflections on FETÖ as a Global Threat to Eurasia", "Ways of Preventing the Exploitation of the Religion and Solution Suggestions." Subjects regarding the FETÖ activities dominated the IX. Eurasian Islamic Council Meeting. This meeting came a few months after the failed coup attempt of 15 July 2016. Meeting served as a chance for Diyanet and AKP to inform participants from other countries about the activities of FETÖ.

MEETINGS OF THE RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS PRESIDENCIES OF THE BALKAN COUNTRIES

Besides Eurasian Islamic Council meetings that were previously mentioned, one of the activities that Diyanet organizes occasionally by bringing together the religious representatives in the Balkans is the "Meeting of Religious Affairs Presidencies of the Balkan Countries" (Balkan Ülkeleri Diyanet İşleri Başkanları Toplantısı). General Directorate of Foreign Relations is responsible for organizing these meetings. Until the end of 2017 in total seven meetings of this kind were organized. Meetings were organized in different locations across the Balkans. This meeting is part of many regional meetings that Diyanet organizes.[53] Issues like cooperation between the religious institutions in the region, problems *Vaqf* foundations face, islamophobia, peace and tolerance in Islam, terrorism, and many other issues were discussed in these meetings.[54]

DIYANET'S 'SISTER CITIES PROJECT'

Diyanet is executing an operation with foreign countries called the 'Sister Cities Programme.' This program is an extension of the program called "Kardeşlik Huku-

53 General Directorate of Foreign Relations ocassionaly organizes meetings for the religious representatives from Latin America and Africa as well. This demonstrates the global strategy Diyanet follows rather than only focusing in Turkey's close neighborhood.

54 "7. Balkan Ülkeleri Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Toplantısı", *Hürriyet*, 14.01.2015, Accessed on November 24, 2019, doi: http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/7-balkan-ulkeleri-diyanet-isleri-baskanlari-toplantisi-37039691

ku" (Brotherly Law)55 that was launched in the 1990s with Soviet Muslim-majority countries of the former Soviet Union. "Sister City Project" was officially launched in 2006.56 The main idea of the programs to form a sister-city relation between Turkish cities with a city from the Muslim World. Sister Cities Project serves as a platform through which religious representatives of two cities cooperate and conduct joint projects. As it is stated on the website of Turkey Diyanet Foundation:

This is a rare program for establishing "Ummah brotherhood", where one town from Turkey and one town from another Muslim country merge to form sister cities, after which religious, educational, cultural, and social needs are met.[57]

[S]ister city program serves as a good way for deepening the cooperation with foreign religious institutions by allowing all the instances of the Presidency to build ties overseas. Through the program, Diyanet has constructed, renovated, and furnished over 100 mosques, Qur'an courses, religious schools across the globe. Diyanet's 210 branches in Turkey built 203 sister city relations in 95 countries of the world. Relations with the Balkan cities are vibrant. In Bosnia and Herzegovina 13 towns have sister-city relations with Turkish counterparts. In Sandžak 4 cities have sister-city relation with Turkish cities of which three goes to Montenegrin towns while only one of them is in the Serbian part of the region.[58] (See Figure C1)

Table 4.2 List of Turkish Sister Cities of Bosnian Towns Within Diyanet's 'Sister Cities Project'[59]

	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Turkey	
1	Maglaj	Erzincan	
2	Zenica	İstanbul	Gazi-Osmanpaşa Municipality
3	Tuzla	İstanbul	Bağcılar Municipality
4	Mostar	Kayseri	
5	Goražde	Kayseri	Kocasinan Municipality
6	Travnik	Manisa	Turgutlu Municipality
7	Banja Luka	Manisa	Salihli Municipality
8	Sarajevo	Tokat	
9	Tešanj	Kütahya	
10	Jablanica	Kocaeli	Başiskele Municipality
11	Doboj-jug	İzmir	Gaziemir Municipality
12	Cazin	Kayseri	Develi Municipality
13	Cazin	İstanbul	Şile Municipality

55 *Kardeşlik hukuku* is the term in Turkish language that is used in order to describe the closeness of the brotherly relations.

56 http://www.diyanet.gov.tr/en-US/Institutional/Detail/9978/208-sister-cities-in-93-countries#

57 https://tdv.org/tr-TR/site/projelerimiz/kardes-sehir-programi-1059

58 "Dışilişkiler Genel Müdürlüğü", *Diyanet*, www2.diyanet.gov.tr/DisIlliskilerGenelMudurlugu/Documents/KardesSehir.docx

59 Ibid.

DIYANET'S OVERSEAS REPRESENTATIVE OFFICES

Diyanet is represented by the two offices in foreign countries. These are Religious Services Consultancies based in Turkish Embassies and Religious Services Attaché Office that is part of Turkish General Consulates.

Among the duties of the mentioned offices are:

- To look after the religious needs of citizens, compatriots, and co-religionists that are living abroad.
- To supervise the activities of the religious-based organizations and foundations. Ensuring that places of worship are opened at the appropriate places. Duties of the servicemen working in the offices are to identify the place where new mosques and masjids are required and to advise the construction of them to the Presidency. To look after the needs of all the appointed servicemen in a certain country including permissions, health, relocation, assignments, return to Turkey, and many other duties.
- To prepare the paperwork of those who want to perform Hajj and Umrah pilgrimage by joining the Presidency's Hajj and Umrah organizations.
- To assist the citizens in *Zakah*[60], *Zakat al-Fitr*,[61] and *Kurban*[62] matters.
- Preparing special programs for "our (Turkish) citizens" and "kinfolk" to preserve their commitment to Islamic religion and "national culture."[63]

Among the other duties are; providing hospital, dormitory, and other religious and spiritual services to the citizens and kinfolk. Providing Turkish children abroad religious education, religious marriages, answering the questions regarding religious affairs, publishing Diyanet's works, and many other services.[64]

By being based in the Turkish embassies and consulates Diyanet's overseas representative offices are in cooperation with the Foreign Ministry. Attaché offices are in charge of running relations in religious affairs with foreign religious institutions in the countries they are active in. In total Diyanet has 22 Religious Services Consultancies, 27 attachés for religious service around the world.[65] Diyanet's attaché office is active in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnian offices are based in the Turkish Embassy and Turkish General Consulate in Sarajevo. Besides offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Consultancy office in Albania, Bulgaria, and Macedonia, and the attache office in Romania are active in the Balkan region.[66]

60 One of the pillars of Islam, where Muslims who are in position are obliged to give 2,5 percent of their wealth that is not in circulation for one year to those in need. In Islam categories that are allowed to receive the *Zakah*are defined.

61 Charity is given to poor Muslims who are in position to help at the end of the month of Ramadan.

62 Animal sacrifice that is performed by Muslims during the Eid al Adha days.

63 Preserving attachment to "National Culture" seems as one of the priorities of Diyanet.

64 2016 Diyanet Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara, T.C. Diyanet Işleri Başkanlığı, 2017), p. 14

65 "Dış İlişkiler Genel Müdürlüğü", Diyanet, http://www2.diyanet.gov.tr/DisIliskilerGenelMudurlugu/Sayfalar/DinHizmetleri.aspx

66 "Diyanet", *Diyanet*, http://www2.diyanet.gov.tr

TURKEY DIYANET FOUNDATION

Another important institution of Turkish religious diplomacy is Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı or Turkey Diyanet Foundation. This organization was founded by the former president of Diyanet, Dr. Lütfi Doğan, deputy-presidents Dr. Tayyar Altıkulaç, Yakup Üstün, and Private Affairs Manager Ahmet Uzanoğlu on Mart 13, 1975. The initial aim of creating the foundation was to assist the Presidency.[67] Today the foundation operates with a wide range of activities in Turkey and abroad. It is responsible for the construction of more than three thousand mosques in Turkey and over a hundred more in 25 foreign countries.[68] The foundation is responsible for the construction of mosques and the distribution of scholarships for foreign students. Even though it has serious experience in constructing the mosques, the focal point of the foundation is in the education sector.

> In accordance with the purpose of its founding, the Foundation is providing support to Diyanet in its services in the field of mosques, courses of Kur'an, muftiates, and education centers.[69]

The foundation educates *hafiz*[70]and supports students going to Imam Hatip (Islamic high school) and theology faculties. It is delivering scholarships to foreign students from 108 foreign countries. Its global outreach is measured by the Foundation's international activities that are spreading across 135 countries.[71]

Even though numbers are impressive, Turkey still lags behind some Muslim countries in the overall capacity of its religious diplomacy. Saudi Arabia is certainly one of the leaders in the Muslim World when it comes to the projection of influence. Saudi Arabian government report says the that Kingdom has donated 70 billion USD of aid around the world in the period from 1970 to 2002.[72] Only during the reign of King Fahd (1982-2005), Saudi Arabia has donated billions of dollars in building 210 Islamic centers, 1500 mosques, 202 colleges, and almost 2000 schools for Muslim children around the world.[73] Compared to the outreach of Saudis, Turkish activities look dwarfed. It is hard for Ankara to compete with the oil-rich countries of the Persian Gulf or even Iran regarding the religious influence in the Muslim World. Especially when having in mind Turkey's overreach caused by the focus on the very wide geographical area. The Turkish government targets a wide geographical frame of influence that even much stronger economies would fail to meet. Scattering its national capacity to a large geographical scope has caused Turkey to remain a mediocre

67 "TDV", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı*, https://tdv.org/tr-TR/site/icerik/hakkimizda-1038

68 Ibid.

69 bid.

70 *Hafiz* is a person who memorizes the whole Kur'an.

71 "TDV 135 Ülkede Yardım Faaliyeti Yürütüyor", *Anadolu Ajansı*, 03.06.2017. Accessed on November 24, 2019, doi: https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/tdv-135-ulkede-yardim-faaliyeti-yurutuyor-/833709

72 John Mintz, "Wahhabi Strain of Islam Faulted", *The Washington Post*, June 27, 2003, Accessed on May 27, 2019, doi: https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2003/06/27/wahhabi-strain-of-islam-faulted/f2eb68be-daae-4bbd-a824-d0ca31ace6c4/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.fe14b3bf3029

73 J. Millard Burr, Robert O. Collins, *Alms for Jihad: Charity and Terrorism in the Islamic World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 41.

power in all the regions it wishes to become a relevant factor.[74]

A favorable fact for the prevalence of other Middle-Eastern powers in the Muslim World, that Turkey couldn't challenge, was the constant inflow of cash that is generated by the oil export. The wealth that has been created by the oil export has positioned Saudi Arabia as the largest constructor of mosques, religious schools, and distributor of religious books in the Muslim World. For decades the Kingdom is investing in its wide-range soft power capacity.[75] Thus both Saudi and Iranian created a wide network of sympathizers abroad. With the openings in Central Asia and the Balkans during the 1990s, the Turkish interpretation of Islam came as an alternative to the other two teachings.[76] As during the 1990s Central Asia was a competitive ground, the Balkans will become one in the 2000s.[77]

4.1.2. 'Turkish Islam' in Competition with Other Islamic Players in the Balkans

During the Cold War period communication between Turkish and Balkan Muslims was at minimal levels. Because of the ideological division during the period, Ankara faced closed doors in the Balkans. As a NATO member, Turkey was perceived as 'unfriendly' by the majority of the Socialist regimes in the region. Ankara also was refraining itself from the risky exposures in the region and moved along the strictly defined framework of the Cold War's geopolitical division.[78]

On the other hand, some Arab socialist regimes enjoyed good bilateral relations with the Communist countries in the region. For this reason, some Arab states hosted Islamic scholars and Muslim students from the Balkans. Especially Socialist Yugoslavia preferred sending Muslim theology students to the Arab World, rather than Turkey.[79] Many Yugoslav Muslims returned with new interpretations of Islam. All this caused the slight 'Arabization' and 'de-Turkification' of Islamic teaching during the Cold War. Alumni from the Middle-Eastern universities especially contributed to the process of 'Islamization' that has started during the 1970s among the Muslim political and intellectual elite.[80] Some practices from the Ottoman era will slowly vanish during the Socialist period. Isolation from Turkey was a unique opportunity

74 Turkey Diyanet Foundation introduced the practice of celebrating *Kutlu Doğum Haftası* (Week of the Blessed Birth) in 1989. is a nationwide ceremony of celebrating the birth of the Prophet Muhammad.

75 Giulio M. Gallaroti, Essam Elfalily and Osama Tayyeb, "Saudi Arabia and the Use of Soft Power" (2012). Division II Faculty Publications. Paper 127. doi:http://wesscholar.wesleyan.edu/div2facpubs/127

76 Ehteshami Anoushiravan, "Middle East Middle Powers: Regional Role, International Impact", *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Volume 11, No. 42 (Summer 2014), p. 29- 49.

77 İsmail Numan Telci and Aydzhan Yordanova Peneva, "Turkey and Saudi Arabia as Thepolitical Actors in the Balkans: The Case of Bulgaria", Insight Turkey, Vol.21 No.2 (Spring, 2019): 237-258

78 Aydın Babuna, "İç Politikadan Dış Politikaya İmparatorluktan Cumhuriyete Balkanlar (1908-2008)", (Presented at Yüzüncü Yılında II. Meşrutiyetin İlanı ve Makedonya'ya Etkileri-Uluslararası Konferansı Tebliğleri, MANU-Makedonya Bilimler ve Sanatlar Akademisi, Skopje, December 18, 2008)

79 Kerem Öktem, "New Islamic Actors After the Wahhabi Intermezzo: Turkey's Return to the Muslim Balkans" (paper presented at the international Workshop 'After the Wahhabi Mirage: Islam, politics and international network in the Balkans' at the European Studies Center, University of Oxford, June 2010.), 19, 20.

80 Fikret Karčić, "Islamska obnova na Balkanu 1970-1992", in *Muslimani Balkana: Istočno pitanje u XXI. vijeku, eds. Fikret Karčić, (Sarajevi: Centar za napredne studije, 2014): 109.*

for Balkan regimes to erase remanents of the Ottoman legacy among the local Muslims and further detach them from Turkey.

With the end of the Cold War intention to restore Turkish influence abroad was born. Ankara's ambition will be more pronounced under the AKP. Projection of Turkish influence spread the unique interpretation of Islamic teaching to the former Eastern Block countries that will position Turkey as an 'alternative' to a more rigid understanding previously advertised by Saudi-sponsored Wahabbi movement or Iranian-backed Shiite Islam.[81] The post-Communism vacuum that emerged in Central Asia and the Balkans was inhabited by other actors from the Middle East.[82]

Like the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan when many Arab fighters joined the Jihad against the Russians, during the 1990s Balkans was another destination for the Muslim volunteers. Atrocities committed by the Serb hand alarmed many in the Muslim world. Many fighters, primarily from the Arab World, flocked to Bosnia in order to help their coreligionists in fighting militarily much superior Serb forces. During the Bosnian War, hundreds of Mujahadeens came to Bosnia to fight alongside Bosniaks. With foreign fighters, the new interpretations of Islam arrived as well. The majority of the foreign fighters were following a specific Salafi interpretation of Islam that was unusual for the overwhelmingly secularly oriented Bosniaks.

Iran's help during the war was another important factor. Tehran was probably the largest arms supplier of the Bosnian army.[83] Iran-run military camps for training the Bosnian Army were active during the war. Thanks to the Bosnian War Tehran was able to set its foot on European soil for the first time. Although the US turned blind eye to Iran's armament of Bosnian Muslims throughout the war, after the Dayton Peace Accord it was unacceptable for the Western states to allow the Iranian presence in the heart of Europe. With the end of the war, Western states led by the US will force the local politicians to shut down all the Iranian activities inside BiH. Besides Iran-backed organizations, many Arab organizations that promoted Salafist-Wahabbi teaching would be subjected to censure after the war. In the same way, as many of their Iranian counterparts, Salafist-Wahabbi organizations will be closed under the US pressure on the Bosnian government. The pressure from the West on Salafi-Wahabbi and Iranian-backed organizations became even harder with the launching of the Global War on Terror by the Bush administration in 2001.[84]

Turkey's rising visibility in the region under the AKP was chiefly welcomed by the local Muslims. With the intensification of influence, the understanding of Islam that is closer to one followed by the Balkan Muslims will be instituted. Compared to the more 'alien' Saudi and Iranian interpretations the school of teaching practiced by

81 This will become more evident after the 2003 and after the 'islamization' of foreign policy to an extent during the AKP.

82 Riad Domazeti, "Suudi Arabistan'ın Balkan Politikaları", ORDAF-Ortadoğu ve Afrika Araştırmacıları Derneği 17 (2017), doi: http://ordaf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/suudiarabistanvebalkarlarrapor.pdf

83 Steven L. Burg and Paul S. Shoup, *The War in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 308.

84 Kenneth Morrison, "Wahhabism in the Balkans", *Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, Advanded Research and Assessment Group: Balkan Series*, (February 2008): 5-7.

Diyanet and Turkish Muslims in general, after all, is closer to the interpretation of Islam followed by the local Muslims. Probably the main reasons for the wide acceptance of Turkey might lay in the fact that its influence was not bearing the potential of creating ideological frictions across the region as the other two Middle-Eastern models did. Constant police raids, tensions in the mosques between the local Muslims and the followers of Wahhabi-Neo-Salafist interpretation of Islam, rebellious attitude against the official Islamic authorities by the same marginal groups started creating serious anxieties in the region. A strong presence of Wahhabi-Neo-Salafist teaching in Bosnia and Herzegovina unjustly labeled this cosmopolitan country as a springboard of radical Islamism in the heart of Europe. Accusations were mainly exaggerated and oversimplified. An important suppressing factor in keeping the Wahhabi-Neo-Salafist ideas marginal was the strong resistance by the region's Islamic authorities and the rejective attitude by the public in general. Both Wahhabi-Neo-Salafist and Shi'a influences remained limited amongst the local Muslims.[85]

For all the mentioned reasons Turkish influence in the region was accepted as a favorable trend by many Balkan Muslims.[86] The support for 'moderate' alternatives against other Middle-Eastern influences lays behind the general acceptance of the Turkish factor even by the Western powers. Especially the military circles in Washington affirmed Turkey to play an active role in balancing the unruly elements in the region.[87] At least, this was the case for the initial years of the AKP government. However, during the time, Turkey's potential role in the region began to be questioned.

4.1.3. Diyanet and the Balkans

During the 1990s Diyanet's modest influence in the Balkans remained limited to Bulgaria and Greece, places where the Turkish minority lives for centuries. After Özal's death, Turkey was following cautious policy during the wars in former Yugoslavia that was strongly attached to the policy of the NATO alliance and avoiding adventurism. As the Serb atrocities were rising, the US' position regarding the unity of Yugoslavia will change. Turkey's position will change accordingly. Ankara followed almost parallel policy with Washington regarding the wars in the former Yugoslavia. However, Turkey was calling for a stronger response against the Serb forces, while the US was hesitant. During the Bosnian war, Suleyman Demirel, Turkish president at the time, had a certain role in the American diplomatic initiatives aiming to reconcile Bosniaks and Croats. Turkey was assisting factors in the process. In the same context, Turkey will take part in NATO's intervention against Serb forces in Bosnia and Kosovo.[88]

85 Xavier Bougarel, "The New Balkan Islam", ISIM Newslater No. 6, (2000): 32-35.

86 Marcus Tanner, "Ottoman Past Haunts Turkey's Balkan Image" Balkan Insight, https://balkaninsight.com, quoted in Othon Anastasakis, "Turkey's Assertive Presence in Southeast Europe: Between Identity Politics and Elite Pragmatism", in *Another Empire? A Decade of Turkey's Foreign Policy Under the Justice and Development Party*, ed. Kerem Öktem, Ayşe Kadıoğlu and Mehmet Karlı, (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University, 2012): 194.

87 Миша Ђурковић, "Односи Турске и Сједињених Америчких Држава", in Турска: регионална сила?, eds. Миша Ђурковић Александар Раковић, (Београд: Институт за европске студије, 2013): 120-137.

88 İlhan Uzgel, "The Balkans: Turkey's Stabilizing Role", in *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power*, eds. Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişçi, (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University Press, 2002): p. 65-93.

After the 1990s Diyanet has grown into probably the strongest regional Muslim institution. Being backed by a regional power such as Turkey, and the well-funded budget made the Presidency a respectable public diplomacy power. Under the AKP, Diyanet's budget has increased multifold.[89] Common historical heritage and cultural similarities made it easier for Diyanet as a Turkish institution to be active in the region. Common *Hanafi-Mathuridi* school Balkan Muslims share with Turkish people makes 'Turkish Islam' more acceptable compared to other interpretations.[90] The difference in interpreting Islam was the largest obstacle for Wahhabi and Shi'a teachings to prevail in the region.[91]

On the other hand, Diyanet is not the only Islamic authority in the region that has a regional scope of influence. With the formation of new Balkan nation-states that have emerged from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire, Islamic authorities independent from the Sheikh al Islam in Istanbul were formed gradually. As Balkan Muslims were left without the protection of a Muslim state, newly formed Islamic religious institutions were the only organized authorities to lead the Muslim communities. Up until the 1990s all Balkan Muslims, except Communist Albania which officially was an atheistic state, were minorities in their countries, thus lacked a state to protect their interests, which in turn forced them to accept religious institutions as their political representatives. Another important Islamic authority in the region is the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose authority is stretching over five countries.[92] After the dissolution of SFRY, Rijaset has lost some of its previous capacities, but mainly endured as the strongest Islamic Institution in Former Yugoslavia. Today, both the Turkish Diyanet and Bosnian Rijaset are probably the two strongest Islamic institutions in the region. Except for few disagreements on certain issues, the two generally cultivated good cooperation during the AKP government.

4.1.4. Turkish Non-State Religious Groups and Organizations

It is already mentioned how religion is becoming an important element of international relations. Besides the official diplomacy channels, faith diplomacy is also being run through the non-governmental sector or also known as 'track-two' diplomacy. When a country struggles to prompt certain policies, the non-governmental sector might jump to help the fulfillment of the wanted outcomes.[93] Thus, in the last decades, the non-governmental sector is gaining a significant role in international relations.

89 Svante Cornell, "The Rise of Diyanet: the Politicization of Turkey's Directorate of Religious Affairs" , *The Turkey Analyst,* October 9, 2015, http://www.turkeyanalyst.org/publications/turkey-analyst-articles/item/463-the-rise-of-diyanet-the-politicization-of-turkey%E2%80%99s-directorate-of-religious-affairs.html

90 This was the dominant Islamic school during the Ottoman period. It was spread across the region by the Ottomans. Hanafi school is one of the four schools of jurisprudenceof Sunni Islam, while Mathuridi school is one of two most prevalent creeds among Sunni Muslims.

91 Kerem Öktem, "New Islamic Actors After the Wahhabi Intermezzo…"

92 The religious needs of Muslims living in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, and Hungary are taken care of by the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

93 Joseph S. Nye, Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), p. 90.

Led by the principles of *Ummah*[94] or Muslim solidarity, Turkish faith-based NGO's actively operate in the Muslim-majority countries. Even for the activities conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is possible to conclude that the Turkish non-governmental organizations are almost entirely limited to areas Bosniaks inhabit. Yet in the Turkish case, pious NGOs might not fit the definition of the 'track-two' diplomacy all the time, as they are often under the supervision of the governmental circles. Many of them are undeniably pro-government and their actions are in the direction of promoting the government's agenda abroad. This is a phenomenon among the non-state actors that Mehmet Özkan names "GONGO" or "Government-organized NGO", where these organizations often act overseas as they are advocates or an extended hand of the political party or government back home.[95] The majority of those organizations are not created by the government, but often are self-initiated by the people who are in government or just feel sympathies with the government. Because of the background of its founders and the working staff, these organizations follow and act overseas according to the political agenda of the government of their home country, which often can create discomfort among the foreign audience.

Turkey's political climate in the past was a fertile ground for the development of the NGO sector, especially among the conservative class. A case where the domestic political climate influenced the development of the non-state sector is best evident in the emergence of *Milli Görüş* (National Outlook). This movement has the centrality in the development of political Islam in Turkey. Before giving birth to the ruling AKP, the National Outlook movement developed a wide network of non-state organizations that operated outside the official political establishment. With the rise of the AKP after 2002, this will change. Since then, some organizations around the movement will enter into the close circle of the government. Sometimes they will direct the official diplomatic channels, but sometimes the process will go in opposite directions, where their organizations closely follow the government's policies. Many politicians from the AKP have their roots in faith-based activism, particularly IHH. There is even an informal circle of AKP politicians who because of their past connections to IHH are labeled as "IHH'cılar" or "IHH-rooted" ones.[96] National Outlook movement was active during the Bosnian War primarily through IHH, a non-governmental organization. This was a non-governmental organization that was created in 1992 for helping the victims of the Bosnian war with humanitarian aid.[97] After AKP came to power the movement expanded its overseas activities. Despite some disagreements over AKP's Syria or Palestine policies, IHH enjoyed the Turkish government's assistance.[98]

94 *Ummah* means "community" in Arabic. Word is used to describe the Muslim community around the world.

95 Mehmet Özkan, "Dış Politikanın Dönüşümünde Türk işbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansının (TİKA) Rölü", *Dış Politika*, Yıl 1, Sayı. 1, (2017): 225.

96 H. Ahsen Akdal, "AKP'nin Dış Politika Enstrümanı Olarak İslamcı Taban Örgütleri", *Gelenekl* No. 118, (2013), doi: https://gelenek.org/akpnin-dis-politika-enstrumani-olarak-islamci-taban-orgutleri/

97 https://www.ihh.org.tr/

98 How AKP backs the activities of National Outlook based organizations was best seen in the case of Mavi Marmara when IHH organized Gaza Flotilla to break the Israeli blockade of Gaza Strip in 2010. After nine civilian

In Bosnia and Herzegovina Turkish faith-based organizations are running dormitories for students, organizing circumcisions for males, delivering meat to the poor during the Eid al Adha (Feast of Sacrifice), organizing symposiums, and many other activities where Diyanet doesn't have a reach. Besides IHH, one of the oldest Turkish faith-based organizations that are active in the region is *Hasene*. Like the IHH, Hasene is also linked to the National Outlook Movement, but its German branch. Hasene is mainly working on delivering humanitarian help. It runs soup kitchens for the poor and organizes iftar meals during the Holy Month of Ramadan. Hasene is actively supporting the local student population by operating student dormitories.[99]

Activities of the Sufi based Islamic groups represent an important component of 'Turkish Islam' in the Balkans. Various "cemaats" or how the expert on the subject Hakan Yavuz calls them 'heterodox' religious groups represent another important dimension of Turkish influence. In the works on Diyanet, Yavuz recognizes two different sources of religious authority in Turkey. The first source is the state's official Islamic institution. This is a tradition that was passed down from the Ottoman office of Sheikh-al Islam to Diyanet, which in a way represents an 'orthodoxy.' The second channel is the 'heterodoxy' represented by different Islamic brotherhoods that almost exclusively are rooted in the Naqshbandi Sufi tradition. This Central Asian tariqah was a "matrix" from which the majority of the later Turkish Islamic brotherhoods will emerge.[100] Naqshbandi Sufi groups from Turkey, like the Süleymanci group[101] and Menzil Cemaati (Menzil group),[102] have some activities in the Balkans.[103] Süleymancis run few dormitories, while the Menzil group is active in the regional Sufi lodges where it created a network of followers among the local Muslims. The group also has some minor publishing activities in local languages. They publish a family magazine called *Semerkand* in Bosnian. Yet the number of followers of Turkish-based Naqshbandi groups seems to be limited.

In global terms, the most widespread of the Turkish Islamic brotherhoods are the *Nurcu* group, who follow the teachings of Kurdish Islamic scholar Said Nursi (1877-1960). Among the Nurcu branches, the most numerous and well-organized is the Gülen movement that before their involvement in the failed military coup in 2016 was the strongest Turkish non-state actor abroad.[104] With its wide network of schools before 2016, it was among the largest religious movements in the world.[105]

passengers where killed by Israeli security forces the incident has created the diplomatic row between Ankara and Tel Aviv, where AKP stood behind the flotilla. Religious-based organizations started playing important role in Turkey's foreign policy after AKP came to power. Once strongest among them, the Gülen movement, has lost its former power and influence after the political split with the AKP and the failed coup attempt in 2016.

99 "Faaliyetlerimiz", *Hasene*, Accessed on October 18, 2018, https://www.hasene.org

100 M. Hakan Yavuz, Islamic Political Identity in Turkey, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.), p. 133-151.

101 Followers of Naqshibandi Shaikh Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan (1888-1959)

102 Naqshibandi group based in Menzil near Turkish town of Adıyaman.

103 Yavuz, M. H. 2003, Islamic Political Identity in Turkey, 133-151

104 Ibid. 151-179.

105 This year is stated because it is a year after which AKP government more actively worked in shutting down the institutions linked to the Gülen movement in Turkey and abroad. After its involvement in the failed military coup attempt in 2016 the movement faced a dramatic decline in number of followers and the reduction in terms

Activities of the Turkish religious groups, including the Gülen movement, are out of the scope of this work.

Cooperation between the pious organizations and the Diyanet is at a minimal level. There are no visible joint activities reported in Diyanet's annual reports that would point to the mutual projects. A lack of coordination and cooperation between the two levels of Turkish faith-based diplomacy is a subject that is often recognized as a weakness of the same.[106] Some cases in the past failed from the aspect of public diplomacy. The best example of harmful cooperation was the infamous case of public "mass circumcision" for poor children in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The event was organized in 2014 by the Istanbul Educational-Cultural Center, an NGO led by the conservative Muslims, Yunus Emre Institute in Sarajevo, and Eskişehir Municipality.[107] The ceremony was planned to be humanitarian. The way it was performed has caused the outcry of the public in the region. Mass circumcision was performed according to the Anatolian tradition. Dressing kids into Turkish circumcision clothes caused harsh critiques against the hosts of the event.[108] As the clothes that kids were wearing don't belong to local tradition the event was interpreted as an attempt of "Turkification" of Bosnian children. It inflamed a strong debate about the overall ambitions of Turkey in the region. The event was even used in the daily political discussions by the political leaders that are famous for their anti-Turkish stances. This ceremony had certainly created question marks about Turkey in the minds of the Bosnian public, the opposite outcome of what should be the primary goal of public diplomacy. Even more sadly, the ceremony was visited by Nabi Avcı, Turkish Minister of Education at the time. Minister's presence stamped a mark of official Turkish diplomacy. A clear example of how diplomacy shouldn't work.

The event demonstrated a failure of Turkish public diplomacy and the harmful cooperation between the state and non-state actors. Interestingly, despite the harsh criticism, similar events were organized in the years after 2014 in different towns across the region. Turkish track-two diplomacy kept on insisting on the tradition that was alien to the Bosnian population, ignoring the criticism of the local public.[109]

In the same 2014, a mass circumcision for 450 kids was organized in the Sandžak region. The first event of this kind in Sandžak was organized in 2010 and held every year since. It was organized by another non-governmental organization known as *Platform of Friends of Sandžak* (Sancak Dostları Platformu) from Turkey. The municipality of Novi Pazar has participated in the organization of the ceremony. Turkish organizations simply insisted on continuing with the activity despite the criticism. A

of infrastructure.

106 E. Fuat Keyman and Onur Sazak, "Turkey as a "Humanitarian State"", *Pomeas Policy Paper*, No. 2 (2014): 11.

107 Anadolija, "U subotu kolektivno sunećenje 150 djece u Sarajevu" *Klix*, April 17, 2014.https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/u-subotu-kolektivno-sunecenje-150-djece-u-sarajevu/140417078

108 Act of circumcision among the Balkan Muslims is not performed publicly and collectively

109 Fahrudin Radončić, "Radončić o koaliciji sa SDA: Neću koalirati sa onima koji organiziraju masovno I javno obrezivanje djece" *Republika*, May 14, 2014. doi: http://www.republikainfo.com/index.php/izdvojeno/13337-radoncic-o-koaliciji-s-sda-necu-koalirati-s-onima-koji-organiziraju-masovno-i-javno-obrezivanje-djece

clear indication that the Turkish government has to dramatically change as soon as possible the approach to the unofficial public diplomacy strategy and try to prevent the harm done by the type of non-governmental organizations Mehmet Özkan calls "MONGO" or "My Own NGO" where the aim for many projects initiated by the same is the political self-promotion of the founders of the organizations by using the official diplomacy of the state.[110]

Özkan also recognizes the absence of coordination among the Turkish non-governmental sector. Certainly, the lack of coordination and strategy among the track-two diplomacy creates more harm than good to Turkey's image abroad. That diplomacy run by the non-governmental sector can be either useful or harmful depending on the quality of cooperation and coordination with the state's diplomacy is confirmed by Joseph Nye.

Nonprofit institutions with the soft power of their own can complicate and obstruct government efforts, and commercial purveyors of popular culture can hinder as well as help the government achieve its objectives.[111]

110 Mehmet Özkan, "Dış Politikanın Dönüşümünde Türk işbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansının (TİKA) Rölü, 225.
111 Joseph S. Nye, Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics, 32.

5.

Turkish Initiative for the Unification of Islamic Communities in Serbia

With Turkey's increasing activities in the Balkans, a unique chance to deepen the engagement has emerged with the eruption of the schism within the Islamic Communities in Serbia. In the period between 2009 and 2014, Diyanet tried to broker a unification deal between the two Islamic Communities that were divided since 2007. The initiative led by Turkey's Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu and Diyanet was popularly known as the "Turkish initiative." The initiative was officially launched in 2009, following the request for Ankara's mediation by the two Islamic communities and Tadić's government.

The crisis between the Islamic authorities in the Sandžak region was causing great concern for Belgrade, that recently lost Montenegro and Kosovo in 2006 and 2008. Occasional gunfights between the supporters of two Islamic Communities were frightening Belgrade further. There was a real fear that the crisis over Islamic Communities could erupt into an armed conflict. Belgrade couldn't afford another ethnoreligious conflict inside its borders. Governments' hands were tied in terms of using force in the region. Serbia's infamous image of a 'Balkans' bad boy' inherited from the 1990s forced official Belgrade to invest much more energy in diplomatic means.

Invitation from Belgrade came in moments when Turkey was trying to be diplomatically more active in the Middle East. Foreign Minister Davutoğlu was trying to broker a deal with Tehran and to negotiate a normalization of ties between Damascus and Tel Aviv. Compared to symbolic diplomatic victories in the Balkans, both Middle Eastern processes ended without any success. AKP's quick response to Serbia's requests was in line with the general premise the Turkish government followed in the region. Since it engaged more actively in the Balkans, Turkey's policy was in the direction of helping Bosniaks and other Balkan Muslims. The crisis in Sandžak was of great importance for Ankara's ambitions in the region.[1] For the Turkish government, Bosniaks represent a backbone of foreign policy in the Balkans. Thus, Turkey could not ignore the fact that Bosniaks are losing ground in constant rivalries between their political and religious elites. The Turkish government was interested in showing to the regional public that Turkey is indeed an important element of the regional stability and honest broker. What will be understood later is that the crisis has already entered a phase where a reverse process seemed to be difficult. After a long process and many failed negotiations, Ankara will understand that the brokering unification wouldn't be an easy task.

1 Rešad ef. Plojović, "Šta nam nudi aktuelna turska vlast i predsjednik Erdoan", *Sandžak Press*, 21.07.2019, Accessed on November 24, 2019, doi: https://Sandžakpress.net/sta-nam-nudi-aktuelna-turska-vlast-i-predsjednik-erdoan

To get a clearer picture of the historical development and the complexity of the regional balance of power in Sandžak, it is important to go back to the Socialist period and the dissolution of the SFRY, as the beginning of the rivalries between religious leaders on one side and between Belgrade and Sarajevo on the other. The rise of almost all actors involved in the crisis goes back to the early nineties of the last century.

5.1. Sandžak Region

Sandžak region covers an area that lays across the whole border region of the modern states of Serbia and Montenegro.[2] (See Figure C1) With 2006 Montenegro's secession from the union with Serbia, the region was split into two separate parts. Today Sandžak is composed of Serbian Sandžak and Montenegrin Sandžak. The name of the region derives from the Turkish word *Sancak*, which in translation means a flag. The word Sancak was also used for the Ottoman administrative-territorial subdivision. During the Ottoman period, this region was organized as the Sancak of Novi Pazar. If both Serbian and Montenegrin parts are joined together then the region of Sandžak covers an area of 8,686 km². According to the 2011 census in Serbia and Montenegro, the total population of the region is 390.797, of which Bosniaks and "Muslims by Nationality"[3] are the most numerous with 213.086 people or 54.53 percent of the population.[4] Beside Bosniaks, ethnic Serbs represent 33,87%, Montenegrins 7,24%, Albanians 1,04% and others 3,30% of the population. Serbian half of the region has a larger population than the Montenegrin part. According to the 2011 Serbian census 238,787 people lived in the Serbian part of the Sandžak, while according to the 2011 Montenegrin census 151,950 people lived across the border in the Montenegrin part.[5] Bosniaks together with Muslims by Nationality represent a majority in the Serbian part of Sandžak with 64.83 percent of the population[6], compared to the Montenegrin part where they are not a majority but the most numerous ethnic group, representing 38.35 percent of the population if counted together with Muslims by Nationality.[7]In the Serbian part of the Sandžak ethnic Serbs represent

2 Vladimir Ajzenhamer, "Sandžak/Raška as a Border Area", in *The Meaning of Borders and Border Issues in the Age of Globalization: Europe and Asia*, ed. Duško Dimitrijević, Dragana Mitrović and Ivona Lađevac, (Belgrade: Institute of International Politics and Economics, 2012): 17-24.

3 Those citizens who rather prefer to declare themselves as Muslims by Nationality in ethno-national term are not ethnically different from their Bosniak neighbors, so we can speak of one ethnic group.

4 Aydın Babuna, "Nationalism and the Bosnian Muslims", *East European Quarterly*, XXXIII, No. 2, (June, 1999); Ivo Banac, "Bosnian Muslims: From Religious Community to Socialist Nationhood and Postcommunist Statehood, 1918-1992", in *The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina: Their Historic Development from the Middle Ages to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia*, ed. Mark Pinson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 129-153., and Aydın Babuna, "Bosnian Muslims during the Cold War: Their Identity between Domestic and Foreign Policies", in *Religion and the Cold War: A Global Perspective*, (ed.) Philip E. Muehlenbeck, (Nashvile: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012), 182-205. "Sjeverni Sandžak na popisu 2011: Demografska analiza" Sandžakpress.net, accessed January 13, 2018, http://Sandžakpress.net/sjeverni-Sandžak-na-popisu-2011demografska-analiza

5 2011 Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in the Republic of Serbia; 2011 Montenegrin Population Census, For more visit: https://www.monstat.org

6 2011 Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in the Republic of Serbia

7 2011 Montenegrin Population Census

the second largest ethnic group with 32,48% of the population. Montenegrins are 0,10%, Albanians 0,12% and others 2,47% of population. Novi Pazar is the largest city with around a hundred thousand people and an absolute Bosniak/Muslim majority with 81.21 percent of the population. Other cities in the Serbian part that have an absolute Bosniak majority alongside Novi Pazar are Sjenica, Tutin. Municipalities of Prijepolje, Priboj, and Nova Varoš are cities with a Serb majority. Except for the municipality of Nova Varoš, which has almost ninety percent Serb population, Bosniaks represent a solid minority in Prijepolje and Priboj.[8]

When it comes to Montenegrin cities, Bosniaks are an absolute majority only in Rožaje and a relative majority with little over fifty percent in Plav, while in the municipalities of Bijelo Polje, Berane, Pljevlja they represent a minority of the population.[9] Serbian part of the Sandžak will be at the focal point of this chapter, as it was at the epicenter of the schism in the Islamic Community.

As a result of the introduction of *Vilayet Law* (Turkish: Teşkil-i Vilayet Nizamnamesi) in 1864, the Sandžak region in 1865 became a part of the larger Ottoman territorial unit known as *Vilayet*.[10] It was organized as a subdivision or *Sancak of Bosnian Vilayet* that besides Sandžak was including the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Area of today's Sandžak, at the time known as *Novopazarski Sandžak* or Sancak of Novi Pazar, was one among the seven Sancaks of the Bosnian Vilayet.[11] After the Ottomans losing the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, the *Sublime Porte* suffered an even harsher diplomatic loss at the Treaty of San Stefano, that reflected enormous territorial defeats faced on the battlefield.[12] Great powers led by the British Empire were unsatisfied with the results of the Treaty of San Stefano.[13] They recognize it as a chance for the Russian Empire to create dominance in the region through the creation of a large Bulgarian state in the Balkans. Other Great Powers were after preserving the nineteenth-century balance of power that aimed to prevent the dominance of any single power. The Treaty of San Stefano urged other European states to immediately intervene by forcing the Russian Empire to renegotiate a new deal with the Ottoman Empire. A deal that would prevent Russians from gaining a dominant role over the Balkans and preserve the balance of power. Having this concept in mind European big powers gathered in Berlin to reach a more balanced solution for the situation that has emerged out of the Russo-Turkish War.[14]

8 2011 Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in the Republic of Serbia

9 2011 Montenegrin Population Census

10 Andreas Birken, "Die Provinzen desOsmanischen Reiches", *Tübinger Atlasdes Vorderen Orients* No. 13. (1976): p. 22.

11 Иван Косанчић, *Ново-пазарски Санџак и његов етнички проблем*, (Београд: Књижара Геце Кона, 1912.)

12 *Sublime Porte* was the common name used by the Western states for the Ottoman government. Ottomans themselves preffered the word *Bāb-ı Âlī, meaning "High gate"* to describe the central government.

13 Barbara Jelavich, "Negotiating the Treaty of San Stefano", *Southeastern Europe/L'Europe du Sud-Est*, Vol. 6, (1979): 171-193.

14 For more see: *War and Diplomacy: The Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and the Treaty of Berlin*, ed. M. Hakan Yavuz and Peter Sluglett, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2011)

Among many decisions of the Congress were the permission and the mandate for Austria-Hungary to occupy Bosnian Vilayet, the northernmost province of the Ottoman Empire, under the pretext of successfully finishing the reform process that was previously started by the Sublime Porte. Ottoman reforms for different reasons stalled under the constantly weakening power of the central authority. By the Congress of Berlin, big powers allowed only the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary. However, the country would remain to be under Ottoman sovereignty. Restriction to occupation only will be ignored by Vienna and it will annex Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908. This move will unleash a crisis that will pave the way for the eruption of the First World War.

By the Congress of Berlin, six out of seven former Sancaks became part of Austria-Hungary, while the Sancak of Novi Pazar remained as a territory of the Ottoman Empire.[15] Vienna got permission to station its troops in few northern cities of the Sandžak region.[16] With the exclusion of Sancak of Novi Pazar from Austria-Hungarian occupation, Bosnian Muslims were divided between Vienna and Istanbul. Muslims living inside the present borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina became citizens of Austria-Hungary, while their counterparts in Sancak of Novi Pazar remained under the Ottoman rule.[17] As a caliph of all Sunni Muslims of the world, Ottoman Sultan's role as a religious authority for Muslims living under the Austria-Hungarian rule was to be regulated by the *Istanbul Convention* signed between Vienna and Istanbul on 21 April 1879 in the Ottoman capital. By this act, the Ottoman caliph will formally remain a spiritual leader of the Bosnian Muslims after the occupation.

An area comprising the Sancak of Novi Pazar will remain part of the Ottoman Empire until the eruption of the First Balkan War in 1912 when the region was divided by the advancing forces of the Kingdom of Serbia and Kingdom of Montenegro.[18] Part of the region was occupied by the Kingdom of Serbia while the other half became part of the Kingdom of Montenegro. The region entered the First World War now separated into two kingdoms, but soon after it will be reunited again, under the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, which will be renamed a few years later as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.[19] This was a tough period for the local Muslim population as they faced massacres by the Serbs. Killings will unleash an

15 After the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary, Sancak of Novi Pazar became a part of Kosovo Vilayet that was created in 1877. Kosovo Vilayet was territorially consisting of today's Sandžak region, Republic of Kosovo and parts of Republic of Macedonia.; Sandra King-Savić, "History and Identity Within the Sandžak Region|, *FMSO*, 2011-12, 6.

16 *Istanbul Convention* also known as *Novi Pazar Convention* was signed between the Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary on April 21, 1879 in Istanbul regulating the details of Austria-Hungarian occupation of northern parts of the Sandžak region and defining the relations between Bosnian Muslims and Ottoman caliph under the Austria-Hungarian rule over Bosnia and Herzegovina.

17 Mark Pinson, "The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina Under Austro-Hungarian Rule, 1878-1918", in *The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina: Their Historic Development from the Middle Ages to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia*, Second edition, (ed.) Mark Pinson, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996): 84-129.

18 Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars, 1912-1913: Prelude to the First World War*, (London: Routledge, 2000)

19 Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia – Origins, History, Politics*, 4th edition (Cornell University Press: Ithica and London 1994): 115-141.

emigration process from the Sandžak region to Ottoman lands, which will continue even after the formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923.[20]

The region was part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia until the Second World War. The new set of atrocities were committed against Sandžak Muslims between 1939 and 1945. The local Partisan forces who emerged victorious from the War will take power and transform the Yugoslav state into the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia.[21] The end of the War brought new arrangements to Sandžak. Despite some promises by the Communists during the War, Sandžak was left without a historic chance to be reorganized as a republic inside the Federation of Yugoslav Republics or at least as an autonomous region.[22] The new territorial organization divided the region between the two federative republics of Serbia and Montenegro.[23] Sandžak remained divided between SR Serbia and SR Montenegro for almost five decades until the end of the Cold War that brought a bloody war to Yugoslavia. The region didn't suffer as much as Bosnia and Herzegovina did, still, it passed through a difficult decade under the repressive regime of Slobodan Milošević.[24]

5.2. Historical Development of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina

After the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by an advancing Austria-Hungarian force in 1878, the Habsburg crown for the first time added a substantial Muslim population to the Empire. The Habsburgs were supposed to carry out the reforms that were previously started by the Ottoman administration and stabilize Bosnia and Herzegovina.[25] A hard task was ahead of Vienna as Ottomans struggled for almost four decades to implement the reforms. The Convention of Istanbul allowed Bosnian Muslims to continue their spiritual relationship with Caliph in Istanbul after the occupation.[26] The fact that four centuries of living under the caliph's rule was over had created an immense cultural shock for the Bosnian Muslims. After all, Bosnian Muslims for centuries fought against Habsburgs under the flag of Ottomans. Now they were to be ruled by the historical enemy.

One of the first serious issues to appear after the occupation was the preservation

20 For more see: Safet Bandžović, *Iseljavanje Bošnjaka u Tursku* (Sarajevo: Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava, 2006)

21 Official name for Socialist Yugoslavia in period between 1946 and 1963 was Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia or Serbo-Croatian abbreviation FNRJ, which will be changed to Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (abbreviation SFRJ), with new constitution of 1963.

22 Mustafa Imamović, *Historija Bošnjaka* (Sarajevo: Matični odbor, 1997): 543.

23 Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia was composed of six Socialist Republics which are, SR Slovenia, SR Croatia, SRBosnia and Herzegovina, SR Montenegro, SR Serbia and SR Macedonia plus two autonomous regions of Vojvodina and Kosovo who existed inside the borders of SR Serbia.

24 Murat Yılmaz, Sancak Drina'nın Öbür Yüzü: Kimlik Oluşumu ve Otonomi Sorunu, (İstanbul: IHH Yayınları, 2004)

25 W.N. Medlicott, *The Congress of Berlin and After: A Diplomatic History of the Near Eastern Settlement 1878-1880*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1963.), 71-86.

26 Mark Pinson, "The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina Under Austro-Hungarian Rule, 1878-1918", 84-129.

of the religious rights of Bosnian Muslims. Calls of local *ulema*[27] immediately after the occupation of the creation of a Bosnian Islamic institution that would look after the religious needs of the believers was refused by Sheikh-al Islam in Istanbul.[28] According to the Convention of Istanbul signed by the Vienna and Sublime Porte, Istanbul still had a say over the religious life of Bosnian Muslims**.** Istanbul's position had postponed the creation of autochtonous Islamic Community for the next four years. The situation changed in 1882 when Mufti of Sarajevo Hilmi ef. Omerović was approved as a Bosnian Mufti by the Ottoman Sheikh-al Islam. 1882 represents the year when the Bosnian Islamic Community was officially founded, yet under a different name at the time.[29] The new Bosnian Mufti received the right from the Austria-Hungarian authorities to appoint ulema and sharia judges in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The same year official authorities of Austria-Hungary will approve Hilmi ef. Omerović as Bosnian Mufti and proclaimed him the Reisu-l-ulema of Bosnia and Herzegovina. With this act, Bosnian Muslims got an official authority composed of Bosnian ulema that would take care of the religious needs of the Muslim population. On the other side, the act of receiving *menşura*[30] from the Ottoman Sheikh-al Islam, the highest spiritual body, gave a strong symbolic and legal base to Bosnian Mufti in terms of confirming his legitimacy over the spiritual issues of Bosnian Muslims. Ottoman Sheikh-al-Islam confirmed the legitimacy of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina to issue rulings regarding the religion of Islam that concerns all believers inside Bosnian borders. This move was of great importance, especially when having in mind that Muslims were still passing through cultural shock after the paradigmatical shift with the occupation and as they were struggling to adapt to the new ruler. After the three-decades-long struggle with Vienna over the issues of controlling religious affairs and the wealth inheritance of Muslim families, Islamic Community managed to get a guarantee of autonomy from the central authorities regarding the mentioned issues in 1909. This move by the central authorities came after the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.[31]

The First World War (1914-1918) ended the reign of the Habsburg monarchy. With the dissolution of Austria-Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina will find themselves in the state union with other South Slavic nations. The new Kingdom to be named the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes emerged from the merging of former South Slavic provinces of Austria-Hungary with the Kingdom of Serbia that has previously

27 Arabic word for Islamic scholar that is widely used across the Muslim World.

28 Sheikh-al Islam was the highest state official in charge of religious affairs during the Ottoman period.

29 Enes Durmišević, *Uspostava i pravni položaj Rijaseta Islamske zajednice u Bosni i Hercegovini: 1882-1899.*, (Sarajevo: Magistrat, 2002)

30 *Menşura* is a license given to Reis, which allows him to exercise religious duties. *Menşura* was issued in Istanbul until 1930. This act predates Ottoman period and was performed by other Muslim dynasties across the Middle East. See more: "Formiranje i razvoj Islamske zajednice", Islamska zajednica u Bosni I Hercegovini, accessed on January 13, 2018, http://www.islamskazajednica.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=50&Itemid=78

31 For more see: Nusret Šehić, *Autonomni pokret Muslimana za vrijeme Austrougarske uprave u Bosni i Hercegovini*, (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1980)

united with the Kingdom of Montenegro.[32] Before entering into a state union with the Kingdom of Serbia, former South Slavic provinces of Austria-Hungary formed a short living State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs. After the unification, this state will be abolished, and its political elite will move to the new capital Belgrade. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes will be renamed in 1929 to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

A spiritual center for the Muslims living in the short-living State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs was in Sarajevo.[33] On the other hand, Muslims living in the Kingdoms of Serbia had their center in Belgrade. Their religious leader was the Mufti based in Belgrade. The merging of the two states brought the two Islamic Communities side by side. The two Islamic Communities will co-exist like this up until 1930 when they will be united by the Law on Islamic religious community during the monarchistic dictatorship of King Alexander.[34] After the merging, the new constitution will be prepared for the unified Islamic Community of Yugoslavia. As a part of the centralist policies of King Alexander's dictatorial rule headquarters of the Islamic Community will be established in Belgrade.[35]

Among the Bosnian Muslims, disappointment with the new regime started to appear very early. The change in the moods was best articulated by then Bosnian Reisu-l-ulema Džemaludin Čaušević who went from a proponent of the unification to one of the loudest critiques of the same. Disappointments began after the Serbian majority started committing atrocities against the Muslim population in Bosnia and Sandžak.[36] The Islamic Community was also passing through difficult years and faced a set of new challenges under the regime in Belgrade.[37] Especially after the abolishment of the Ottoman Caliphate by Mustafa Kemal, Islamic Community was left on its own. Upon the formation of the new Kingdom Belgrade recognized the rights previously granted by Austria-Hungary. But, due to strong centralization tendencies from Belgrade, the right for autonomy was abolished in 1930 with the headquarters being moved from Sarajevo to Belgrade. The abolishment of the autonomy forced Reisu-l-ulema to resign. Appointment of the new Reisu-l-ulema was conducted in Belgrade's Bajrakli Mosque, the only mosque left from the Ottoman period, with the ceremony of delivering a menşura.[38] The ceremony was held with the presence of the

32 Official name of the state will be changed by King Alexander I on 3 October in 1929.

33 "Položaj Islamske zajednice u Jugoslaviji 1979-1936", Islamska Zajednica u Bosni I Hercegovini, Last modified on November 23, 2010, Accessed on December 31, 2019, doi: islamskazajednica.ba/vijesti/vijesti-arhiva/9831-poloaj-islamske-zajednice-u-jugoslaviji-1918-1936

34 Zorica Kuburić, *Verske Zajednice u Srbiji i Verska Distanca* (Novi Sad: CEIR, 2010), 128.

35 Срђан Баришић, "Из нашег непосредног окружења: Муслимани", бр. 4, (Ниш: Универзитет у Нишу, 2005), 597-612.

36 Mustafa Imamović, Historija Bošnjaka, 489-492.

37 For more see: Adnan Jahić, *Islamska Zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini za vrijeme monarhističke Jugoslavije (1918-1941)*, (Zagreb: Islamska Zajednica u Hrvatskoj, 2010)

38 Bajrakli Mosque is the only mosque in Belgrade built during the Ottoman period that is still in function. This mosque will have a symbolic meaning during the split in the Islamic Community as it served as a base for Jusufspahić family. Jusufspahić family will serve as imams of Bajrakli Mosque and Muftis of Belgrade for many decades, during after the SFRY. Дарко Танасковић, "Исламска заједница Југославије", у Религија и друштво, Институт за уџбенике и наставна средства, (Београд, 1988), 382. in Срђан Баришић, "Из нашег непосредног окружења: Муслимани", бр. 4, (Ниш: Универзитет у Нишу, 2005), 597-612

king and other high state officials. With the abolishment of the autonomy, Islamic Community will have to wait for full the restoration of autonomy until 1993.

After the dissolution of Socialist Yugoslavia Restorative Assembly of Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Obnoviteljski Sabor Islamske Zajednice u BiH) will be organized on April 28, 1993, after which lost autonomy will be restored in a full sense.[39] In the period between 1930 and 1993 Islamic Community managed only to partially regain some of its autonomy. In the mid-1930s of the last century, the Kingdom's leading Bosniak politician Mehmed Spaho, who was at that moment seen as the right choice for making a coalition by the government of Milan Stojadinović, would try to influence official Belgrade to restore the Islamic Community's autonomy status. Autonomy will partially be given back by a decree of the government issued in 1936.[40] That year headquarters of the Islamic Community will be moved back to Sarajevo.

After passing through hard times in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and struggling to survive under the regime inclined to preserve a centralized state system, with the end of the Second World War in 1945 Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sandžak region found themselves governed by a Socialist regime.[41] The new Yugoslav state was divided into five federative republics, of which SR Bosnia and Herzegovina were once, while Sandžak was divided between SR Serbia and SR Montenegro. The new regime was inspired by the atheistic worldview, which certainly was another shock for the Muslim population, that still followed a very conservative lifestyle. After the Second World War, the Islamic Community will be once again established across the entire Yugoslav territory. Headquarters remained in Sarajevo.[42] Both the *Supreme Islamic Council* and *Supreme Islamic Eldership* presided in that town. Supreme Islamic Council was composed of delegates from the republican councils of the five Yugoslav federative republics.[43]

The new Constitution of the *Islamic Religious Community* as it was then called was adopted in 1947.[44] It will be modified on a few occasions until 1969 when the

39 In 1993 Mustafa ef. Cerić (1993-2012) will be appointed as the new Reisu-l-ulema of independent Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mehmet Uğur Ekinci, "Bosna Hersek Siyasetini Anlama Kılavuzu", *SETA*, (2014): Ankara: 115-117.; "Formiranje i razvoj Islamske zajednice", Islamska zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini, accessed on January 13, 2018, http://www.islamskazajednica.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=50&Itemid=78

40 Dragan Novaković, "Processes of the Internal Organizational Consolidation of the Islam Religious Community in the Socialist Yugoslavia" in *Islam in the Balkans in the Past, Today and in the Future*, ed. Dragan B. Đorđević, Dragan Todorović and Ljubiša Mitrović, (Niš: Yugoslav Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, 2007), 68-69.

41 Nijaz M. Šukrić, *Organizacija i oblici vjerskoprosvjetnog života muslimana Bosne i Hercegovine od 1945. do 1976. godine*, (Sarajevo: Fakultet Islamskih nauka – El Kalem, 2006)

42 Član 41., Ustav Islamske zajednice u Socijalističkoj Federativnoj Republici Jugoslaviji, 1969. Islamska zajednica BiH, Accessed on December 31, 2019, doi: https://www.islamskazajednica.ba/images/stories/Ustavi/Ustav_IZ-e_iz_1969.pdf

43 For more see: Ustav Islamske zajednice u Socijalističkoj Federativnoj Republici Jugoslaviji, 1969. Accessed on December 31, 2019, doi: https://www.islamskazajednica.ba/images/stories/Ustavi/Ustav_IZ-e_iz_1969.pdf

44 Ustav Islamske vjerske zajednice u FNRJ iz 1947. godine, Islamska zajednica BiH, Accessed on December 31, 2019, doi: https://www.islamskazajednica.ba/images/stories/Ustavi/Ustav_IZ-e_iz_1947.g.pdf

new Constitution will be prepared.[45] [46] With the Constitution from 1969 Islamic Religious Community will be renamed to *Islamic Community*.[47] The last constitutional change during the Socialist period was in 1990, immediately before the breakup of the SFRY, after which a fundamental organizational restructuring will be introduced.[48] After the territorial changes that came with the dissolution of the SFRY, Islamic Community with headquarters in Sarajevo will continue as the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while few other national Islamic Communities will emerge out of it. The constitution of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina that is valid today was prepared in 1997, two years after the end of the Bosnian War (1992-1995).[49]

During the Socialist Yugoslavia Sarajevo remained the religious capital of all Yugoslav Muslims, which at the time was among the most numerous Muslim communities in Europe. On the eve of the dissolution of the SFRY, the Yugoslav Muslim community numbered more than four million people. It was predominantly Slavic Muslim and Albanian in origin, with small Turkish and Roma minorities. According to Reisu-l-ulema Naib Hadžiabdić (1975-87), it was the best organized Islamic Community in Europe and therefore held responsible for the future of Islam on the Continent.[50] As time will show understanding that the Bosnian Islamic Community holds responsibility for the future of European Islam will be preserved even after the formation of an independent Bosnian state. This premise will be evident especially during the mandate of Mustafa ef. Cerić, the first Reisu-l-ulema of independent Bosnia and Herzegovina. That the idea of creating an Islamic Community that would extend beyond the national borders or Bosniak areas was proposed even before the independence. One of the strongest advocates of this idea was the last Reisu-l-ulema of Yugoslavia Jakub ef. Selimoski (1990-1993)[51], who suggested that the Islamic Community should be reorganized into a supranational institution. He was suggesting the formation of a regional Islamic Community. For him, even going beyond the region was an option.[52]

45 Dragan Novaković "Processes of the Internal…, p. 70.

46 With the new constitution previously named Islamic Religious Community will be renamed as Islamic Community

47 Srdjan Barišić, "Institucionalizacija Islamskih zajednica nakon raspada SFR Jugoslavije", *Filozofija i Drustvo* 2, (Beograd: 2008), 118.

48 "Pregled razvitka Islamske zajednice u Bosni i Hercegovini", *Islamska zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Accessed on November 22, 2018, doi: http://www.islamskazajednica.ba/component/content/article/215-adresar/medlisi/52-pregled-razvitka-islamske-zajednice-u-bosni-i-hercegovini

49 "Ustav Islamske zajednice", *Islamska zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Accessed on November 22, 2018, doi: http://www.islamskazajednica.ba/component/content/article?id=43:ustav-islamske-

50 Dragan Novaković "Processes of the Internal…, p. 76.

51 Jakub ef. Selimoski was the only non-Bosnian that has ever served as the Reisu-l-ulema of Yugoslavia.

52 Edin Radušić, *Stav Islamske zajednice prema raspadu Jugoslavije*, Prilozi-Institut za Istoriju u Sarajevu, Sarajevo, 2017, page. 193-202.; In this light Union of Islamic Communities of Eastern Europe was formed in …. where Yugoslav Reisu-l-ulema Jakub ef. Selimoski served as the Secretary-General of the Union for 4 years. Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia were part of the Union. Muharem Omerdić, Osnivanje saveza islamskih zajednica Istočne Evrope, *Glasnik RIZ-a u SFRJ*, LIV/5, Sarajevo 1991, 624-625. Quoted in Edin Radusić, *Stav Islamske zajednice prema raspadu Jugoslavije*, Prilozi-Institut za Istoriju u Sarajevu, Sarajevo, 2017, page. 193-202.

In the last years of the SFRY, there was no unified position among the leadership of the Islamic Community regarding the question of what path Yugoslavia should follow in the future. Differing positions existed. Although the views shifted according to the dynamic political developments, during the last decades of the SFRY a dominant view among the non-Serb political elite was that the state should take the path of federalism or confederalism.[53] On the other hand, throughout the Socialist period, the majority of Serb politicians were for a stronger centralist rule. Experiencing the troubles with the centralization during the 1930s, Islamic Community was among the proponents of the decentralization of power. After the situation in the country evolved for the worse, the Islamic Community took the position that the regime should shift into a democratic one. The leadership recognized that this would be an ideal scenario for Yugoslav Muslims. What is for sure was that a big part of the Muslim religious leadership was for the continuation of Yugoslavia. Among the important portion of Bosniak politicians, this position prevailed despite the wars in Slovenia and Croatia. During the election campaign for the new Reisu-l-ulema, all four candidates were proposing Yugoslav unity as the best option for the country's Muslims. Cerić's views were the least for the Yugoslav concept but were more inclined towards Bosnian independence.[54]

After the dissolution of the SFRY started taking place Islamic Community tried to adapt to the new situation. A consensus on how Islamic Community would look after the Yugoslav state didn't exist. As it is already mentioned some like the last Yugoslav Reisu-l-ulema Jakub ef. Selimoski was proposing a region-wide Islamic Community, while some like Mustafa ef. Cerić was more in favor of an Islamic Community in line with the concept of Bosnian national self-determination.[55] As the war reached Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnian Mešihat started taking a more Bosnian-centered position rather than a Yugoslav one. Thus Yugoslav Islamic Community like the state itself was slowly losing ground among its Muslims. Statements of the religious leaders shifted in direction of the rhetorics that will be used by the Islamic Community throughout the war. Immediately after Bosnia gained its independence in 1992, Mustafa ef. Cerić, imam of the Zagreb mosque, will be elected as the first Reisu-l-ulema of independent Bosnia and Herzegovina in April 1993.[56]

With the official breakup of the SFRY into sovereign nation-states, Islamic Community had to adjust its organizational scheme accordingly.[57] With the constitutional changes in the Islamic Community on February 5 of 1993, a way for the secession

53 Dušan Biladžić, *Historija Socijalisticke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije: Glavni procesi 1918-1985*, Treće dopunjeno izdanje, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 1985, page. 320-339.

54 Edin Radušić, *Stav Islamske zajednice prema raspadu Jugoslavije*, 193-202.

55 Ibid.

56 Jusuf Žiga, "U povodu konstituiranja Obnoviteljskog sabora Islamske zajednice u R BiH", *Glasnik RIZ-a u BiH*, LVI/1, Sarajevo 1994, 51; Deklaracija Obnoviteljskog sabora, *Glasnik RIZ-a u BiH*, LVI/1, Sarajevo 1994, 65. in Edin Radušić, "Stav Islamske zajednice prema raspadu Jugoslavije", *Prilozi-Institut za Istoriju u Sarajevu*, Sarajevo, 2017, p. 202.

57 Fikret Karčić, „Raspad SFRJ i pitanje organizacije Islamske zajednice", *Glasnik Rijaseta Islamske zajednice*, br. 3-4/1992, 191-193)

of *Mešihats*[58] in other federative republics from their spiritual center in Sarajevo was paved. In 1993 a Restorative Assembly of Islamic Community was convened in Sarajevo. There was proclaimed a constitutive decision that stresses the restoration of once abolished autonomy from 1909. Some structural reorganization of the Islamic Community was undertaken as well. The exterritorial jurisdiction was defined. The newly established Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina was responsible for three more Mešihats outside the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These were, Mešihat of Croatia, Mešihat of Slovenia, and Mešihat of Sandžak region. All the mentioned Mešihats recognized Sarajevo as their spiritual center. Mustafa Cerić who was elected to the position of the Reisu-l-ulema will serve on that position until November 2012.[59]

Another important meeting was held in Istanbul on October 10, 1994, where Islamic Communities that have emerged from the Yugoslav Islamic Community held a meeting. All the related Muftis from the former federative republics came together. The representatives of the independent Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Sandžak assembled to define the redistribution of the jurisdictions under the post-Yugoslav political reality. With this assembly united Islamic Community of SFRY will formally cease to exist.[60] The fragmentation of the Yugoslav Islamic Community with headquarters in Sarajevo will give birth to the rise of the national Islamic Communities. In Istanbul, the establishment of the Islamic Communities of Macedonia, Kosovo, and Montenegro was formalized.[61] Representatives from the Mešihat of Sandžak who recognized the authority of Sarajevo were also present at the meeting. For Serbia meetings between the new Islamic Communities were illegitimate.[62] Belgrade didn't recognize the new order, especially because religious representatives from Kosovo and Sandžak acted without the coordination with official Belgrade.

58 *Mešihat* represents a autonomous territorial unit of the Rijaset of Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina outside the present borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mešihats have autonomy in "creating their own internal organization and making internal decisions according to the needs of the Mešihat." "According to the Constitution of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, The Mashihat of the Islamic Community in Sandžak, along with the Mashihats of the Islamic Community in Croatia and Slovenia respectively, are responsible for the organisation of religious life on their respective territories, which they achieve with their own regulations that are in accordance with the Constitution of the Islamic Community."

59 Until Montenegro's independence in 2006, Sandžak region was part of the state union of Serbia and Montenegro.

60 Srđan Barišić, "Muslimani i raspad SFRY", *Peščanik*, (2008), doi: http://pescanik.net/muslimani-i-raspad-sfrj/

61 Islamic Community of Montenegro in the present shape was officially formed in 1994 after the Congress held in Istanbul. Islamic Community of Montenegro claims the legacy of the once egistent Community that was formed in 1878 at the Congress of Berlin. After the Kingdom of Montenegro received independence from the Ottomans at the Congress of Berlin, by the Article 30 of the deal reached at the Congress and the agreement between Ottoman Empire and Kingdom of Montenegro, Montenegrin Muslims received the right "*to from their own religious institution, and right to independently manage religious issues and properties according to Sharia Law as it was during the "Turkish times",* "Historijat Islamske Zajednice", *Monteislam* (Official Website of the Islamic Community of Montenegro), Accessed on September 27, 2018, doi: http://www.monteislam.com/islamska-zajednica-u-crnoj-gori/historija-islamske-zajednice

62 Александар Раковић, "Турска иницијатива за уједињење Исламске заједнице у Републици Србији (2011)", in *Турска регионална сила?* ed. Миша Ћирковић and *Александар Раковић (Београд: Институт за европске студије*, 2013): 234.

It is important to remind that representatives from the Muftiates from proper Serbia were not present at the meeting.[63] Mufti of Belgrade Hamdija Jusufspahić who didn't come to the Istanbul meeting proclaimed a separate Mešihat of the Islamic Community of Serbia in the town of Niš in 1994.[64] The jurisdiction of Jusufspahić's Mešihat was excluding Kosovo and Sandžak.[65] The absence of any rival in Sandžak made it easier for Bosnian Rijaset and Mešihat in Novi Pazar to set up infrastructure across the region.[66] Despite being Bosniak himself, Mufti of Belgrade Jusufspahić and later his sons never accepted to be part of the larger Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina and declined to participate in the cause of Bosniak national affirmation. Jusufspahić rather preferred to remain loyal to the Serbian state that was to be born out of the ruins of the bloody Yugoslav dissolution. The vacancy of muftis from Serbia at the meeting in Istanbul was the first indication of the future divisions between Sarajevo and Belgrade, a rivalry that will have its climax in the schism between the Islamic authorities in Serbia.

The presence of the religious authorities from the Sandžak at the Istanbul meeting was of great importance from the aspect of Bosniak transborder religious unity. Incorporating weak and forsaken religious infrastructure in Sandžak as an integral part of the Bosnian Rijaset was in line with the Bosniak national affirmation led by Izetbegović's SDA party. Election of Mustafa ef. Cerić, one of the founders of SDA known for nationalist stances, to the position of Reisu-l-ulema meant that the Islamic Community will act as a second leg of the Bosniak national affirmation process.[67]

During the war in Bosnia Islamic Community played a very important role in consolidating Bosniaks.[68] Having at the disposal a wide network of mosques and other institutions, imams actively worked on supporting the liberation cause, gave religious support during the hard times, but also warned its coreligionists not to commit crimes against the civilians. Similar was done by the imams in Sandžak.

63 Serbian provinces outside Kosovo and Sandžak.

64 Srđan Barišić, "Muslims in the Balkans: Problems of (Re) Institutionalization and Transformation of Identity,", Islam at the Balkans in the Past, Today and in the Future (XIV Annual International YSSSR Conference, Niš, 2007): 34.

65 Srđan Barišić, "Muslimani i raspad SFRJ", *Pescanik*, (Belgrade: 2008), : https://pescanik.net/muslimani-i-raspad-sfrj/

66 Ibid.

67 Despite the general acceptance that SDA and Islamic Community worked in tandem during the Bosniak National Awakkening of the early 1990s which is true, there are some that argue that from as early as the first years of the SDA there was a slight tension between political and religious elite. It is argued that SDA tried to put under the control Islamic Community while it was criticizing the IC for being composed solely of "children from the rural areas." Some moves by the politicians close to SDA indicate that the party was after infiltrating IC with its cadre. The two institutions are interconnected yet sometimes little resented by the eachother. Even today some like Osman Softić are members of the SDA and the Council of the Islamic Community in the same time. There were similar examples in the past as well, like in the cases of high positioned SDA politicians like Edhem Bičakčić, Hasan Čengić and others. who sat at the Council of the Islamic Community. After the war Islamic Community mostly will support SDA in the elections, but sometimes will collaborate with the opponents of the party. For more see; Medina Delalić, "Prije 25 godina SDA jedva skupila 40 potpisa za formiranje stranke", *Bosnian National Network*, May 25, 2015, https://bnn.ba/misljenje-i-osvrti/prije-25-godina-sda-jedva-skupila-40-potpisa-za-formiranje-stranke

68 Edin Radusić, *Stav Islamske zajednice prema raspadu Jugoslavije*, p. 200.

There Islamic Community was represented through Mešihat. After Sulejman Ugljanin, the leader of SDA Sandžak, was expelled by the Milošević regime, Mešihat remained almost only organic tie between Sandžak and Sarajevo. Even Bosnian SDA was disconnected from the region. As the party was preoccupied with the defense of the country, after Ugljanin's exile, SDA's already minimal political influence will vanish. It was now up to the Islamic Community and Mešihat to continue the task that was previously started by SDA and its Sandžak branch. Strong ties with the 'Bosnian mainland' was only achievable by the strong presence on the ground of both SDA and the Islamic Community. These two sources of authority worked together to maintain the orientation Bosniaks in Sandžak had towards Sarajevo. A symbiotic relationship between the two today represents an important dimension of Bosniak national identity.

Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina staked out a claim over religious affairs of Bosniak Muslims in Sandžak, leaving some non-Bosniak Muslims in Serbia outside the jurisdiction of Sarajevo. Besides Bosniaks in Sandžak and a small number of Bosniaks living along the Drina river, Muslims of different ethnic backgrounds live in Serbia. Those are Albanians in the Preševo Valley region, Roma Muslims, and the foreign citizens living predominantly in the capital Belgrade.[69] The fact that many Muslims were left without Mešihat's service will create various complications after the war.

5.2.1. *Institutional Organization of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina*

The organizational structure of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina passed through various modifications in its turbulent past.[70] With the Constitution of 1997, the hierarchical structure that survived until now was defined. This was the last great structural change the Community has adopted. As some instances of the power will be mentioned it is important to say something about the hierarchical order of the Islamic Community. The lowest hierarchical instances, as it is described in the constitution of the Islamic Community, are the provincial bodies that are composed of a group of believers known as *Džemat* (Jamaat).

> Džemat is the basic organizational unit of the Islamic Community. It is composed of at least 100 Muslim houses, that live in one particular area that is interconnected in performing their religious duties.[71]

> The right to allow a Jamaat to exist in a certain area belongs to Rijaset, the highest instance of the Islamic Community. Next in the hierarchy from down to top comes *Medžlis* (Majlis).[72] It can be formed from at least seven jamaats

69 Ahmed Alibašić, "Serbia" in The Yearbook of Muslims in Europe, ed. Jorgen Nielsen et. al, vol. II, (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 457-466.

70 Amir Duranović, "Organizaciona struktura Islamske Zajednice u Bosni i Hercegovini i "Austrijsko naslijeđe"" *Historijska Misao*, god. III, br. 3, 303-319, Tuzla (2017)

71 "Džemat-Ustav Islamske zajednice", *Islamska Zajednica u Bosni I Hercegovini*, Accessed on December 7, 2019, doi: https://www.islamskazajednica.ba/muftijstva-m/dzemat

72 "Medžlis-Ustav Islamske zajednice", *Islamska Zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Accessed October 12, 2017, doi:

in one area. The decision to form a majlis on a certain area is decided by the Council of Islamic Community on the suggestion of Rijaset. Majlis' have their assemblies and executive boards. Majlis assemblies are composed of elected members of jamaats in a certain area. The next instance in order is *Muftiluk* (Mufti's office).[73] This level of authority is of great concern for this chapter, as Mešihat in Sandžak is run by Mufti of Sandžak. Mufti's office is led by a Mufti.

He can be appointed or removed from the position by the Council of Islamic Community after the suggestion of Reisu-l-ulema.[74]

Muftis have the authority to:[75]

- To interpret Islamic norms and publish *fetvas*
- To supervise the work of imams, khatibs, muallims, and muderises
- To protect the rights of religious rights of Muslims under his jurisdiction
- To take care of conditions under which Muslims perform their Islamic duties
- To look after the implementation of decisions and instructions of the higher authorities of the Islamic Community
- To suggest the placement, dismissal, and transfer of the chief imam

Mufti has its own office and is helped in his work by the Council around him, which is composed of all chief imams and principals of madrassas that are found in the area of the particular Muftiluk. Muftija for his work responds to Reisu-l-ulema.[76]

Rijaset represents the highest administrative and religious body of the Islamic Community. Reisu-l-ulema is the head of the Rijaset. Besides Reisu-l-Ulema 14 other members are leading Rijaset. These are the Deputy of Reisu-l-Ulema, General Secretary of Rijaset, Mešihat Presidents, and the Director of Directorate of Foundations (Waqfs).[77] Other members of the Rijaset are chosen by the Islamic Community Council and these are; four elected members among Muftis, two elected members among the Deans of the Theology Faculty, Directors of the Islamic educational facilities, and the two respectable members of the Islamic Community that are not full-time employees of the same.[78] The mandate of the members of Rijaset is four years. Reisu-l-Ulema and the Rijaset have a wide spectrum of duties, but some of them that are concerning the subject of the chapter will be mentioned. Among some duties are;

- protecting the religious rights of the Muslims,

http://www.islamskazajednica.ba/component/content/article?id=43:ustav-islamske-

73 "Član 43-48., Muftija-Ustav Islamske zajednice", Islamska Zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini, Accessed October 12, 2017, doi: http://www.islamskazajednica.ba/component/content/article?id=43:ustav-islamske-

74 Član 45., Ustav Islamske Zajednice u BiH iz 1997. godine, p. 9.

75 "Član 43-48., Muftija-Ustav Islamske zajednice", Islamska Zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini

76 Ibid.

77 Waqf is charitable endowment under Islamic Law made by Muslims for religious, educational or charitable causes.

78 Član 49., Ustav Islamske Zajednice u BiH iz 1997. godine, Islamska Zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini.

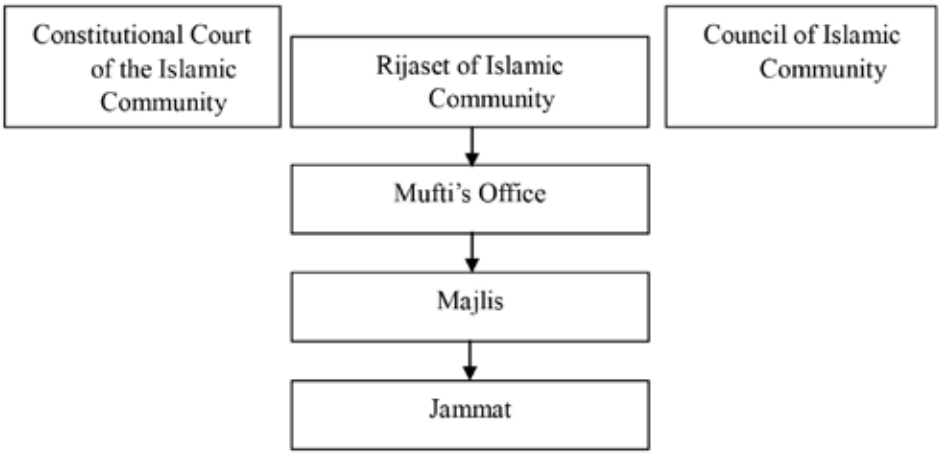
• establishing and maintaining relations with other Islamic Communities,

• establishing relations with other religious communities.

The Authority of the Islamic Community Council is above the Reisu-l-ulema's. It represents the top representative and judiciary body of the Islamic Community that is appointed by Reisu-l-ulema himself. Even Reisu-l-ulema responds to Islamic Community Council for his actions. The Council is responsible for preparing a constitution, organizing the hierarchical scheme, and distributing the duties in the Islamic Community. The Council looks after the budget, creates funds, issues permissions for creating firms and organizations that are part of the Community.[79] It has the authority to select the members of Rijaset as well.

Another important body of the Rijaset is the Constitutional court, which is responsible for controlling the work of other organs of the Rijaset. It is composed of five members appointed by the Islamic Community Council.[80]

Graphic 5.1 Hierarchical Organization of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina:[81]



5.3. Historical Developments Leading to the Schism Between the Islamic Communities in Serbia

To have a better understanding of the crisis over the Islamic Communities in Serbia. it is important to mention three interconnected dynamics starting in the early nineties that will culminate in the schism. In the most general terms, it could be said that the ground for the future division was prepared with the redistribution of the authority that became necessary with the dissolution of the SFRY. With the

79 Član 62., Ustav Islamske Zajednice u BiH iz 1997.
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid.

dissolving of the Islamic Community of Yugoslavia, Belgrade was unsatisfied with the new distribution of the authorities that the newly emerged Islamic Communities have agreed on. Claims of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina over the Sandžak region was troubling Belgrade.

Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina together with SDA Sandžak and its leader Sulejman Ugljanin made the young and 'energetic' imam Muamer Zukorlić a Mufti of the Mešihat of Sandžak. Zukorlić from day one demonstrated unquestionable loyalty to Sarajevo. Making him a Mufti was in line with the nationalistic paradigm SDA and Bosnian Rijaset followed in Sandžak as a part of Bosniak national hinterland. Zukorlić was even active in the SDA's Sandžak before becoming a Mufti.

Another important development was the decision of Belgrade's mufti, Hamdija Jusufspahić to distance himself from the developments in Sarajevo and Novi Pazar. He ignored the Istanbul consensus reached by the new Islamic Communities and formed an independent Mešihat of Islamic Community of Serbia in Niš in 1994.[82] This move of him came in a very sensitive historical moment that corresponded to mass killings of Bosniaks by the hands of the Milošević regime and his proxies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Serb actions pushed Bosniak to launch wide national consolidation across the former Yugoslavia. Bosniak himself, Belgrade mufti remained deaf to the destiny of his compatriots. His stances during the Bosnian War created a repulsion among the majority of Bosniaks in Serbia. At the same time, together with his sons, Jusufspahić refused to recognize the institutional supremacy of the Bosnian Rijaset over his Mešihat. Rather he acted parallel to the desires of the Milošević regime, which also was strongly against any foreign influence over the Muslims in Serbia. Milošević's regime was especially worried about the destiny of Sandžak, that was living under the fragile peace. To the official Belgrade peace in this region came to a question with the rise of SDA and Sulejman Ugljanin who was openly suggesting autonomy from Serbia.

The third correlated dynamic was the emergence of SDA and Ugljanin as the strongest political option for Bosniaks in Sandžak.[83] SDA controlled both the political and religious life of the Bosniaks. Ugljanin had a vision where Bosniak National Council, a political platform created by him, would control all the Bosniak institutions in Sandžak, including the Mešihat of Sandžak. This ambition will be prevented by Zukorlić and Mešihat. Refusal to subdue Mešihat under Ugljanin's control launched more than a two-decades-long power struggle.[84] Now let's move to political happenings of the early 1990s which is of crucial importance to better understand the crisis of Islamic Communities.

82 Srdjan Barišić, "Institucionalizacija Islamskih zajednica nakon raspada SFR Jugoslavije", Filozofija i Drustvo 2, (Beograd: 2008), 124.

83 Kenneth Morrison, "Political and Religious Conflict in the Sandžak," Defence Academy of the United Kingdom (2008), doi: https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/92367/2008_Aug_Political_Relig.pdf

84 Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović, Interview with Muamer Zukorlić, former Mufti of Mešihat in Serbia and MP of Serbia, Conducted on 26.01.2018.

5.4. Rise of the SDA Sandžak and the Situation in the Region in the Early 1990s

With the death of Josip Broz Tito, a founder of the SFRY, the country entered into a period of chronic economic and political crisis. Unemployment combined with the collapse of an inefficient economy, led to dissatisfaction with the Socialist system. Since the mid-1980s, nationalistic rhetoric started slowly heating up. The discontent with the order and the economic condition was nourishing various ethnicity-based ultra-nationalisms. The most aggressive and the loudest in revisionism among other nationalisms was the Serbian one. Since the 1960s Serb politicians in the Communist party were suggesting a centralized model of the state preserving Belgrade's stronger control over the country. Other ethnic groups recognized this plan as a smokescreen for the creation of 'Greater Serbia', thus they favored stronger decentralization. The emerging nationalist political elite of the late 1980s used mass dissatisfaction with the situation as a trump card to push out the Communists from the political arena. In the atmosphere of irreconcilable disagreements and staggering economic crisis, Slobodan Milošević rose very fast in the hierarchy of the Communist party, cleaning up the party from those disagreeing with his nationalist policies. With the assistance of nationalistic intelligentsia, he restored the old idea of "all Serbs living in one state."[85] Milošević used his power as the president of Serbia, the largest among the Yugoslav federative republics, to launch aggressive centralist policies against other republics. His nationalistic and populist actions were a catalyst for the dissolution of the country as they provoked other ethnic nationalisms to react. The first the political elite of Slovenes, Croats, and Albanians, and in the later stage Bosniak[86] and Macedonian political elite decided to defend their republics against the aggressive SR Serbia. Led by Momir Bulatović, Milošević's ally, Montenegrins will align with Serbian nationalistic politics. The concept of "Brotherhood and Unity" that kept Yugoslav republics together for almost five decades was *de facto* dead.[87]

The future of the SR Bosnia and Herzegovina as the most complex Yugoslav republic in terms of religious and ethnic diversity was uncertain. None of the three Bosnian nationalities was composing an absolute majority of the population. The fact that SR BiH was geographically at the center of the SFRY was complicating the situation even more. Muslims, who formed the most numerous ethnic group, started seeking independence amid strong irredentist tendencies from Belgrade and Zagreb. As SFRY was entering into a phase of internal conflict the tone of Muslim nationalism that was very silent in the beginnings was becoming louder and louder. Especially after wars erupted in Slovenia and Croatia Muslims started politically

85 Vesna Pesic, "Serbian Nationalism and the Origins of the Yugoslav Crisis", United States Institute of Peace (1996): 6.

86 When speaking of period before the breakup of SFRY, Muslim by Nationality term will be used, as it was the official name for this nation at that time.

87 *Bratstvo i Jedinstvo* in Serbo-Croatian language.; See: Sabrina P. Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milošević*, 4th ed. (Oxford, Westview Press, 2002), and Alastair Finlan, *The Collapse of Yugoslavia 1991-1999*, (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2004)

consolidating their rows. First democratic elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina were organized in November 1990. Nationalist parties on all sides won the majority of the votes. Following the example of Bosnian Serbs and Croats, Muslims extensively voted for SDA.[88] The SDA led by Alija Izetbegović was elected as the president of SR Bosnia and Herzegovina. Soon after gaining independence on March 1, 1992, Bosnia and Herzegovina will also enter into a bloody war that will last until 21 November of 1995.[89]

SDA understood that it has legitimacy among the Bosniaks living outside Bosnian borders as well. Similar was done by Serbia that backed SDS BiH, and Croatia that backed HDZ BiH. SDA also spread its network across the former republics of Yugoslavia. Party opened the branches in areas where Bosniaks predominantly lived. Sandžak, the region where the most Bosniak population outside BiH live, will be included in SDA's vision of national consolidation. Sulejman Ugljanin, former dentist and boxer, became the leader of the Sandžak branch.[90]

Since the early days, SDA was ideologically split between the two political factions. The first line was conservative and more oriented toward political Islam. This group was gathered around Alija Izetbegović. Other stream had more secular orientation and was aligned around people like Adil Zulfikarpašić, a prominent businessman living in the diaspora and Fikret Abdić an industrialist from Northwestern Bosnia.[91] There was a tense debate about which ideology party should follow. Through time Izetbegović's faction prevailed. After the ideological split with the conservative leadership, Zulfikarpašić and Abdić severed their ties with SDA by forming their parties.[92] Abdić even entered into open armed conflict against the SDA-dominated government in Sarajevo. In Sandžak, Sulejman Ugljanin was closer to Izetbegović's faction, while second to him in the party Rasim Ljajić was leaning towards a secular worldview.[93]

88 SDA or Party of Democratic Action was formed on May 26 in 1990. Alija Izetbegović who will serve as the first President of independent Bosnia and Herzegovina was party's first president.; "Lična karta Stranke Demokratske Akcije, Stranke Demokratske Akcije, Accessed on January 13, 2018, http://sda.ba/home/o-name/licna-karta-stranke/

89 Bosnian War was ended with US brokered Dayton Peace Agreement between three warring factions, reached on November 21 in 1995 in Dayton, OH and signed on 14 December 1995 in Paris. Alija Izetbegović, then President of Bosnia and Herzegovina, represented the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slobodan Milošević of Yugoslavia (later Serbia) represented Bosnian Serb and Franjo Tuđman Bosnian Croat forces. For more see: Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War*, (New York: Modern Library, 1999); Noel Malcolm, Bosnia: A Short History, (London: Papermac, 1996), p. 213-253.

90 "Serbia's Sandžak: Still Forgotten", International Crisis Group: Europe Report No. 162, 8 April 2005, p. 9.

91 Fikret Abdic will latter leave the SDA and form an autonomous region in Northwestern Bosnia where his supporters will clash with the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina forces loyal to government in Sarajevo. After the war he ended up being convicted as war criminal by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague, the Netherlands.

92 Medina Delalić, "Prije 25 godina SDA jedva skupila 40 potpisa za formiranje stranke", *Bosnian National Network*, May 25, 2015, https://bnn.ba/misljenje-i-osvrti/prije-25-godina-sda-jedva-skupila-40-potpisa-za-formiranje-stranke

93 *Serbia's Sandžak: Still Forgotten*, p. 9.

5.5. Rise of Sulejman Ugljanin in Sandžak

Sulejman Ugljanin is one of the founders of SDA Sandžak in 1990.[94] From the beginning, Ugljanin was inclined towards the conservative line represented by the President of SDA and Bosnia and Herzegovina Alija Izetbegović (1992-2000). Ugljanin's deputy in the party Rasim Ljajić was representing the secular-leaning base in the Sandžak. More or less both of them preserved similar political ideologies until today. To understand Ugljanin's role in Sandžak in the last three decades it is important to give a short description of the political developments in that region since the early 1990s.

Throughout the Socialist period, Muslim Slavs were under the pressure from Serbian and Croatian irredentist ambitions.[95] There was a decades-long tendency to reject Muslims' right for their nationhood. Muslims was rather seen as a part of either a Serb or Croat nation.[96] As SFRY was entering a dissolution period caused by the inflammation of the ethnic violence, Muslim Slavs, feeling the pressure of Serbian assertiveness, started aligning around the SDA party. Irritated by decades-long Serb and Croat irredentism, SDA aimed to strengthen the self-awareness and the feeling of Bosniak nationhood. Revived plans for creating Greater Serbia and Croatia at the expense of Bosnian territorial integrity pushed Bosniaks more decisively towards the SDA. During this time, some Bosniak nationalist intellectuals tried to link the cause of Bosniak national affirmation to the pre-modern period, extending it even to the medieval times.[97] For the conservative line, Muslim religious identity was an important dividing line, that is distinguishing Bosniaks from their Orthodox and Catholic neighbors. For one part of SDA's leadership Islamic identity was crucial in consolidating the national self-awareness. In that sense, Bosnia's Ottoman past was important in building up a national discourse. In 1993, a consensus will be reached that the term *Musliman* (Muslim), previously used as an ethnic-national category, must be replaced with the historical name *Bošnjak*[98] (Bosniak).[99]

In this atmosphere, the idea that Bosniaks living in Bosnia and Herzegovina share the same destiny with those outside its borders shaped SDA's political vision regarding the Sandžak region. These ideas developed in the shadow of much stronger Serbian and Croatian claims over Bosnia and Herzegovina. In a way, this represented a reaction to irreconcilable claims from Belgrade and Zagreb over Bosnia's integrity. The Conservative line in Sandžak understood that the region is traditionally part of

94 Yorgos Christidis, The Party of Democratic Action in the Sandžak (Serbia): "Establishment, Evolution and Political Aims, 1991-2010", *Etude Balkaniques-Institut D'Etudes Balkaniques& Centre de Thracologie*, (2012): 3-25.

95 For more see: Mustafa Imamović, Historija Bošnjaka, (Sarajevo: Preporod, 1997)

96 During the Second World War, fascist regime of Independent State of Croatia, in order to mobilize Muslims for their irredentist cause, called them as the 'flowers of Croathood.' Serbian nationalist elite tend to see Muslim Slavs of Western Balkans as the Islamized Serbs, since the times of Serbian national awakening in the nineteen century.

97 Mustafa Imamović, *Historija Bošnjaka*, (Sarajevo: Preporod, 1997); Nada Klaić, *Srednjovjekovna Bosna: Politički položaj Bosanskih vladara do Tvrtkove krunidbe (1377. g.)*, (Zagreb: Eminex, 1994.)

98 After this point author will use the word Bosniaks.

99 Aydın Babuna, "Nationalism and the Bosnian Muslims"

Bosniak habitat, as they formed a relative majority of the population. Before being separated from the Bosnian mainland, the region enjoyed a special status as a Sancak of Novi Pazar. For these reasons, Ugljanin and SDA believed Sandžak was deserving special status.

Amid troubling times for truncated Yugoslavia, on 11 May 1991, Ugljanin and his SDA Sandžak formed the so-called *Muslim National Council of Sandžak* (MNVS). With the name change from 1993, the Council will be renamed to *Bosniak National Council of Sandžak* (BNVS).[100] BNVS was a platform from which Ugljanin launched a campaign for the autonomy of the Sandžak region. The referendum on autonomy was held between October 25 and 27 of 1991. The outcome of the referendum was disastrous for Belgrade. Around 70 percent of registered voters have chosen the right to take a part in the referendum and the result was 98.90 percent in favor of autonomy. The majority of those who voted at the referendum was either Bosniak or Albanian, while Serbs mainly rejected to vote. The referendum was organized only six months before the official eruption of violence in neighboring Bosnia and Herzegovina. Belgrade was uncomfortable with the referendum, as it suspected it would lead to the formation of a much-feared 'Green Corridor', by connecting Bosnian Muslims through Sandžak with the rest of the Muslim World.[101] In 1993 BNVS published "Memorandum on the Special Status of Sandžak" was published, which defended the position of why Sandžak deserves autonomy.[102]

Contrary to the quests for autonomy by Bosnian Serbs and Croats, the adventure for Sandžak's autonomy didn't end up in an armed conflict. Unlike puppet regimes of Milošević and Tuđman in BiH, Ugljanin and his supporters never created armed forces, let alone launching armed separatism. Even Ugljanin's party was not united regarding autonomy. His deputy Ljajić was more for cooperation with the Serbian state rather than self-determination. As Serbia had a hard time keeping other republics in the state union, the referendum will be understood by Belgrade as another 'separatist' tendency. With the eruption of violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosniaks in Sandžak will be punished by the Milošević regime for organizing a referendum.[103]

Ugljanin participated with SDA Sandžak in the first free elections for the National Assembly of SR Serbia in December 1990. His party managed to get more than eighty thousand votes which equal to 1.7 percent of national votes.[104] The result

100 BNVS will be renamed again in 2003 to Bosniak National Council (BNV), the name it will keep until today.; "O Vijeću", Bošnjačko nacionalno vijeće, Accessed on January 13, 2018, http://www.bnv.org.rs/o-nama/

101 During the 1980s and 1990s the myth of Green Corridor was often mentioned by the Serbian right leaning academicians and politicians as general "plot of Yugoslav Muslims" against the Serbian people, according to which there is a conspiracy that Muslim politicians are trying to achieve, where they are aiming to reconnect local Muslim population with the rest of the Muslim World.

102 "Memorandum o uspostavljanju specijalnog statua zaa Sandžak u okviru ostatka Jugoslavije (Srbije i Crne Gore)", (Novi Pazar: Muslimansko Nacionalno Vijece Sandžaka, 1993), doi: http://www.dijaspora.org/memorandum.htm

103 "Serbia's Sandžak: Still Forgotten", p. 9.

104 "Hronologija parlamentarnih izbora", RTS, Accessed on January 13, 2018, http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/

represented a significant achievement for a party with the regional scope. With the elections, SDA Sandžak emerged as the fifth strongest party in Serbia and delegated three MPs to Serbian National Assembly. Elections provided Ugljanin a chance to voice SDA's cause in the national parliament.

A model of cooperation practiced between SDA and the Islamic Community in BiH was followed in Sandžak as well. Being the strongest political leader in Sandžak gave Ugljanin power to install Muamer Zukorlić as the mufti of Mešihat of Sandžak.[105] A model where a political leader is installing a religious figure was practiced all over the region.[106] Young Zukorlić who just returned from his education in Algeria was an activist of the SDA during the early 1990s.[107] He was the kind of mufti that Ugljanin would need for national affirmation in the region to succeed. After all, they represented the two legs on which overall Bosniak political strength in Sandžak was standing.[108]

Milošević decided not to tolerate Ugljanin and his "separatist tendencies" anymore and exiled him to Turkey in 1993 on allegations of "terrorism, disrespect of constitution and separationist attempts."[109] Ugljanin stayed in Turkey until 1996. In the meanwhile, a war was raging in BiH, where Serb forces were conducting ethnic cleansing against the non-Serbs. This was the largest atrocity since the Second World War that was committed on European soil.[110] Bosniaks in Sandžak didn't suffer to an extent their Bosnian compatriots did, but the overall condition was very hard. Because of the crimes committed in neighboring countries, the Milošević regime came under international sanctions.

Embargo from the Western powers made life very hard for Bosniaks in Sandžak as well. In economic terms, even before the war, this region was seriously lagging behind the rest of Serbia. With international sanctions, the gap widened even more.[111] Ethnic policies of the central government preferred Serbs for all the positions in the state sector. Bosniaks started losing state jobs, as they were stigmatized by the regime to be a "fifth column." On the other hand, the planned-economic model left the pri-

story/1950/Izbori+2012/1095368/Hronologija+parlamentarnih+izbora.html

105 Islamic Communities in the Balkans are institutions that are officially separate from the state and its staff is elected by the Community members.

106 Sulejman Ugljanin was even a member of the Islamic Community Committee in Novi Pazar in the early 1990s.

107 Zukorlić finished his high school education in Sarajevo's famous Gazi Husrev Bey Medresa, a fact that will probably define his loyalty to Bosnia and Herzegovina since the teenage years. In the moment of his coronation, Zukorlić was only 23-years old and probably the youngest imam in the whole world to held a position of the mufti.

108 Zukorlić denies that Ugljanin installed him as a Mufti in Mešihat.

109 Muhamed Jusić, "Turkey as Mediator, or Something more between Islamic Islamic Communities in the Balkans," Democracy and Security in Southeastern Europe 12-13 (2013): 88-93.

110 Around 100.000 people were killed in Bosnian war, which represents 2-3 percent of country's pre-war population. Percentage of Bosniaks killed during the war is disproportional to the percentage of population they represented prior to war. According to the last census conducted during the SFRY Bosniaks represented aroud 44 percent of population while more than 60 percent of the killed belong to the same group. As a direct consequence of Bosnian War (1992-1995) over 2.2 million people were displaced. This number represents the half of the population Bosnia and Herzegovina had before the war.

111 "Serbia's Sandžak: Still Forgotten", 34-35.

vate sector underdeveloped. All this disenfranchised Bosniaks further, who saw exit from the economic depression in creating a private sector. Through years Bosniak private business will flourish. Thanks to the export of textile products to Turkey and Western Europe a class of rich Bosniaks started emerging.[112]

Constant propaganda from the regime caused inter-ethnic tensions in the region to rise. State terror forced some 60 to 80 thousand Bosniaks to emigrate from the region.[113] Besides the Belgrade factor, people in Sandžak directly felt the negative consequences of war in BiH. Bosnian Serb militias were occasionally trespassing border and attacking Bosniak villages in the Northern Sandžak. Municipalities like Pljevlja and Priboj, where ethnic Serbs form a slight majority, suffered the most. The extent of killings was far compared to those committed in Eastern Bosnia, but still fear of larger aggression forced many out of their homes.[114]

Milošević allowed Ugljanin to return in 1996. With his comeback to local politics, he saw the vacuum left behind by his exile was filled by the former protégé Zukorlić. An absence of political power and hard work by Zukorlić gave him great prominence among the conservative population. Being a religious leader in times when Sandžak lacked a political leader helped him to achieve great popularity. As mufti's popularity was rising memory of Ugljanin was slightly fading away. Upon the return from Turkey, Ugljanin will have to face a new reality.

One of the first things Ugljanin tried was the reinstitution of the BNVS. The Council became a political platform controlling a wide range of sister institutions, all under the control of Ugljanin himself. Mešihat was not submitted to the BNVS, but autonomous. This was unacceptable for Ugljanin, who had a vision where SDA and BNVS were sole political power in Sandžak. He believed that his party should control religious institutions also. In his interview to local newspapers in 1997, Ugljanin said that,

Islamic Community must become an integrated part of the rest of the 19 institutions of Bosniak-Muslim people in this region. Because everything besides institutions of the MNVS (BNVS) is not representing any factor and doesn't mean anything...[115]

Ugljanin's attempt to subdue Mešihat was rejected by the majority of religious leadership. Soon after rejecting Ugljanin's proposal an orchestrated media attacks on

112 "Sandžak: Calm for Now", *ICG Balkan Report No. 48*, (Sarajevo: 1998), p. 6,7.

113 "Chronology for Sandžak Muslims in Yugoslavia", *Minorities at Risk Project*, 2004, Accessed on September 22, 2018, doi: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/469f38f61e.html

114 "Serbia's Sandžak: Still Forgotten", 10-12.; "According to the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in the Sandžak, from 1991 to 1995, 34 persons were murdered, 131 were kidnapped, 29 were wounded, and 291 were physically attacked. Serbs carried out 18 attacks on area villages and burned 57 houses… The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in the Sandžak registered 1,082 cases in which the police searched homes looking for guns; 446 persons were taken into custody, and 422 were physically mistreated. Only 19 persons were tried and found guilty of illegal possession of weapons.", Quotation taken from: Informacije o Sandžaku, *Helsinski Odbor za Ljudska Prava u Sandžaku*, 1996, p. 16, 17. quoted in Sandžak: Calm for Now, *ICG Balkans Report No. 48*, (Sarajevo, 1998): p. 11.

115 Sulejman Ugljanin, *Sandžačke novine*, March 5, 1997., Novi Pazar, Year II, No. 41., page. 3.

Mešihat will be launched through media close to SDA. Ugljanin's former ally, Mufti Zukorlić was at the center of the media lynch, which in turn forced him to invest in creating its media outlets. The conflict between the two leaders will provide a base for future schism in the Islamic Community.

Another blow to Ugljanin came within the SDA Sandžak. This time it was his deputy Rasim Ljajić. In 1995 Ljajić separated his way with Ugljanin's SDA and formed another party naming it *SDA-Rasim Ljajić*.[116] This party will be renamed to *Sandžak Democratic Party* (SDP) in 2000.[117] After severing its ties to SDA Ljajić emerged as Belgrade's favorite Bosniak politician. This will bring him many Ministerial positions in different Serbian governments. Contrary to Ugljanin and Zukorlić he will follow a more conciliatory policy concerning the official Belgrade. Ugljanin now had a situation in which SDA lost dominance both in political and religious life. Besides government in Belgrade, Ugljanin was now challenged by Zukorlić, who controlled the religious life and enjoyed enormous popularity among the conservative Bosniak population, and Rasim Ljajić, who was less in conflict with the official Belgrade and by that fact in a better position than SDA.

5.6. Rise of Mufti Muamer Zukorlić

Muamer Zukorlić is the central figure in the schism between two Islamic Communities in Serbia. He had a pivotal role in Mešihat's history. Even today Bosniaks in Sandžak are firmly divided between those that are staunchly for or staunchly against the 'Mufti.'[118] Thanks to his position as a Mufti in Sandžak and the large mass of committed supporters, Zukorlić's power will go beyond the region, to BiH, Bosniak diaspora, and even to Serbian capital where he was elected to the parliament in 2016.

Muamer Zukorlić was educated in Sarajevo's famous Gazi Husrev Beg madrasah. After finishing high school, he continued secondary education in Algeria. With the unfolding of the crisis in the SFRY, he comes back to Sandžak and becomes active in the local branch of the SDA. Soon after being recognized as a perspective young imam, in 1993 the leader of SDA Sandžak Ugljanin installed him as a Mufti in the Mešihat in Sandžak that was founded a year earlier.[119]

These were years when a unified Islamic Community of Yugoslavia was passing through transformation. After Yugoslav republics proclaimed independence from Belgrade, new Islamic Communities emerged from the ashes of the Islamic Community of Yugoslavia. The question of what will be with Sandžak, that didn't have any administrative status, represented an important challenge. Smaller units (majlis)

116 Kenneth Morrison, "Political and Religious Conflict in the Sandžak," (2008): 4.

117 "Istorija", *Sandžačka Demokratska Partija*, Accessed on December 31, 2019, doi: https://sdp.co.rs/istorija/

118 He is popularly called 'Mufti' by the local population.

119 Zukorlić denies claims that he was installed by Ugljanin as a Mufti. "Claims that he (Ugljanin) allegedly appointed me as a Mufti are totally untrue... Even if he wanted to do so at that time he couldn't do it, we were not even in Sandžak at the same time during the 1993.", Muamer Zukorlić, "Serijal svjedocenja "Odbrana Islamske Zajednice" 01 epizoda" YouTube video, Duration 1:06:28, December, 11, 2017

of the Islamic Community that were found in the Sandžak decided to join together to form a Mešihat. After being formed in 1993, Mešihat became an integral part of the Islamic Community of BiH. All other Islamic Communities in the region, except Mufti of Belgrade, recognized Mešihat as a such.[120]

After taking the office, Mufti found very weak religious infrastructure, which will be strengthened by him in a short period. Almost a defunct institution, was turned into a respectable one. The rise in religiosity across the region during the wars made his work in that sense easier. Mešihat evolved into an organization that was looking after the needs of scared Bosniaks living under the fear of being exposed to the same destiny as their compatriots in BiH. The successful reorganization of Mešihat positioned Mufti as a new political authority in the region. As the infrastructure of Mešihat was developing the ties with the Islamic Community of BiH were strengthening as well. Mufti's work was especially appreciated by Sarajevo during the mandate of Reisu-l-ulema Mustafa ef. Cerić whose enormous sympathies he enjoyed.

Mešihat and Zukorlić filled the power gap while Ugljanin was in exile and the government in Sarajevo was preoccupied with defending the country. His popularity soon passed Ugljanin's. After being pardoned by Milošević Ugljanin returned to the political scene in 1996. Problems between SDA and Mešihat emerged soon after. Power vacuum filled by Zukorlić and the disagreements over the properties of Mešihat caused the two to enter into a struggle.[121] Two sides started building up their own media mouthpieces turned into propaganda machinery working to discredit the other side. Ugljanin controlled *Sandzacke Novine* (Sandžak Newspapers), while Zukorlić controlled religious paper *Glas Islama* (Voice of Islam).[122] The rivalry between the two strongly divided the conservative segments of the population since the mid-1990s. The rise in Zukorlić's regional prominence will start particularly with the end of the Milošević-regime.

International pressure helped the overthrow of Slobodan Milošević in 2000. He was ousted by the new generation of Serbian youth eager to transform Serbia into a functioning state that would abandon the police-state structure created during the 1990s. Zoran Đinđić, a Prime Minister of Serbia from 2001 to 2003, and his Democratic party were the personification of these liberal movements. The new government was against the nationalist policies built on ethnic hatred. Đinđić's ascendancy was a unique chance for Bosniaks to enter into Serbian mainstream politics. With the fall of Milošević Mufti's influence will rise dramatically. Đinđić recognized Mufti as an ideal partner in Sandžak.[123] A clear off with the wrongdoings of the 1990s was

120 Srdjan Barišić, "Institucionalizacija Islamskih zajednica nakon raspada SFR Jugoslavije", *Filozofija i Drustvo* 2, (Beograd: 2008), 123.

121 After the war even in BiH relations between SDA and Rijaset entered periods of disagreements. This was the case especially when SDA was led by Sulejman Tihic and Islamic Community by Mustafa ef. Cerić. Yet, the animosity between the two will not last long as it lasted in Sandžak nor it will be heated in the same intensity. With the changes in the leadership relations were normalized between the two.

122 Kenneth Morrison, "Political and Religious Conflict in the Sandžak," (2008): 9.

123 Ibid.

the main reason why Đinđić avoided contacts with nationalist Ugljanin, who after all was one of the symbols of the bloody 1990s. Ugljanin had a negative reputation in Belgrade because of the referendum for autonomy. On the other hand, despite the weak SDA Sandžak compared to the early 1990s this party was still the strongest in the region. Instead of choosing Ugljanin as a political ally in the region, Đinđić preferred a religious figure. On the other hand, Ugljanin who was left without alternatives decided to enter into a coalition with Vojislav Koštunica, the main opponent of the Democrats and a Serbian nationalist. This reflected another paradox of politics in Serbia. On one side was a Serbian and Bosniak nationalist in a coalition against the coalition of a liberal Serb with the Bosniak mufti. Support Zukorlić enjoyed from Đinđić's government made him unofficially a representative of Sandžak in Belgrade. Mufti's reputation was going even beyond Ljajić's. In his visits to Novi Pazar Đinđić would first meet with Zukorlić, than Ljajić. Mufti even accompanied the Serbian state delegation in 2003 on their visit to the United Arab Emirates.[124]

During this short period, Zukorlić invested a lot in expanding educational and other infrastructure. He founded the University of Novi Pazar, the first university in Sandžak.[125] Opening the first university in this underdeveloped region brought Mufti even more popularity. His network of schools was ahead of the state schools in many aspects. For instance, two madrasahs controlled by the Mešihat are better equipped, have lower teacher/pupil ratio and teachers have higher wages compared to the state schools.[126] These developments represented a significant achievement for one of the poorest regions in the Balkans. Financing of the educational network schools was mainly provided by the rich Bosniak class that emerged during the sanctions, diaspora money, and Middle-Eastern donors.[127] With his active approach to politics and the infrastructural capacities he built, Zukorlić was demonstrating that he is not typical mufti. Besides religious institutions, it is believed that he controls a wide network of businesses. Zukorlić with his activities to a small extent managed to buffer the economic depression in the region that SDA Sandžak previously failed to do. During the early 2000s both Ugljanin and Ljajić were overshadowed by Zukorlić's success. Ljajić who recognized the power-base around Mufti decided to side with him.[128] This represented another blow for Ugljanin's SDA Sandžak.

Another factor that secured Zukorlić's influence was the support he enjoyed from

124 "Serbia's Sandžak: Still Forgotten", 24.

125 University of Novi Pazar is famously called "Mufti's University" in the region.

126 Islamic high schools

127 During the sanctions on Serbia imposed by NATO, Sandžak and especially its capital Novi Pazar was sort of safe haven for trade and textile industry. The city had economically benefited from the Kosovo war, when network of strong diaspora of Sandžak Bosniaks in Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Western Europe was used for the family-run businesses. Much of the economy was unregulated and illegal and it was responsible for the emergence of new capitalist class of local business which will have their word in financing local politics. The fact that demonstrates best this short economic prosperity is the price of real estate in Novi Pazar which by 2001 even surpassed the prices in Belgrade. This period of prosperity was short-lasting. Not much will left of the economic boom after the second half of the 2000s. For more see: "Sandžak: Calm for Now", *ICG Balkan Report No. 48*, (Sarajevo: 1998), 6,7.

128 This alliance didn't last long. Later two will severe ties and become rivals.

Rijaset in Sarajevo. He also had a very close relationship with the Reisu-l-ulema Mustafa ef. Cerić.[129] Cerić factor and Rijaset's institutional support to Mešihat positioned Zukorlić high in the Bosniak political scale. In gratitude, Zukorlić was always clear that Sarajevo is an undisputed center for the Bosniaks in Sandžak, which in turn was creating uneasiness in Belgrade.

While Zukorlić was benefiting from the relationship with Sarajevo, SDA Sandžak was not cultivating effective relations with the Bosnian branch of his party. The situation was different compared to the early 1990s. Probably ideological shift under the secular president of the SDA Sulejman Tihić, who inherited the party from Alija Izetbegović, was partly responsible for this. Under Tihić SDA became a more secular-oriented party, while Ugljanin was conservative. SDA in BiH lost much of the popularity it enjoyed during the war. The post-war elections were passing through ups and downs. Other parties winning the elections, especially leftist ones, would come up with different political visions from SDA. As time was passing interest in Sarajevo for Sandžak was fading away. Other Bosnian parties also failed to create an effective strategy regarding the Sandžak. Only a vital tie between Sarajevo and Novi Pazar was going through the Islamic Community of BiH and its protégé Zukorlić. On the other hand, the rivalry between SDA Sandžak and Mešihat, which will culminate in 2007 with the schism in the Mešihat, continued for the next ten years.

Another important phenomenon that developed throughout the 1990s was the spread of Wahhabism. This teaching, spread in the region during the war in BiH when not more than three thousand hundred volunteer fighters, mainly from the Arab World, came to help their coreligionists in their fight against the Serb aggression.[130] Before the war, this interpretation of Islam was unknown among the local Muslims. Even though followers of the teaching remained insignificant in terms of a number they gained some supporters among the local Muslims. When the wars ended across the former Yugoslavia, Wahhabism slowly spread to Sandžak and Kosovo.[131] With the help of Islamic Active Youth (IAO), a Wahhabi NGO from BiH, the group started missionary work in Sandžak.[132] They started preaching on the streets and distributing pamphlets with the promotional texts. With the pressure from the West followers of Wahhabism will be attacked on daily basis. Unjustly the whole region, including Sandžak, was stigmatized as a springboard of Islamic radicalism in Europe. Especially Belgrade had discomfort with their presence in Sandžak. The poor socio-economic condition of Muslims in Sandžak caused Wahabbism to flourish there. But, even there, mainly thanks to Mešihat's control over the mosques, the group always remained marginal.

129 Mustafa ef. Cerić, "Muftija ide stopama Alije Izetbegovića i on je moj lider u panbošnjačkom buđenju", *Sandžakpress*, April 30, 2011, http://Sandžakpress.net/muftija-ide-stopama-alije-Izetbegovića-i-on-je-moj-lider-u-panbosnjackom-budenju

130 Steven J. Zaloga and Ronald Volstad, The Yugoslav Wars: Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia 1992-2001, (New York: Osprey, 2006)

131 Sandžak: Still a Vulnerable Region, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia Annual Report 2004., 13th Economic Forum Prague, 23 – 27 May 2005

132 Serbia's Sandžak: Still Forgotten", p. 24.

Some critiques of Zukorlić, Ugljanin's circle included, were accusing him of having links to the group. He denied these accusations on many occasions.[133] Quite contrary to the claims, Zukorlić and Mešihat had serious trouble with the group. Even an assassination attempt was tried on Mufti in 2007. After the plot was thwarted by the police, the group planning the assassination was prosecuted in court, where they were proved guilty.[134] Accusatory rhetoric might be used by Belgrade to discredit Mufti, for his "separatist" tendencies.

The dispute between Mešihat and SDA was partly responsible for the strengthening of the radical groups. In some areas, they managed to form independent mosques where daily prayers were performed according to Wahhabi teaching. The same problems were faced by the Bosnian Rijaset. The movement's main problem with the religious authorities was the version of Islam promoted by the Islamic Community. Street clashes between the group and the police, sometimes even the officials from Mešihat became a part of daily life in the region.[135] Although accused of having ties to Wahhabis, Zukorlić was in the eyes of the radical groups representing "official Islam", which for the group was "corrupted" by the Islamic Community. Therefore, mosques controlled by Mešihat were to be used according to "proper methods" of Islam. Besides tensions with the Ugljanin supporters, Mešihat was dealing with yet another challenge. The main problem with the radical groups was that they acted dissolutely and didn't have a centralized structure or a leader with whom Mešihat could try to reconcile.

5.7. Jusufspahić Family and the Islamic Community of Serbia

The emergence of the Jusufspahić family as muftis of Belgrade was another important development that prepared the ground for the schism in the late 2000s. Jusufspahić's decision to separate the path with Bosnian Rijaset during the early 1990s echoed in the decades after the war. His concept of the Islamic Community of Serbia will lead to a schism with Sarajevo and Novi Pazar in 2007. Redistribution of authority after the breaking of the Islamic Community of Yugoslavia left a small number of Muslims in Belgrade, Central Serbia, and Vojvodina left Muslims there without adequate service. Mufti of Belgrade to some extent bridged their need. He managed to build his authority in these regions, partly because of the careless attitude Sarajevo-line had for the needs of Serbia's Muslims outside the Sandžak region.

Jusufspahić emphasized the historical continuation of the Islamic Community of Serbia that he recreated in 1994. After raising his Mešihat in 2007 to a level of

133 "For me that (Wahhabis) is group of extremists…" Muamer ef. Zukorlić, "Moj civilizacijski koncept je prejak za ovo okruženje", *Oslobođenje-Pogledi*, November 28, 2007.

134 "So called Wahhabis and extremists of that kind actually tried to kill me in 2007. This is proved at the court, they are senteced, they admitted that assassination was prepared.", Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović, Interview with Muamer Zukorlić, former Mufti of Mešihat in Serbia and MP of Serbia, Conducted on 26.01.2018.

135 "Sukob s policijom-ubijen Vehabija", *B92*, Accessed on January 13, 2018,http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2007&mm=04&dd=20&nav_id=242766

Rijaset, the leadership of the new Islamic Community of Serbia will constantly point out a century and a half long continuation with the historical Islamic Community created in 1868 by the Principality of Serbia.[136] The same is stated in the Constitution of the Islamic Community of Serbia.[137] By the order of Mihailo Obrenović in 1868, the remaining Muslims in the Principality received the right to freely profess their religion.[138] Bajrakli Mosque in Belgrade was to be upkeeped by the authorities of the Principality for the religious need of the community.[139] At the time the seat of the chief Mufti was not in Belgrade but the southern Serbian town of Niš. Like in the case of Bosnian Rijaset, the legitimacy of the mufti was confirmed by the Ottoman Sheik-al Islam. Islamic Community of Serbia will use Obrenović's order and the authorization from the Ottoman Sheikh-al Islam as the main argument against the claims of Bosnian Rijaset over Sandžak. Occasionally Belgrade will remind that their Community has an older tradition than Islamic Bosnian Rijaset, which was formed later, in 1882.

On the other hand, the lack of continuation of the Islamic Community in Serbia and historical interruptions it has faced during the Yugoslav period, where all muftis including Belgrade's, were for decades under the jurisdiction of the Islamic Community of Yugoslavia with headquarters in Sarajevo was ignored by Jusufspahić's. During the Socialist period, Mufti of Belgrade was in charge of the sub-unit of the Yugoslav Islamic Community known as Muftiate for the SR Serbia[140] with the headquarters not in Belgrade but Pristina. Anyhow, except for the very short period of centralist policies followed by the Kingdom of Yugoslavia between the two world wars, Belgrade as a center for the Muslims in Serbia was a novelty that he has introduced. Especially when it comes to Belgrade's claims over Sandžak. Even during Socialist Yugoslavia, up until 1981, the seat of Mufti of Serbia was in Pristina, after which it will be moved to Belgrade. But even in that case, Mufti of Belgrade will have authority only over Serbia proper and Vojvodina region, excluding both Kosovo and Sandžak. Mufti of Belgrade will remain under the authority of Sarajevo, the religious center of all Yugoslav Muslims, even with the changes of 1981. After Islamic Community was disbanded, in 1994 Hamdija Jusufspahić organized a separate Restoration Assembly in the town of Niš. After the assembly, he will upgrade his Muftiate to *Mešihat of the Islamic Community of Serbia*.[141] Mešihat will continue working actively throughout and after the war period in this renamed form.

136 Zorica Kuburić, *Verske Zajednice u Srbiji i Verska Distanca* (Novi Sad: CEIR, 2010), 130.; Александар Раковић, "Турска иницијатива за уједињење Исламске заједнице у Републици Србији (2011)", in *Турска регионална сила?*, 237.

137 *Ustav Islamske zajednice Srbije*, I. Karakter i načela Islamske zajednice, Član 3., 2007.

138 *Срђан Баришић, "Из нашег непосредног окружења: Муслимани*", 601.

139 Ibid, 597-612.

140 Socialist Republic of Serbia was one of the six Yugoslav republics.

141 Srdjan Barišić, "Institucionalizacija Islamskih zajednica nakon raspada SFR Jugoslavije", 124.

5.8. The Schism in the Mešihat in 2007

During the 2000s Serbia passed through territorial changes. Montenegro proclaimed independence from Serbia in 2006. After this point, Sandžak will be geographically divided into two parts, Serbian and Montenegrin.[142] Bosniaks in Montenegrin overwhelmingly voted for independence despite calls from Zukorlić, Ugljanin, and Ljajić not to do so.[143] After Podgorica left the state union, ties between the Serbian and Montenegrin parts of Sandžak will be reduced significantly, thus Mešihat will importantly lose its influence over the Muslims in the new state. The authority of the Islamic Community of Montenegro will be consolidated there. Two years after Montenegro, Kosovo will also proclaim independence from Serbia, rounding the territorial map of the region.

The most important development that triggered the schism in Mešihat was the proclamation of the Law of Churches and Religious Communities in 2006 by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Serbia that ordered religious communities to register only one institution as their official representative. The Law represented the first of this kind since 1993 after Milošević abolished the laws on religious communities from the Socialist period.[144] The Law was criticized by the OSCE, Council of Europe, and Venetian Commission. International organizations claimed that some articles of the Law are not in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights. Especially problematic was Article 18. and 19.[145] According to international organizations, these two articles had discriminatory elements. In the case of Islamic Communities Serbian state openly ignored Article 19. when it allowed two Communities to be registered in the Register of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Article 19 which explicitly says;

A religious organization whose title contains the name or part of the name that expresses the identity of a church, religious community, or religious organization that has been already been registered in the Registry or who has previously submitted an application for the registration (in the Registry), cannot enter the Registry.[146]

142 Besides independence of the state in 2006, this meant that Islamic Community of Montenegro was to follow the state. Islamic Community of Montenegro has the history of being independent that stretches back to 1878 and Congres of Berlin. After Kingdom of Montenegro won its independence from Ottoman Empire at the Congress, special deal was done between the Kingdom and Ottoman Empire, which would guarantee rights for Montenegrin Muslims like it was during the "Turkish times." Right to have independent religious Community which would look after their needs according to rules of sharia, to keep the rights over the properties they hold and formation of Montenegrin-Turkish comitee that would discuss the issue of *Vaqf*, was given to Muslims in Montenegro. For more visit: "Historijat Islamske Zajednice", Monteislam, Accessed on April 7, 2020: http://www.monteislam.com/islamska-zajednica-u-crnoj-gori/historija-islamske-zajednice

143 Sandra King Savić, "Serbia's Sandžak: Caught Between Two Islamic Communities", *Euxeinos* 23, (2017): 35.

144 Milan Vukomanović, "Diskriminacija sa predumisljajem", *Pescanik*, Last modified in October 8, 2010, Accessed on November 6, 2018, doi: https://pescanik.net/diskriminacija-s-predumisljajem/

145 Article 18 titled "Procedure for the registration of the religious communities" is giving orders about the registration of religious communities to the "Register of the Ministry for Religious Affairs."; Article 19. is defining under which name a religious organization can apply to be written in the Register of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

146 *Zakon o crkvama i verskim zajednicama*, "Službeni glasnik RS", broj 36/2006.; In Serbian: "U Registar se ne može upisati verska organizacija čiji naziv sadrži naziv ili deo naziva koji izražava identitet crkve, verske zajednice

Ministry of Religious Affairs allowed the registration of two Islamic organizations which share almost identical name and represent the same religion. Registration was approved by the Ministry although Article 19. of the Law promoted by the same Ministry explicitly forbids it.

Proclamation of the Law on Churches and Religious Communities will directly influence the actions of both, Mešihat in Sandžak and Muftiate of Belgrade led by Jusufspahić. The Law implied one of them now had to put to an end his activities. The announcement of the Law Belgrade provoked the race for the legitimacy of Muslims in Serbia.

Soon after the announcement of the Law on Churches and Religious Communities by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Serbia, on February 1, 2007, Mufti of Belgrade Hamdija Jusufspahić proclaimed himself Reisu-l-ulema of Serbia. After this move, Muftiate he led was raised to a status of Rijaset of Islamic Community of Serbia which equals the status of Bosnian Rijaset. This action of him was supported by his son Muhamed, who after Hamdija Jusufspahić passed away in 2016 follow his father's steps when it comes to relations with the Bosnian Rijaset. At the meeting of the Assembly of the Community on 19 February, Rijaset of the Islamic Community of Serbia was officially launched, and its constitution was accepted. From the beginning, the Jusufspahić family claimed that the legitimacy of the Islamic Community of Serbia goes back to 1868 when some rights for Muslims were given by at that time Principality of Serbia. The constitution of the Islamic Community of Serbia says,

The Islamic Community of Serbia derives its sharia-legal foundation from the menşura of the Shaikh-ul-Islam and the recognition of Islam as the legal religion of the Principality of Serbia by the decision of the State Council of the Principality of Serbia on 18 May 1868.[147]

Leaders of the Islamic Community in Serbia will occasionally claim that they are fourteen years older than Bosnian Rijaset. By claiming this Belgrade was sending a message to the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina that it has a much older tradition, thus having more legitimacy over Muslims in Serbia. Besides claiming to be older Islamic Community of Serbia was referring in Article 3 of its constitution to *menşura* given by the Ottoman Sheikh-al Islam. With the menşura, the right to lead Muslims in the Principality of Serbia was given at the time by the highest Ottoman religious authority. Islam was recognized as a legitimate religion by the authorities of the Principality even before 1868.[148] For Jusufspahić's, the Islamic Community of Serbia represents a continuation of the old Islamic Community.[149]

With launching Serbian Rijaset, the question of Sandžak where most Muslims

ili verske organizacije koja je već upisana u Registar ili koja je ranije podnela zahtev za upis."

147 *Ustav Islamske zajednice Srbije*, I. Karakter i načela Islamske zajednice, Član 3., 2007.

148 "Istorijat Islamske zajednice Srbije", Rijaset Islamske zajednice Srbije, Accessed on January 13, 2018, http://www.rijaset.rs/index.php/rijaset; Velizar Antić, Marko Veković, "Odnos Islamske Zajednice BiH prema Islamskim Zajednicama u Srbiji", *Godišnjak Fakulteta političkih nauka* vol. 6, br. 7, (2012):109.

149 Ibid. 103-119.

live and the majority of the religious infrastructure is found automatically was raised. For decades, the organization of religious life in the region was under the direct supervision of Sarajevo. The Jusufspahić family was aware of the fact that the main rival and actual power behind Mešihat in Novi Pazar and Zukorlić lay in the affirmation they enjoy by the Bosnian Rijaset and other Islamic Communities in the region. Besides claiming legitimacy over non-Bosniak Muslims in Serbia, which was never a challenge for Jusufspahić, the real aim was to extend the authority over the Sandžak region; the point of actual controversy between the two Islamic Communities. By proclaiming himself Reisu-l-ulema of all Muslims in Serbia, Jusufspahić provoked Novi Pazar and Sarajevo to react. The idea where Bosnian Reisu-l-ulema was extending its authority regionally was perceived as a threat in Belgrade. Bosnian Reisu-l-Ulema Mustafa ef. Cerić was occasionally even declared "unwelcome" in Serbia by the Ministry of Faith of the Republic of Serbia.[150] Serbia's law on religious communities from 2006 was explicit, only one official institution for Muslims was allowed. The law forced Novi Pazar and Belgrade to start competition over who has more right over Muslims in Serbia.

On the other hand, Sarajevo accused the Serbian state of having double standards by criticizing the foreign influence on religious institutions. The case of the Serbian Orthodox Church in BiH was put forward by Sarajevo. Serbian Orthodox Church in this country is under the jurisdiction of Serbian Patriarch that resides in Serbia. Its organizational structure is centralized under the leadership of the unified Serbian Orthodox Church; the same right Serbian state was ignoring in the case of Mešihat in Novi Pazar. It is widely known that the Serbian Orthodox Church has built close relations with different Serbian governments after in the post-Socialist years, plus the unconditional support for Republika Srpska by the majority of Serbian politicians and priests which further strengthens the control of Belgrade over Bosnian internal affairs.

Representatives of Mešihat in Novi Pazar didn't affirm the formation of the new Islamic Community. Jusufspahić was described as a self-appointed Reisu-l-ulema.[151] From the beginning, Novi Pazar tried not to give much importance to Jusufspahić's claims by using eliminatory words like describing the new Islamic Community as "Jusufspahić's family business."[152] Counter-argument for Mešihat was that someone who controls only a few mosques cannot be a representative of all Muslims in Serbia. Mešihat had under its jurisdiction around 120 mosques in Sandžak only. After all, Mešihat in Novi Pazar had many more mosques under its supervision, while the Jusufspahić family was in charge of just "one or two."[153] Mešihat will manage to preserve quantitive advantage until today.

150 "Mustafa ef. Cerić nepoželjan u Srbiji", Slobodna Dalmacija, Accessed on January 13, 2018, http://www.slobodnadalmacija.hr/novosti/bih/clanak/id/53934/mustafa-ef-Cerić-nepozeljan-u-srbiji

151 Muhamed Jusić, "Turkey as Mediator, or Something more between Islamic Communities in the Balkans", 88-94.

152 Ibid.

153 Ibid.

A set of countermeasures were prepared to adequately answer to the conditions created by the Law on Churches and Religious Communities and Islamic Community of Serbia. Novi Pazar's first move was to gather at the Unification Congress on March 27 of 2007 Muslim authorities from other parts of Serbia and the region. This initiative was supported by the Bosnian Rijaset at the assembly held on January 31, 2007, in Sarajevo. Regional Reisu-l-ulemas, including Mustafa ef. Cerić of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegrin Reisu-l-ulema Rifat ef. Fejzić and Reisu-l-ulema of Macedonia Sulejman ef. Redžepi was invited to the Congress. According to the decision of the Congress Mešihat was renamed to *Mešihat of Islamic Community in Serbia*. By this Novi Pazar tried to reaffirm itself as the only legal Islamic Community for the Muslims living outside Sandžak.[154] Article 1 of the Constitution that was prepared for the occasion says that the Islamic Community in Serbia (Mešihat) is "the only legitimate religious representative of the Muslims in this area."[155]

As it is understood from the article the main goal of Congress was to unify all Muslims in Serbia under the authority of Mešihat, which at the same time would retain the loyalty to Sarajevo. The new constitution underlined the privileged relation between Sandžak and BiH. According to Article 2,

the right for the Islamic Community (Mešihat) to establish special relations with the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina is recognized. Continuity of the relations with the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina is recognized to the Islamic Community of Sandžak.[156]

Mešihat's initiative was accepted by all the regional representatives that were invited to the Congress.

To avoid confusion, there is a slight difference in name between the two Islamic Communities. One based in Belgrade bears the name *Islamic Community of Serbia*, with "of" word in the official name, while the Novi Pazar-based *Islamic Community in Serbia*, has the word "in" in the official name. As a result of the Unification Congress, the full name of the Novi Pazar-based Community will be *Mešihat of Islamic Community in Serbia*. As it still recognizes Sarajevo as the spiritual center, the word "Mešihat" was preserved in the official name.[157]

154 "O Mešihatu", *Mešihat.org*, Retrieved on September 16, 2008, doi: http://Mešihat.org/Mešihat/o-Mešihatu2/

155 A. Kadribegović, "Ovo je temeljac za ocuvanje i kontinuitet islama na Balkanu", *Preporod*, Br.7/849, April 1, 2007, p. 30.

156 Ibid.

157 Initiative for the unification of all Islamic authorities on the territory of Serbia was launched by the Mešihat in 2006, months before the official division happened. In accordance with the previous initiative Mevlud ef. Dudić, Mufti of Mešihat of Islamic Community in Serbia since 2016, in his speech at the Unification Congress said, "Starting from the conviction that unity of the Muslims is the precondition for the full realization of the religion of Islam and the interests of the Islamic Community, and taking into account that the conditions for the unification of the Islamic Community are ready with the constitution of Serbia as an independent state and the proclamation of the Law on Churches and Religious Communities which orders that only one and united Islamic Community in Serbia can exist, at the gathering of the Council of Islamic Community held on 26.09.2006 the unanimous initiative for the unification of the Islamic Community in Serbia as nine-member body which would be formed from the representatives from the areas of Sandžak, Preševo valley region, Vojvodina and Central Serbia was accepted." For more see: A. Kadribegović, "Ovo je temeljac za ocuvanje i kontinuitet

By the decisions of the Congress Mešihat was to be divided into four subdivisions known as *Muftijstvo* or Mufti office. These are Mufti of Sandžak with headquarters in Novi Pazar, Mufti of Preševo Valley area with the office in the city of Preševo, Mufti of Central Serbia with the office in Belgrade and Mufti of Vojvodina region with the office in Novi Sad. Headquarters of the Mešihat remained in Novi Pazar. According to the new constitution higher degree of decentralization was ordered. With the new measures, regional offices were to play a bigger role in the organizational scheme.

Assistance by the Islamic Community during the process of Bosniak national affirmation that has left some non-Bosniaks in Serbia without adequate religious service was seriously addressed at the Unification Congress. Even though it was held to reconfirm Sarajevo as a spiritual center, problems of other ethnic groups living outside the Sandžak region were seriously evaluated. In this regard, Congress proposed the construction of a "representative Islamic Center in Belgrade and a madrasah in the Albanian-majority town of Preševo."[158] The new constitution aimed to assure other muftiates that the future composition of the administrative bodies will be more carefully arranged when it comes to the number of representatives coming outside Sandžak and that distribution of the foreign donations would be better distributed. With this Congress, Mešihat achieved to keep on its side an important number of Muslims living outside Sandžak. Article 2 of the new constitution ordered that Albanians living in Serbia's Preševo valley region were to preserve the Islamic Community of Kosovo as their spiritual center. The right to appoint Mufti in Preševo would be delegated to the head of the Islamic Community in Kosovo. The plan for Albanians in Preševo to come under the jurisdiction of Pristina was unacceptable for Belgrade.[159]

Congress ordered Mufti Zukorlić to stay as the leader of the Mešihat and the Mufti of Sandžak for one year, after which elections were supposed to be announced. Congress also ordered that 54 imams should be given various positions under the new deal. Even Jusufspahić was given a right to retain the position of mufti in Belgrade. He was invited to the Congress but decided not to show up. Sarajevo was ready to recognize his position as a mufti under the jurisdiction of Rijaset. A small gesture that aimed to please him was the decision to give office in Belgrade a special status, where it would serve as a diplomatic hub responsible for relations with foreign institutions and governments. Jusufspahić didn't accept the gesture and decided to make his next move.[160]

The official response from Jusufspahić's Islamic Community of Serbia was harsher and better calculated than expected. He needed Zukorlić's old foe to thwart his ostensible victory. It was time to use Sulejman Ugljanin in this crisis of authority. The schism in the Mešihat was happening under Ugljanin's watch. At the time of

islama na Balkanu", *Preporod*, Br.7/849, April 1, 2007, p. 28.

158 A. Kadribegović, "Ovo je temeljac za ocuvanje i kontinuitet islama na Balkanu", *Preporod*, Br.7/849, April 1, 2007, p. 27-30.

159 At that time Pristina was still part of Serbia. Kosovo independence will be adopted next year on 17 February.

160 Ibid.

the schism, he served as a Mayor of Novi Pazar. For too long he was under the Mufti's shadow. Legitimacy vacuum that was created by the proclamation of the Law on religious communities was the right moment for him to enter the game. With Jusufspahić's action, Ugljanin got a chance to influence the developments to create an Islamic Community in Sandžak that would be loyal to his BNVS and SDA. One year before the schism Ugljanin said to media that,

Mešihat doesn't exist anymore. Issues of Islamic community among the Bosniaks are under the jurisdiction of the Bosniak National Council (BNVS).[161]

Unfolding of the crisis after the March 2007 Unification Congress will be devastating. A group of imams employed in Mešihat that are believed to be affiliated with Ugljanin and SDA Sandžak conducted a putsch on the night of October 2 to 3, 2007 while Mufti Zukorlić and his deputy Mevlud ef. Dudić were not present in the region. They decided to use the moment while Zukorlić was away on a business trip to Morocco to strip him off from all the posts in Mešihat. An extraordinary session in a caféhouse at the local Hotel Taj (Tadž) was held on the night between October 2 and October 3, where dissident imams decided to pledge allegiance to Adem ef. Zilkić, an imam from the city of Tutin.[162] Dissident imams announced Zilkić to be the Reisu-l-ulema of Serbia.[163] After learning about these developments, Mešihat organized an extraordinary session on October 6, condemning the putsch. A deadline was given to imams who are "manipulated or under the pressure" to "repent." They are ordered to confirm their repentance with a written statement.[164] Main actors of the coup didn't respond to the call, while some imams with lower ranks did so.

On October 11, Zilkić went to Belgrade to pledge his allegiance to recently self-appointed Reisu-l-ulema Jusufspahić, who in turn gave him a letter of authorization in Belgrade's Bajrakli Mosque.[165] With the authorization letter, Zilkić was confirmed by Jusufspahić as ahead of the Presidency of the Islamic Community of Serbia. After this point, Zilkić was recognized as the Serbian Reisu-l-ulema, while Hamdija Jusufspahić was announced to be "a lifetime honorary Reis of Islamic Community of Serbia."[166]

Raising an imam from Sandžak this high in the structures of the Islamic Community of Serbia probably discloses Jusufspahić's real intentions. After all the battle was for the influence in Sandžak. During the period when Zukorlić possessed unquestionable authority in the region he used to say how Jusufspahić "doesn't have enough believers to fill even a bus."[167] With some imams from Sandžak on his side,

161 Sulejman Ugljanin, "Interview of Sulejman Ugljanin to Regionalna Televizija from 20.09.2006."

162 In previous years Zilkić was active member of the SDA Sandžak.

163 S. Bakračević - M. Pešić, "Zilkić novi reis-ul-ulema", Politika, 04.10.2007, Accessed on September 18, 2007, doi: http://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/5128/

164 Medija centar Mešihata islamske zajednice u Srbiji, *Preporod*, Br. 20/862, 6.

165 "Adem Zilkić reisu-l-ulema Islamske Zajednice Srbije", *Radio Slobodna Evropa*, October 11, 2007, https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/716995.html

166 Srdjan Barišić, "Institucionalizacija Islamskih zajednica nakon raspada SFR Jugoslavije", 125.

167 "Sandžak-vera i politika", Miroslav Filipović, accessed December 17, 2017, http://postjugo.filg.uj.edu.pl/baza/

the situation slightly changed in favor of Jusufspahić. Alliance with Zilkić and Ugljanin gave him and the new Community greater authority over Muslims in Sandžak. Islamic Community of Serbia was now a leading organization of not only a small number of Muslims living in Belgrade but some Bosniaks in Sandžak as well. New Serbian Reisu-l-ulema also underlined that a possibility for the Islamic Community of Serbia to come under the jurisdiction of Bosnian Rijaset is excluded.[168] That Ugljanin welcomed the creation of the Islamic Community of Serbia was confirmed by his words to the local TV station on October 11, the same day Zilkić was pledging allegiance to Jusufspahić in Belgrade. Ugljanin on that day said;

I have to express my joy for the fact that we Muslims in this country for the first time after a hundred years have a supreme religious leader.[169]

Immediately after the coup Zukorlić in his style accused "trinity" composed of Serbian Intelligence agency-Ugljanin-Jusufspahić" for the putsch.[170] That Koštunica's government together with SDA Sandžak was behind the coup was said in the "confidential" document published by Wikileaks in 2011. The content was a summary of the talks between the American ambassador to Serbia Cameron Munter and Rasim Ljajić who at the time served as a Labor and Social Affairs Minister of Serbia. The conversation took place in November 2007, one month after the coup. In the document Ljajić, who at the time was close to Mešihat, confirmed that Ugljanin was behind the coup. The report says that Ljajić was claiming how "the government (Koštunica's government) was behind the split in the Islamic Community."[171] Zilkić's group would not exist without support from Koštunica and Novi Pazar Mayor Sulejman Ugljanin, Ljajić's political rival. Ljajić said he had told Koštunica that the problem would resolve itself if the politicians would stop meddling in the Islamic Community's affairs."[172] Ironically, Ljajić will some years later form a political alliance with Ugljanin.

The coup inside the Mešihat was a shock for Zukorlić who previously enjoyed enormous influence and popularity in Sandžak. He decided to fight back without a compromise. He managed to keep the support of the majority in Mešihat on his side. Mešihat proclaimed Zilkić and his group as illegitimate. Media close to Zukorlić blamed Zilkić and Jusufspahić to belong to the "Serbian secret service" that actively works in damaging Bosniak unity. This claim was even supported by Ljajić at the time. Jusufspahić responded with the words that Zukorlić tries to demonstrate that he holds a majority of support and how five hundred imams don't mean that he enjoys the support from all over Serbia. For him, the problem of schism in Serbia

texts_display.php?id=521

168 S. Bakračević - M. Pešić, "Zilkić novi reis-ul-ulema", Politika, 04.10.2007, Accessed on September 18, 2007, doi: http://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/5128/

169 Sulejman Ugljanin, "Dokumentarni film "Odbrana Islamske Zajednice" III dio" YouTube video,Duration 50:39, November 3, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UomXKIWzgXk

170 *Preporod,* 20/862, 6.

171 "Serbia's Social Affairs Minister Tackles the Mental Health Affairs", Wikileaks, November 21, 2007, Published on August 30, 2011.

172 Ibid.

was limited to "only thirty percent of Muslims in Serbia" and "only to Sandžak."[173]

Despite the criticism from Belgrade, Zukorlić still held the majority of believers in Sandžak on his side. But, despite the attempts from Mešihat to put the situation under the control, permanent damage to unity was already done. With the putsch, two sides entered into open competition for control over the religious life in the region. Disputes arose in issues like, who will control mosques, who will organize a Hajj pilgrimage, and most importantly, the question of *waqf* property.

Soon after the allegiance ceremony in Belgrade, Zilkić headed to Sandžak which was the main stake in the dispute. In Novi Pazar, he was welcomed by the part of the crowd accepting him as the new Reisu-l-ulema and other accusing him of treason for his siding with Jusufspahić, who was unpopular in the region often seen as a collaborator with the Belgrade.

On the other side, Zukorlić called the supporters of Mešihat "to defend mosques from the traitors."[174] He used accusatory words like, "spies", and "collaborators of the Serbian secret service" to discredit Zilkić and the new Islamic Community of Serbia.[175] Zilkić blamed him for openly calling people to lynch. Response from Belgrade was quick and harsh as well. Jusufspahić accused Zukorlić of "immaturity" and "fascination with money and power."[176] Yet in the answer, he gave a pro-state stance that can be seen. Jusufspahić said,

In this state, Muamer became a mufti, because from his village of Orlja[177] education was made possible to him…. He got diplomatic immunity because Serbia gave him that status.[178]

Whether Zukorlić's accusations about the "secret service plot" true or not, what will come out openly during the Turkish brokering in the schism is the fact that the official Belgrade was always more comfortable with Zilkić and Jusufspahić then it was ever with the establishment in the Mešihat in Novi Pazar.

In 2009, the Serbian Ministry of Religion initiated the formation of a commission that would evaluate the legitimacy of the Mešihat of the Islamic Community in Serbia (Novi Pazar) and decide that the Islamic Community of Serbia has more legitimate and historical continuity in Serbia. In November 2009, a "special working group" was formed composed of representatives from the political, academic, and religious life.[179] The selection of the members to the "special working group" that was supposed to give professional and unbiased opinion was indicative. For instance,

173 "Jusufspahić: Zukorlić je za sve kriv", *Vesti Online*, Last modified on May 29, 2013, Accessed on December 31, 2019, doi: https://arhiva.vesti-online.com/Vesti/Srbija/316679/Jusufspahic-Zukorlic-je-za-sve-kriv

174 Ekipa "Novosti", "Raskol Islama u Srbiji", Večenje Novosti Online, October 7, 2017, http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/aktuelno.69.html:203847-Raskol-islama-u-Srbiji

175 Ibid.

176 Ibid.

177 Orlja is a village near town of Tutin where Muamer Zukorlić was born.

178 Ibid.

179 "Turska inicijative I Islamska zajednica", *Politika*, Last Modified on January 29, 2013, Accessed on January 1, 2020, doi: http://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/247450/Turska-inicijativa-i-Islamska-zajednica

among the members of the group was Adem Zilkić, Serbian Reisu-l-ulema at the time. Mešihat refused to name its representative in the "special working group." Expectedly, in July 2010 the commission concluded that

> historical continuity and the judicial legitimacy of the "traditional Islamic Religious Community" can belong only to the Islamic Community of Serbia (Belgrade).[180]

After the decision from the "special working group", the Islamic Community of Serbia would be integrated into almost all instances of the state, like the Interreligious Council of the Ministry of Religion, religious services in the Armed Forces of Serbia, National Educational Council, Commission of the Serbian government for the religious classes in primary and high schools and others.[181]

During the crisis, the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina didn't stand by side but has taken an active role in supporting Zukorlić and Mešihat. In May 2009 almost, only two months before the initiative for unification was launched by Turkey, the Bosnian Grand Mufti paid his historic visit to the region. The visit caused a lot of criticism from the Serbian media.[182] Adem Zilkić also criticized the visit. The problem of schism dominated the agenda of the visit. This can be seen from the words of Cerić in front of the mass of supporters when he said that; "there is no power that can separate Sarajevo from Sandžak, and Sandžak people from Sarajevo."[183] Cerić rejected the claims that there is a division among Muslims in Serbia and described the departed imams as "dissatisfied with the actual organization in the Islamic Community."[184] He came to Sandžak to reassure that Bosnian Rijaset is standing by the Mešihat and its Mufti.

> We live in two different countries and our instructions from Sarajevo are clear – Muslims wherever they live, have to respect the laws of that country. The relationship between the Islamic Community in Serbia (Mešihat) and the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina is brotherly and Muslims have the right for Sarajevo to be their spiritual center. That is our natural right. When it comes to our internal organization that is our concern.[185]

After two sides tried to discredit each other, the crisis entered a new phase. It will move to the streets. Street clashes or fights in the mosques became new normal in

180 *Налаз посебне радне групе за констатовање чињеница о историјском континуитету и правном легитимиету Исламске заједнице у Републици Србији*, Министарство вера Републике Србије, No. 119-01-17/09-03., July 23, 2010, from Александар Раковић, "Турска иницијатива за уједињење Исламске заједнице у Републици Србији (2011)", in *Турска регионална сила?*: 238.

181 *Александар Раковић, "Турска иницијатива за уједињење Исламске заједнице у Републици Србији* (2011)", 238.

182 "Mustafa ef. Cerić nepoželjan u Srbiji", Slobodna Dalmacija, Accessed on January 13, 2018, http://www.slobodnadalmacija.hr/novosti/bih/clanak/id/53934/mustafa-ef-Cerić-nepozeljan-u-srbiji

183 Mustafa ef. Cerić, "FTV Dnevnik Cerić u Sandžaku", Filmed (May, 2009), YouTube, 00:49, Posted (May 20, 2009), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wu-g_6EhcFQ

184 Mustafa ef. Cerić, *Danas*, May 21, 2009, from "Muslimani u Srbiji", in Sonja Biserko, (ed.), "Sandžak i evropska perspektiva", *Helsinške sveske* br. 29, Beograd: Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji, Belgrade: 2010): 257.

185 Ibid.

the region. Supporters of two sides would regularly walk around armed. Few times even weapons will be found inside the mosques. Fightings between the two sides will occasionally claim lives, and leave several people wounded. Every side was praying in its mosques, behind their imams. Even mosques were set on fire.[186] Families of the supporters were not safe either.[187] The tension over the Islamic Community will dominate the region for years to come.

5.9. The Emergence of Turkey as a Mediator in the Balkans

During the AKP's second term in the Turkish parliament, it seemed that it was over with Ankara's passive policies in the Balkans. One of the first things Ahmet Davutoğlu did after becoming a Foreign Minister in 2009 was to announce Ankara's ambitions in the Balkans. Davutoğlu's speech in the Bosnian capital at the conference about the "Ottoman Legacy and the Balkan Muslims Today", organized by the *BALMED* in 2009, was in a way a manifesto of the new ambitions.[188] Participants of the conference were 'reminded' by the Foreign Minister about the "greatness" of the Ottoman period. Davutoğlu's words like, "these were the Ottoman Balkans, and hopefully we will reestablish the spirit of that Balkans…", provided an argument for those blaming Ankara of fostering Neo-Ottoman ambitions.[189] Those uncomfortable with the Turkish involvement will use the Foreign Minister's speech to prove Ankara's "hidden agenda" in the region. Words said at the conference will echo in the region for years to come. Because of this Davutoğlu will constantly refute having revisionist or neo-imperial ambitions throughout his mandate.[190]

Before moving to mediation between the religious leaders in Sandžak, let's mention other diplomatic initiatives Turkey started under the Davutoğlu. One of the first strategies AKP followed in the post-war Balkans was securing Turkey a role of a pacifier in the region, that would work on securing a lasting peace in the turbulent Balkans. This was possible only with strong engagement and proactive diplomatic initiatives. One of the most significant diplomatic initiatives were the two trilateral mechanisms formed with the help of Turkey.[191] The first was a trilateral mechanism BiH-Serbia-Turkey, while the second was BiH-Croatia-Turkey. These initiatives tried to normalize severed bilateral relations in the Western Balkans. Both initiatives took

186 On 27 August 2008, masjid near Novi Pazar was set on fire.

187 On 7 November 2017, six kids believed to be the supporters of Ugljanin and other Islamic Community were expelled from Gazi Isa Bey Medresa controlled by Zukorlić. Expulsion was done over the claims of school authorities that "they are not able to guarantee the safety of the kids." Even a distant cousin of Mufti Zukorlić, who will together with his father side with the new Islamic Community, was expelled from the school. Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović, conducted on 26.01.2018.

188 BALMED is Turkish think tank close to AKP government whose works and activities are focused on Balkans. BALMED is short for "Balkanlar Medeniyet Merkezi", in Turkish "The Balkans Civilization Center." This institute was mentioned by Mufti Zukorlić as a part of the campaign for influencing Turkish politicians against the Mešihat in Sandžak. Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović, conducted on 26.01.2018.

189 Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Address of H.E. Prof. Ahmet Davutoğlu Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Turkey" (speech delivered on the opening ceremony of the conference, "Ottoman Legacy and Balkan Muslim Communities Today", Sarajevo, October 16, 2009

190 Ibid.

191 Erhan Türbedar, "Trilateral Balkan Summit in Istanbul", TEPAV, Ankara, April 2010

Bosnia and Herzegovina and its sovereignty at the center.[192] Ankara recognized Belgrade as a key country for regional stability. After all, it was at the center of the post-Yugoslavia disorder. In that sense normalization between Belgrade and Sarajevo was of crucial importance. Ankara pushed for the normalization of the ties between the two capitals. It resulted in the signing of the *Istanbul Declaration* on April 24, 2010, by BiH, Serbia, and Turkey.[193] Istanbul Declaration was a symbolic act claiming the security and integrity of the Bosnian borders. It represented a declaration of goodwill for the sake of long-term peace in the region.[194] Despite the symbolic nature of the declaration, Turkey demonstrated a capacity to bring together for the first time Serbian president Boris Tadić and Bosnian President Haris Silajdžić. Among the concrete results of the initiative was the reopening of the Bosnian embassy in Belgrade after the three years of interruption. Even more surprising was a declaration issued by the Serbian parliament condemning the crimes in Srebrenica.[195]

The signing of the Istanbul Declaration came just a few months after the EU and USA failed to persuade Bosnian politicians to implement a set of constitutional reforms during the so-called *Butmir Process*.[196] Prescribed constitutional changes were supposed to help the BiH to get out of the political lockdown of the Dayton-system. After years of effort to make post-Dayton BiH a functional state, the West failed to reinstitute a reformist spirit among the local politicians. Butmir Process was the last attempt by the Western powers to implement a serious set of reforms. After this point, the Euro-Atlantic integration process of the country would enter a lockdown.

On the other hand, Turkey as a regional player proved capable of reconciling the two troubled states. The success of the Istanbul Declaration sent a signal that Turkey is ready to play a role in the Balkans. But, Turkey's diplomatic record in the region will not go much beyond the initial success. Erdoğan's words over Kosovo in 2013, Serbia will freeze Serbia's participation in the trilateral with BiH and Turkey for some time. [197] Croatia's full integration to the EU in 2013 will automatically end Zagreb's participation in the trilateral mechanism with BiH and Turkey.

192 The trilateral mechanism for BiH-Croatia-Turkey became a defunct with Croatia entering the EU in 2013.

193 "Relations with the Balkan Region", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Turkey, Accessed on November 23, 2018, doi: http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-with-the-balkan-region.en.mfa

194 Istanbul Declaration was a political gain for Haris Silajdžić, a Bosniak representative of Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. During his political career he was known for harsh rhetoric against secessionism of the Bosnian Serbs. With the Declaration going public was not liked by the regime in Banja Luka and Serb nationalist circles. After all, politicians from Republika Srpska are probably the loudest critiques of Turkish policy in the region.

195 "Srebrenica Declaration Adopted," V.I.P. Daily News Report, accessed August 17, 2017, http://www.ramonlobo.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/vip4323_31-03-10.pdf; Birgül Demirtaş, Đorđe Pavlović, Didem Ekinci Sarıer, *Current Turkey-Serbia Relations*, (Ankara: SAM-Center for Strategic Research): 11., doi: sam.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/SAM-Report.pdf; It is important also to say that much credit also belongs to the EU diplomacy for the normalization of bilateral ties between BiH and Serbia, as it was assisting reforms process in both countries at the time that has culminated in the normalization of ties in the region.

196 Aleksandra Zdeb, "Prud and Butmir Processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Intra-ethnic Competition from the Perspective of Game Theory", *Ethnopolitics*, (February, 2016)

197 Serbia froze its participation in Trilateral Summit in 2013, after the words of, then a Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep TayyipErdoğan at the public speech in Kosovo, when he said, "Turkey is Kosovo and Kosovo is Turkey." Belgrade immediately reacted to these words and asked PM to apologize. Turkish diplomacy tried to persuade Belgrade that these words of Erdoğan are misunderstood and taken out of the context, but apology never came.

Croatia was the last country from the Western Balkans to enter the EU. After 2013 the enlargement process afterward seemed frozen. This was confirmed by the words of the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker (2014-2019) when he said in July 2014 that there will not be an enlargement in his five-year term.[198] EU's internal struggle after the 2008 financial crisis and United States' shifting focus from the Balkans to other regions under the Obama administration opened a space for Turkey as a regional power to position itself as a brokering factor. All this happened at the moment when the Turkish economy was growing at astonishing rates, second only to China, while the West was struggling with the economic recession. Injection of fresh energy was needed in the region and Ankara with its booming economy appeared to many to be a suitable factor. Because of its history in the region, Turkey could only become a relevant factor if accepted as an objective mediator capable of mediating between the troubled sides with an equal distance to all actors. Turkey's Euro-Atlantic dimension was certainly adding a positive note to the country's perception in the region. In this environment, Ankara was asked to become a mediator in the dispute between the Islamic Communities in Serbia.[199]

5.9.1. Why Turkey as a Mediator?

The Republic of Turkey is the successor of the Ottoman Empire that ruled the Balkans for more than 500 years. The legacy of bringing Islam to the region makes Balkan Muslims emotionally attached to Turkey. Hence there is a widespread belief among the Balkan Muslims that Turkey bears responsibility for the destiny of Islam in the region. On the other hand, Balkan Muslims are perceived by their Christian neighbors as a legacy of the Ottoman hegemony. Post-Ottoman nation-states in the Balkans pejoratively call the local Muslims "Turks."[200] For Christian nationalists using the word Turk demonstrates a feeling where the local Muslims are negatively connotated as a legacy of the 'Ottoman yoke.'

Ankara's ambitions would be impossible to fulfill without the sympathizers among the local Muslims. A survey conducted by the *Bilgesam*[201] in 2012 shows that religion plays a crucial role when it comes to the perception of Turkey. Muslims in the Balkans see Turkey much more favorably than the Christians.[202] Unlike the region's Orthodox Christians who historically cultivate good relations with Russia whom they recognize as a protector and a liberator, or Catholics who benefit from good ties with the West, particularly Germany, Balkan Muslims for the big part of

198 Petros Fassoulas, "Regaining the Enlargement Momentum", *European Movement International*, Accessed on 9 November 2018, doi: https://europeanmovement.eu/regaining-the-enlargement-momentum-2/

199 Muhamed Jusić, "Turkey as Mediator, or Something more between Islamic Communities in the Balkans", 88-93.

200 While committing atrocities against unarmed Bosniak civilians in Srebrenica on summer of 1995, Serb general Ratko Mladic, proclaimed that revenge from Turks has been taken, ignoring the fact that Bosniaks, like Serbs, have Slavic origin.

201 Turkish think tank

202 M. Sadi Bilgiç and Salih Akyürek, Balkanlar'da Türkiye ve Türk Algısı, Rapor No. 49, (Ankara: BILGESAM, 2012)

the last two centuries were left unprotected against the militarily stronger Christian majority.[203] Never-ending atrocities against the Muslims created a need for a protector. Fort his reason Muslim who represent slightly over ten percent of the Balkan population welcomed Turkey's engagement.

Almost six hundred years of Ottoman domination created a sort of emotional identification with the Turkish Muslims. Being geographically the closest Muslim-majority country and at the same time, secular has created an image of Turkey that is closer than any other Muslim nation. Continuous emigrations to Anatolia deepened the relationship even more. Millions of Turkish citizens that originate in the region created a strong voting base, a fact many politicians in Ankara take into serious account.[204] A network of NGOs run by the Balkan origin citizens has created a strong lobbying capacity. They played an important role in lobbying for the stronger Turkish engagement during the wars in the former Yugoslavia. At the same time, Balkan emigrants had a central role in the foundation of the Turkish Republic. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic, was born in Thessaloniki.

When it comes to 'spiritual relations' with the fellow Muslim population in the Balkans a non-interventionist foreign policy during the Cold War caused a period of 'interregnum' in the relations. Republican elite's stance was understandable, as they inherited a country torn up by a devastating war. They turned inward in the struggle to consolidate what was left from the dissolved Empire. It was a luxury for Turkey to strain its relations with the Balkan states over the destiny of its coreligionists. The memory of the wars in the Balkans was fresh in the mind of the elite. Turkey seemed lacking the capacity to become a "protector" of Balkan Muslims.

During the Cold War, countries of the peninsula, except for Greece, were under Communist rule. Turkey since 1952 was a NATO member. Separation with the Balkans by the Cold-war block system minimized the cultural exchange. Socialist governments in the Balkans perceived Turkey as unfriendly. This division encouraged some governments to build stronger relations with the Arab World, rather than Turkey.[205] The end of the Cold War will change this. Even before AKP, under the Özal government, Ankara started developing stronger relations with the Muslims in the Balkans.[206] During the Bosnian War, Turkey was even calling for a NATO-led military engagement against the Serbs.[207] Ankara was now taking a more responsible

203 Justin McCarthy, Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922, (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1995)

204 There are different estimates for the number of people with the Balkan origin The prediction that approximately 1/5 of Turkish citizens has an ancestor that has migrated from the region seems to be plausible. For more on this subject see: Kemal Karpat, *Osmanlı'dan günümüze etnik yapılanma ve göçler*, (Istanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2010)

205 Yugoslavia was one of the founding states of the Non-Alligned Movement, a group of countries to whome many Arab states belonged as well. Turkey as NATO member was part of the different ideological and military camp, thus Socialist regime in Yugoslavia preferred to send young Muslim students to Arab countries rather then to Turkey. This ideological rift and suspicion against Turkey was even more felt by other regimes in the region that belonged to the Warsaw Pact, like Romania, Bulgaria or isolated state of Albania.

206 Turgut Özal served as a Prime Minister of Turkey from 1983 to 1989 and as a President from 1989 to 1993.

207 İlhan Uzgel, "The Balkans: Turkey's Stabilizing Role", 65-93.

role regarding the destiny of the Muslims in the region. Under the sponsorship of Clinton's administration, President of Turkey Süleyman Demirel will help to bring Bosniak and Croats to a negotiation table. The US-Turkish initiative will result in the foundation of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina that will strengthen both's hands against the Serbs.[208] Today one-half of BiH is administratively run by the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.[209] After the AKP government came to power in 2002 it will work even more dynamically on restoring the historical ties. Being a NATO member and the candidate for entering the EU has made it easier for Turkish diplomacy to position itself as a mediator in regional issues.

5.10. Turkish Initiative for the Unification of the Islamic Communities

For years Ankara was looking with discomfort to political and religious divisions in Sandžak. The crisis over Islamic Communities represented a blister for both Belgrade and Sarajevo, but to Ankara as well. After the invitation from the Tadić government, Turkey decided to help in finding a solution. The reason for accepting the mediation role in the crisis is not hard to guess. It was a part of the general premise AKP followed in the region where Turkey was after positioning itself as a recognized factor. In that sense, Ankara was interested in the developments in Sandžak which occupies a central position on the peninsula.[210] The region represents one of the "strategic depths" for Turkey.[211] In his book, *Strategic Depth*, Ahmet Davutoğlu underlines the importance of Sandžak from the aspect of security in the Balkans and Turkey's strategic presence in the region.[212] For him helping the national affirmation of Bosniaks and Albanians was in the best interest of Turkey itself. On the other hand, Belgrade also has great importance for Turkey. With deciding to help the unification of Islamic Communities AKP accepted a task where it had to balance emotions with the principles of *realpolitik*.

After the initial euphoria during the 2000s among the Muslims, Ankara soon came under their criticism. Turkey was often blamed for not doing enough in helping its coreligionists. Economic parameters like the volume of trade or the number of investments were insufficient. Especially when trade and investments in Serbia are compared to those in BiH or Sandžak.[213] Turkey was often accused of investing in emotions with the Muslims in the Balkans while doing business with Serbia.[214] From

208 Süleyman Demirel was a president of Republic of Turkey from 1993 to 2000.

209 Another half or precisely 49 percent of the country is represented by the Serb-majority political entity known as Republika Srpska.

210 In geographical terms Sandžak today a occupies the area between five sovereign countries which are, BiH, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo and Albania.

211 Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu*, 40th ed. (İstanbul, Küre Yayınları, 2009)

212 Ibid. 306.

213 Sanja Kljajić, "Majka Turska kao majka Rusija", *DW*, 11.10.2017, Accessed on November 24, 2018, https://www.dw.com/sr/majka-turska-kao-majka-rusija/a-35890521

214 Think Tank Populari, *A Political Romance: Relations between Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina*, (Sarajevo: The Balkan Trust for Democracy-A Project of the German Marshal Fund, 2014) Accessed December 17, 2017. http://populari.org/index.php?bGFuZz1lbiZyPTMmbD0mZT0xOTI=

the point of geopolitical interest, Serbia with the larger population and as a micro-regional power was probably more interesting for Turkey. But, Turkey's ambassador to Serbia Süha Umar, who will play an important role during the mediation process, was not sharing the view that AKP was investing enough energy in relations with Serbia. In his criticism, he says how the AKP government didn't recognize the importance of Belgrade concerning the general well-being of Bosniaks, "Turkey's natural allies."[215] On the other hand, various statements from Turkish politicians and some political moves in the past prove how Ankara understood the premise that good relations with Belgrade in the long-term indirectly will benefit Muslims. Contrary to Umar's accusations, in the process of normalizing the bilateral ties with Belgrade, the Turkish side was always taking into account Serbia's behavior to Bosniaks in a derivative. Sandžak was set high on the agenda of almost all bilateral meetings between Serbia and Turkey. Especially when having in mind Turkish leadership's numerous visits to the region. At least constant visits of the "forsaken region" prove that Turkey is not indifferent regarding the future of Bosniaks in Serbia.

When Kosovo declared its independence on the night of February 17, 2008, an angry mass of protesters attacked the Turkish embassy in Belgrade damaging the building. Despite being one of the first countries to recognize independent Kosovo, Ankara managed to normalize ruined ties with Serbia in a short period. A bilateral rift was quickly improved with a dynamic diplomatic effort and according to the presidents of the two countries soon after relations entered a period of "historical height."[216] Turkish diplomacy raised Serbia to the rank of a "neighboring country", despite not sharing a border with Turkey.[217] Restoring good ties with Serbia certainly paved the way for Turkey to become a mediator in Serbia's internal issues.

Before the official start of the reconciliation process, the problem in Sandžak was raised to the Turkish side by Tadić's government.[218] Süha Umar says in his memoir book how Tadić himself expressed discomfort with the situation in Sandžak.[219] It was normal for Tadić to feel that way as Serbia just lost Kosovo and Montenegro. Belgrade was still feeling the stress of losing Kosovo, a province of symbolic and historical importance to Serbia. Tadić and his government couldn't afford a new crisis Sandžak. Serbian news portal *Danas* also confirmed that it was the Serbian side that "asked for Turkish participation in resolving this problem." Danas quoted Turkish newspaper Hürriyet where an unnamed Turkish diplomat spoke about the Serbian suggestion of a Turkish-backed reconciliation initiative.[220] As the political and reli-

215 Süha Umar, "Kardeşim Davutoğlu", *Cumhuriyet*, October 31, 2012, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/diger/380030/Kardesim_Davutoğlu....html

216 Süha Umar, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović, Interview with Süha Umar, former Turkish Ambassador in Serbia, Conducted via web on 21.09.2017.

217 "Relations between Turkey and Serbia", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Turkey*, Accdessed on January 13, 2018, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-serbia.en.mfa

218 Official start of the Turkish initiative was Davutoğlu's official two-day visit to Serbia on 22-24thof July in 2009. During this visit, Davutoğlu paid a visit to Novi Pazar where he sat with the representatives of two Islamic Communities.

219 Süha Umar, Belgrat 500 Yıl Sonra

220 "Davutoglu danas u Beogradu", *Danas*, 11. Novembar 2011, Accessed on February 26, 2019, doi: https://www.

gious crisis in the region prolonged for many years it was causing serious concern for Belgrade. There was no solution in sight. After the schism in 2007, the crisis moved to the streets which added more to Belgrade's concern. After understanding the issue had to be dealt with seriously, in 2009 Turkey was asked to help in bringing the involved sides to a negotiation table.

Turkish brokering was welcomed by the Islamic authorities as well. For years Islamic Communities based in Belgrade, Novi Pazar, and Sarajevo all accepted Turkey as one of their greatest supporters.[221] All sides counted on unconditional Ankara's unconditional support in securing their positions. At the beginning of the process, both Sarajevo and Mešihat in Novi Pazar expressed having trust in Turkey's goodwill and capability. This view was confirmed by Zukorlić. When asked about the Turkish initiative, he said;

> My love and respect for Turkey, Turkey's leaders, and its people are eternal. Let Turkey send a neutral delegation here, let them work here and decide who is right, and whoever is wrong, let him leave the position he holds.[222]

Islamic Community of Serbia had a similar stance. Its leader Adem Zilkić said;

> If we are supposed to have a headquarters somewhere, let it be Turkish Diyanet, not Sarajevo. The Center for all Balkan Muslims is Turkey's Diyanet.[223]

That Turkey was important for the Islamic Community of Serbia was seen in the fact that soon after establishing the Community Adem Zilkić paid an official visit to Diyanet in Ankara on 20 November of 2007. A very early visit to Ankara demonstrates how seriously Belgrade counted on Turkish support.[224] After the initial demonstration of goodwill from all sides, now it was up to Turkey to develop a good strategy in reconciling the disputed actors. This was a test for Ankara's capacity to deal with complex issues. Ruining or deepening the relations with Sarajevo, Belgrade and Novi Pazar was at the stake. After symbolic success with the Trilateral dialogue initiatives, the Turkish initiative for the unification of the Islamic Communities was the next big challenge.

Just a few months before launching the initiative, in the spring of 2009 Turkish embassy in Belgrade tried to bring the two sides to a negotiation table. This represented a prelude before Foreign Minister and Diyanet got directly involved in the process. The embassy's effort was confirmed by Zukorlić. According to the interview

danas.rs/drustvo/davutoglu-danas-u-beogradu/

221 Erhan Türbedar, "Sancak Bölgesi'ndeki Müftülük Kavgası Siyasi Gerginliğe Dönüşüyor", (Ankara: Tepav-Türkiye Ekonomi Politikaları Araştırma Vakfı, 2010, Eylül), doi: http://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/files/1285682842-7.Sancak_Bolgesindeki_Muftuluk_Kavgasi_Siyasi_Gerginlige_Donusuyor.pdf

222 Muamer ef. Zukorlić, "Turska da odluči ko je vrhovni poglavar muslimana u Srbiji", *Nova Srpska Politička Misao*, August 7, 2011,http://www.nspm.rs/hronika/muamer-Zukorlić-turska-da-odluci-ko-je-vrhovni-poglavar-muslimana-u-srbiji.html?alphabet=l

223 Anadolu Ajansı, "Sancak'ta tehlikeli bölünme", *Dünya Bülteni*, August 5, 2011, http://www.dunyabulteni.net/haber/169613/sancakta-tehlikeli-bolunme

224 *Avrupa Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, No.130, 2010-February, p. 17,doi: http://www2.diyanet.gov.tr/DisIliskilerGenelMudurlugu/Documents/sirbistan.pdf

magazine *Sedmica*, an offshoot of the largest Bosnian daily newspaper *Dnevni Avaz*, conducted with Mufti Zukorlić, he rejected the two invitations from the Turkish embassy after being invited to seat at the same table with Zilkić and Jusufspahić. According to his words in the interview, he was ready to seat even with Zilkić, but before doing that, "the first condition is that Adem Zilkić and his gang should apologize to Muslims in Serbia for all the wrongdoings they have done to them. "Once this is done, "they can address the Islamic Community to let them be her member." For Zukorlić, "this was the only way."[225] All in all, the initial effort to bring together two sides has failed.

5.10.1. *Reconciling Ugljanin and Ljajić*

What served as a good introduction for the official launch was a political compromise reached with Turkey's help between Sulejman Ugljanin and Rasim Ljajić. Sandžak's two strongest politicians came together and reconcile after years of filthy competition. Serbia's two ministers at the time, Ugljanin and Ljajić symbolically shook hands in front of Jeremić and Davutoğlu in Novi Pazar on July, 24. A picture of two shaking hands with the Foreign Ministers of Turkey and Serbia in the background dominated the local press the next day.[226] (See Figure C2) This event was presented as a great success of Ankara's diplomacy in the Turkish press as well.[227] The importance of this reconciliation was the fact that both Ugljanin and Ljajić were deeply involved in the crisis over the Islamic Community. Especially the first one. Ugljanin was close to Zilkić. On the other side, Zukorlić and Ljajić were former allies. This alliance was formed to weaken SDA and Ugljanin but was shortlived. In recent years the duo entered into an open rivalry. In his memoirs about the mandate he served in Serbia, former Ambassador of Turkey Süha Umar mentions that he had an important role in bringing together the two politicians. Probably true, but the credit for the success went to Tadić's government and Turkey. A rivalry that was ripping apart Bosniak political strength for years seemed to be solved. Tadić's government appreciated Turkey's help. A quick success provided an enormous credit to Ankara in the eyes of Tadić's government and pretty much annulled a heavy burden of being one of the first countries to recognize Kosovo's independence.

During the talks between the two Ministers, the Serbian government proposed the Turkish delegation a few infrastructural projects to be undertaken in Serbia. Construction of road and an airport in Sjenica near Novi Pazar for which both Zukorlić and Ugljanin were lobbying for some time was on the agenda of the visit. Davutoğlu was interested in the projects.[228] His words to the Serbian press confirm this when he

225 Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Faruk Vele, *Mislili su da će nas srušiti za tri dana*, Dnevni Avaz/Sedmica, April 11, 2009.

226 S. Bakračevć, "Ljajić i Ugljanin javno se rukovali u Novom Pazaru, *Politika"*, July 24, 2009, http://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/96973/Ljajić-i-Ugljanin-javno-se-rukovali-u-Novom-Pazaru

227 Anadolu Ajansı, Davutoğlu Sancak'ta küsleri barıştırdı, *Radikal*, July 25, 2009, http://www.radikal.com.tr/yorum/Davutoğlu-sancakta-kusleri-baristirdi-946590/

228 The construction of the road network in Sandžak region by Turkey was a vision that was never realized. Another reason for Turkey to be criticized for not doing enough in the region.

said how Turkey "is ready to cooperate with the Serbian government on every issue regarding the Sandžak."[229] On the other hand, the Serbian government preferred to help the construction of an airport in the Serb-majority town of Kraljevo. These projects will be abolished shortly after. When Turkey failed to react to the calls from the Serbian government, Belgrade decided to give over the projects to other investors.[230] A highway project that was supposed to connect Belgrade to Montenegro will be given to Chinese and Azerbaijani firms.

5.10.2. *Davutoğlu's visit to Novi Pazar*

In the bilateral talks with the Turkish side, Belgrade was constantly bringing to the table the question of Zukorlić and Cerić.[231] The Serbian government was uncomfortable with Zukorlić's sharp rhetoric against the state and Cerić's "interference" in the country's internal affairs.[232] In his public speeches and statements, Mufti was constantly criticizing Belgrade for behaving badly towards Bosniaks. For him, the state was responsible for the division in Mešihat. In the relations with the Belgrade, it was over with a short-lived honeymoon that he enjoyed during Đinđić's time. Under Koštunica's government, relations between the two deteriorated seriously. Especially after the schism in Mešihat, Mufti will radicalize his rhetoric. Zukorlić didn't restrain from using separationist rhetoric against Belgrade. He constantly emphasized the autonomy of Sandžak. For him, the improvement of Belgrade's behavior towards Bosniaks was a necessity for security in the region. During the Tadić's government relations were probably worse than ever before.[233] Despite being significantly weakened by the coup inside Mešihat, Zukorlić was still very influential and popular in Sandžak. His popularity will reach a zenith in 2010 after receiving more votes than Ugljanin and Ljajić in the elections for Bosniak National Council.

On July 24, 2009, the Turkish delegation together with Serbian Foreign Minister Jeremić headed to Novi Pazar. As a member of the delegation vice-chairman of Diyanet Mehmet Görmez was present as well.[234] During his mandate as a President of the Directorate for Religious Affairs between 2010 and 2017 Görmez together with Davutoğlu played a central role in the process of arbitration between the two Islamic Communities. Operative responsibility for coordinating the process of reconciliation will be handed over to Diyanet. According to the proposed plan of the visit, the delegation was supposed to meet with the leaders of both Islamic Communities. The protocol was prepared in that way that it didn't prioritize either of the sides. To avoid

229 Radio Televizija Vojvodine, "Jeremić i Davutoğlu u Novom Pazaru", *Vesti.rs*, July 24, 2009, http://www.vesti.rs/Politika/Jeremić-i-Davutoğlu-u-Novom-Pazaru.html

230 Süha Umar, Belgrat 500 Yıl Sonra

231 Ibid. 145.

232 Ibid. 147.

233 Muamer ef. Zukorlić, "Autonomija Sandžaka je neophodna nužnost, *Agencija Anadolija*, March 22, 2012, "http://aa.com.tr/ba/balkan/zukorli%C4%87-autonomija-sand%C5%BEaka-je-neophodna-nu%C5%BEnost/376156

234 Mehmet Görmez will serve as a chairman of Diyanet in period between 2010 and 2017. When Turkish initiative was launched in 2009, Ali Bardakoğlu (2003-2010) was at the head of Diyanet.

potential misinterpretations, it was planned to conduct a visit to one of Zukorlić's mosque and another one under the control of Zilkić.[235] Turkish side decided to make the visit balanced and not to demonstrate open support for neither of the sides.[236]

While the delegation was touring the city, Görmez left to meet with Zukorlić. According to Umar, Görmez was was by Davutoğlu himself. This indicates that Diyanet might have a strategy to solve the crisis through close and friendly relations it enjoyed with Sarajevo-line. As it is confirmed by the former ambassador, after the meeting with Zukorlić, Görmez and Davutoğlu understood that the task of reconciliation will not be that easy. Umar who is an open critique of Zukorlić blames mufti for his unreconciliatory stance.[237] After meeting with the Mufti, Görmez conveyed the reactions of Zukorlić to the Turkish delegation. I am quoting the words of the Turkish ambassador, who was at the spot;

> Görmez shortly summarized what he spoke with Zukorlić and added that it seems that mufti will not cooperate,[238] the ambassador was right, we cannot count on support from Cerić either, said Görmez.[239]

Zukorlić was a tough negotiator and Davutoğlu probably understood that the strategy he came with to Serbia wouldn't be easily achievable. From Umar's book, it can be concluded that 'Mufti' was Belgrade's nightmare. He managed to outlast many governments in Serbia. Belgrade tried to use Ankara's influence to eliminate his harm to Serbia's integrity. On the other hand, Mufti wasn't ready to give away that easily the position Mešihat enjoyed before 2007.

That Görmez paid a visit to Mešihat on the sidelines of the Novi Pazar visit was confirmed by Zukorlić in an interview conducted with him. He also mentioned another meeting between him and Görmez just a few days before Davutoğlu's visit to Novi Pazar. Görmez called him conveying the plans of the Turkish and Serbian diplomacy to negotiate a unification deal with the two sides. This proposal was welcomed by Zukorlić himself.[240] Two met in Novi Pazar. Zukorlić said,

> The meeting lasted for a couple of hours, and the only thing where the two reached a consensus was the necessity of uniting two Islamic Communities. But the consensus about the model that should be followed to unite the two sides was not reached.[241]

235 Süha Umar, *Belgrat 500 Yıl Sonra*, 148-149.

236 In his memoir book, Turkish ambassador writes that, while the delegation was walking around Novi Pazar, visit Altun Alem mosque at the center of the city, known for belonging to Zukorlić, was canceled as the head of the Serbian protocol decided that it is not a good idea to enter the mosque. This decision was also supported by Jeremić. This small detail shows a concern official Belgrade had regarding Zukorlić. Süha Umar, *Belgrat 500 Yıl Sonra*, 148-149.

237 Zukorlić was neither a fan of Turkish ambassador. He blames Umar for destructive role in the process of reconciliation. Turkish emabasy's negative role was occasionally reminded by the mufti during his public appearances in the media.

238 In Turkish: "…Zukorlić yola gelecek gibi görünmüyor…"

239 Ibid, 149.

240 Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović, conducted on 26.01.2018.

241 Ibid.

For the Turkish ambassador, Zukorlić's style was in a way too radical. He openly expressed his discomfort with Zukorlić and his policies. Throughout his book, Umar confirms that relations between him and Zukorlić were not warm. Umar's stances regarding the Islamic Communities seemed closer to Belgrade's position rather than defending the transborder religious unity of Bosniaks. In his statement to Serbian news agency *Tanjug* from April 14, 2009, Umar said,

> I did not see that the Muslims in Serbia are faced with difficulties or discrimination. Sandžak and Preševo, where most Muslims live, are less developed, but that has nothing to the with religion…
>
> Since October 2007, two Islamic communities are active in Serbia … The essential difference between the two options is that supporters of Zilkić believe that the Muslims in Serbia should practice their rights in the country they live in, while supporters of Zukorlić belong spiritually and organizationally to the Islamic Community of Bosnia-Herzegovina and recognize Reis Mustafa Cerić as their supreme leader. … in principle, no country would ever allow any community to belong to institutions of another country.[242]

On the other hand, Zukorlić was not satisfied with the role the Turkish embassy in Serbia played during the schism. Even before the Novi Pazar visit, Zukorlić complained to Bosnian magazine about the negative role the Turkish embassy played regarding the two Islamic Communities. After being asked "what is behind" the embassy's efforts to bring to negotiation table two Islamic Communities, he replied how,

> Mešihat has relations with important factors in Turkey – on the level of the Minister of Faiths, as well as in the Turkish Parliament and how Mešihat intensively cooperate with them." He tried to assure the public how "they (Turkish diplomatic milieu) do not share the views of the Turkish Ambassador.[243]

For Zukorlić the Turkish ambassador was not a reflection of Turkey's official position regarding the Mešihat and Rijaset in Sarajevo. Whenever asked about the role of the Turkish embassy in the process he will criticize it.

> He (the Turkish ambassador) was deeply involved in the destruction of the Islamic Community… was a very active actor in the breaking of the Islamic Community.[244]

After delegation toured Novi Pazar, it was time to proceed with a planned protocol schedule. Turkey's Foreign Minister met Adem Zilkić in one of the Novi Pazar's hotels. Zilkić started with complaints against Zukorlić. arguments on the other side

242 Süha Umar, *Muslim leaders agree on code of behaviour*, Republic of Serbia-Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Daily Survey, No. 2/142, April 15, 2009.

243 Muamer Zukorlić, "Mislili su da će nas srušiti za tri dana*", Islamska Zajednica u BiH* (April 14, 2009), quoted in *Dnevni avaz/Sedmica*, April 11, 2009, doi: http://www.islamskazajednica.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6352:mislili-su-da-e-nas-sruiti-za-tri-dana&catid=205&Itemid=460

244 Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović, Conducted on 26.01.2018.

didn't change. They were still uncomfortable with the leader of Mešihat. He once more reminded the Turkish delegation about their opinion. For Zilkić, Zukorlić was leading the Islamic Community in an authoritarian manner. He also criticized his harsh rhetoric against Belgrade and accused him of having a strong will to control everything, nepotism, and many other things. According to Umar, Zilkić was "extremely respectful."[245]

After the meeting with Zilkić was over it was now time to meet with Mešihat representatives. According to Umar, Zukorlić asked the delegation to meet with them at his University. This proposal was rejected by the Turkish delegation. After two sides came together, like Zilkić previously, Zukorlić explained to Davutoğlu and the delegation his complaints regarding the other Islamic Community. Zukorlić blamed the Islamic Community of Serbia for cooperating with the Serbian state at the expense of Bosniak unity. He put forward how Belgrade for decades was hostile to Bosniaks in Sandžak.[246] He complained about breaking the unity of the Islamic Community after the group of imams split off from the Mešihat.[247] He again accused Zilkić, Jusufspahić, and Ugljanin of collaborating with the Serbian secret service. Davutoğlu underlined him the importance of religious and political unity in the Sandžak. For the Foreign Minister, it was "heartbreaking" to see Muslims in the region divided.[248]

During the Novi Pazar visit, Friday prayer created a minor crisis. Whether the Turkish Foreign Minister will pray in a mosque close to Zukorlić or Zilkić was a serious issue for the Serbian hosts. Foreign Minister's choice in that regard had the potential to indicate which side Ankara is favoring in the conflict. This situation demonstrates the level of tension and the emotions invested in the conflict. In the end, the Melajska mosque in Novi Pazar, believed to be under Zukorlić's control, was chosen. It is believed that this mosque was chosen for its geographical nearness and practical purposes rather than any other reason.

5.10.3. Launching the Reconciliation Process

After conducting the meetings with the leaders of two Islamic Communities, the Novi Pazar visit was over. It symbolized an official start of the Turkish initiative. Now it was up to the Turkish side to prepare a concrete plan for the unification. First impressions proved that the road for unification will be bumpy. Whether Ankara understood this reality in 2009 is another question. A great start was the fact that Turkey just recently managed to reconcile two Bosniak political leaders.

But, before Diyanet conducted any concrete steps in preparing a draft agreement for the unification, the Turkish ambassador tried to pacify the two sides with a diplomatic initiative. In his interview for *Sandžak Danas* from October 2009 Umar said

245 Umar expressed his opinion and strategies regarding the involved sides in his book. For more see: Süha Umar, Belgrat 500 Yıl Sonra, 149.
246 Ibid, 149-150.
247 Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović, Conducted on 26.01.2018.
248 Ibid.

how after writing to the leaders of Islamic Communities about the wishes of Turkey regarding the merging of the two Communities, he only received letters where both sides were pledging support for the unification. He complained about how no action followed these words. After seeing the muftis passive he refused to communicate with them until they show concrete initiative. In this interview Umar even said that he responded to the two leaders with the words;

> Until you end your fight don't write and don't come to me. I don't need you in that state.[249]

It is natural for every government to have preferences in making choices between the regional players and to decide with whom it wishes to build closer relations. But this time Ankara had to make a choice between two sides with whom it had a partnership. But, Turkey had to act as a just broker. Entering into the conflict barred a risk for damaging relations either with Sarajevo or Belgrade. This was a hard choice for Ankara, as on one side was BiH, a 'brotherly' country, while on the other Serbia, probably the strongest micro-regional power. It is not hard to guess that Belgrade favored Zilkić from the beginning to weaken the Zukorlić's and Sarajevo's interference in Sandžak.

While the visit to Novi Pazar shows that Ankara was after balancing between the sides, Süha Umar doesn't share this opinion. He believes that Davutoğlu and Diyanet from the beginning were more interested in pleasing Bosniak national interests, which meant supporting Sarajevo and Zukorlić.[250] Aleksandar Raković, a Serbian historian who was working for the Ministry of Religion of Serbia and was directly involved in the schism as one of the representatives of the official Belgrade, also thinks that Turkey was favoring Sarajevo-Novi Pazar line during the initiative.[251]

Whether these claims are true or not, as time was passing Ankara slowly shifted its position towards the Islamic Community of Serbia and official Belgrade. On the other hand, Davut Nuriler, a prominent Bosniak of Sandžak origin living and working in Turkey and the close affiliate of Ugljanin, who is familiar with the situation in Sandžak, thinks that Turkey was not favoring any of the sides in the process, but talked with everyone.[252] At the beginning of the process, both Ankara and Belgrade probably intoxicated by the success of rapid improvement in bilateral ties didn't understand the difference of opinion they had regarding the Sandžak quagmire. Sooner or later they will find themselves on opposite sides. It was clear that Belgrade's interest lied in strengthening Zilkić's Islamic Community. While it might be possible that in the initial phase of the process Ankara was in a mood of 'emerging Turkish power' combined with the emotional solidarity with Sarajevo.

249 Interview of Turkish Ambassador Süha Umar for *Sandžak Danas*, October 16, 2009

250 Ibid.

251 Александар Раковић, "Турска иницијатива за уједињење Исламске заједнице у Републици Србији (2011)", in *Турска регионална сила?* ed. *Миша Ђурковић* and Александар Раковић (Београд: Институт за европске студије, 2013)

252 Author's interview with Davut Nuriler conducted on 28.09.2017 in Istanbul

On the other hand, what can be understood from the memoirs of the Turkish ambassador and various other sources familiar with the issue, as time was passing the Turkish side was becoming more and more uncomfortable with Zukorlić's attitude. He was seen by his opponents as being arrogant, and "having fascination about the power."[253] Zukorlić said how the Turkish side even before launching the initiative had a negative opinion about him. He blamed the Turkish ambassador and Ugljanin's supporters in Turkey for the development of this prejudice.[254] Probably true, as Turkish ambassador Umar never hide his disapproval both for the concept Zukorlić defended and of him as a person.[255]

Zukorlić himself said that the "poisoning of the Turkish public" regarding him started very early, basically, since the days Ugljanin was exiled in Turkey in the mid-1990s. The propaganda was spread primarily through "Ugljanin's activists in Turkey."[256] Some of the activists are people close to various Bosniak associations in Turkey and enjoy close relations to the ruling AKP.[257] The influence of the mentioned groups over the outcomes of the initiative probably represents an important aspect and should not be ignored. But, the official discomfort with Zukorlić by Diyanet will be materialized in the later phases of the initiative.

Turkish ambassador mentioned a strange situation that happened in 2010, approximately one year after the Novi Pazar visit. It was about the two-day visit of Mehmet Görmez and Ibrahim Kalın to Serbia. He is not giving the exact date of the visit in his book. At the moment of the visit, Görmez was still the Deputy-President of Diyanet while Kalın was the Assistant of the Undersecretary for Foreign Relations. Görmez's visit was understandable for Umar. A reason behind including Kalın to the initiative might lay in his acquaintance with the religious leadership in Sarajevo, that stretches back to the 1990s when many from Bosnian and Turkish side involved in the initiative were whether professors or students in that country.[258] Like Cerić,

253 Ekipa "Novosti", "Raskol Islama u Srbiji", Večenje Novosti Online, October 7, 2017.

254 "One line of the poisoning campaign of Turkish state and religious factors about me and the Islamic Community I am leading was going through Turkish ambassador at the time Suha Umar, other line were Ugljanin's activists in Turkey." Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović conducted on 26.01.2018.

255 Ibid.

256 Ibid.

257 Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović, Conducted on 26.01.2018.

258 After 1992 İbrahim Kalın was a student at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where Mustafa Cerić served as professor from 1991 to 1993. This Institute is the part of the International Islamic University Malaysia where Ahmet Davutoğlu lectured from 1993 to 1996. This Malaysian university is a famous nursery of many prominent people in BiH and Turkey, that will serve as the main artery in Bosnian-Turkish relations during the times when Ahmet Davutoğlu was Foreign Minister and Prime Minister. This 'Malaysian line' is another example of how personal relations were used in diplomatic ties between the two countries. Davutoğlu even personally supported Sarajevo Business Forum calling it even "Davos of the Balkans" whose main proponent is director of Bosnia Bank International Amer Bukvic, Davutoğlu's student during Malaysian years. Another clear example of how close personal relations played important base in diplomatic ties the two countries is seen in the example of Bosniak representative in Bosnian presidency Bakir Izetbegović and Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Izetbegović was occasionally criticized by Bosnian media for using his personal relations with Erdoğan in state-to-state communication. "Davutoglu is not only my friend, he is my brother. I am not saying that just like that, I am speaking about blood relation.", "Susret Ahmet Davutoglu-Mustafa ef. Cerić", TRT Bosanski, accessed on January 06, 2018, http://www.trt.net.tr/bosanski/turska-1/2011/10/04/susret-ahmet-davutoglu-mustafa-ef-Cerić-1897 Eldar Sarajlic, "The Return of

Davutoğlu was also lecturing in Malaysia during the 1990s.[259] The two might have strong personal relations since then. A sudden visit surprised the Turkish ambassador. According to his words, he was not previously consulted about the visit. Two Turkish statesmen also visited Novi Pazar, where they met with the local politicians and Zukorlić.

After the two visited Novi Pazar Rasim Ljajić called the Turkish ambassador. According to the ambassador, Ljajić was very angry because of this visit. He said to him;

> How could you do this to me? Görmez and the man with him are imposing Zukorlić's conditions on me.[260]

Ambassador tried to assure Ljajić not to worry and that this attempt doesn't have anything to do with the embassy. Umar met with Görmez and asked him about their meeting with Zukorlić. According to information Görmez gave to him, Zukorlić convinced the two on four points that should be arranged if he is going to reconcile with the two Bosniak Ministers and Zilkić. Görmez was willing to convince two ministers about Zukorlić's wishes which angered Ljajić very much.[261] We don't know whether these wishes were shown to Zilkić, but partial information that was available indicate that Ankara at the beginning tried to help the Bosnian Rijaset to preserve its authority in Sandžak. What Görmez and Kalın missed was the fact that the Islamic Community of Serbia would never accept the conditions pointed by Zukorlić. Neither would two Ministers or official Belgrade.

To fulfill the goals of the Initiative, Diyanet could not push the sides to cooperate. The credibility of Turkish diplomacy was at the stake. These kinds of errors show that Ankara entered the process probably unprepared and unaware of the nature of the crisis it got involved. What role personal acquaintances, like Cerić-Davutoğlu friendship, played in AKP's decision to favor the cause Bosnian Rijaset stood for remains an open question. We might not get the answer to this question, but certainly, it had its influence on Sarajevo's argument to prevail in the eyes of Turkish diplomacy. As it is already mentioned Zukorlić believes that Ankara had different ambitions from the beginning. This will be confirmed to him by the later attempts to tie Novi Pazar to Ankara in religious matters.

5.10.4. Erdoğan's Visit to Novi Pazar in 2010

After the normalization of bilateral ties, intensive diplomatic traffic between Turkey and Serbia followed. Because of the reconciliation initiative, Turkish politicians paid frequent visits to Serbia. Besides that Ankara was responsible for various projects in Serbia, like the trilateral commission between Serbia, Turkey, and Bosnia

the Consuls: Islamic Networks and Foreign Policy Perspectives in Bosnia and Herzegovina", *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 11 (2), (2011): 173-190.

259 Kerem Öktem, "Global Diyanet and Multiple Networks: Turkey's New Presence in the Balkans", *Journal of Muslims in Europe*, (2012): 33, 34.

260 Süha Umar, *Belgrat 500 Yıl Sonra*, p. 261-236.

261 Ibid, p. 261-236.

and Herzegovina. Even Abdullah Gül, at the time the president of Turkey, paid a two-day visit to Serbia in 2009. That the bilateral ties reached a historical high was seen during Gül's visit. His visit represented the visit of the highest diplomatic level. After the president, the time came for the Prime Minister of Turkey to pay his official visit to Serbia. This happened between 10 and 12 July 2010. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan came to Serbia for a two-day visit. Serbian counterparts were waiting for Erdoğan's visit for some time. Contrary to his 2017 visit when he visited Bajrakli mosque and recited Qur'an inside the mosque on the first day of the 2010 visit was reserved for the meetings in the capital. Despite wishes from the Islamic Community of Serbia, Erdoğan didn't meet with the religious representatives in Belgrade.[262] Their efforts were obstructed by the intervention of the Turkish embassy. The embassy didn't see it appropriate to have a meeting with the religious authorities that were in a state of a fight. After Belgrade-part of the visit was over, the delegation headed to Novi Pazar. Tadić came to Novi Pazar as well. It was reported by the Serbian media that Görmez was also part of Erdoğan's delegation.[263]

In the largest Bosniak town in Serbia, the government together with the Turkish delegation opened the Atatürk Cultural Center. Both Zukorlić and Zilkić expressed their wishes to meet with Erdoğan which was again prevented after the intervention from the Turkish Embassy. Turkish Prime Minister didn't meet with the Bosniak Ministers either. Erdoğan's visit to Novi Pazar came a month after Zukorlić's victory with his newly formed *BKZ* in the elections for Bosniak National Council in June 2010. Three days before Erdoğan visited Novi Pazar BKZ sent a letter to Erdoğan complaining about the "discriminatory attitude of the Serbian regime" towards Bosniaks. But despite all efforts, Erdoğan didn't meet with the representatives of the BKZ either.[264]

Erdoğan's visit in 2010 to Novi Pazar passed with some minor incidents. Far from the protocol meetings, the streets of the town were live. A group of Zukorlić's supporters chanted the words "Muftija!" on the streets of Novi Pazar. They clashed with the opponents. Luckily this fight didn't end in bloodshed as some previous ones did. Soon the media opposing Zukorlić started spreading the news that his supporters attacked other citizens. Some years later Zukorlić will claim that this incident was orchestrated by Ljajić, who wanted to politically benefit from the tension.[265] In one of his 2017 interviews for local Sandžak television close to him, Zukorlić said that

262 "Pogledajte kako predsjednik Erdoğan uči Kur'an u Bajrakli džamiji u Beogradu /VIDEO/", *Saff*, October 11, 2017, http://saff.ba/pogledajte-kako-predsjednik-Erdoğan-uci-kuran-u-bajrakli-dzamiji-u-beogradu-video/

263 Islamska Zajednica: Vernike spaja Ankara?, *Vecernje Novosti*, February 3, 2015, Accessed on November 15, 2018, http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/drustvo/aktuelno.290.html:532134-Islamska-zajednica-Vernike-spaja-Ankara

264 Nusret Nicević, Jahja Fehratović and Alen R. Duraković, *Izvještaj o formiranju Bošnjačke kulturne zajednice i izborima za Bošnjačko nacionalno vijeće*, (Novi Pazar: Bošnjačka Kulturna Zajednice-BKZ, Year Unknown), Accessed December 17, 2017.http://www.bkz.rs/izvjestaj-o-formiranju-bosnjacke-kulturne-zajednice-i-izborima-za-bosnjacko-nacionalno-vijece/

265 Muamer Zukorlić, "Zukorlić: Turska je velika sila i mogla bi pomoći projektu autoput Sarajevo-Novi Pazar", Filmed (September 2017), YouTube, 18:23, Posted (September 13, 2017), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58YCgFBLN7s

Erdoğan's visit and the inability of Tadić to walk around Novi Pazar together with the Turkish Prime Minister was the primary motivation why Serbian government launched a war against Mešihat. Tadić saw the Novi Pazar visit as a political defeat. The fact that he was restrained from walking freely in his country with another Prime Minister due to security concerns represented a shame for his government. Whether the analysis of Zukorlić true or not, soon after Erdoğan left Serbia, in September Tadić's government sent 1500 gendarmerie troops to Novi Pazar. Gendarmerie tried to occupy Mešihat's waqf properties in the incident known as "incident at Hadžet."[266]

5.10.5. Making the Draft Agreement for the Unification of the Islamic Communities

The situation on the ground was not improving. After the first attempt to unite two Islamic Communities between 2009 and 2010 has failed, hostilities on the streets and mosques continued. Local Muslims became accustomed to the fact that mosques are divided. Through years, the number of violent fights in mosques across Sandžak has dropped. This was the only concrete improvement. It is hard to gather any detailed information about the closed-door meetings that were conducted in two years between 2009 and 2011. But, it is important to mention that some serious steps in reconciliation were achieved by the negotiating sides in the first two years since the initiative was launched in Novi Pazar. The content of the negotiations and draft agreements were kept secret from the public eyes and media. There is not much media reporting on the issue or any other significant publication, except the news reporting about the diplomatic visits from Turkey. It is only known that the delegations of all three sides met a few times in the period from 2009 to 2013. In an interview conducted with Zukorlić by the author of this book, he mentioned meetings on three different occasions at which he participated. The first meeting regarding the unification was the telephone talk between him and Görmez in 2009, just a few days before Davutoğlu's - Novi Pazar visit. The next meeting Zukorlić and Görmez had was the face to face meeting on the day of the visit to Novi Pazar by the Foreign Minister and his delegation.

After the official launch of the initiative in 2009, Zukorlić sat together with the Turkish side three more times in Istanbul and Ankara. These meetings happened in different periods.[267] According to Zukorlić's words,

> Every time meetings were under the sponsorship of Foreign Minister Davutoğlu. Mehmet Görmez participated in the meetings. He was a kind of operational factor from the other side (Turkish side).[268]

In one of his public appearances in 2012 Zukorlić said that he participated in the three "very long" and "exhausting" meetings regarding the initiative for the unifica-

266 On September 4, 2010 gendarmerie entered Novi Pazar and usurped parts of Vaqf foundation called 'Mearif' at the place known as Hadžet. After this incident Mešihat organizes the anniversary gathering every year to comemorate the incident.

267 Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović, Conducted on 26.01.2018.

268 Ibid.

tion, but added that there is still "nothing concrete, negotiations are ongoing."[269] It is only known that the first meeting was held in Ankara without sharing any details about the time of the meeting. In the Turkish capital, a draft for the unification was agreed between Diyanet and Bosnian Rijaset.

In 2011 the initiative once again came to public focus after the media shared partial information about the talks that were going on for some time. During the summer of the 2011 Serbian news portal, *Blic* shared the news that two sides are ready to reconcile but cannot agree about the concept.[270] Near the scheduled arrival of the Turkish delegation to Belgrade, allegedly Zilkić called Zukorlić to make a peace. He even called Cerić to help them to achieve peace. According to Serbian media, Zukorlić accepted the peace offer only if Zilkić himself proclaim the Islamic Community of Serbia as illegitimate and publicly apologize for the disunity he caused among Muslims. Zukorlić was clear; there can be reconciliation only if basic principles of the Bosniak religious unity are met. Basic principles of spiritual unity were to be preserved, otherwise, no concessions were acceptable. Zukorlić also refused to denounce Rijaset in Sarajevo as the authority of Bosniaks in Serbia. A stance that he stick to from day one.

> Even before Davutoğlu's visit to Novi Pazar in 2009, I underlined to Görmez that I will not have a separate stance from the Rijaset of Islamic Community of BiH.[271]

On the other side, when it comes to loyalty to a "spiritual center" Zilkić's position remained firm as well. Discussion over transferring the spiritual loyalty was not an option for him neither. For Zilkić and imams around him, Serbia was to remain a state allegiance to be pledged for. Even after Süha Umar's mandate ended, the Turkish embassy in Belgrade tried to bring together two sides under the new ambassador. Two Islamic Communities had a meeting with the Turkish delegation led by the new Turkish ambassador Ali Riza Çolak.[272] The outcome was the same as before. A plan to unite Islamic Communities failed once again. Both sides continued with their initial stances. Nothing was achieved. But both Belgrade and Novi Pazar insisted on counting on the Turkish assistance. Both hoped for eventual support for their cause that will come from Ankara. Both Islamic Communities kept repeating for the media on every occasion that they accept the authority of Turkey in helping them to find the solution for the unification. Both needed Turkey to accept their cause as the legitimate one. Zukorlić considered Bosnia and Herzegovina besides Turkey for this role, while the Islamic Community of Serbia had similar relations with the official Belgrade.

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269 Muamer Zukorlić, "Turska inicijativa: Svi 'problemi' se sve svode na jedno ime – muftija Muamer ef. Zukorlić" Filmed (January, 2012) YouTube video, Duration: 09:13, Posted (January, 2012): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAth9sNWjzA

270 "Zukorlić i Zilkić spremni na pomirenje, sporan koncept", *Blic*, June 19, 2011, http://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/Zukorlić-i-Zilkić-spremni-na-pomirenje-sporan-koncept/2xek1wv

271 Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović, Conducted on 26.01.2018.

272 Ali Riza Çolak served as Turkish ambassador to Serbia from 2010 to 2012.

That 2011 represented a turning point regarding the initiative that was confirmed by Zukorlić. He says that "the second wave of attacks"[273] to the unity of Mešihat of Islamic Community in Serbia came after Bosnian Reisu-l-ulema Mustafa ef. Cerić together with the delegation from Rijaset and the Mešihat paid an official visit to Diyanet in Ankara during early October 2011.[274] The draft agreement for the unification was prepared by the Turkish side around the days the visit was held. Visit Ankara by a broad delegation from Rijaset represented the first serious step in finding a solution to the schism. This was the first of the three important meetings between Bosnian and Turkish sides Zukorlić mentions. As usual, the meeting between the Rijaset and Diyanet was warm with a lot of sweet words from both sides about the mutual relations.[275] As it is noted by one of the members of the Bosnian delegation the division in Sandžak was also discussed during the meetings.[276]

Bosnian delegation was accepted by all the important political instances in Turkey, from President, Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Head of Diyanet, to representatives of local communities.[277] The delegation was accepted even by Prime Minister Erdoğan, where he had a separate meeting with Reisu-l-ulema Cerić and talked about the situation in Sandžak. Erdoğan separated three hours for the meeting with the Bosnian delegation. It is not known how long he spoke separately to Cerić about the problem in Sandžak. Upon his return from Turkey, Cerić said at the meeting of the Council of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina how;

> after the visit of the delegation from the Islamic Community of BiH Turks are now better informed with the real facts regarding the issue.[278]

However, this was a unique chance for the delegation to present Erdoğan their angle of view regarding the lockdown in Sandžak Meeting with Erdoğan was important because he was the actual power behind the AKP.[279] Even though not all the details of the meeting were shared with the public, the schism in Sandžak was set high on the agenda. Zukorlić confirms this with the words,

> at that meeting, the question of restoring the unity of the Islamic Community has been reopened once again.[280]

At the press conference, Görmez gave after the meeting with the Bosnian del-

273 According to Zukorlić, the first wave of attack happened in 2007 with the help of SDA Sandžak, Jusufspahić and the Serbian secret state.

274 Cerić's this visit was conducted together with 16 imams from Slovenia, Croatia and Sandžak that serve under the Bosnian Rijaset.; Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović conducted on 26.01.2018.; "Ankara: Delegaciju IZ primio ministar vanjskih poslova", Islamska Zajednica u Bosni I Hercegovini, accessed on February 05, 2018, http://www.islamskazajednica.ba/vijesti/mina-vijesti/11953-delegaciju-iz-u-ankari-primio-ministar-vanjskih-poslova

275 Aziz Kadribegović, "Otovorena nova stranica u odnosima Islamskih zajednica Bosne i Hercegovine i Republike Turske", *Preporod*, 2-6.

276 Ibid. 5.

277 Delegation visited Ankara's Municipality of Keçiören.

278 Selman Selhanović, "Inicijativa koje osigurava stabilnost u regiji", *Preporod*, No. 23/961 (2011): 7.

279 Ibid. 6.

280 Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović conducted on 26.01.2018.

egation, the head of Diyanet used some words that might be indicative, regarding Zukorlić's argument about the "second wave of attacks" against him and Mešihat. Görmez said how,

> Every mufti present here (at the meeting) has a 'brother mufti' in Turkey. When I analyze the activities I witness that they still act as stepbrothers. After this visit, they will start being blood brothers. Muftis that act as stepbrothers will be dismissed from this brotherly task and will have to find the new brother.[281]

He might be alluding to Zukorlić when mentioning "muftis" that "act as stepbrothers", rather than the "blood brothers."[282] Or maybe only spoke in general terms about those that are not working enough in developing the relations between the two institutions. What Görmez meant with these words will remain a question, but might be indicated if the words are analyzed in the context of Zukorlić's argument about the "second wave of attacks" that started after Cerić visited Ankara. But, what is important to underline that the overall atmosphere of the meeting was harmonious and positive. To demonstrate the level of the relations between the two institutions, Cerić openly expressed his personal wish to call Görmez "Sheik-al Islam."[283]

During the October visit, Diyanet and Rijaset talked about the draft deal. Diyanet reminded the Bosnian delegation about the concerns the Turkish side has regarding Sandžak.[284] Even a text of how unification might look like was prepared and finally approved by both sides. Basic consent between the two institutions was reached. The text was suggesting the restitution of the unity in the Islamic Community in a way that was before the division, with only slight modifications compared to the pre-2007 period. The draft was ordering the withdrawal of Zukorlić from the position of Mufti, which he accepted.[285] There was even a proposal to make headquarters of the unified Islamic Community in Novi Pazar. The Islamic Community of Serbia was not present at this meeting.

A draft text that was accepted in Ankara by the two sides will be ratified by the Council of Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It will pass through minor modifications in November of the same year. The draft agreement was accepted unanimously by the Bosnian Rijaset.[286] In harmonizing with the decisions of the Council, both Rijaset and Mešihat in Sandžak approved the deal. Even Zukorlić

281 Mehmet Görmez, "Mehmet Görmez'den Önemli Açıklama", *Haberler.com*, 03 October 2011, doi: https://www.haberler.com/Görmez-uvey-kardeslik-yapan-muftuler-bu-3033518-haberi/

282 Muamer Zukorlić was not present at the delegation that visited Diyanet in October 2011. He will join Bosnian Reisu-l-ulema in Turkey few days after the mentioned meeting when the mother of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan passed away on 07 October 2011. He was at the funeral together with Cerić.

283 This statement of Cerić was in line of his public statements glorifiying Turkey that he usually was giving prior to breaking out of the disagreements between him and Turkish side regarding the issue of Mešihat in Sandžak.; "According to our Bosnian tradition I want to call you Sheikh-al Islam." Mustafa ef. Cerić, "Bosna Reisü'l Üleması, Görmez'e beyat etti", *Milli Gazete*, 03 October 2011, http://www.milligazete.com.tr/haber/1115079/bosna-reisul-ulemasi-Görmeze-beyat-etti

284 Aziz Kadribegović, "Nas i Turaka osamdeset (i dva-tri) miliona", *Preporod* No. 21/959 (2011), page. 5.

285 Muamer Zukorlić, "Dokumentarni film "Odbrana Islamske Zajednice" IV dio"

286 Selman Selhanović, "Inicijativa koje osigurava stabilnost u regiji", *Preporod*, 7.

who was often criticized to be "irreconcilable" by his opponents, accepted the deal by saying to media how

> the support of the Council of Islamic Community regarding the Draft agreement for the unification of the Islamic Community in Serbia is very important.[287]

Zukorlić also told the media that the new agreement represents "a continuity" of the Islamic Community with Novi Pazar as its "operational center" and Sarajevo as the "spiritual center."[288] His quick and reckless statements were certainly harming the process. He seemed euphoric as the proposed agreement was legitimizing Sarajevo as a spiritual authority in Sandžak. But to have a unified Islamic Community, a green light from Belgrade was necessary.

Islamic Community of Serbia was alarmed with the deal Bosnian Rijaset and Diyanet have reached in Ankara. That Belgrade will not accept the draft agreement was clear when Serbian media published an interview in late October 2011 with the Serbian Reisu-l-ulema Zilkić with a headline; "Cerić is not my leader."[289] Zilkić publicly rejected the draft plan for the unification.

> Negotiations of reconciliation cannot be based on the document that is shared with the public, and that was prepared without our knowledge, and whose main creator was Mustafa ef. Cerić. He wants to destroy the Islamic Community of Serbia, and that is the reason why Zukorlić feels like a winner.[290]

> In the same interview, he added how, he (Zilkić) insist that Bosnian Reis Cerić should be excluded from the talks, because he is not neutral, and is inclined towards Muamer Zukorlić.[291]

Zilkić's main concern was Sarajevo, as he understood it to be the power base behind Zukorlić. He was complaining about the absence of the Islamic Community of Serbia in talks. Zilkić also said that he is not expecting to be invited at all. He insisted that the Islamic Community of Serbia should be included in the talks as soon as possible. Jusufspahić also made comments saying that Serbia is not well represented in the talks without the participation of the Islamic Community of Serbia.[292] Aleksandar Raković, a historian working for the Serbian Ministry of Religion, thinks that the Turkish draft agreement aimed to abolish the Islamic Community of Serbia.[293]

287 "Zasjedanje Sabora Islamske Zajednice", Medžlis Islamske Zajednice Bijeljina, accessed January 01, 2018, http://mizbijeljina.ba/vijesti/zasjedanje-sabora-islamske-zajednice-u-bih/

288 "Novi Pazar ostaje centar IZ, ali Turska ne pristaje na potpuno uklanjanje Muftije", Sandžak Press, accessed on February 13, 2018, http://Sandžakpress.net/novi-pazar-ostaje-centar-iz-ali-turska-nije-pristala-na-potpuno-uklanjanje-muftije"

289 Adem ef. Zilkić, "Zilkić: Cerić nije moj vođa", *Večenje Novosti Online*, October 28, 2011, http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/drustvo/aktuelno.290.html:351099-Zilkić-Cerić-nije-moj-vodja

290 Ibid.

291 Ibid.

292 Muhamed Jusufspahić, "Ujedinjenje Islamske zajednice glavna tema", *Danas.rs*, 24.10.2011, Accessed on February 26, 2019, doi: https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/ujedinjenje-islamske-zajednice-glavna-tema/

293 Александар Раковић, "Турска иницијатива за уједињење Исламске заједнице у Републици Србији (2011)", 243.

All in all, without the participation and approval from Serbia chances for the deal to be implemented, seemed very slim. Zilkić openly expressed his wishes for Mešihat in Novi Pazar to be incorporated into the Islamic Community of Serbia. Zilkić's vision regarding the future of the religious organization in Serbia remained the same from day one. When asked about the proposed deal, he responded with words;

> we do not want to abolish the Islamic Community of Serbia; we want the existing communities to merge.[294]

Statements coming from Belgrade showed that the draft agreement was deadborn. Failure to accept the deal by the Islamic Community from Belgrade returned the negotiations to a starting point. Serbian Islamic Community understood the deal as favorable to Bosnian Rijaset and Mešihat. The next step for Turkish diplomacy was to try to convince the government in Belgrade regarding the deal and to adjust the agreement according to the expectations from Belgrade. On the other hand, Zukorlić was sure that Serbia will not accept the Turkish deal. He said in an interview with the author of this work how he,

> wasn't against presenting the deal to Serbia but was sure that they will not accept it.[295]

Not only Zukorlić but all sides were aware that they don't have a deal unless the Serbian government approves it. Serbia's will was crucial for the success of the reconciliation process.

5.10.6. *Rejection of the Draft Agreement*

Soon after the October meetings in Ankara, in November 2011 news on Turkey's agreement plans started appearing in the regional media once again. The media received some partial information that agreement might be reached. The Turkish side was insistent on reaching the final agreement. On November 12-13, 2011 Davutoğlu paid an informal visit to Serbia to talk with the Serbian counterpart about Diyanet's draft agreement. He talked to Turkish media outlet Anadolu Agency saying how Ankara is uncomfortable with the split among the Muslims in Serbia.[296]

> We saw a decisive and solid basis for reaching a deal and overcoming divisions between the religious institution of Muslims in Sandžak that creates social tensions. We hope that this problem will be solved as soon as possible.[297]

According to Raković from the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Serbia, before Davutoğlu's November visit Serbian Foreign Ministry consulted the Ministry

294 Ibid.

295 Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović, Conducted on 26.01.2018.

296 "Davutoğlu çözüm için Sancak'ta", Timeturk, accessed February 13, 2018, https://www.timeturk.com/tr/2011/11/12/davutoglu-cozum-icin-sancak-ta.html

297 Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Davutoglu: Uskoro rješenje za muslimanske institucije u Srbiji", *Nezavisne novine*, November 13, 2011, https://www.nezavisne.com/novosti/ex-yu/Davutoglu-Uskoro-rjesenje-za-muslimanske-institucije-u-Srbiji/114768

of Religion regarding the draft agreement. Ministry of Religion suggested to the Foreign Ministry that,

Serbia should keep the stance that Rijaset of the Islamic Community of Serbia with the headquarters in Belgrade led by the Reisu-l-ulema is the unified and indivisible religious community of Muslims in the Republic of Serbia.[298]

After all, the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Serbia accepted the Islamic Community of Serbia as being the "traditional (legitimate) religious community in Serbia."[299]

After concerns Jusufspahić had during the talks in October, his statement from November of the same year shows some relaxation regarding the talks. He commented on the meeting of Serbian and Turkish Foreign Ministers by saying how Jeremić "conveyed their views (of Islamic Community of Serbia) to the Turkish side."[300] From Jusufspahić's words, it can be seen that the concerns of the Islamic Community of Serbia were taken into account by the Foreign Ministry. Especially after the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Serbia warned the Foreign Ministry that the interests of the Islamic Community of Serbia should be protected. Even though the Islamic Community of Serbia was not directly involved in the negotiations, now its interests would be represented by the Serbian Foreign Ministry.

In November 2011 visit the two Foreign Ministers came together to synchronize the Turkish draft agreement according to the Serbian laws before presenting the final deal to the Islamic Communities. After that point, it was supposed to get its final shape and the approval from all the relevant sides. Even though the original content was never shared with the public, it was reported by the media that the agreement contains 14 or 15 principles in total.[301] According to Diyanet's proposed plan, one and unified Islamic Community was to exist on the territory of Serbia. Similarly, as Zukorlić proposed during the Unification Congress in 2007, the agreement was suggesting that the headquarters should be in Novi Pazar. The official magazine of the Islamic Community of BiH *Preporod* confirmed that Novi Pazar as a center of the unified Islamic Community was taken into a consideration.

> According to the act (draft agreement), only one Islamic Community can remain in Serbia with the headquarters in Novi Pazar, and with the unquestionable spiritual and cultural ties to Sarajevo...."[302]

Serbia once again reminded of its red lines regarding the headquarter. Preservation of the spiritual ties with Sarajevo and Novi Pazar as a center of the unified Islam-

298 Александар Раковић, "Турска иницијатива за уједињење Исламске заједнице у Републици Србији (2011)", 247.

299 bid.

300 Muhamed Jusufspahić, "Jusufspahić: Jeremić preneo naše stavove turskoj strani", *Politika*, November 14, 2011, http://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/197786/

301 "Turkish FM visits Belgrade", *Pioneer Investors*, http://www.pioneer-investors.com/article.asp?ItemID=15346&mcid=1&cid=1&page=91

302 Selman Selhanović, "Inicijativa koje osigurava stabilnost u regiji", 7.

ic Community were problematic suggestions for the Serbian side. The government in Belgrade insisted that the headquarters of the Islamic Community should be in the Serbian capital, while the Turkish side was suggesting Novi Pazar. Turkish suggestion was strongly rejected by Belgrade. The government's position was clear, Belgrade must remain a center of all Muslims in Serbia.

Another point the Serbian government insisted on was the removal of Zukorlić from the region. The government wanted him to end all his political activities in Sandžak. He represented a danger in their eyes, while still living in the region. To end his popularity and the support, he enjoyed among Bosniaks he had to disappear from the region. Serbia's wishes were conveyed to Zukorlić by the Turkish side. In order to have him distanced from Sandžak, he was even offered a position of an ambassador of Serbia in the OIC, which he refused.[303] In one of his public speeches a few months later he confirmed Belgrade's expectations by saying that; everything comes down to one question, and "that question is Muamer Zukorlić."[304] He continues with the words; "the problem is not my appearance, but the concept I am standing for."[305] The proposal of removing Zukorlić had implications for Zilkić as well. Bosnian *Preporod* was writing how according to the draft agreement;

Zilkić was expected to publicly renounce his title of Reisu-l-ulema of the "so-called Islamic Community of Serbia."[306] After eventually leaving the position of Reisu-l-ulema, in return "appropriate working position" in one of the "cultural or educational positions in Serbia would be guaranteed to him."[307]

The proposal was forbidding both Zukorlić and Zilkić to be candidates for leading the unified Islamic Community.[308] This proposal was more acceptable for them both. On the other hand, despite the wishes from Belgrade to remove Zukorlić from the region, the draft agreement was securing his presence in Sandžak by ordering him;

> to remain the mufti of Sandžak and to perform the duties provided by the normative acts of the Islamic Community.[309]

The draft agreement went far to order that neither Zukorlić and Zilkić nor their close associates should get involved in politics in the future. The proposal was explicit; the present set-up was to change if unification was going to proceed. By putting restrictions on their political engagement any possible lobbying attempts by the two

303 Organization of Islamic Conference is a top international institution that gathers Muslim majority countries. It is composed of 57 member states. Serbia enjoys a status of an observer in the OIC.; Muamer Zukorlić, "Dokumentarnifilm "Odbrana Islamske Zajednice" IV dio"; This was the suggestion of the Turkish side, which appearently was agreed previously with the Belgrade. This offer will be given to Zukorlić after Davutoglu's November visit to Belgrade, when Mufti was invited by Görmez to Ankara for the third and the last time. At this meeting he was called alone, without Cerić.

304 Muamer Zukorlić, "Turska inicijativa: Svi 'problemi' se sve svode na jedno ime – muftija Muamer ef. Zukorlić" Filmed (January, 2012) YouTube video, Duration: 09:13, Posted (January, 2012)

305 Ibid.

306 Selman Selhanović, "Inicijativa koje osigurava stabilnost u regiji", 7.

307 Ibid.

308 Ibid.

309 Ibid.

imams for the benefit of their supporters inside the unified Islamic Communities was to be restrained. Two leaders were more comfortable with this proposed measure of not be a candidate for the leadership anymore, than accepting the concept of shifting the centers of spiritual and political loyalty. Belgrade was uncomfortable for Sarajevo to remain the spiritual center. Both Zilkić and Zukorlić were after securing the continuation of their spiritual centers.

After seeing that the Serbian side is insistent on Zukorlić's removal from Sandžak, the Turkish side might understand that Belgrade would not accept any proposal that secures Mufti's stay in the region. After Ankara understood this reality a controversial "Turkish-Serbian" plan of Zukorlić's removal from Sandžak and Mešihat started unfolding. The Turkish side will try to assist Zukorlić's removal by offering him the position of a Serbian ambassador at the OIC. Offering a diplomatic post in Serbia shows that Ankara was coordinating the plan with Belgrade. In this stage, Turkish diplomacy served as a courier in Serbia's communication with Zukorlić. Diyanet's president together with Davutoğlu was responsible to convey the offers to Mufti. Position at the OIC was only one among many offers that were presented to the Mufti. He refused them all by ironically putting forward his own 'demands' to the Turkish side. Among Zukorlić's demands was to name him as a "president of Diyanet's Eurasian Islamic Council" whose headquarters would be relocated to Novi Pazar.[310] By giving an example of something valuable to Diyanet, like the Eurasian Islamic Council, Mufti was probably after giving a glimpse to Diyanet's president how important is religious unity for him. By suggesting the organizational changes in the Diyanet he demonstrated how interference into internal affairs looks like. In other words, by using this method Zukorlić clearly said, no to reconciliation without preserving trans-border and national unity among Bosniaks.[311]

Davutoğlu strongly counted on Diyanet's brokering capacity in resolving the crisis. During the November visit to Serbia, Davutoğlu praised the efforts of Diyanet by saying that enormous energy was invested by Görmez for opening the "channel of dialogue" between the two Islamic Communities.[312] Having the full trust of the AKP government and Davutoğlu, Görmez was familiar with the issue from the very beginning. He was directly authorized by the Foreign Minister to prepare a draft agreement and received full authority to direct the process through Diyanet. Turkish ambassador Süha Umar confirms this by saying how Davutoğlu encouraged Diyanet's participation from the very beginning of the initiative.[313] For Umar, it was a huge mistake to hand over the brokering process to the Presidency.[314] After all, Görmez was the leader of the largest Islamic religious institution in the Balkans,

310 Muamer Zukorlić, "Dokumentarni film "Odbrana Islamske Zajednice" IV dio" YouTube video, Duration 50:39, November 3, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mtonOgh0Q6U

311 He said that after refusing all the offers put forward by the Diyanet Görmez told him; "If you don't want there are those who want.", Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović conducted on 26.01.2018.

312 Muhamed Jusić, "Turkey as Mediator, or Something more between Islamic Communities in the Balkans," 88-93.

313 Süha Umar, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović, Interview with Süha Umar, former Turkish Ambassador in Serbia, Conducted via web on 21.09.2017.

314 Süha Umar, *Belgrad 500 Yıl Sonra*

which probably made AKP believe that it will make the mediation process much easier. But it was not the case. Meeting with two Bosniak Ministers Ljajić and Ugljanin was arranged during Davutoğlu's November visit. They were kept updated through the brokering process. After all, both were deeply involved in the schism.

Ankara was not ready to give up on the initiative. The lack of understanding of the crisis might be the reason behind Ankara's hesitation to pull out from the initiative. The schism appeared to be too deep and complex to be solved with a couple of diplomatic maneuvers. What was understood from the first stage is that all the involved sides have strictly defined red lines they are not ready to even negotiate about. Their attitude made compromise almost impossible to reach. This was a war of concepts between Sarajevo and Belgrade, a competition between the two national ambitions, Serbian and the Bosnian. It was led by Islamic Communities. Unity of the Islamic Community fell victim to this rivalry. Ankara's weak evaluation dragged Turkish diplomacy into the heart of this rivalry. Unlike the Trilateral Summit and Istanbul Declaration which was a success for the AKP, few protocols, meetings, and a draft agreement were not enough to solve the issue of this complexity.[315]

After failing to convince the Serbian side Diyanet had to look for other arrangements. Serbia's unreadiness to accept Sarajevo's influence in Sandžak will force Diyanet to reconsider the previous premises it followed and to search for an alternative solution. Turkish side started modifying the previous agreement for the unification of Islamic Communities.

5.10.7. Modification of the Draft Agreement

After the Serbian side did not accept the draft agreement the Turkish side had to remodify it to meet Belgrade's criteria. This forced Diyanet and the Turkish Foreign Ministry to search for acceptable solutions. According to Zukorlić one of the primary reasons why all proposed draft agreements failed to be accepted was the fact that the Turkish side was constantly changing the agreement after it would be previously accepted by the Rijaset and Mešihat.

> After accepting the negotiated deal, they would come up with something new. After reaching a deal they (Turkish side) would say, "now we have to send this deal to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (of Turkey) to prepare the agreement according to a diplomatic language.
>
> After receiving the agreement modified by the Ministry, it wouldn't look like the deal that we previously agreed on. It wasn't modified according to the diplomatic language but became a new (changed) deal. The new deal would come with enormous changes. Some new points would be added to the deal that was not even mentioned in the previously agreed deals.[316]

315 "In the draft agreement there was not a precise suggestion that included details", Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović conducted on 26.01.2018.

316 Ibid.

Every next modification of the agreement would further distance Sarajevo and Novi Pazar from Ankara's position. Some proposed measures seemed illogical and harming Rijaset and Mešihat. According to one of the "modified" deals every city was supposed to have its 'own' mufti. Turkish side suggested modifications like forming offices for almost every town in Sandžak, like Muftiate of Sjenica, Muftiate of Prijepolje, Muftiate of Tutin, and so on. Some proposed measures were unacceptable for Rijaset and Mešihat.[317] If implemented it would imply a total decentralization of Mešihat's infrastructure. Even though Rijaset and Mešihat accepted the previous deal reached in Ankara in October 2011, new deals that came after implied radical modifications.

Ankara was trying to shape the draft agreement to minimize Belgrade's concerns. But pleasing Belgrade created concerns in Sarajevo and Novi Pazar. Relations with Serbia were at stake if Ankara insisted on the deal that Sarajevo and Novi Pazar preferred. Indications that Ankara was even looking after meeting its geopolitical interests by using the lockdown in Sandžak shouldn't be excluded either. All this was happening in the last quarter of 2011 and early 2012, which in a way was the turning point after which Diyanet will slowly distance from Rijaset and Mešihat and will start following a strategy that was more friendly towards Belgrade and other political players in Sandžak.

In the unfolding of the process after the November meetings with Jeremić and Tadić, Ankara's relations with Bosnian Rijaset and Mešihat will start deteriorating seriously. After the talks in Belgrade, Davutoğlu met Cerić and Zukorlić. He gave a brief report about the meeting with the Serbian government. Among many things, Davutoğlu conveyed to the two that Tadić was planning to arrest Zukorlić over various crime accusations, primarily arms trade.[318] Allegedly Tadić told to Davutoğlu that he came at the moment when Belgrade was having preparations for arresting Zukorlić. Allegedly a report was prepared before Davutoğlu visited Belgrade over Mufti's criminal activities, which would be presented to Turkey's Foreign Minister.[319] Whether this report existed at all is not known, but Zukorlić was never persecuted by the Serbian state for the mentioned crimes, which in turn raises a question of why this report was even mentioned to the Turkish Foreign Minister when reaching a deal over unity was near. Why the Serbian government never prosecuted the Mufti if it had proof of his illegal activities is another question. All this necessarily brings the conclusion that the Serbian government was after preventing the deal that was recognized as harmful for its national interests.

The new Turkish suggestions regarding the unification agreement were even more problematic for Bosnian Rijaset and Mešihat than any previous ones. Davutoğlu said to Cerić and Zukorlić that Serbia's wish is to give the right of delivering *murasela*[320] to Ankara rather than Sarajevo. Zukorlić said Davutoğlu told them how,

317 Ibid.

318 Muamer Zukorlić, "Dokumentarni film "Odbrana Islamske Zajednice" IV dio"

319 Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović conducted on 26.01.2018.

320 *Murasela* is the official decree of approval issued by the highest religious authority that gives mufti or imam right to perform religious duties in certain geographical area.

> Tadić doesn't accept that Bosnian Reisu-l-ulema to deliver murasela to imams in Sandžak, but he wants Ankara to do it.[321]

Cerić also confirmed that Davutuğlu came to him with the same offer. He said in one of the public appearances that the Turkish Foreign Minister told him how, "Tadić doesn't agree for Bosnian Reisu-l-ulema to appoint Mufti in Sandžak, but he wants Ankara to do this"[322]. Allegedly Davutoğlu also said to him, "if you accept this then everything is solved."[323] The offer Davutoğlu came with something unacceptable both for Mešihat and Bosnian Rijaset. Zukorlić even doubts that Tadić doesn't even know what murasela is and that Davutoğlu tried to benefit from the situation. Like Cerić, he also believes that Ankara tried to use the position of a negotiator with Serbia to subdue religious authorities in Sandžak under its control. He is on the position that Turkey was from the beginning after its interest.[324] That Cerić shares the same opinion is seen from his words when he said,

> Belgrade doesn't care about our spiritual condition and from where (which city)[325] we will draw our spirituality.[326] Belgrade wouldn't dare to do all this without the support from Turkey.[327]

If these claims are true then it appears Ankara tried to instrumentalize the brokering position to benefit from the schism.

> Serbia was used by them (Turkish side) to achieve their interest through Serbia.[328]

There was one more meeting, a third, where Zukorlić was invited alone. Both Cerić and Zukorlić claim that Ankara tried to divide them by arranging separate meetings with them. "They tried to separate us, to distance us."[329] After inviting Zukorlić alone, according to his words, Foreign Minister and Görmez made him offers that would remove him from the region, which he again rejected. Turkish side failed to convince Zukorlić to leave the region. After this meeting, negotiations were practically dead. After this point, Diyanet will start a harmful "Initiative for the Reconciliation in Sandžak." This initiative was supported directly by Diyanet and didn't include Mešihat or Bosnian Rijaset. According to Zukorlić, this initiative was supposed to "remove him from the game."[330] After Davutoğlu's visit to Belgrade

321 Muamer Zukorlić, "Dokumentarni film "Odbrana Islamske Zajednice" IV dio" YouTube

322 Mustafa ef. Cerić, Dokumentarni film "Odbrana Islamske Zajednice" IV dio"

323 Ibid.

324 Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović, Conducted on 26.01.2018.; "The real intention was to break away Mešihat from Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to put it under the control of Diyanet. This was the esence. All the details in the deal were leading in that direction", Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović conducted on 26.01.2018.

325 Here is alluded on what will be the spiritual center of Muslims in the region, Sarajevo, Belgrade or Ankara.

326 Mustafa Cerić, "Dokumentarni film "Odbrana Islamske Zajednice" IV dio"

327 Ibid.

328 Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović, Conducted on 26.01.2018.

329 Mustafa Cerić, "Dokumentarni film "Odbrana Islamske Zajednice" IV dio"

330 Ibid.; Failure of Diyanet to reach a unification agreement and the refusal of Rijaset and Mešihat in Sandžak to accept Turkish plan of the recouncilation, that included accepting Ankara as the spiritual center, Zukorlić and

Cerić and Zukorlić will radicalize their discourse regarding Turkey's role in the process. They recognized Davutoğlu's attempt as an open attack on Bosnian Rijaset and Mešihat.

Cerić's next move will also bring further damage to the process of reconciliation, which already had slim chances to succeed. In the last days of his mandate in 2012, Bosnian Reisu-l-ulema issued a *fetva* (Arabic: Fatwa)[331] against Zilkić; that prohibits Muslims to pray behind him. This was a direct shot on the legitimacy of the Islamic Community of Serbia and represented a blow to the unification process. A harsh language was used in the fetva, saying to Muslims that it is religiously not allowed neither to listen nor to follow Zilkić; simply because

> his speeches are creating disunity among Muslims and lead astray to a path that like a cracked coastline is threatened to be sacked into hell fire together with him.[332]

The fetva describes the mosques that are under the control of the Islamic Community of Serbia as *Masjid al-dirar* (Masjid of damage).[333] The fetva clearly showed that Cerić is not willing to tolerate the existence of the Islamic Community of Serbia in Sandžak. Probably Davutoğlu's offer to transfer murasela right to Ankara inflamed new tensions between the two Islamic Communities.

The timing of the fetva is indicative as more conciliatory Kavazović was to take over the position of Reisu-l-ulema. He couldn't just let go of the cause in which he invested so much time and energy. On the other side upcoming Serbian elections were another factor that made the atmosphere unhealthy. Counting on ethnic Serbs' votes, Belgrade was not in the position to make compromises with Zukorlić. Elections were close and easing up to Mufti's anti-state rhetoric was not an option for Tadić's government. But Belgrade will face another surprise from Zukorlić. This time Belgrade will see him as the candidate in the Serbian presidential elections in 2012. He decided not to pull back, but to challenge the state. Many secular-minded critiques of the Mufti criticized him for a defying attitude which was symbolized with him entering to race from Serbian parliament with *ahmedija*[334] on his head and *tespih*[335] in his hand.

Turkey failed to implement the agreement for the second time. As the crisis en-

Mešihat define as a start of the "Second wave" of attacks to Islamic Community. Initiative for recouncilation was led by the group of imams inside Mešihat and Islamic Community of Serbia. According to Zukorlić the leader of this initiative on the ground was Nedžad Hasanović, who was Zukorlić's deputy and the director of Gazi Isa Beg Medresa. "The First wave" of the attacks to the unity of the Islamic Community was in 2007 when the division officialy happened.

331 Comes from Arabic word *Fatwa* which means "opinion" and is legal order by a qualified religious authority.

332 *Fetva Reisu-l-Uleme o Ademu Zilkiću*, Islamska Zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini, "http://www.islamskazajednica.ba/mina-vijesti-arhiva/15320-fetva-reisu-l-uleme-o-ademu-Zilkiću

333 The term *Masjid al-dirar* comes from a mosque built during the time of Prophet Muhammad, when hypocrites built a mosque. Prophet prohibited Muslims to conduct prayers in that mosque as its construction would bring more damage and disunity to Muslims, so its destruction was ordered by him.

334 *Ahmedija* is a religious hat Muslim religious authorities wear in the Balkans

335 *Tespih* is Muslim variant of chaplet used for praying.

tered 2012 it became more obvious two Islamic Communities will not unite. All sides persisted with the positions they had in 2007. There was not an improvement. As Muhamed Jusić puts it, it was now obvious to everyone that Ankara doesn't have enough capital on all sides to be able to push the initiative.[336] Turkey's soft power capacity seemed pretty limited. Contrary to AKP's populist rhetoric at home presenting Turkey as an indispensable regional actor, the government faced its real capacity in the region.

Belgrade's 'headache' with Zukorlić will enter a new phase after he joined mainstream politics in Serbia. In the 2012 elections, he ran for the Serbian presidency. This was a continuation of the trend that was started in 2010. Since that year Mufti changed his strategy and started acting more as a politician rather than a simple religious leader. In 2010 he even founded a political party named *BDZ Sandžak* (Bosniak Democratic Community)[337] entered a candidacy in the elections for Bosniak National Council, Ugljanin's stronghold. In the 2010 elections for the BNV Zukorlić received the most votes.[338] His first political engagement passed successfully and showed that he enjoys enormous support among Bosniaks in Sandžak. His success in politics represented another headache for Belgrade. Former Turkish Ambassador Süha Umar in his book confirms the government's discomfort with mufti's political engagement.[339] Zukorlić will achieve another, maybe even a greater political victory during the 2016 Serbian parliamentary elections. After making a political pact with Vučić his party managed to get two mandates in the Serbian parliament. He defended his decision to enter mainstream politics as his fight with the system in its center. The leadership of the Mešihat of Islamic Community in Serbia was inherited by his former deputy Mevlud Dudić.[340] Zukorlić continued to be very influential in the Mešihat despite the formal departure.

5.10.8. Bitter Taste of the Turkish Initiative

After many attempts, Turkey failed to bring together two sides. Almost a decade after launching the initiative, relations with Diyanet seem not to be free of problems and mistrust. Especially when it comes to Mešihat in Novi Pazar. Some moves Diyanet and the Turkish Foreign Ministry tried to make caused counter-effects that damaged Turkey's overall reputation. Ending up with damaged relations with the

336 Muhamed Jusić, "Turkey as Mediator, or Something more between Islamic Islamic Communities in the Balkans," 88-93.

337 BDZ will be renamed as *Stranka Pravde i Pomirenja* (SPP) or Party of Justice and Reconciliation in December 2017 after party's leader Muamer Zukorlić entered into a coalition with Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić. This move came as a part of Zukorlić's vision of general Serbo-Bosniak reconciliation which became one of the premises his party has commited to follow during Vučić's mandate.

338 Zukorlić with his Bosniak Cultural Community (BKZ) got 48,40 % of the votes and was ahead of Sulejman Ugljanin and his "Bosniak List" that managed to get only 37,35 % of the votes. Third candidate was Rasim Ljajić with his "Bosniak Revival", who got only 14, 25 % of the votes.

339 Süha Umar, *Belgrad 500 Yıl Sonra,*p. 260, 261.

340 "Muftija za Sandžak i Srbiju dr. Mevlud ef. Dudić", *Islamska Zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini-Vijeće Muftija*, Decembar 8, 2015: http://vijecemuftija.islamskazajednica.ba/index.php/clanovi-vijeca/muftija/Dudić-ef-mevlud-muftija-Mešihata-iz-u-srbiji

Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, one of the strongest Islamic authorities in the Balkans, makes the failure of the initiative even greater. After the Islamic Community in BiH realized that it can not count on Turkey's help in stabilizing its authority in Sandžak, it will distance itself from Diyanet in the last months of Cerić's mandate. From 2009, when the initiative was started, to 2014 when Cerić's mandate ended Diyanet went from being one of the closest allies to an organization whose intentions are suspicious in the eyes of the Islamic Community of BiH. Even close personal relations between the AKP and some members in Rijaset didn't save the situation. That relations were not good can best be seen in public statements Zukorlić was making. Influential names in Rijaset through media 'reminded' Bosniaks that they are not Turks but European Muslims. In public appearances, Zukorlić emphasized that Islam came to the region much before Ottoman conquests. Cerić followed a similar discourse. He openly blamed Turkey for helping the schism in Sandžak. In one of his interviews Cerić said;

> I cannot explain to myself what was the interest of Turkey in breaking up and removing Muamer Zukorlić.[341]

Turkey was now perceived by him as a patronizing country trying to impose its own will and power over the religious life in the region. In an interview for a documentary sponsored by the Mešihat he said,

> we are not anyone's colony, especially not the colony of Turkey…. They are interested in us to be their obedient ones…[342]

After ending his two-decades-long mandate as Bosnian Reisu-l-ulema, Cerić became a candidate in the Bosnian presidential elections of 2014. Cerić based the campaign on weakening his rival Bakir Izetbegović, who is known for close ties to AKP and a personal friend to Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, by attacking SDA's relations with Ankara. Cerić's decision to run for the presidency against Izetbegović might have been influenced by his disappointment with the Turkish initiative.[343] Cerić's shift was radical when having in mind that it was he who once famously proclaimed Turkey as "our mother."[344]

Relations with Mešihat deteriorated even more. On November 7 Mešihat organized the General Assembly where it pronounced its "IV. Sandžak Declaration" addressing various issues including the "interference of Diyanet in internal issues."[345] The third article of the declaration says;

341 Mustafa Cerić, "Dokumentarni film "Odbrana Islamske Zajednice" IV dio" YouTube video, Duration 50:39, November 3, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mtonOgh0Q6U

342 Ibid.

343 Under the leadership of Bakir Izetbegović SDA fosters close relations with the AKP. For this reason Izetbegović was ocassionaly criticized even by Cerić himself.

344 Miloš Mitrović, "Ličnost Danas: Reis Mustafa Cerić", *Danas*, 15.09.2011, Accessed on November 24, 2018, https://www.danas.rs/dijalog/licni-stavovi/licnost-danas-reis-mustafa-Cerić/

345 Oficijelna web stranica Islamske Zajednice u Srbiji, "Četvrta Sandžačka Deklaracija", Mešihat.org, https://Mešihat.org/2016/11/07/cetvrta-sandzacka-deklaracija/ (accessed November 20, 2017)

> we ask Diyanet of the Republic of Turkey to stop interfering in internal issues of the Islamic Community, which causes great damage to Bosniaks and Turkish-Bosniak relations.[346]

Once, a great majority of conservative Bosniaks were in favor of proactive Turkish foreign policy in the region. Because of the wrong strategies, the Foreign Ministry of Turkey and Diyanet followed in the region this favorable political climate was changed. Today, even conservative Bosniaks, especially in Sandžak, are divided between those for and against Turkey's stronger influence. Zukorlić and Cerić by controlling the powerful religious infrastructure in the region projected themselves as the symbols of the 'resistance' against the 'assertiveness' of the Turkish foreign policy.

Even the new Reisu-l-ulema Husein ef. Kavazović, who contrary to Cerić is known for a softer temper, occasionally underlined how the Turkish side's approach to the regional problems is "shallow" and how they "sometimes don't understand the problem."[347] After being elected as a new Reisu-l-ulema for Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2012, Kavazović will change the policies Islamic Community followed under Cerić. He was not as harsh as Cerić was in dealing with its political foes but followed a more conciliatory approach. Unlike Cerić, who was more focused on domestic and regional politics, foreign relations, and projecting Rijaset's power abroad, Kavazović will work more on consolidating the internal structure of the Islamic Community.

Kavazović started with 'cleaning' the foreign influences among the Muslims in BiH. During the two-decades of Cerić's leadership, foreign religious institutions flourished. Saudi-type Wahhabi groups, Iranian-financed Shia organizations, Turkish Gülen movement, and some other religious groups from the Middle East opened various organizations inside Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through the years these groups gained ground among the local Muslims. Even among the ulema emerged those who were sympathized with this or that group. After 2012 the leadership of the Islamic Community decided to end the activities of the 'heterodox' groups. In that light, the Islamic Community signed a protocol with the state to close all *paradžemati* (parallel jamaats).[348] Besides Wahhabi, Shia, and Ahmadis, activities of the Gülen movement were limited during the process as well.[349]

Some immediate developments after the change in the leadership show that Islamic Community was not limiting this campaign only to parallel-jamaats, but decided to constrain other foreign influences, including the Diyanet's. Diyanet's at-

346 Ibid.

347 Husein ef. Kavazović, "Reisu-l-ulema Kavazović o Muftiji i Sandžaku" Filmed (October, 2013). YouTube video, Duration: 08:48, Posted (October 14, 2013): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHaKD3LKES8

348 *Paradžemats* or paralel džemats is popular name in Bosnia and Herzegovina for paralel Muslim groups or gatherings. This name was popularly given to 'heterodox 'Muslim conservative groups or gatherings that were not under the direct control of Rijaset of Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina or operated under the teaching of Islam that was different from the Hanafi-Mathuridi teaching promoted by the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

349 *Rijaset predstavio izvještaj o razgovorima sa nelegalnim džematima*, Islamska Zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini, April 23, 2016, http://www.islamskazajednica.ba/vijesti/aktuelno/23732-rijaset-predstavio-izvjestaj-o-razgovorima-sa-paradzematima

taché for religious affairs at the Turkish embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina has complained to me in one of our private meetings how Rijaset *is* "closed to any influence from the East."[350] Attitude Bosnian Rijaset had to all "influences from the East" was probably influenced by the War in Syria, after some Bosniaks joined the Daesh, brutal violence demonstrated by the radical groups, Sunni-Shia fightings that were ravaging the Middle East, political split between the Turkish government and Gülen Movement and many other problematic developments that were troubling the Muslim World. Unlike the period when Cerić was leading the Community, Rijaset might be more cautious that none of the mentioned divisions cause tensions among the local Bosniaks. Rijaset presumably had a fear that the harmful dynamics from the Middle East might negatively affect Bosniaks. If the attache's observation is true the reason for the defensive attitude regarding the influences from "the East" might lay in the mentioned factors.

All in all, Diyanet failed to take into serious account all the sensitivities sides involved in the schism over Islamic Communities in Serbia had strictly defined during the decades-long historical experience. Diyanet and Turkey demonstrated inexperience in understanding the reality on the ground. The question that comes to mind is why Turkey decided to proceed with the brokering and didn't end the initiative while relation with both Islamic Communities was still good, especially after it became obvious that neither of the sides will cross the strictly defined red lines. Although late, probably understanding the harm caused by getting involved in the schism, in the last months of his mandate, Görmez will in a press statement during the official visit of Bakir Sadović, Bosnian ambassador to Turkey, remind that;

> he on every occasion reminds the importance that Bosnian Riyaset has not only for Bosnia and Balkans but the whole of Europe.[351]

5.10.9. Clash of the Ambitions

During Cerić's mandate (1993-2012) as a Grand Mufti, the Islamic Community of BiH seriously counted on becoming if not the strongest Islamic institution in Europe. He was a regular attendant of the pan-European Islamic forums like the *European Council for Fatwa and Research*. He would regularly emphasize the need to create an institution at the European level to meet the needs of the Muslims on the continent.[352] The European nature of Bosniaks was also emphasized by the academic circle around the Islamic Community. Fikret Karčić is one of the writers who wrote about the Europeanness of the Bosniaks from the academic aspect.[353]

350 Words said to the author during the informal conversation with Hasan Atlı, attache for religious affairs in Turkish Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

351 Mehmet Görmez, "Diyanet İşleri Başkanı Görmez, Bosna Hersek Ankara Büyükelçisi Sadoviç'i kabul etti", " Filmed (March, 2017). YouTube video, Duration: 04:22, Posted (October 14, 2017):https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnCZI0M7fkI

352 Xavier Bougarel, "The Role of Balkan Muslims in Building a European Islam", *European Policy Center*, Issue Paper No. 43. (2005): 25.

353 Fikret Karčić, "The Other European Muslims: A Bosnian Experience", *Center for Advanced Studies*, Sarajevo, (2015)

Rijaset's regional, macro-regional and continental ambitions nourished under Cerić prevented even the slightest possibility of foreign patronage, even in the case when 'brothers' are pretending to do so. Rijaset's ambitions were greater than regional and Diyanet failed to see this reality. Rijaset's ambitions were stretching much beyond the Bosnian borders, and Diyanet failed to understand this reality, or simply ignored it. That Mešihat followed the Islamic Community of BiH in the ambition is seen in the official letter condemnation that the previous sent after the harsh reaction from the Ministry of Faith of Serbia to Cerić's Novi Pazar visit in May 2009.

> The Mešihat of the Islamic Community in Serbia most strongly condemns and resolutely dismisses the insults and libels against the highest authority of Muslims in the Balkans by the Ministry of Faiths (of Serbia). (See Figure D5)

Diyanet's failure or ignorance to recognize this reality might be caused by the blindness of the *abi*[354] attitude, that was rising together with the rise in Turkey's prominence. After all, Turkey was an expanding regional power, and Bosniaks were only a few million. Ankara's attitude was not criticized only in the Balkans, but even by the "brotherly countries" of Turkic Central Asia in the previous decades. This approach became one of the chronic problems and the source of many miscalculations in foreign policy.

But, Bosnian Rijaset was not the only institution that had higher ambitions. We can see from Diyanet's foreign policies the ambitions for the leadership not only in Europe and the Balkans but in the entire Islamic world. The collision of the two similar ambitions by the two strongest Islamic institutions in the region should be taken into serious account when reasons for the dispute between the two are analyzed.[355] Even Turkey's ambassador Süha Umar believes that Diyanet should be ahead institution of European Muslims before anyone else. On my question about Cerić's European ambitions, he replied with these words;

> For Cerić to represent European Muslims was unacceptable behavior for me. I was thinking that only the Presidency of Religious Affairs of Turkey (Diyanet) was able to be a representative of European Muslims.
>
> I still believe this way. To let this authority to Cerić would be a serious mistake for the Republic of Turkey. During my mandate, I constantly and especially stressed out this.[356]

Islamic Community of Serbia reading Diyanet's international ambitions has decided to flatter with this idea. Even to use it as a weapon against Bosnian Rijaset to

354 Big brother in Turkish. The term often put forward by AKP's politicians when it comes to relation of Turkey's Muslims to other Muslim communities in the former Ottoman geography. AKP government is occasionally blamed for havinga a big brother attitude regarding the smaller Muslim communities. According to critiques of the attitude, Tutkey's abi approach is based on Neo-Ottomanist vision followed under the AKP.

355 Kerem Öktem, "Global Diyanet and Multiple Networks: Turkey's New Presence in the Balkans", *Journal of Muslims in Europe*, (2012)

356 Süha Umar, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović, Author's interview with Süha Umar about Turkish Initiative in Serbia, Conducted via web on 21.09.2017.

thwart its regional and continental ambitions. In one letter from May 12, 2009, written in Turkish that the Islamic Community of Serbia has sent to the Diyanet's Eurasian Islamic Council through the Turkish Embassy in Belgrade they express the same concerns that the Turkish ambassador has regarding the Cerić. In the letter, it is said;

> we condemn Cerić who is representing himself as a leader of the European Muslims and showing up in front of European public institutions without authorization. (See Figure D3)

In the letter from 2009 Islamic Community in Serbia confirmed its approval of Diyanet's leadership among the European Muslims. In the same letter, after attacking Cerić's ambitions of becoming the leader of European Muslims, it continues with words;

> We would like to point out that the Serbian Islamic Community wants to build a relationship with all legal Islamic Communities in the region. Especially with Diyanet centered in Ankara; the only organization that together with Turkey has the right to be the leader of European Muslims.[357] (See Figure D3)

Islamic Community of Serbia was ready to accept Diyanet as the leader of Islam in Europe, but Bosnian Rijaset's same ambition was troubling for them. This attitude is seen in the words of Zilkić when he says;

> If we are supposed to have a headquarters somewhere, let it be Turkish Diyanet, not Sarajevo. The Center for all Balkan Muslims is Turkey's Diyanet.[358]

Islamic Community of Serbia flattered well with Diyanet's ambition as a card against the Bosnian Rijaset and Mešihat. These two opposite views of Diyanet's potential role in the region might be an important reason behind Ankara's shift towards Belgrade, rather than Sarajevo and Novi Pazar. That Islamic Community of Serbia was not troubled by the centralization of the authority among the Islamic institutions in the Balkans and Europe, but was against the centralist attempts under the leadership of Sarajevo is seen in another letter that was sent by Zilkić to the Turkish embassy on May 2009. In the letter, he conveys his open support for the creation of the Turkish-sponsored European Islamic Community by saying; "we especially give our support to European and Balkan Muslim Union that would be created under the condition where Turkey takes a leading role." (See Figure D4) Zilkić's problem was with Sarajevo and not the concept of "European Islamic Union" Cerić was defending during his mandate.

357 This letter was sent by Islamic Community of Serbia to Turkish embassy in Belgrade on May 12, 2009. Letter comes just two months before the official start of Turkish initiative in July 2009. Islamic Community of Serbia sends this letter to Eurasian Council meeting that was organized by Diyanet in which it condemns the Mešihat and Bosnian Rijaset and warns organizators that they are the only legitimate representatives of the Muslims in Serbia.

358 Anadolu Ajansı, "Sancak'ta tehlikeli bölünme", *Dünya Bülteni*, August 5, 2011, http://www.dunyabulteni.net/haber/169613/sancakta-tehlikeli-bolunme

Even Sead Nasufović who inherited the position of Serbian Reisu-l-ulema from Zilkić was in the same position when it comes to the matter of leadership among the European Muslims. In his statement to Turkish state agency Anatolia he said;

> Spiritually we are attached to Turkey or Diyanet, Islamic Community of Turkey. I am sure that all European Muslims, to whom we belong as well, have this stance. The reason for this is very clear and stable, and that is the fact that our religion of Islam is taught, interpreted, and studied in the most proper way in Turkey and it has proven itself through centuries to be the best model for all adherents of Islam that belong to European identity.[359]

The outcome of the Turkish initiative has shown how Mufti's in Belgrade managed in a very subtle manner to influence the shifting of the Turkish support in their favor. On the other side, Mešihat in Novi Pazar will lose Ankara's support they probably enjoyed before the initiative was launched.[360] But, without the participation from Bosnian Rijaset and Mešihat, Ankara was not in power to do anything to reunite the two Islamic Communities.

Davutoğlu and Diyanet might reshift their support towards the Islamic Community of Serbia after receiving a supportive stance from Belgrade and facing an irreconcilable stance from both Cerić and Zukorlić. Despite raising the concern about being excluded from the talks on the draft agreement, the leadership of the Islamic Community of Serbia refrained from using accusatory words against Turkey, which in turn might make Ankara consider them as allies. Flattering with Diyanet's regional ambitions have certainly helped to turn the initiative in Belgrade's favor. Having the blessing from Ankara was what the Islamic Community of Serbia was desperate in need of. Any confirmation of its legitimacy was welcomed. On the other hand, Ankara never openly said which option it favors. In the official statements, Turkey refused to give priority to Belgrade or Sarajevo. Diplomatic gestures chiefly point that Ankara was after balancing between all the players in the region. Whatever of the claims is true it was too late to change anything. Turkey was dragged into a regional power struggle.

Around 2013 rumors started appearing regarding Turkey's new ambitions in Sandžak. Some clues point that Diyanet was financially supporting the 'third stream' in the schism. This move raised many questions about Turkey's aspirations in the region. Allegedly a group of imams from both Islamic Communities were after creating a 'unified' Islamic Community that would be loyal neither to Sarajevo nor Belgrade, but to Ankara. Something similar Diyanet achieved with the Islamic Community of Mon-

359 Sead ef. Nasufović, Reis IZ Srbije Sead ef. Nasufović: Duhovno smo direktno vezani za Tursku i za "Dijanet", *AnadoluAgencija*, March 18, 2017, http://aa.com.tr/ba/balkan/reis-iz-srbije-sead-ef-nasufovi%C4%87-duhovno-smo-direktno-vezani-za-tursku-i-za-diyanet-/774616

360 After present Mufti of Mešihat in Sandžak Mevlud Dudić paid a visit to Turkey after the 2007 split in order to give the explanation of what happened in Sandžak to his Turkish counterparts, he was told by one of the high lobists in Turkish politics, who lobbied for the cause of SDA Sandžak in Turkey, how, "They will not allow Zukorlić and Solana to set up European Mufti." According to Zukorlić, "these words prove how some Turkish factors saw this vision as a competition to their ambition of controling Muslim issues in Europe."

tenegro, led by Rifat ef. Fejzić, alumni from Turkish university. Montenegrin Grand Mufti Fejzić is known for having very close ties to Diyanet.[361] After Montenegro won independence from Serbia in 2006, Fejzić successfully prevented attempts from Bosnian Rijaset and Mešihat in Novi Pazar to control the religious organization of Muslims in this country. Today Fejzić is among Diyanet's closest affiliates in the Western Balkans and open sympathizer of Turkish president Erdoğan.[362] (See Figure C3)

5.10.10. Third Way or 'Diyanet's Way'

Statements to media by a group of imams that separated their ways with Mešihat and the Islamic Community of Serbia confirms that in 2013 Turkey was supporting a group that was after creating a third Islamic Community in Sandžak. Serbian newspaper *Danas* interviewed one of the unhappy imams who wanted to stay anonymous and who partially revealed the plans, confirming that rumors about the initiative are true. There is information that Muhammed Jusić, a blogger and researcher on the subject of political Islam, has got from one of "his sources" saying that an idea to go with the third option in the split of Islamic Communities was born when a group of imams from the both Islamic Communities, unhappy by the treatment from their leader, visited Görmez and at the time the Prime Minister Erdoğan.[363] In an interview with Zukorlić, he said that forming a third option was the initial stance of the Turkish sides, which appeared to him during the first day of the initiative when he hosted Davutoğlu, Görmez, and Turkish delegation in Novi Pazar. According to Zukorlić, suggestions the Turkish side was putting forward implied this.

> A group of imams split off from the Mešihat Islamic Community in Serbia, and we (Mešihat) couldn't accept under any circumstances to have two Islamic Communities, that would "reconcile" through the formation of a third Islamic Community.[364]

He believes that Turkey had the ambition to control the religious issues and to benefit from the division from the beginning. For Mešihat this was unacceptable, as Zukorlić underlines, accepting a plan of unification that would ignore the existing

361 Mešihat and Zukorlić were against Montenegrin independence as it would separate Sandžak Bosniaks. Prior to 2006 Montegrin part of Sandžak region was under the authority of Mešihat of Sandžak and Rijaset of Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. With the independence Sarajevo and Novi Pazar lost the control over Majlis' in Montenegrin Sandžak and city of Bar. Act of taking control of Montenegrin Sandžak from the hands of Mešihat and Bosnian Rijaset by Islamic Community of Montenegro has provoked the rivalry between Fejzić and Zukorlić over who will control religious life in Montenegrin part of Sandžak. Zukorlić's attempts to preserve the authority of Sarajevo and Novi Pazar over religious life in Montenegrin Sandžak is a reason for Fejzić's occasional complaints about interference in Montenegro's internal affairs by Zukorlić.

362 Jahja Muhasilović, "Turkey's Faith-based Diplomacy in the Balkans", Rising Powers Quarterly, Vol.3 Issue 3, 2018, 77, 78.; Rifat ef. Fejzić is Turkish alumni. He finished his university studies in Turkey. His initiative to make a birthday of Prophet Muhammad a state holiday for Muslims in Montenegro is similar to Diyanet's practice of 'the Week of Blessed Birth' and might be indicative about the influence his studies in Turkey left on him. Whether there is a connection between this initiative with Diyanet's practice or not, he enjoys close ties with Ankara.

363 Muhamed Jusić, "Turkey as Mediator, or Something more between Islamic Islamic Communities in the Balkans," 88-93.

364 Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović on 26.01.2018.

Islamic Community and forming a new one (Islamic Community) would mean rejecting an institutional tradition that is more than a century old. This was the essence of the disagreement.[365]

Among the leaders of the 'unhappy' group of imams was Bekir Makić, a prominent imam in Sandžak, once close to Zukorlić and Mešihat's director of the Office for Hajj pilgrimage. He will serve as the frontmen of this initiative. According to Zukorić besides Makić, the main actor of the new initiative was Nedžad Hasanović, who was another close figure to him.[366] But during the crisis, Makić was the most exposed figure in media appearances. He left Mešihat after having a "fistfight" with the Zukorlić himself. He claimed that Zukorlić physically assaulted him, a claim that was denied by the mufti.[367] After the incident, Makić will walk around with plaster around his neck for some time.

On the other side, Zukorlić in his counter-arguments against him said to media that the reason for the problem between him and Makić are financial malversations that allegedly Makić was doing.[368] After the news on forming a third option was spread, Zukorlić was the first to react. He openly accused Diyanet to be behind the new split and for trying to create a third option from the group of dissatisfied imams. He didn't accuse only Diyanet of the crisis, but Ljajić as well. Ljajić was accused by *Sandžak Press*, media close to Zukorlić, that he is together with imam Bekir Makić after forming his "own Islamic Community."[369] After Ugljanin got the Islamic Community that would be loyal to his political option in 2007, according to Zukorlić the second schism was supported by Ljajić himself. That his claims are true is best seen in the fact Makić almost daily was hosted by the media outlet controlled by Ljajić's SDP. He became a favorite TV preacher of the RTV Novi Pazar. If Ljajić was not directly involved in the split of 2013, he certainly did claim the protection of the group.

Besides the tensions between the two sides, during the schism, the relation among the leadership of both Islamic Communities was ruined as well. As the rivalry entered the blind alley, slowly opposition to Zilkić and Zukorlić started emerging within. Some imams became uncomfortable with the policies and the stubborn attitude of their leaders when it comes to unification. Seemingly they decided to search for other options and to conclude the unification. Serbian paper *Danas* conducted an interview with an alleged supporter of creating the new Islamic Community which confirms that Zukorlić's fears were not unfounded. The source, which preferred to stay anonymous, confirmed the rumors on Diyanet's support. The same source even corrected the words of Zukorlić by saying that amount Diyanet is paying is not 500 EUR but 300 EUR. He claimed that 27 imams from both Islamic communities are benefiting

365 Ibid.

366 Ibid.

367 Bekir Makić's in interview for RTV Novi Pazar, April 2013: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifTMR_FQP4s

368 Muamer Zukorlić's interview for Bosnian TV1 in 2013: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VYozRX-nj-18&t=16s

369 "Attacks on Islamic Community through the initiative for recouncilation in 2011-2013 was led by Rasim Ljajić", Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović on 26.01.2018.

from Diyanet's financial help and that more than a hundred employees from both Islamic Communities have signed the initiative for unification.[370] After being fired by the Islamic Communities in Belgrade and Novi Pazar, in fear of their existential future and living under "various maltreatments", imams decided to ask for Diyanet's help. Bekir Makić, once a close associate of Zukorlić, after allegedly being physically assaulted by the Mufti became a leader of the group of disfranchised imams.[371]

Makić turned some of Zukorlić's supporters against him. He launched an initiative for the unification of the Islamic Community which was signed by a large number of local intellectuals. With the emergence of imams that distanced themselves from Mešihat and Belgrade, Görmez allegedly even welcomed them at the Diyanet's office in Mecca, where more than 100 unhappy imams signed a petition for the reconciliation of Islamic Communities.[372] On the other hand, Makić and his group failed to explain how a third Islamic Community would be 'united' when still Zukorlić and Zilkić had much larger support among the Muslims and the majority of infrastructure in their hands.[373] Makić tried to assure media that he is not after creating a third Islamic Community, but a united one. He confirmed the claims that the group is receiving financial aid from Turkey and added how this initiative is also supported by the embassies of the US and the UK. Makić's words indicate that some other geopolitical players might be involved in the process as well. That Makić was for stronger Turkish influence in Sandžak and the region is demonstrated by him just before Erdoğan's October 2017 visit, when he publicly stated in his official Facebook profile that Erdoğan is a man "who walks with the steps of Sultan and Caliphs and goes with the footsteps of his good predecessors-Caliphs." Makić ends his public statement with the words; "welcome Sultan and the pride of Ummah."[374] In another social media statement, Makić says; „without dilemma, Turkey is something the most beautiful and the most positive that is happening to Muslim Ummah (world)."[375] Makić's statements clearly show that he was not hiding the excitement about Turkey and the wish to be subdued under stronger Turkish control over the religious affairs. With the adventure of creating a third Islamic Community Diyanet would add one more Islamic authority to a very complex equation and further division among Bosniaks. This was another problem that proves Diyanet's wrong strategy, and according to Kavazović 'shallow' approach to the problem.

After receiving the news about the new schism Bosnian Rijaset did not hurry to ruin the relations with Diyanet. Rijaset was not interested in severing the ties with Diyanet, which will be confirmed by the words of Kavazović amid the last schism.[376] The first confirmation about creating a third option by Diyanet came from Zukorlić.

370 S. Novosel, "Finansiranje protivnika muftije Zukorlića", Danas, August 29, 2013, http://www.danas.rs/danasrs/drustvo/finansiranje_protivnika_muftije_Zukorli%C4%87a.55.html?news_id=266826

371 Ibid.

372 Ibid.

373 Mešihat controls the big majority of mosques and other infrastructure in Sandžak region.

374 Bekir Makić's official Facebook page, accessed November 15, 2017, https://www.facebook.com/bekir.Makić

375 Ibid.

376 Husein ef. Kavazović, "Reisu-l-ulema Kavazović o Muftiji i Sandžaku"

Learning about the plans, Mešihat organized a session to discuss the issue. A letter to the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina was composed, concluding thirteen points that were reached during the session, which was signed by Zukorlić. In the letter, Mešihat asked new Bosnian Reisu-l-ulema Kavazović to react against the initiative.[377] According to the letter that was leaked by the media even a foundation was created by Görmez to financially support Zukorlić's opponents. In the letter, it was claimed that Diyanet is paying 500 EUR to imams which are willing to proceed with the unification act on their own. The mentioned group of imams were coming from both Islamic Communities and were unhappy with Zukorlić's and Zilkić's leadership. In the letter to Kavazović, Zukorlić asks Sarajevo to end the Turkish initiative, which he claims, is extremely "harmful" for Bosniaks. He even put Görmez to the same rank with "those responsible for the schism."[378] In the same letter, the mufti is saying that Mešihat is ready to work on the reconciliation, but not with those responsible for the schism like, "Vojislav Koštunica, head of Diyanet Mehmet Görmez, Sulejman Ugljanin and Rasim Ljajić."[379] He equated Görmez with Belgrade, by putting the Diyanet on the same level as his old foes. He also requested from Kavazović to "resist to all the pressures from Diyanet" and "to protect Islamic Community and Muslims", and from Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan to react to the scandal, by asking him to "take the necessary measures", after Diyanet's activities of interfering in internal affairs were exposed.[380] This was a turning point after which Sarajevo and Novi Pazar decide to end the reconciliation initiative. Diyanet's activities forced Zukorlić to launch a public anti-Diyanet campaign. Another negative effect of Diyanet's activities was Sarajevo's decision to end the further support for the Turkish initiative. Without Kavazović' and Zukorlić's participation, it was not possible to conduct unification.

Association of Citizens League of Sandžak, close to Zukorlić, published a text accusing Diyanet of seeking to establish full control over the Islamic Communities in the region, like in the cases of Montenegro, Macedonia, and Kosovo. The text reflects uneasiness with creating a new Islamic Community that would be loyal to Ankara. According to the text, dismissed Bekir Makić and Jakup Leković, are acting as the front-men of the initiative. Authors claim in the text that the fact Turkey is waiting for a green-light from Serbia to proceed with the plan is very indicative. Composers of the letter complained about how the interests of Bosniaks were ignored, in order to preserve good diplomatic relations with Belgrade. The expectation from Belgrade to give a "green light" to another Islamic Community whose "spiritual" center would be outside Serbian borders, in this case in a much stronger and bigger country like Turkey, is another reflection of Diyanet's miscalculations. Since the beginning of the initiative, Serbia demonstrated a clear stance that it opposes any uncontrollable

377 S. Novosel, "Zukorlić traži da ga zaštite od Görmeza", Danas, September 18, 2013, http://www.danas.rs/danasrs/drustvo/Zukorlić_trazi_da_ga_zastite_od_Görmeza.55.html?news_id=267895

378 S. Novosel, "Zukorlić traži da ga zaštite od Görmeza"

379 Ibid.

380 S. Novosel, "Muftija Zukorlić uslovljava svog vrhovnog poglavara", *Danas-RTV Novi Pazar*, September 20, 2013,https://rtvnp.rs/2013/09/20/muftija-zukorli-uslovljava-svog-vrhovnog-poglavara/4800

foreign influence on its Muslim citizens. Even the Islamic Community of Serbia was against Diyanet's attempt of forming a "united Islamic Community."[381]

President of the *Bosniak National Foundation* Hako Duljević that is connected to the *World Bosniak Congress* formed by Cerić and Zukorlić, wrote an open letter to the Turkish political establishment, warning them about the negative consequences of creating a third Islamic Community. One part of the letter blames the "certain circles in Turkey" for supporting the third option.[382]

The author of the letter also reminded the Turkish side about the historical achievements of the Bosniaks during the Ottoman period, where they as people were living along the border with the Habsburg Empire and defending the Ottoman borders for centuries and dying in Sublime Porte's endless wars.[383]

In the same letter, Duljević puts forward the fear that genocide might happen again to Bosniaks if Ankara helps the further divisions. The letter reminds the Turkish side about the role of the Islamic Community in the process of building Bosniak national consciousness and how Turkish help for this cause is welcomed and expected. But, if Turkey is not willing to help, she should neither be a barrier for achieving the "affirmation of Bosniak national identity", says in the letter.[384] With the plans on creating a third Islamic Community, Turkey was now bringing damage to the cause in which the Islamic Community invested great energy since the early 1990s. The author was clear in the letter; if you can help us on our mission of affirming Bosniak national identity you are welcomed to help, if not, please get off our way. Ankara is warned by the author not to position itself among the countries which have "colonial ambitions."[385] When it comes to the problem of Islamic Communities in Sandžak it was of fundamental importance if Bosniaks are to survive as a nation in the tough Balkans.

> Any other attempt which is not in function of this cause will be understood as someone's will to make, colonizers, rulers over this geography once more, which altogether means a model under which various manipulators will take away our youth, continues in the letter.[386]

Few days before Erdoğan's October 2017 visit to Serbia, when the initiative for

381 "Muslimani u Sandžaku protiv uticaja Turske", BN Televizija, Accessed on January 13, 2018, http://www.rtvbn.com/17380/muslimani-u-Sandžaku-protiv-turske

382 Hako Duljević, Predsjednik Bošnjačke Nacionalne Fondacije Hako Duljević uputio pismo Ministru vanjskih poslova Republike Turske Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Bošnjačka Nacionalna Fondacija*, May 9, 2013, http://www.bnfondacija.org/site/NASLOVNA/tabid/55/ctl/ArticleView/mid/542/articleId/14/Predsjednik-Bosnjacke-Nacionalne-Fondacija-Hako-Duljević-uputio-pismo-Ministru-vanjskih-poslova-Republike-Turske-Ahmetu-Davutoğlu.aspx

383 A romanticized view of Bosniaks bleeding for the glory of the Empire is a discourse occasionally used by Bosniak nationalist historiography. Many chapters of Bosniak history textbooks for primary and high schools remind the school kids of Bosniak warriors being a food to gunpowder in various Ottoman wars. For more see: Jahja Muhasilović, "Bosna Hersek Güncel Tarih Ders Kitaplarında Osmanlı/Türk İmajı", Master Thesis, İstanbul Üniversitesi, İstanbul, 2015, YÖK Tez No. (422209)

384 Hako Duljević, Predsjednik Bošnjačke Nacionalne Fondacije Hako Duljević uputio pismo Ministru vanjskih poslova Republike Turske Ahmet Davutoğlu

385 Ibid.

386 Ibid.

the unification was de facto dead, the Turkish embassy in Belgrade had some attempts to revive the process.[387] But, all the attempts went in vain. The initiative was not revived. Dr. Rešad Plojović, who was at that time Deputy-President of Mešihat and the director of Mešihat's madrasah, wrote an open letter to the Turkish president before he visited Serbia. In the letter, Plojović reminded the Turkish president about "damages" done to the unity of the Islamic Community by some circles in Turkey that are close to Ugljanin and Ljajić. As it is sad by Plojović in the letter where he is addressing the Turkish President,

> there are some people around you who in the name of Turkey are financing all those who want to bring harm to honest, honorable, dignified, and real representatives of the people here…[388]

Mešihat blamed certain people close to political leadership in Turkey for supporting Ugljanin and Ljajić in their attempt to crush the Mešihat. From the context of the letter, a discomfort can felt regarding the fact that Turkey might have taken Ugljanin and Ljajić as allies in Sandžak rather than Mešihat or Zukorlić. In the period when the letter was written the later was not mufti but MP in the Serbian parliament. Author of the letter continues by saying;

> Dear president you have taken Ugljanin as a person to communicate within Sandžak, and after him also Ljajić by thinking that they are political representatives of Bosniaks in Sandžak…for a long time, they are not the same for the Bosniaks in Sandžak what they once were.[389]

Since 2016 Zukorlić was no more a mufti in Sandžak, but now a politician with a political party that even managed to enter the Serbian parliament. By the letter of his affiliate, his new political party might be searching for an ally in Erdoğan. After years of being marginalized by Belgrade Zukorlić decided to fight with the political means for his cause. He even entered a coalition with the ruling Serbian Progressive Party of Serbian president Aleksandar Vučić. In order to prevent the attacks on Mešihat from the local Bosniak politicians, he needed to stop the support from Turkey they enjoyed. For this, he felt the necessity of an ally with regional credibility like Erdoğan.

Another reason for opening up the issue of the failed initiative before Erdoğan's October 2017 visit might lay in Mešihat concern that Turkey might try to restart the unfinished task of uniting two Islamic Community, which might imply a further legitimization of the Islamic Community of Serbia or even worse creation of a third

387 "They *(Turks)* get the will when someone is coming to visit Serbia or Sandžak. They get the will to show the power of the coming person, in this case Erdoğan. Like he is going to solve the problem with the magic stick. But they lose the will*(energy)* when parade is over. After that issues became forgotten. After that call from the embassy I didn't hear anything regarding the initiative. Of course Turks can help, of course they are welcomed to help. But in order for someone to be helpful he first has to stop being a distraction. You can't be a help and distraction in the same time.", Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović, conducted on 26.01.2018.

388 Rešad ef. Plojović, "Bratsko pismo Dr. Rešad ef. Plojovića upućeno predsjedniku Redžepu Taipu Erdoğanu" *Sandžak Press*, October 7, 2017, http://Sandžakpress.net/bratsko-pismo-dr-resad-ef-Plojovića-upuceno-predsjedniku-redzepu-taipu-Erdoğanu

389 Ibid.

Islamic Community. Both scenarios represented a nightmare for Mešihat. Even for all Bosniaks in the region, as they would now have not two, but three religious authorities. This implied new tensions and even renewing of the violence across the region.

What is indicative in the letter, as it is in the previous ones, is the fact that Mešihat was addressing the problems caused by the unification initiative exclusively to Erdoğan, blaming "some people around him" for the mess caused during the Turkish initiative. Communication was directed towards Erdoğan himself. In all letters, it is underlined that supporters of Ugljanin or Ljajić are responsible for influencing Turkish decision-makers. All the letters were written in the context that Erdoğan is not aware of the harm that has been done by some circles in Turkey and Sandžak in the name of Turkey. Even as early as April 2009, few months before the initiative was launched, Zukorlić said in one of his interviews to a Bosnian magazine that Prime Minister Erdoğan and President Gül are not aware of all the dynamics of the initiative. On the question of whether the President and Prime Minister of Turkey were aware of the process, Zukorlić explicitly replied,

> No, absolutely not… in Turkey, there was a lot of misinformation even among the present ruling circles.[390]

Strong lobbying forces inside Turkish politics were navigating the official state position regarding the Sandžak and the initiative.[391] During the Turkish initiative, SDA Sandžak and Ugljanin's close affiliates in Turkey have overruled the Mešihat's voice among diplomatic circles in Ankara. That Mešihat was right about being concerned was confirmed during Erdoğan's diplomatic visit to Serbia in 2017 when he took the Islamic Community of Serbia as an interlocutor. Erdoğan's visit and the recitation of the Holy Qur'an in Belgrade's Bajrakli Mosque was a symbol of this decision. Zukorlić on many occasions repeated that he believes how information about the happenings in Sandžak is not fully reaching Erdoğan.

Confirmation of the fears that Erdoğan is not aware of the influence that was done by "some circles" was once more emphasized by Zukorlić in an interview he gave in 2017 when asked about Turkey's role in Sandžak. He said to local Sandžak television that, "some close allies of Ugljanin in Turkey" permanently "spread lies" about him of being a "Wahhabi and destroying Ottoman legacy in Sandžak."[392] He even added in the same interview that it is normal for Erdoğan to believe in this lies when he is serviced with wrong information about him by;" the "Turkish embassy, Serbian state, his Minister of Foreign Affairs." He also added that; "this is how the state functions."[393] According to Zukorlić when you receive all these distorted reports from the ground, it is logical to act according to the advice provided in those

390 Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Faruk Vele, *Mislili su da će nas srušiti za tri dana*, Dnevni Avaz/Sedmica, April 11, 2009.

391 One of the major lobbying groups are Bosniaks from Sandžak living in Turkey.

392 Muamer Zukorlić, "Zukorlić: Turska je velika sila i mogla bi pomoći projektu autoput Sarajevo-Novi Pazar"

393 Ibid.

reports.[394] Zukorlić and the people around him see Erdoğan as a victim of a wrong reporting about the situation in Sandžak. He also believes that Erdoğan's personality would not allow him to support the destruction of the Islamic Community.[395]

Even Bosnian Reisu-l-Ulema Kavazović in one of his public appearances on Bosnian television, when asked about Turkish initiative, said something that indicates how lobbying activities of some Bosniaks from Sandžak that are living in Turkey might be decisive in directing Diyanet's approach to the problem. Kavazović said;

> don't forget that many Sandžak Bosniaks live in Turkey and that Turkey has a special angle of view regarding the area of Sandžak. Those Muslims that live in Turkey are making pressure on Diyanet for Turkey to help to get the situation in order there (Sandžak).[396]

Contrary to Zukorlić, Kavazović's statements were much more balanced when it comes to Turkey's role during the initiative, as he "believes that they need the help from Turkey"[397] and that the "help is necessary and welcomed."[398] All in all, Mešihat and Zukorlić had a strong impression that Erdoğan is not aware of what was done in the region under the initiative card and that he would support Mešihat if he finds out what was going on during the process of uniting two Islamic Communities. Plojović repeats this view in the open letter from October 2017, when says;

> Honorable President some individuals have threatened and scared us, and have called us to meetings in Turkey and were putting ultimatums in front of us, asking us to do things they expected from us, they asked from us to leave our struggle for freedom and to end our ties with BiH and Reisu-l-ulema.
>
> We can not accept this, because we strongly believe it would be harmful to us, and that it is not your request or wish. After all, you are someone who is well aware of what is the price of and the value of freedom, contrary to slavery.[399]

Mešihat hoped that Erdoğan would abolish any further attempts on restoring the initiative for unification that would imply for Mešihat to sever its ties with Bosnian Rijaset and thus tear out Bosniaks in Sandžak from, as Zukorlić names BiH, "their

394 Ibid.

395 "I simply cannot believe that all this could be done to us with Erdoğan's approval. Considering that he demonstrated that he is a great leader who is ready to side with those who are endangered and disenfranchised even when it causes a damage to him and the state. In the case of Muslims in Greece he sided with Muslim who rejected the concept where Greek government would empose a mufti. In that case he supported Muslims and the Islamic Community. But in our case, his government, his Ministry of Foreign Affairs and his Diyanet sided with regime's installation of religious authority, which is totally illogical. I cannot accept the possibility that Erdoğan with his character would accept illogicality and unprincipledness like this. It leaves me to believe that information doesn't reach him.", Muamer Zukorlić, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović, conducted on 26.01.2018.

396 Husein ef. Kavazović, "Reisu-l-ulema Kavazović o Muftiji i Sandžaku" Filmed (Sometimes in 2013). YouTube video, Duration: 08:48, Posted (October, 2013): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHaKD3LKES8

397 Ibid.

398 Ibid.

399 Rešad ef. Plojović, "Bratsko pismo Dr. Rešad ef. Plojovića upućeno predsjedniku Redžepu Tajipu Erdoğanu" *Sandžak Press*, October 7, 2017, http://Sandžakpress.net/bratsko-pismo-dr-resad-ef-Plojovića-upuceno-predsjedniku-redzepu-taipu-Erdoğanu

matrix." Mešihat didn't have a problem with Erdoğan personally but with those, they call "certain circles" in Turkey. Mešihat identified these circles to be close to Ugljanin and Ljajić, who used different means to weaken them by using Turkey's capacity as a regional power.[400] The decision by Diyanet's religious attache in Serbia to give a menşura in February 2019 to the newly elected Mufti of Sandžak supported by the Islamic Community of Serbia once again caused the disappointments in Mešihat. Relations that seemed as improving between were once again damaged by this act.

Turkish diplomacy chiefly accepted Ugljanin and Ljajić as their interlocutor in Sandžak. This was once more confirmed during Erdoğan's 2017 visit to Serbia when Ugljanin and his Bosniak National Council with warm welcomings hosted him in Novi Pazar. On the other side, Mešihat was almost isolated to a small protocol signed with the Directorate for Foundations of Turkey about the restoration of an Ottoman-era bath in Novi Pazar. During the visit to Novi Pazar, the Turkish delegation gave the weight to SDA Sandžak and Ugljanin. On the other hand, a protocol ceremony with Mešihat indicates that was Turkey after all searching for a balance. This time the Turkish balance favored SDA Sandžak and Ugljanin. Ironically, what time has shown that Zukorlić's uncompromising stance regarding the spiritual ties with Sarajevo has isolated him from Turkey's diplomatic circles. Turkey was sucked into the complexity of the quagmire in the Balkans where the political elite in Ankara didn't have enough knowledge and sensibility to push regional actors to play in the favor of its own strategic goals but instead became victims of the political ambitions of the local leaders and passive object of the decades-long power struggle. Regional politicians and religious leaders managed to use Ankara as an instrument for punishing their political opponents.

Summa summarum Turkey's attempt to unite Islamic Communities in Serbia has failed. At the beginning of the initiative, all sides were expecting that Turkey would act according to their sensitivities. Looking from this point it becomes clear all involved actors saw in Turkey a strong regional player that would work in legitimizing their goals. Primarily because of various miscalculations, Ankara was brought to an impossible position, as in one moment it had to make a difficult decision. Damaging relations with Sarajevo or Belgrade was at stake. Turkey was not interested in ruining the relations, but decided to make another ill-advised step by supporting the 'third option.'

400 In one of his rare appearances in Turkish media Muamer Zukorlić when asked about those who are spreading information in Turkey about him being anti-Turkish and pro-Wahabbi, he pointed to the various Bosniak NGO organizations in Turkey that have close political ties to Sulejman Ugljanin. Probably the largest Bosniak NGO in Turkey is Bosna-Sancak Derneği (Bosnia-Sandžak Association) based in Bayrampaşa neighborhood. The association is known to have particularly close ties to Sulejman Ugaljnin. Even though NGO has two branches, its main branch that is based in Istanbul's Bosniak neighborhood of Bayrampaşa is known for not hiding the negative opinion of Muamer Zukorlić and has sided with the Islamic Community of Serbia after the split. Sulejman Ugljanin is often a guest of the Association. On the other hand, some prominent members of the Association don't hide their open support for SDA or Islamic Community of Serbia based in Belgrade. In the last years, the 'Bayrampaşa branch' of the NGO enjoys close ties with the ruling AKP which in turn might be responsible for securing them a possibility to influence AKP's official stances vis a vis Serbia and Sandžak.**;** Erdoğan was informed about the problem in Sandžak in 2011 by Cerić himself. He had a chance to hear Rijaset's position regarding the issue during the visit by the Bosnian delegation. As a part of the visit to at the time, Prime Minister Erdoğan and Cerić had a separate meeting that lasted for few hours, See: Aziz Kadribegović, "Otovorena nova stranica u odnosima Islamskih zajednica Bosne i Hercegovine i Republike Turske", *Preporod*, 6.

Ankara backed an option that didn't have enough supporters among imams or pious Muslims. A decision to form one more Islamic Community with few imams to create a "unified Islamic Community" represented another paradox. To continue on this path meant seriously risking damaging the relations with Bosniaks. Being frustrated with Turkish ambition both Mešihat and Bosnian Rijaset turned their back to the initiative, thus ended the initiative. Zukorlić even confirmed this in an interview for media when he said; "there was indeed a cooling in the relations with Diyanet."[401] He saw the reason for this in the fact that Diyanet "participated in the division of the Islamic Community."[402] Ankara faced a diplomatic defeat in the Balkans. The trust between Diyanet and the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina thus Mešihat was damaged as a direct consequence of the initiative. Turkey started being perceived as following hidden agenda in the region, which was confirmed by Zukorlić in his interview to Serbian *Pink 3 Info* television when he said;

> mainly those factors coming from abroad and bringing some money they would like to turn us into servants and expect from us to run around for their interests; I really cannot do that, my religion and my dignity are not allowing me to do that..., I believe that these people will soon be under the attack of the government itself because they are not doing good to Turkey either.[403]

Turkey's public diplomacy proved not to be up to the task in dealing with the complex issues in the Balkans. The positive outcome was the fact that the crisis didn't further unfold in a direction that would damage ties permanently, but certain political developments that unfolded after 2014 came as a refreshment to the strained relations.

5.10.11. Definitive Collapse of the Initiative

After the formal split between Mešihat and Diyanet in 2015 and 2016 main architects of the Turkish initiative will leave their positions. Some will be removed in a pretty dramatic way.[404] The first one to go was Ahmet Davutoğlu. After falling out of President's favor for his political choices that didn't fit Erdoğan's vision of Turkey he was forced to resign from the position of Prime Minister in May 2015. He held the position since August 2014. After his resignation, Davutoğlu will be marginalized in the political circles in Turkey, which meant that his backing of already dead initiative in Serbia came to an end. Ironically one of his last visit abroad as Prime Minister was to Banja Luka, capital of the Serb majority entity in Bosnia

401 Muamer Zukorlić, "Zukorlić: Turska je velika sila i mogla bi pomoći projektu autoput Sarajevo-Novi Pazar"
402 Ibid.
403 Muamer Zukorlić, Zukorlić o Dijanetovim bolesnim ambicijama!" Filmed (sometimes in 2016) YouTube video, Duration: 08:57, Posted (November 16, 2016): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4baYhg86rR0
404 It is important to underline that neither Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina nor did Diyanet severed their ties. Ankara and Sarajevo never claimed publicly that they have bad relations, except Zukorlić's few public statements claiming that they passed through 'certain coldenings' in ties with Diyanet. Both sides claim that relation is excellent, which probably is true, but regarding the participation in the initiative, Bosnian Rijaset understood that it doesn't have unconditional support from Ankara for its cause which in turn has created certain disappointments.

and Herzegovina, where he participated at the opening of Ferhadija mosque restored with Turkey's financial help. During his speech at the ceremony, the words he used were once more perceived as neo-Ottomanist, which in turn resulted in strong criticism from Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik.[405]

The same month Davutoğlu resigned, Islamic Community of Serbia in Belgrade entered a crisis. Adem Zilkić and the whole Rijaset together with Jusufspahić was fired in May 2016. They were fired by the order of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Community of Serbia. Zilkić strongly protested this decision. Zilkić accused the Supreme Assembly that its decision was done without securing a necessary majority previously. In the first instance, he refused to accept the decision, and kept calling himself a "Reis of Serbia."[406] Other employees blamed him for leaving the Islamic Community in bad financial conditions. The greatest paradox is that Zilkić blamed the Serbian state that it is trying to get rid of the Islamic Community of Serbia through the Jusufspahić brothers, who according to him work for the state.[407] He used the same words Zukorlić previously used against him and Jusufspahić when the two carried out a coup back in 2007. Now he was a victim of a similar coup he put Mešihat through. Sead ef. Nasufović will replace Zilkić in the position of Serbian Reisu-l-ulema.

That even SDA Sandžak was unhappy how the situation with the division of the once united Islamic Community unfolded was confirmed by Davut Nuriler, a close affiliate of Sulejman Ugljanin and probably his greatest lobbyist in Turkey. Nuriler confirmed in an interview conducted with him that the whole separation of the Islamic Community and the forming of the second Islamic Community was a mistake and harmful for Bosniaks in Sandžak. He said;

> A move with Zilkić was wrong, this was a trap, we've been deceived here, we shouldn't do it… they left him (Ugljanin) with no choice, as Sandžak Bosniaks we fall into this trap.[408]

Mehmet Görmez will resign from the position of the President of Diyanet on 31 July 2017. He was together with Ahmet Davutoğlu among the chief architect of the Turkish initiative. His resignation, together with Davutoğlu's implied that it was over with the initiative. The reason to believe that he went out of President's favor lays in the statement that was given by the president just a few days after the resignation of Görmez when Erdoğan criticized Diyanet for acting very late in preventing the rise

405 During his Banja Luka speech, in similar populist fashion as in previous years when he served as a Foreign Minister, now as a Prime Minister of Turkey he used statement like; "we were here, we are now here and we will stay here forever. "Milorad Dodik, a President of Republika Srpska said that Davutoğlu sent Neo-ottomanist messages in his speech. "Dodik: Davutoglu iz Banja Luke poslao neoosmanske poruke", *Klix*, 08.05.2016, Accessed on November 19, 2018, https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/dodik-davutoglu-iz-banje-luke-poslao-neoosmanske-poruke/160508076

406 "Zilkić ne prihvata smjenu: Ja sam Reis", Sandžačke Novine, Accessed on January 13, 2018, http://www.sandzacke.rs/teme/Zilkić-ne-prihvata-smjenu-ja-sam-reis/

407 Ibid.; At that time Muhamed Jusufspahić was in Serbia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while his brother Mustafa was in Ministry of Defense.

408 Davut Nuriler, Interview with Jahja Muhasilović, Interview with Davut Nuriler, Conducted on 28.09.2017 in Istanbul

of the Gülen movement.[409] The resignation of Davutoğlu and Görmez has certainly gladdened Zukorlić who in an interview to local media, in the capacity of MP in the Serbian parliament, said;

> what is positive is that two key people responsible for the breaking of the Islamic Community, former Foreign Minister and Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu and Head of Diyanet Mehmet Görmez, are removed. I believe that Davutoğlu and Görmez are not removed because they were good, but because they were bad.[410]

As it was already mentioned after 2010 Zukorlić acted more actively in the political life in Serbia. After achieving success in the 2010 elections for BNV and forming a party, he achieved yet another political success in 2016, after his new political party won two parliamentary seats in the 2016 Serbian parliamentary elections. This represented a big success for the former mufti and his young party. He continued the struggle for the political legitimacy among Bosniaks, next to his historical rivals Ugljanin's SDA Sandžak and Ljajić's SDP. What gave him more strength was the decision to collaborate with the president of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić. Zukorlić campaigned among Bosniaks for their support to Vučić. Unusual action for Zukorlić, a staunch nationalist at the same time and a former Mufti, to campaign in favor of a former radical Serbian nationalist. But, Vučić has transformed into a more pro-European politician in recent years which in turn has brought him success in mainstream politics. This strategy of mufti will pay off after Vučić was elected for the position of Serbian president in 2017, while still preserving the strong presence in the parliament through his Serbian Progressive Party.[411] Zukorlić and his party will be rewarded by entering the parliament. More importantly, all the previous attacks on Mešihat by the various governments in Belgrade ended under Vučić's SNS.

Today Zukorlić is an MP in Serbia parliament and the president of the Parliamentary Committee for Education, Science, Technological Development, and Information Society. The position of presiding over the Committee for Education has put him in a favorable position to fight for the official recognition of the educational network he has created in Sandžak. However Zukorlić is now probably stronger than ever, and vis a vis Turkish initiative is more than ever in a position to block any "harmful" attempts of unification of Islamic Communities that don't fit the interests of Sarajevo and Mešihat.

All the mentioned developments, plus intensified internal divisions among the various groups in the Islamic Community of Serbia have further strengthened the position of the Mešihat and Bosnian Rijaset. Since the internal crisis with Zilkić

409 "Erdoğan'dan: Diyanet çok ama çok geç kaldı", Hüriyyet, Accessed on January 13, 2018, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/Erdoğandan-diyanet-isleri-baskanligi-dogu-ve-guneydogudaki-calismalarda-cok-ama-cok-gec-kaldi-40541299

410 Muamer Zukorlić, "Zukorlić: Turska je velika sila i mogla bi pomoći projektu autoput Sarajevo-Novi Pazar", Filmed (September 2017), YouTube, 18:23, Posted (September 13, 2017), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58YCgFBLN7s

411 Srpska Napredna Stranka (SNS) in Serbian

previously, the Islamic Community of Serbia entered a new one in 2018. Divisions among the leadership of the Islamic Community of Serbia have culminated in March 2018 when Hasib ef. Suljović, Mufti of Sandžak, decided to depart from Belgrade. Suljović was one of the leaders of the group that has participated in schism back in 2007. In March 2018 internal tensions unfolded between the Reisu-l-ulema Sead ef. Nasufović and Mufti of Sandžak region Hasib ef. Suljović after an imam of the local Bor Mosque known to be close to Suljević was physically attacked. Beside Grand Mufti Nasufović, Suljović accused Fuad Bećićanin, a politician from the SDA Sandžak, for the attacks.[412] According to the news media close to SDA Sandžak, Suljović allegedly said that he refused the "immoral offer" from the same party.[413] While on the other hand Serbian Reisu-l-ulema Nasufović previously claimed that "self-proclaimed mufti" Suljović acts as an "extended hand" of Zukorlić.[414] Nasufović's words might be unfounded accusations as previously media close to Mešihat and Zukorlić accused Suljović of trying to form "one more para-religious institution."[415] Whatever of the claims is true, this division represented a great blow for the Islamic Community of Serbia as its basis in the Sandžak, the region because of which the schism happened in the first place, was weakened by the departure of Suljović. In the meantime, while the Islamic Community of Serbia was passing through turbulent times, according to the media close to Mešihat four jamaats left the other Islamic Community and returned under the authority of Mešihat. It was also reported by the media close to Mešihat that negotiations for the return of three more jamaats from the Islamic Community of Serbia are continuing.

One of the first positive signs of the normalization of ties between the Turkish government and Mešihat was the signing of a protocol for the reconstruction of Isa-Beg's bath in Novi Pazar in 2016 that was again confirmed during Erdoğan's visit to Novi Pazar in October 2017, when Mešihat and Directorate for Foundations signed a statement on the Intention of Cooperation.[416] This is an important example that proves how ice started melting on both sides. A positive development indicating the rationalization of the relation.

After Husein ef. Kavazović took the post of the Reisu-l-ulema of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina from Cerić in November 2012, relations with Di-

412 "Muslimani u strahu posle prebijanja imama", Večernje Novosti, accessed on March 26, 2018, http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/hronika/aktuelno.291.html:718727-Muslimani-u-strahu-posle-prebijanja-imama; Hasib ef. Suljević, " Kriza u Islamskoj zajednici Srbije/Muftija Suljović: Aktivisti SDA napali imama Bor dzamije!", *Sandzacke novine*, 24. March 2018, Accessed on October 3, 2018, http://www.sandzacke.rs/featured/kriza-u-islamskoj-zajednici-srbije-muftija-Suljović-aktivisti-sda-napali-imama-bor-dzamije-video/

413 "Pretučen imam novopazarske Bor džamije Nezir ef. Salihović", *Sandzacke novine*, 24.03.2018, Accessed on October 3, 2018, http://www.sandzacke.rs/vijesti/crna-hronika/pretucen-imam-bor-dzamije-nezir-ef-salihovic/

414 Sead Nasufović, "Samoproglašeni muftija Suljović djeluje kao produžena ruka Muamera Zukorlića", *Sandzacke novine*, 25.03.2018, Accessed on October 3, 2018, http://www.sandzacke.rs/featured/Nasufović-samoproglaseni-muftija-Suljović-djeluje-kao-produzena-ruka-muamera-Zukorlića/

415 "Raspad-Hasib Suljević formirao jos jednu paravjersku tvorevinu!", *Sandžak press*, 20.03.2018, Accessed on October 3, 2018, http://Sandžakpress.net/raspad-hasib-suljevic-formirao-jos-jednu-paravjersku-tvorevinu

416 "Potpisan protokol o saradnji na rekonstrukciji Isa-begovog hamama", *Mešihat*, 23.10.2017, Accessed on November 25, 2018, http://Mešihat.org/2017/11/23/potpisan-protokol-o-saradnji-na-rekonstrukciji-isa-begovog-hamama/

yanet started slowly normalizing. There was even a talk that the initiative for unification will proceed. Regional media reported that during the late January of 2015 two sides had a meeting where a protocol that includes 12 points was signed. Allegedly 10th point of the protocol was saying that the Turkish Diyanet and Islamic Community of BiH "will work together" in solving the problems of the Balkans' Islamic Communities. [417] The two sides also spoke about the problem of schism in Sandžak. Reportedly they agreed to work together on the formation of a unified Islamic Community in Sandžak and Serbia. This information was not confirmed either by Ankara or Sarajevo. After this report, nothing concrete happened regarding the unification. Even under the leadership of Kavazović, the initiative remained on standby.

Despite the positive approach from the Islamic Community of BiH under Kavazović, another development has shaken the relations once again during early 2019. In February 2019 Senad ef. Halitović, once close affiliate to Zukorlić, was elected as a new president of the Mešihat of Sandžak (controlled by the Islamic Community of Serbia) and as a Mufti of Sandžak by the Islamic Community of Serbia. He replaced Hasib ef. Suljović as the Mufti of Sandžak, after the later entered into conflict with the Serbian Reisu-l-ulema. The Turkish side was once again involved in the crisis. Representatives from Diyanet participated at the ceremony of Halitović's coronation. Menşura was delivered to Halitović by Diyanet's attache in Belgrade himself. Even the letter from the new president of Diyanet Ali Erbaş was read at the ceremony. In the letter Erbaş says,

> I believe that every step that contributes to the unity of Muslims in Serbia is of enormous value. I had wished to personally witness the manifestation of that unity at your academy. I congratulate sincerely respectable Mufti Senad Halitović and ask from the exalted Lord that your honorable duty would be for the well-being of our Muslim brothers that live in that area and for the wellbeing of all Islamic World. I wish that it would be a cause for peace, prosperity, and unity.[418]

Few days after the ceremony Halitović confirmed to the local RTV Novi Pazar, close to Ljajić, very important role of Diyanet in his coronation. He said that the support from Diyanet was "crucial for him to accept the responsibility in the turbulent times…"[419] He added that support from Diyanet is "something special."[420] Interestingly, Halitović was deeply involved in the Turkish organizations in the Balkans before becoming a Mufti. He served in the Hasene, NGO affiliated with Milli Görüş movement. This ceremony once again demonstrated the fact that Turkey decided to side itself with the Islamic Community of Serbia.

The reaction from Mešihat and Zukorlić came soon after. Zukorlić on his Face-

417 Islamska Zajednica: Vernike spaja Ankara?, *Vecernje Novosti*, February 3, 2015, Accessed on November 15, 2018, http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/drustvo/aktuelno.290.html:532134-Islamska-zajednica-Vernike-spaja-Ankara

418 "Nevjerovatno: Turski Diyanet podrzao razbijanje Islamske zajednice u Srbiji", *Saff*, Accessed on February 18, 2019, doi: http://saff.ba/nevjerovatno-turski-diyanet-podrzao-razbijanje-islamske-zajednice-u-srbiji/

419 Senad ef. Halitović, "Gost dnevnika novoizabrani muftija Sandžački" February 11, 2019, YouTube, 3:15, doi: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBe4LuMZnEM

420 Ibid.

book profile shared a message regarding the ceremony saying,

> Very Honorable President Erdoğan, distinguished brothers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Turkey, respected brothers in Diyanet, if you love us at least half as we love You, stop those who on your behalf break our Islamic Community.[421]

Islamic Community of BiH also condemned the ceremony reminding the public that it is for the religious unity of Muslims in Serbia under the authority led by Mevlud ef. Dudić. Media close to Mešihat shared this official letter from the Islamic Community of BiH from 2016, where it explicitly underlines that Sarajevo recognizes only

> one traditional, legal and legitimate Islamic Community whose leader is Mevlud ef. Dudić…", and ask Serbia "… to accept this fact with full respect.[422] (See Figure D5)

5.11. Concluding Remarks

After the mediation initiative between the Islamic Communities in Serbia's Mešihat accused Turkey of trying to control the Islamic institutions in the region. This attempt was perceived as an interference to internal affairs. Some like Cerić even go that far to accuse Turkey of dividing the Muslims in Serbia. Diyanet's leadership failed to understand the importance of Islamic Communities institutions for the Muslims in the region. Certain interest groups were allowed to kidnap the process for the sake of their political ambitions. The domestic populism of a 'rising Turkey' shouldn't be projected onto foreign policy as it creates a mistrust regarding Ankara's ambitions. The Turkish officials should be more careful regarding the regional power-balance and the national sensitivities of each country in the region, and not turn into an elephant in a china shop. Further ignoring the complex regional power-balance could isolate Turkey and in the long run, turn this country into a marginal factor in the Balkans.

Lobbying forces reoriented Turkey from a country in favor of the 'Bosnian concept' to a sponsor of the Belgrade-backed Islamic Community. Erdoğan's performance in the Bajrakli Mosque and visit to Serbia in 2017 was perceived as proof that Turkey shifted course. Preserving good bilateral relations with Serbia, as well as a firm attitude of Cerić and Zukorlić, certainly did influence Turkey's decision to shift the support. In the end, Turkey sided with Ugljanin and SDA Sandžak. This party became Turkey's main political ally in Sandžak. Misleading and influencing the initiative by the various Turkish NGO's and local media was another problematic issue for Ankara during the process. The Turkish non-state organizations failed to synchronize their strategies towards Turkey's general strategies. Often another way around happened, where sometimes the state itself followed the interests of its non-state sector. All this has created a bitter taste regarding the initiative.

421 Muamer Zukorlić's Facebook page, Accessed on February 18, 2019, https://www.facebook.com/muamer.Zukorlić.16
422 Ibid.

6.
Turkey's Student Exchange Diplomacy: YTB

Hosting international students represent one of the most efficient ways of conducting public diplomacy. The type of diplomacy where a host nation is conducting international students exchange programs as a part of its public diplomacy is called "student exchange diplomacy." According to Nicholas J. Cull,

> the student exchange diplomacy in public diplomacy may be defined as an actor's attempt to manage the international environment by sending its citizens overseas and reciprocally accepting citizens from overseas for a period of study and/or acculturation.[1]

By studying in a hosting country foreign students have a chance to learn more deeply about the hosting country. In giving the example from the US experience of hosting millions of international students Nye also emphasizes the importance of student exchange diplomacy from the aspect of soft power. According to him, hosting millions of international students gives foreign students a more complex and deeper view of the United States with all its positives and negatives.[2] Student exchange diplomacy is also one of the shortest ways for 'relationship building' with the foreign audience which represents one of the most important aspects of public diplomacy. For the former American Under Secretary of Public Diplomacy James Glassman, "Exchanges (programs) are the crown jewels of public diplomacy."[3] A textbook example of a successful relationship building is the case where the majority of the leaders from the states that provided support for the coalition forces in Iraq were US alumni.

As an emerging regional player, Turkey defined the communities abroad with whom it decided to engage more actively. Foreign policy premise AKP follows started taking shape before 2002, precisely with the end of the Cold War. With the rise of AKP, Ankara accelerated the goal of creating its sphere of influence. The new premise is best observable by analyzing the strategy Turkish public relations institutions follow.[4] A sphere of influence is been formed in the geographies where the "related

1 Nicholas J. Cull, *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past*, (Los Angeles: University of Southern California 2009): 20.

2 Mark Leonard, Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy* (London: Foreign Policy Center, 2002), 19.

3 Guy J. Golan, "An Integrated Approach to Public Diplomacy", in *International Public Relations and Public Diplomacy: Communication and Engagement*, ed. Guy J. Golan, Sung-un Yang and Dennis F. Kinsey (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 423.

4 Ayhan Kaya and Ayşe Tecmen, "The Role of Common Cultural Heritage in External Promotion of Modern Turkey: Yunus Emre Cultural Centers", European Institute-Istanbul Bilgi University, Working Paper No: 4 EU/4 (2011): p. 19, 20.

communities" are found. This geographical frame is popularly known as "heart geography"[5] in Turkey.[6] One of the most important foreign audiences for Ankara is Turkish diaspora living in Western Europe, and the Turkish communities scattered across the Balkans and the Middle East. But, the "heart geography" is not limited only to ethnic Turks, but many communities stretching across vast geography from Central Asia to the Balkans, encompassing different ethnic, religious, and racial groups.

One of the first challenges for Turkish diplomacy after the 1960s was setting the communication between the state and Turkish diaspora living in the West. It could be said that Turkey is among the countries that didn't benefit much from its diaspora, especially to an extent some countries like Israel, Armenia, or Albania did. As some other examples show a well-organized diaspora can be critical in bringing the investments to the home country or sending significant amounts of money back home, known as remittances. Compared to some countries in the Balkans for instance, Turkey has a low remittance rate. In some countries like Kosovo or Bosnia and Herzegovina remittances compose more than 10 percent of the national GDP, but in Turkey, even at its heights during the 1970s and 1980s remittances never crossed 5 percent of the GDP. Today they represent less than 1 percent of the total GDP.[7]

During the 1970s Turkey felt the need to organize its diaspora and strengthen its ties to the parent country. One of the reasons for this lays in the fear of assimilation by foreign countries. Assimilation was problematic for the third and fourth generations of migrants. The first generation of Turkish migrants to the industrialized countries of Western Europe and North America were tightly attached to Turkey in the first years, but once strong ties started loosening. The growing problem of ghettoization among the Turkish community abroad represented another serious issue. Policies towards the diaspora were activated more under the AKP government. Rooted in the Millî Görüş movement that was active in diaspora for decades helped AKP to strengthen diaspora policies. Other target groups were the Turks that traditionally live in the Balkans and Cyprus. Especially the wellbeing of the Turks in the Balkans became an important foreign policy agenda of the Özal government when a concept of *Dış Türkler*[8] started taking shape.[9] With the end of the Cold War Turkey will extend Turkic peoples and other Muslim communities in the Balkans, the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Caucasus to the concept of "Overseas Turks and the relative communities."[10]

5 "Gönül coğrafyası" in Turkish

6 Çağlayan Çetin, (2011). "Explaining the Change in Turkey's Identity Question in European Union Accession Process: A Levels of Analysis Approach," *Unpublished MA Dissertation*, Social Sciences Institute, Istanbul Bilgi University, Istanbul, 2011, p. 63-69., YÖK Tez No. (288029), doi: yez.yok.gov.tr

7 The World Bank, The World Bank Data, Personal remittances, received (% of GDP), https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=TR

8 Turks abroad in Turkish

9 Heinz Kramer, *A Changing Turkey: The Challenge to Europe and the United States*, (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2001), p. 146. quoted in Didem Ekinci, Turkey and the Balkans in the Post-Cold War Era: Diplomatic/Political, Economic and Military Relations, Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of International Relations-Bilkent University, Ankara, 2009, 22-23. YÖK Tez No. (235095), doi: tez.yok.gov.tr

10 "Dış Türkler ve akraba toplulukları" in Turkish

To stop the undesired trends the government decided to create an institution that would focus on the mentioned communities and reverse the unwanted trends.[11] The main public diplomacy institution aiming to fulfill this purpose is the Presidency of Turks Abroad and Relative Communities known in Turkish as *Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı* (*YTB*) launched in 2010.[12] YTB is aiming to meet the needs of the communities that share historical, cultural, and geographical ties to the Turkish state and its people and serve as their link to the Turkish government by combining two public diplomacy communication methods, Mass Communication with Network Communication.[13] The idea of reversing the assimilatory, helping diaspora regarding the problems of discrimination, and other unwanted trends can be seen in annual reports published by YTB.

> Our citizens that live abroad face various problems like, xenophobia, Islamophobia, kids that are taken from their parents by different departments, the reunion of families, and education….
>
> To make our citizens more effective with their identities and cultures in countries they are living abroad, we are running various programs.[14]

Besides the Turkish diaspora, YTB is directing its public diplomacy activities towards the communities with whom Turkey shares history, culture, and geography. Proactive foreign since the early 2000s was in a need of an institution that would address the issue of the 'relative communities' living outside Turkey's borders as well. The geographical frame that YTB follows corresponds to the hinterland previously defined during the Özal government. The same hinterland Davutoglu calls Turkey's "strategic depth."[15] The definition of "close" or "relative" communities is defined in a broad context, including the societies that once were subjects of the Ottoman Empire, mainly composing of Muslims living in Turkey's proximity, like Balkans, Caucasus, and the Middle East, plus the distant Turkic "cousins" in Central Asia. Bosniaks are included in the frame of relative communities. Despite being Slavic, the mutual Ottoman past was decisive to incorporate Bosniaks in this group.

6.1. *Where Does the YTB Stand in Turkish Politics and Its Internal Organization?*

When it comes to YTB's position state's hierarchy, it is important to say that like the majority of the Turkish public diplomacy institutions the Presidency is under the supervision of the government. More precisely, YTB was under the direct control of

11 2017 YTB Faaliyet Raporu (Ankara, urtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, 2018), p. 40, 41.
12 YTB abbreviation will be used after this.
13 R.S. Zaharna, "The Soft Power Differential: Network Communication and Mass Communication in Public Diplomacy", *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 2 (2007): 217-221.
14 YTB 2014 Faaliyet Raporu (Ankara, Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, 2015), 1.
15 Ahmet Davutoğlu, Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu, 40th ed. (İstanbul, Küre Yayınları, 2009)

the Prime Minister's Office.[16] One of the appointed Deputy Prime Ministers is in charge of following the work of the institution in the name of Prime Ministry. Like the majority of Turkish public diplomacy institutions, YTB is under the control of the Prime Minister's Office rather than the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. YTB has one President who is responsible for three boards. YTB is composed of three roof boards with a different set of responsibilities. These are:

- Advisory Board for Citizens Living Abroad
- Board for Coordination Evaluation of Cultural and Social Relations
- International Students Evaluation Board

In the hierarchical sense, the President of the YTB is beneath the three boards mentioned above. Under the president's authority, the scheme is more complex as there are various departments and sub-departments. The president has three deputy-presidents each responsible for one of the three head-departments. The entire organizational scheme of the YTB is presented in Graphic 6.1.

YTB today is an official state institution responsible for international students studying in Turkey. Without entering into all the details of the organizational scheme, let's say something boards and departments responsible for the international students. International Students Evaluation Board, one of the three main departments, is responsible for international students studying in Turkey. This board;

was founded to establish the coordination between the institutions that are in charge of the students that are seen by our institutions as appropriate to study in our country and those who came to study in our country through various international agreements and defining the basis for those students to finish their studies in our country in a successful manner.[17]

As it is already mentioned one out of three of the deputy-presidents is responsible for the work of the *Presidency of Department for International Students*[18], which serves as a chief department looking after the needs of international students that came to Turkey through YTB's scholarship program. Besides the Presidency of the Department for International Students, which is directly in charge of international students, there are two more relevant sub-departments. These are Presidency for Department of Processing Information and Presidency of Department for Support Services.

The most relevant for international students is the first one, the Department for International Students, under which *Türkiye Bursları*[19] operates, the main public diplomacy office responsible for providing scholarships to international students

16 With the new constitution that was approved by the public in the 2017 referendum Office of the Prime Minister would be abolished and it would merge with the Presidential Office.

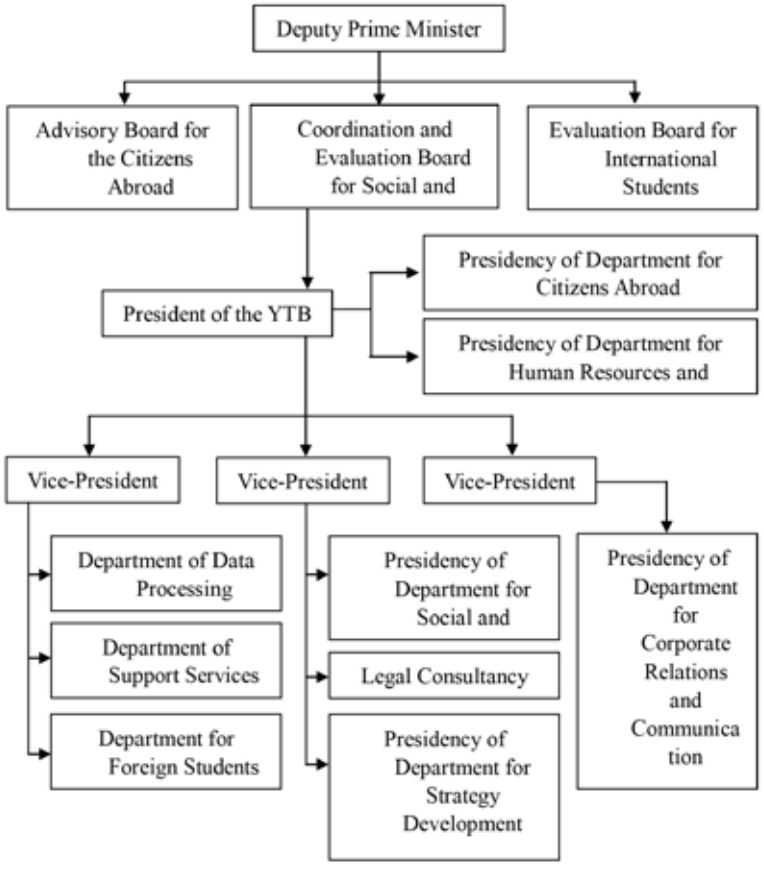
17 2016 YTB İdari Faaliyet Raporu (Ankara, Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, 2017), p. 20.

18 Uluslararasi Öğrenciler Daire Başkanlığı in Turkish

19 Turkey Scholarship

studying in Turkey. Department for International Students is not responsible for international students that study in Turkey through other scholarship programs like EU-sponsored Erasmus, programs provided by the Council for Higher Education (YÖK), or scholarship programs organized between Turkish universities with those overseas, but only for those students that came through Türkiye Bursları's program.[20] Even though many students from BiH and Sandžak study in Turkey with other programs, in this chapter I will mainly focus on those that came through Türkiye Bursları. YTB is the government's official public diplomacy institution and it is the best address for analyzing Turkey's international student policy. Students that came through different arrangements will be only briefly mentioned in this chapter. It is important to mention that YTB's activities in the Balkans are not limited only to the international student program. YTB is also active in other fields as well, but the most recognized of all activities is Türkiye Bursları's scholarship program.

Graphic 6.1 YTB's Organizational Scheme[21]



20 Ibid.

21 2017 YTB Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara, T.C. Başbakanlık – Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, 2018), 11.

Türkiye Bursları is probably the most important program that YTB runs in the Balkans, so this program is at the focus of this chapter, while other activities will be only briefly mentioned as their importance from the aspect of Turkey's position in the region is sometimes marginal. Yet a large number of students from the region that benefit from the scholarship and stay in Turkey for many years make the student program even more important from the aspect of Turkey's soft power and public diplomacy. Turkey Scholarships, which provide a large number of university scholarships for students. The Turkish state was providing scholarships to foreign students even before YTB was formed in 2010. Various other state institutions like the Ministry of National Education or Diyanet and many other private organizations or think tanks were providing scholarships. Many of these institutions proceed with their programs up to date. YTB cooperates with other state institutions regarding the scholarships. With the arrival of a few million Syrian refugees in Turkey since 2011, YTB together with Diyanet launched a special scholarship package for the Syrian nationals.[22]

6.2. Ministry of National Education (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı) and the International Students in Turkey

Joseph Nye in his famous book about soft power speaks about the importance of accomodating international students from the aspect of foreign policy. Higher education scholarships are important from the aspect of building long-term relations between states. Nye reminds us about the words of former US Secretary of State Colin Powell who said that there is no more valuable asset than the friendship of the foreign students educated in the US who will be future world leaders.[23] Charlotte Beers, who served as the Undersecretary of the State for Public Diplomacy under the Bush administration shares a similar opinion with Powell. Speaking about the *Fullbright Student Exchange Programme*'s importance for the US international standing, he said that;

> around half of the leaders of the International Coalition were once exchange students to the US... this has got to be the best buy in the government.[24]

Turkish government recognized the importance of international students, and in recent years decided to actively work in the direction of turning Turkey into a desirable education destination. But, interest in Turkey as a destination for foreign students is not new. This has started as early as the 1960s. After signings various bilateral agreements with other countries foreign students started arriving at Turkish universities. The earliest program was known under the name "Hükümet Bursu" or "Government's scholarship", and was coordinated by the Ministry of National Education (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı).[25] In the first decades, the number of foreign students

22 Bülent Aras and Zulkarnain Mohammed, "The Turkish Government Scholarship Program as a Soft Power Tool", *Turkish Studies*, (2018): 7.

23 Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 46.

24 Mark Leonard, Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy* (London: Foreign Policy Center, 2002), 19.

25 Muhammet Fatih Kaya, "Uluslararası Öğrenci Hareketliliğinde Lider 6 Dünya Ülkesinin Yükseköğretim

studying in Turkey was modest. The first significant jump in terms of numbers will happen during the 1990s influenced by Özal's policy of opening to Central Asia and the Balkans. In 1992 under Özal's presidency, Turkey's international students' policy was for the first time systematized under the project known as "Büyük Öğrenci Projesi" (BÖP) or "Great Student Project."[26] This international student program corresponded to Özal's policy of opening to Central Asian Turkic states that gained their independence from the Soviet Union. It represented an educational aspect of the pro-active foreign policy. Under the project, many students from Central Asian and other "relative communities" had a chance to conduct their higher education in Turkey. The program included applicants from the Balkans as well. The state's scholarship program for international students led by the Ministry of National Education (Milli Egitim Bakanlığı) lasted until 2012 when the scholarship program for international students will be transferred to YTB's newly formed Türkiye Bursları.[27]

Table 6.1 The Number of International Students that Studied in Turkey Before Shifting to the Türkiye Bursları:[28]

Year	Student that came with (BÖP)	Self-financing students (YÖS)	Total number
1993-1994	7.860	7.860	
1994-1995	4.870	8.684	13.554
1995-1996	6.750	8.250	15.000
1996-1997	6.380	9.944	16.324
1997-1998	5.850	12.570	18.420
1998-1999	4.860	13.802	18.662
1999-2000	4.550	13.800	18.350
2000-2001	4.450	13.204	17.654
2001-2002	4.440	12.216	16.656
2002-2003	4.440	11.888	16.328

Tanıtım Uygulamaları ve Türkiye Bursları Tanıtım Stratejisi İçin Bir Model Önerisi", Uzmanlık Tezi, T.C. Başbakanlık-Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, Ankara, 2014, doi: https://www.ytb.gov.tr/uploads/resimler/thesis/muhammet-fatih-kaya-uluslararasi-oegrenci-hareketliliginde-lider-6-duenya-uelkesinin.pdf

26 Mehmetali Akdağ, "Türkiye Bursları Kapsamında Yükseköğrenim için Türkiye'ye Gelen Öğrencilerin Sorunları ve Bu Sorunlara İlişkin Çözüm Önerileri" Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara Üniversitesi, Ankara, 2014, YÖK Tez No. (381789)

27 Selim Öztürk, "Büyük Öğrenci Projesinden Türkiye Bursları Projesine Geçiş Süreci ve Türkiye'nin Öğrenci Politikasındaki Değişim" Uzmanlık Tezi, T.C. Başbakanlık- Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, Ankara, 2014.

28 Mehmetali Akdağ, "Türkiye Bursları Kapsamında Yükseköğrenim için Türkiye'ye Gelen Öğrencilerin Sorunları ve Bu Sorunlara İlişkin Çözüm Önerileri", 25. doi: https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/tezSorguSonucYeni.jsp

2003-2004	4.450	11.296	15.719
2004-2005	4.520	10.778	15.298
2005-2006	4.660	10.821	15.481
2006-2007	3.900	11.993	15.893
2007-2008	3.850	12.979	16.829
2008-2009	4.500	13.650	18.158
2009-2010	4.650	16.711	21.361
2010-2011	5.370	20.850	26.228
2011-2012	5.750	25.420	31.170

6.3. Student Exchange Diplomacy of the Türkiye Bursları

With the transfer under the umbrella of the YTB, the state-sponsored scholarship program was further sophisticated and new practices were introduced. Turkiye Burslari was an institution focusing solely on international students, contrary to the Ministry of National Education that was in charge of Turkey's entire education system. Until 2012 foreign students were required to take so-called TCS exams.[29] With the shift to Türkiye Bursları in 2012 this practice will be abolished, and the interview system was adopted.[30] In the case of Bosnian students, before 2012 evaluation of the international students was conducted mainly in the Turkish Embassy. After this year interviews started being organized in cooperation with other public diplomacy institutions like Yunus Emre Institute. Students would come to the office of the Yunus Emre Institute for the evaluation interview. A representative officer from YTB together with an expert on the region from Turkey, in this case, an expert on the Balkans, would assist the officer in evaluating the applicants.

The authority of the examination and selection of international students was transferred from Ministries to public diplomacy institutions linked directly to the Office of Prime Minister. By the physical transfer of the interviews from the embassies to the public diplomacy institutions the authority to select the international students was submitted under the Prime Minister's Office, which certainly provided more control to the government when it comes to the election of the international students. YTB, Yunus Emre, and other public diplomacy institutions under the Prime Minister's Office limited the authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by eliminating embassies from the process.

29 TCS or Turkish and Relative Communities Examination is university exam for international students that wish to study in Turkey.

30 Mehmetali Akdağ, "Türkiye Bursları Kapsamında Yükseköğrenim için Türkiye'ye Gelen Öğrencilerin Sorunları ve Bu Sorunlara İlişkin Çözüm Önerileri" YüksekLisansTezi, Ankara Üniversitesi, Ankara, 2014, YÖK Tez No. (381789), Page 36.

Among other novelties was the introduction of signing a contract with the new applicants. With the 2012-13 school year, applicants that were accepted to study in Turkey were required to sign a contract with Turkiye Burslari. Among other novelties was prohibiting the international students to enter the job market in Turkey during the study or limiting them to only one level of education.[31] For instance, a student that was previously accepted to a bachelor degree program is forbidden to apply for a Master's degree after finishing the BA level. The new ruling required students to return to their home countries and stay there for at least two years. After the two years period was over, a student becomes eligible to apply again for the scholarship.[32] The problem lays in the fact that a student after applying after two or more years to continue its education in Turkey was to be evaluated under the same criteria as the applicant who is applying for the first time. Türkiye Bursları is not securing any guarantees to its former student for being accepted to the next level of education. The explanation from Turkiye Burslari was that aim was to increase the number of students that would benefit from the scholarship. Another reason for introducing the ruling was to encourage students' return to their homelands. After being refused to get financial help the new regulation forced many students to return to their homelands, even though many wished to continue studies in Turkey.

On the other hand, Türkiye Bursları's new regulation didn't meet the expectations. It forced some students to self-finance their studies at the next level of education, which in turn pushed many international students to enter the labor market in Turkey to finance their education. Contrary to the expectations of the YTB the new regulation didn't stop many who wished to stay in Turkey permanently or to continue their education in third countries. One of the reasons put forward was Turkey's strategic goal to produce useful citizens for their home countries upon their return.[33]

31 In the EU allowing, forbidding or limiting the employment during the university studies or aftermath changes from member to member. Even among the EU member countries there is no common rule that applies to employment of the international students. But, what is common for the majority of the EU member states is that they allow international students to work part-time or limited number of hours per week while they are studying. Countries that are more relevant to Bosnian students like Austria and Germany, allow foreign students to work with the limited hours of work per weak. In Austria it is allowed to work, "not exceeding 10 hours per week without a labour market test, and this can rise to 20 hours a week once the diploma of bachelor's degree has been achieved." For Germany situation is similar, where it is allowed to work if it doesn't "exceed 120 full-days or 240 half-days." In Turkey students that are self-financing or are "registred as workers are allowed to work full time in addition to studying." After finishing their studies Austria allows students to look for a job in time period of six months upon the completition of their studies, while in Germany so called "job seeeker permit" that lasts for 18 months can be issued to the graduates. All this opportunities probably opened the gate for many foreign students, including Bosnian students, to stay in Austria and Germany after finishing their university studies, contrary to Turkey, where majority leave the country after graduating. I don't have the statistics of the percentage of Bosnian students that have stayed to work in Austria, Germany or other EU member states after finishing their studies. *Immigration of International Students to the EU*, European Migration Network Study 2012, European Commission-EMN Synthesis Report, 2012, p. 61, 63. doi: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/immigration-students/0_immigration_of_international_students_to_the_eu_sr_24april2013_final_en.pdf

32 This information was obtained after speaking with many international students benefiting from the Türkiye Bursları scholarship program. Authorities at the YTB failed to respond to the official interview request sent by the author.

33 This information was obtained after speaking with international students benefiting from the Türkiye Bursları scholarship program. Authorities at the YTB failed to respond to the official interview request sent by the author.

On the other hand, limiting access to the scholarship program for students that already benefited from the same, possibly created certain dissatisfactions regarding studying in Turkey.

In his article about Türkiye Bursları, Bülent Aras correlates the satisfaction among the international students with the education in Turkey to the level of satisfaction with the language of instruction. According to his hypothesis, the level of satisfaction with the language of instruction depends on the number of years students spend in Turkey. As the number of years increases the level of satisfaction with the language of instruction and education in Turkey increases as well.[34] Hence, keeping students on shorter-terms in Turkey can be responsible for dissatisfaction with education in Turkey. In this regard, the cancelation of scholarships by Turkiye Burslari to students that were accepted by the previous National Education's program or new regulation aiming to increase the circulation of student body certainly brought harm to Turkey's image as an education destination among the foreign graduates.[35] Aras' survey also found that foreign students are not satisfied with their communication with the YTB. Many complained that YTB is abolishing grants to easy, and how many students spend months without receiving the scholarships.[36]

6.3.1. International Students in Turkey After the Shift to Türkiye Bursları

Transfer to the YTB didn't bring much change in terms of the number of international students. In 2011, the last year of the Ministry of National Education's program, 3871 foreign students were approved eligible for the scholarship. In the next year in 2012, the first year under the YTB, this number rose to 4021; but in the next 2013 year, the number went to 3755, which was even under the numbers from 2011.[37] Even three years later, in 2016, the number of accepted students was still around 4 thousand.

In 2016, 122 thousand students from 172 countries applied for Turkey scholarships, but only less than 4 thousand applicants were approved.[38] Since 2011, there was not much change in terms of the number of accepted students. in the 2012/13 academic year, 12.575 international students were studying with Türkiye Bursları scholarship. Students accepted before the shift to the Türkiye Bursları program are also included in the number. In 2016 this number rose to around 16

34 Bülent Aras and Zulkarnain Mohammed, "The Turkish Government Scholarship Program as a Soft Power Tool", 2.

35 Scholarships were canceled to those who by the Türkiye Bursları were recognized as not being successful enough in their studies. Resons for the abolishment of the grants were prolonged education, failure to graduate on time or insufficient average were generaly as the reasons. With the YTB the cancelation of the scholarships became more common then previously.

36 Bülent Aras and Zulkarnain Mohammed, "The Turkish Government Scholarship...", 13.

37 "Binlerce uluslararası öğrenci 'Türkiye Bursları' projesiyle Türkiye'de", T.C. Başbakanlık Kamu Diplomasisi Koordinatörlüğü, accessed December 10, 2017, https://kdk.gov.tr/haber/binlerce-uluslararasi-ogrenci-turkiye-burslari-projesiyle-turkiyede/312; After YTB took over the state sponsored scholarship programme official status of the overseas students that come to study in Turkey was changed from "foreign students" to "international students" in 2012, YTB 2012 Faaliyet Raporu (Ankara, Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, 2013), p. 34.

38 For more see: https://www.turkiyeburslari.gov.tr/

thousand students. International students were distributed across 105 universities in 55 cities. Parallel to Turkey's rising importance in the international arena the interest in studying in Turkey showed a slight rise as well. This is observable in the number of applicants for the scholarships. According to OECD statistics from 2005, only 12 thousand foreign students studied in Turkey, while seven years later the number was more than doubled to 38 thousand students.[39] Despite the rise since the mid-2000s, the number of accepted students from 2016 shows that there is a stagnation in terms of accepted students since 2013. In that year the number was less than 4 thousand. When compared to 2012, the year when a peak was reached in terms of quantity, there is even a fall in terms of numbers. According to data provided by the annual report of the General Directorate of Migration of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Turkey, that is following all the migration trends in the country, in the year 2016, 3995 Türkiye Bursları scholarships were delivered to foreign students from 142 different countries. In 2017 there was a rise to 5.378 accepted students from 163 countries.[40] It would be interesting to see whether the trend of rising in quantity will continue. At the end of 2018 chances for that seemed slim, as Turkey throughout the year struggled with the currency crisis, which seriously slashed the budgets of all state institutions. All in all, the statistics before 2017 show the number of Türkiye Bursları scholarship holders remained stagnant since YTB's took over from the Ministry of Education.

6.3.2. A shift in the Regional Preferences

According to geographical distribution, most students come from Asia, whether it is the scholarship program of the Ministry of National Education or Turkiye Burslari, this remains a constant. Students, particularly from Turkic countries of Central Asia, are accepted in the greatest numbers. Even during the years when the Ministry of National Education runs the scholarship program, Turkic states dominated the scene. During those years Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan were leaders in terms of the number of foreign students. In the year 2011, the second-largest source of international students was Europe with 1025 students and Africa third with 492 students. (See Graphic 6.2)

Turkiye Burslari has separated scholarship holders into 9 different scholarship categories according to the region of origin. These are; Balkans, all Balkan countries excluding Romania, Black Sea, that include Russia, Romania, Georgia and Mongolia, a program for the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus[41], Bachelor Degree Scholarships for States Speaking the Turkish Language that includes Azerbaijan and

39 OECD.stat, Foreign/international students enrolled, The World Bank, The World Bank Data, https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=RFOREIGN#

40 2017 YTB İdare Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara, Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, 2015), 30.

41 Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) has been proclaimed by the Turkish Cypriot leadership as independent state in 1983, as result of invasion of the island in 1974 by Turkish Armed Forces. Invasion came as a result of attempt of nationalist Greeks to unite island with Greece and clashes between Cypriot Greeks and Cypriot Turks. TRNC is recognized as independent state only by Ankara.

other Central Asian Turkic Republics, Harran Bachelor Degree Scholarships for Iraq, Iran, Syria, State of Palestine, Pakistan and Tajikistan; Turkey-Africa Bachelor Degree Scholarships for whole Africa, Golden Horn Bachelor Degree Scholarships for Southeast Asian countries, Bosphorus Scholarships for countries like Brazil, China, India, Japan, and South Korea and finally Anatolia Bachelor Degree Scholarships specially opened for students coming from Afghanistan and Somalia. For years students from the Balkans were getting the most scholarships after the students from Central Asian countries.[42]

With Türkiye Bursları's taking over in 2012, a shift in favor of Third World countries, particularly those from the African continent is evident. (See Table 6.2) and (Graphic 6.2) This trend unfoldes at the expense of students in Europe. In 2013 Africa overtook Europe as the second-largest source of international students. The number of African students was 1091 while Europe was the third with 688 foreign students accepted to study in Turkey.[43] Under the YTB number of African students tripled in only two years, while the number of European students was lowered to two-thirds from the number in 2011. (See Graphic 6.2) This trend can be related to AKP's policy of opening up to the Middle East and Africa in foreign policy.[44] Türkiye Bursları's new approach is a direct reflection of the government's shift in foreign policy premises.[45] The rise of the 'third worldist' narrative among the AKP leadership, as a part of the populism at the domestic stage, has reflected the policies of public diplomacy institutions. Strengthening of this premise can be connected to frequent diplomatic rifts with the West and the widespread disappointment with the EU accession process. These circumstances caused AKP to follow a more dynamic approach towards Africa and the Middle East rather than Europe.

Another indication of the 'isolationist' approach towards the West was forbidding international students in Turkey to participate in the foreign student exchange programs in 2017.[46] Even though prohibition included all exchange programs, as Western countries have the most developed and the most extended student exchange programs with Turkey, it is not hard to guess that the greatest damage would be done to EU-sponsored exchange programs like Erasmus. To fulfill this premise, the isolation on a cultural level, since economic isolation is hard to imagine as Turkey is

42 "Binlerce uluslararası öğrenci 'Türkiye Bursları' projesiyle Türkiye'de", T.C. Başbakanlık Kamu Diplomasisi Koordinatörlüğü, accessed December 10, 2017, https://kdk.gov.tr/haber/binlerce-uluslararasi-ogrenci-turkiye-burslari-projesiyle-turkiyede/312; It would be important to mention that besides international students from the countries that are seen as 'relatives' by the Turkish government, the YTB is providing the grants for Turkish citizens and youth of Turkish origin living abroad under different programmes. First scholarship programme of this kind was organized in 2015. Students from 21 different country applied for the scholarships. YTB provided grants for 51 students, of which 11 for Master, 23 for PhD and 17 for Post-Doctorate studies.

43 Ibid.

44 Bülent Aras and Zulkarnain Mohammed, "The Turkish Government Scholarship...", 8. and "Türkiye'nin Afrika Açılım Stratejisinde Uluslararası Öğrenci Hareketliliğinin Rölü", Uzmanlık Tezi, T.C. Başbakanlık- Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, Ankara, 2014, 59-90.

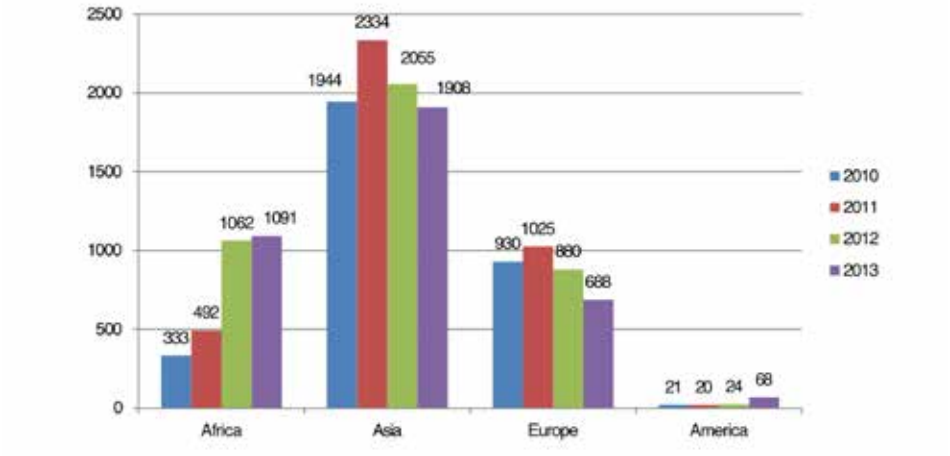
45 David Shinn, "Turkey's Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa: Shifting Alliances and Strategic Diversification" *Chatham House-The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Africa Programme*, (2015)

46 IHA, "Yabancı Öğrencilerin Değişim Programı Hakkı Kaldırıldı", *Milliyet*, 3 November, 2017, doi: http://www.milliyet.com.tr/yabanci-ogrencilerin-degisim-programi-eskisehir-yerelhaber-2380081/

highly dependent on Europe, is only achievable at the moment. As Türkiye Bursları is directly attached to the government its management has to follow AKP's policies to the letter. Another reason why attaching public diplomacy to the government could be problematic. This model makes it impossible for public diplomacy to build a consistent policy. With each subsequent government, different strategies in public diplomacy will be followed, which in turn makes Turkey's public diplomacy lacking long-term goal and vision, but an ideological tool for every next government.[47]

Table 6.2 Number of African students that Came to Turkey as Scholarship Recipients by Year

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
6	12	4	9	11	38	71	61	94	294	334	492	1062	1091	3581



Graphic 6.2 Number of International Students that Came to Turkey Through Türkiye Bursları Scholarship Program (2010-2013). Source: https://kdk.gov.tr

Prime Minister's Office of Public Diplomacy Coordination has published the statistics on Turkiye Burslari's bachelor degree scholarship holders according to the region they come from. Statistics on the number of bachelor students from the whole Balkans who continue their studies in Turkey by 2013 is also available. In 2013, 2.103[48] students from the Balkans were continuing their studies in Turkey.[49] Despite shifting the regional

47 2013 YTB, Türkiye Bursları, quoted in Kemal Kaya, "Türkiye'nin Afrika Açılım Stratejisinde Uluslararası Öğrenci Hareketliliğinin Rölü", Uzmanlık Tezi, T.C. Başbakanlık- Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, Ankara, 2014, 73.

48 This number excludes Romania

49 For instance three times more Turkish students study in the Balkans. In 2015-2016 around 6.300 students were hosted by the Balkan countries. For more see: "Education: Inbound Internationally Mobile Students by

priorities, the number of Balkan students was second to those coming from Central Asia and Azerbaijan. The number of students from there was 5.054 in 2013. In terms of numbers, Balkans was still placed high in Turkiye Burslari's scholarship policy. It remains to be seen whether the trend of shifting to African and Asian countries would continue.

According to the data of the Office for the Coordination of the Public Diplomacy from 2013 Bosnian students are the 20th largest group studying under the Turkiye Burslari program.[50] Five top countries providing the most students are; Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Syria, Kosovo, and the State of Palestine. Kosovo as the fourth largest source of students is the largest sender from the Balkans. From the region, Greece comes second, and eleventh overall, Macedonia third and sixteenth, next is Albania, which holds the seventeenth place and BiH fifth-largest sender from the region.[51] When it comes to the ethnic composition of students from BiH, data is not available. Non-Bosniaks study in Turkey as well, but it is not hard to guess that Bosniak students are dominating the scene. According to UNESCO's data, which mainly includes students studying with different scholarship programs, there is a decrease in the number of students from BiH since 2012. Their number peaked in 2012, with 629 students accommodated in universities across BiH. In 2016, the last available year, the number of Bosnians studying in Turkey was only 427, which represents a decrease of 47 percent in four years since 2012.[52] (See Table 6.5) UNESCO's statistics also support a shift of interest from the region.[53] Even BiH, a country of three and a half million people, hosts more Turkish students than the number of hosted Bosnian students in Turkey. More than four times more Turkish students study in BiH compared to the number of Bosnian students in Turkey. In 2016, 1859 Turkish students were studying in BiH, compared to only 427 Bosnians in Turkey. A year before there were even 2038 Turkish students in BiH, roughly an equal amount to all Balkan students studying in Turkey. Since 2013 BiH is the seventh most popular destination for Turkish students.[54]

Bosniak students from other parts of the Balkans are studying in Turkey as well. Turkish universities have high attendance of students from the Sandžak region. They apply to the program under the quota intended for citizens of Serbia and Montenegro. In 2016, some 596 students from Serbia, and 183 from Montenegro studied in Turkey.[55] Although ethnic Serb and Montenegrin study in Turkey as well, the dispro-

Country of Origin, Asia: Students from Turkey, both sexes (number)", UNESCO, Accessed on December 9, 2018, http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=169

50 "Binlerce uluslararası öğrenci 'Türkiye Bursları' projesiyle Türkiye'de, T.C. Başbakanlık Kamu Diplomasisi Koordinatörlüğü

51 Ibid.

52 "Education: Inbound Internationally Mobile Students by Country of Origin, Europe: Students from Bosnia and Herzegovina, both sexes (number)", UNESCO, Accessed on December 9, 2018, http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=169

53 Ibid.

54 Majority of Turkish students in BiH study in private universities founded by the Turkey.; "Education: Inbound Internationally Mobile Students by Country of Origin, Asia: Students from Turkey, both sexes (number)", UNESCO, Accessed on December 9, 2018, http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=169

55 "Education: Inbound Internationally Mobile Students by Country of Origin, Europe: Students from Serbia, both sexes (number)", UNESCO, Accessed on December 9, 2018, and "Education: Inbound Internationally Mobile Students by Country of Origin, Europe: Students from Montenegro, both sexes (number)", and UNE-

portion in favor of Bosniak students is noticeable. The official percentage of Bosniaks among the hosted Serbian and Montenegrin students is not known. Contrary to Bosnian students, whose numbers diminished 47 percent between 2012 and 2016, the number of Serbian students rose more than three-fold in the same period, from 171 to 596 students. [56] The number of students from Montenegro more than doubled in the same period, from 74 to 183. [57] It is not hard to guess that a small number of citizens of Kosovo and Macedonia are ethnically Bosniaks. If Bosniak students from the Sandžak region, Kosovo, and Macedonia are added to those from Bosnia and Herzegovina it would boost the total number of Bosniak students in Turkey. Adding Bosniaks from Sandžak and Kosovo would probably place Bosniaks higher in general standing than being positioned at a slim twentieth place where BiH was standing in 2013. From the aspect of getting positive feedback in the region, YTB might consider rising quotas reserved for non-Bosniak students. This strategy could positively impact Turkey's image among Balkan Christians. However, the statistics since 2012 indicate that Türkiye Bursları is less and less interested in this part of the world.

It is natural for every regional power to concentrate its public diplomacy efforts in the region it wants to influence. In Turkey's case, it would be logical that it is the Balkans before all, as the country's economic and demographic heart is positioned immediately next to that region. Rich Marmara region is closer to the Balkans than any other region whether it is the Middle East, Central Asia, the Caucasus, or distant Africa. When other regional or global powers are analyzed from the aspect of accommodating foreign students, what is common for all of them is the fact that these countries concentrate on students coming from the region where power and influence are planned to be projected. When it comes to the Balkans, Turkey is not the only country trying to conceive influence through education. Austria is another country that nourishes the imperial past in the region, especially in BiH, that was under Vienna's control for forty years (1878-1918).[58] Unlike its northern neighbor Germany that is looking in many directions, Balkans is the primary region for Austria's aim to project influence. This is also the case in education policies. Vienna's strategy is best seen when the background of international students studying in this country is analyzed. Despite its small student population, Bosnians are the fourth largest international student population after Germans, Italians, and Turks.[59] Austrian universities are traditionally an important destination for Bosnian students. Austria is the after Serbia the most preferred destination for Bosnian students, followed by Turkey which holds third place.[60]

SCO, Accessed on December 9, 2018, http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=169

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

58 For more see: A.J.P. Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1809-1918: A History of the Austrian Empire and Austria-Hungary*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), Noel Malcolm, *A Short History of Bosnia*, (London: Papermac-Macmillan, 1996): 136-156., and Robert J. Donia & John V.A. Fine Jr., Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Tradition Betrayed, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994): 93-120.

59 Statistika Austria-2017, p. 334.

60 Redakcija Dnevnog Avaza, "Istrazivanje "Dnevnog Avaza" Mladima iz BiH najpristupačnija je Austrija", *Dnevni Avaz*, accessed February 26, 2018, http://avaz.ba/vijesti/teme/167501/istrazivanje-dnevnog-avaza-mladi-

In the case of the US, the largest receiver of international students in the world, the share of students from Asia among foreign students is 76 percent. These statistics are in line with the recent US foreign policy of shifting towards Asia. In Spain, 37 percent of foreign students come from Latin American countries. This is logical for Spain that has a colonial legacy there plus a base of a few hundred million people speaking the Spanish language. Russia is another serious player when it comes to the accommodation of international students. Around two-thirds of all international students come from former-Soviet republics. By accepting high numbers of students from these republics Russia is hindering the process of de-Russification that has been taking part for some years. France is the main destination for African students where 41% of international students are from this continent. Accommodating a high number of African students seems natural given the country's colonial legacy and large Francophone population. A priority for France is "promotion of the French culture, teaching… Geographically it focuses on Africa/North Africa…."[61]

The question would be what region is a priority for Turkey. Whether Africa or Asia are foreign policy preferences for Turkey is another. The statistics are demonstrating that they are slowly becoming so, despite the weaker cultural, economic, and political ties compared to the Balkans. If Ankara is expecting success from the invested money in educating international students, then it requires more strategic planning rather than wasting its limited resources.[62] Turkey's geopolitical preferences shouldn't become a victim of "fluctuations" caused by the "internal identity debates", but should be more based on realism and political interests.[63]

6.3.3. Challenge of Accommodating International Students

Upon arrival, international students enter the one-year language course to learn the Turkish Language. Türkiye Bursları is organizing these classes in cooperation with Turkish Language learning centers across the country. These language teaching centers are mainly provided by Turkish state universities. The most widespread language-learning center is TÖMER (Turkish and Foreign Languages Research and Application Center).[64] Language centers provide international students with a chance to learn the basics of the Turkish Language. For the majority of students, this program is the first contact with the Turkish Language. After speaking with some of them, they complaint how the period provided by YTB for learning the language is not long enough to perfect the language to an extent sufficient for attending the univer-

ma-iz-bih-najpristupacnija-je-austrija

61 Margaret Wyszimorski, Christopher Burgess, and Catherine Peila, *International Cultural Relations: A Multi-Country Comparison*, (Columbus: The Ohio State University, 2003), page 10., doi: https://intranet.americansforthearts.org

62 *Education at a Glance 2017-OECD Indicators*, OECD, 2017, p. 290., doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2017-en

63 Hakan M. Yavuz, "The Trifurcated Islam of Central Asia: A Turkish Perspective" in Asian Islam in the 21st Century, ed. John L. Esposito, John O. Voll and Osman Bakar (New York; Oxford University Press, 2008), 119.

64 TÖMER or Turkish and Foreign Languages Research and Application Center is founded in Ankara University in 1984 aiming to teach Turkish Language to foreigners. Various branches of TÖMER were opened across Turkey and throughout years other state universities started providing Turkish Language courses for the foreigners as well.

sities. Once a receiver of YTB's scholarship myself, I witnessed many international students facing difficulties in following the classes after being redirected from the language courses. The opinion of some students is that the level of language used in universities requires much more time to be spent in the language-learning process. This observation was confirmed in Bülent Aras' survey conducted with the recipients of the Türkiye Bursları. In his article Aras says,

> from the results of both online surveys and interviews, the language of instruction was the biggest challenge to international students... 109 out of the 195 students expressed dissatisfaction with the language of instruction of their respective programs.[65]

YTB has a comprehensive scholarship program that includes full help for students including a wide range of needs from student's accommodation, public transport, and food to university fees. With their arrival, international students are provided with a dormitory. These are mostly state dormitories, which sometimes do not match the criteria of dormitories in the developed world. For example, a few years ago dormitories with rooms for more than 15 students existed. With the help of the government, the quality of the dormitories was raised in the last years. Besides state dormitories provided by Türkiye Bursları international students that arrive with other scholarship programs can accommodate themselves in private dormitories. Especially some conservative NGOs have a wide network of dormitories across the country.[66] Before 2014, the student accommodation sector was dominated by the Gülen Movement and its widespread network of schools, universities, dormitories, and rented-houses. After 2014, this movement was slowly swept from the student-accommodation sector by the government's efforts. AKP decided to end the gender-mixed accommodation dormitories and turned them into only-one-gender dormitories. Even Turkey's president made public statements against the mixed dormitories before the practice was ended.[67]

Turkey lacks the capacity to host large numbers of international students. The country's infrastructure in terms of the number of universities and dormitories is still insufficient to position Turkey as a prominent destination of higher education. Despite high ambitions, Turkey still faces problems in accommodating the domestic student population in state universities, which in turn created the system of many university entry exams for domestic students on almost all levels of higher education. Studying in state universities is a luxury even for domestic students, flocking in millions every year. They are obliged to enter state university-entry-exams. Hosting foreign students complicates the situation even more.

In the global rankings, Turkey is not ranked among the top countries in terms of the number of higher education institutions. According to YÖK's official list number

65 Bülent Aras and Zulkarnain Mohammed, "The Turkish Government Scholarship...", 12.

66 "TÜGVA", *TÜGVA*, http://www.tugva.org

67 Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, "Başbakan'dan öğrenci yurtları açıklaması", *Sabah*, November 5, 2013, https://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2013/11/05/basbakan-erdogan-konusuyor

of universities in the country by early 2018 was close to two hundred. In the other list, presented by the Webometrics, countries were positioned at the slim 27th position[68] in terms of the number of universities.[69] Even some countries with a smaller population and a similar level of development have a much larger number of higher education institutions. For instance, Argentina and Spain, both around half of Turkey's population, have roughly seven to nine times more universities than Turkey. France has more than five times more universities per capita than Turkey.[70] Balkan region if counted as a whole, have around three times more universities per capita than Turkey.[71] Statistics clearly show Turkey lacks a capacity for its students, let alone the international ones.

Lack of capacity is evident in terms of dormitories as well. The state institution for student accommodation, *Yurtkur*[72], has dormitories where in one room six students or more are accommodated. This is the case even with the dormitories in metropole cities like Istanbul and Ankara. Some dormitories don't fit the international standards for minimal accommodation space that commands how every person should have at least 3.5 square meters of personal space.[73] It is important to underline that not all dormitories are overcrowded. Overcrowded dormitories especially can be those reserved for male students, while in the female dormitories condition seems better. In 2015, YTB planned to create the *International Union of Dormitories* to improve the cooperation between the institutions that deal with the accommodation of students in Turkey and abroad. Another ambitious project was not realized.[74]

AKP inherited the problem of capacity insufficiency from the previous governments. Prior governments didn't invest enough energy to build adequate infrastructure for the country's large student population. Since the AKP state dormitories started being modernized across the country. Once strong Gülen movement to an extent managed to fill the gap before 2013 by running dormitories for domestic and

68 According to United Nations 2017 report Turkey was the 19th most populous country in the world. Being the 19th most populous country and 27th in number of universities indicate that Turkey is bellow the World average in in per capita terms and that the country seriously suffers from capacities lacking. *World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision, Key Findings and Advance Tables*, United Nations-United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division, 2017, New York, page 29.

69 "Countries arranged by Number of Universities in Top Ranks", Webometrics, accessed February 22, 2018, http://www.webometrics.info/en/node/54

70 "Top 10 countries with most Universities in the World", Worldknowing, accessed February 22, 2018, http://worldknowing.com/top-10-countries-with-most-universities-in-the-world/

71 "Countries arranged by Number of Universities in Top Ranks", Webometrics

72 Yüksek Öğrenim Kredi ve Yurtlar Kurumu-Yurtkur or Higher Education Credit and Dormitories Institution, http://yurtkur.gsb.gov.tr/

73 According to international standards for shelter and settlement standards provided by The Sphere Project, which pepared a standards guidline explaining how to deal with victims of humanitarian crisis named "Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response", a minimum space in the covered floor area must exceed 3.5 square meters per person. Some Turkish state dormitories seem not meeting this criteria, let lone student accomodation standards. Probably aware of the deficiancies AKP government allowed opening of dormitories by the non-state actors like TÜGVA., *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*, The Sphere Project, Third edition, 2011, 258-259.

74 2015 Kurumsal Mali Durum ve Beklentiler Raporu, (Ankara, Strateji Geliştirme Daire Başkanlığı – Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, 2015), 19.

foreign students After the political rift between the government and the movement entire infrastructure was taken over by the state. In recent years, some foundations close to the government, like TÜGVA, are heavily investing in the dormitories sector. Until 2017 TÜGVA was providing the service only for domestic students. AKP's general strategy in the sphere of education after 2013 is in direction of filling the gap at home and abroad that was left by terminating the activities of Gülen movements. In that sense, the government supports *Maarif* colleagues abroad.[75]

6.4. Turkey's Standing in the World in Terms of Educating International Students

AKP government aims to position Turkey among the respective destinations of international education. Yet as a newcomer, Turkey lags well behind some countries when it comes to the number of hosted international students. According to statistics provided by UNESCO for 2014, Turkey was not ranked even among the top 20 top receiving countries for international students.[76]

The education of international students as a sector is passing through expansion globally. During the 1950s there were only 200 thousand international students in the world. During the 1970s this number rose to only 500 thousand.[77] But, in 2001 this number was 2.1 million. Fifteen years later this number more than doubled to almost 4.9 million students.[78] For the leaders of international education like the United States and the United Kingdom hosting foreign students is perceived as an important aspect of soft power. The best way to introduce your own culture to a foreign audience is by hosting their students. Joseph Nye mentions the advantage the US enjoys in foreign policy by being education heaven for international students.[79] For Nye, student exchange programs are an essential tool for introducing the American way of life abroad. Educating the future political elite of other countries makes it easier for the US to fulfill the fundamental premise of soft power, to make others want things you want. A large number of world politicians that graduated in Amer-

75 Large number of educational facilities like universities, primary schools, high schools and dormitories have been shut down by the AKP after the failed coup attempt on July 15, 2016. AKP government blamed Gülen movement for the coup attempt which led to nationwide purges against the institutions that were controlled by the movement. This goes also for the Movements' education operations abroad. AKP government has formed *Maarif Vakfı* or *Maarif Foundation* on June 2016 to take over the wide education network from the Gülen movement internationaly. Turkish government signed many bilateral protocols after the failed coup attempt, especially with African states, where these countries have pledged to close all the educational facilities of Gülen movement in their countries and to hand them over to Maarif Foundation. Since its launching until beginning of 2018 Maarif Foundation has taken over or formed from zero some 43 schools in 12 countries across three continents. Maarif Foundation is not under the jurisdiction of Ministry of National Education of Republic of Turkey. As it is state on the official website of the foundation; "*Maarif* Foundation is the only institution that is outside the control ofthe Ministry of National Education that has right to open a new educational institution abroad in the name of Republic of Turkey." https://turkiyemaarif.org

76 UNESCO Institute for Statistics, July 2014

77 Mehmetali Akdağ, "Türkiye Bursları Kapsamında Yükseköğrenim için Türkiye'ye Gelen Öğrencilerin Sorunları ve Bu Sorunlara İlişkin Çözüm Önerileri

78 *Global Migration Indicators 2018*, GMDAC-International Organization for Migration, 2018, p. 24, 25.

79 Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 44-46, 109-110.

ican or British universities show how alumni can be successfully instrumentalized in foreign policy.[80] This was best tested when the International Coalition was formed by the US leadership where around half of the leaders of the Coalition were former exchange students in the US universities.[81]

For decades the United States dominates the global international student mobility. In 2016 1.043.839 foreign students were studying in the country. It is estimated that foreign students annually generate around 20 billion dollars to the US economy.[82] The Fulbright student exchange program is the most representative US-sponsored exchange program.[83] The United Kingdom was holding second place with 496.690 foreign students. China, which, not an OECD member, was third with 397.635 foreign students. DAAD, the German counterpart of Türkiye Bursları, mentioned 340 thousand foreign students in Germany for the year 2016.[84] A total hundred thousand international students in Turkey versus 340 thousand foreign students in Germany reflect the economic gap between the two countries. Russia, another rising economy that is not a member of the OECD, is another important destination for international students. In 2016 Russia was positioned high sixth place in global ranking with 244 thousand foreign students.[85]

Turkey is not positioned among the top international student hosting countries. Despite the government's tremendous efforts the country still is not among the leaders in this area. In Turkey's case, it is important to mention a few points regarding international students. YTB's Türkiye Bursları is not only an institution providing scholarships to foreigners. There are other alternative sources as well. A large number of foreign students come to study in Turkey through other state or public diplomacy institutions like Diyanet or non-governmental channels provided by different religious organizations or *cemaats*. Some students study in Turkey thanks to the EU-sponsored Erasmus exchange program. When students of Syrian and Iraqi origin are excluded, the total number of international students, including those staying in Turkey under different scholarship programs, is around one-hundred-thousand. Thus, Türkiye Bursları is responsible for a little over 10 percent of all international students. According to another data from 2016 provided by the Ministry of National Education that includes all foreign students, including those with a refugee background, the total number of foreign nationals studying in various universities across Turkey was around 232 thousand, of which only around 16 thousand were

80 Ibid, 109-110.

81 Mark Leonard, Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy*, 19.

82 Guy J. Golan, "An Integrated Approach to Public Diplomacy", 424.

83 After the World War II and during the Cold War, United States sponsored various programmes as a tool for wining the global ideological war against the Soviet Union. Among programmes that was launched was Fulbright student exchange programme. Launching United States Information Agency and the Voice of America were part of this strategy as well. With the end of the Cold War and struggle for on the field of ideology some of these programmes lost the importance in the eyes of US governments.

84 Wissenschaft weltoffen kompakt 2017: Daten und Fakten zur Internationalität von Studium und Forschung in Deutschland, p. 1.

85 "Education: Inbound Internationally Mobile Students by Continent of Origin", UNESCO, Accessed on December 8, 2018, http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=169#

Türkiye Bursları scholarship recipients.[86] When this number is taken as a basis, the share of foreign students corresponds to a little over six percent of Turkey's entire student population. The majority of 232 thousand foreign students come from Syria. As Syrian refugees were integrated into the Turkish educational system they have boosted the number of foreign students. In total 166.482 Syrians were studying in Turkey, which corresponds to 71.5 percent of all the foreign students.[87] The size of this number gets more meaning when placed in the context of the number of undergraduate students in Syria before the Syrian Civil War. According to the BBC number of undergraduate students in Syria before 2011 was roughly 350 thousand.[88] Thus, Turkey is accommodating the Syrian student population almost equal to half of the country's pre-war undergraduate student population.

If the students of Syrian origin are excluded then we get the number of 66.232 foreign students.[89] Excluding Syrian students raises the share of Türkiye scholarship recipients to a quarter of all foreign students. After Syrians, the most crowded group is Iraqis with 23.971 students.[90] Like Syrians, many Iraqis also reside in Turkey as refugees. If Iraqi students with a refugee background are excluded the number of foreign students becomes much lower.

Statistics YÖK (Board for Higher Education) provided to the Ministry of Interior Affairs shows a similar number of foreign students with the numbers provided by the Migration Department of Turkey. According to the YÖK, the total number of foreign students studying in Turkey for the academic 2016-17 year was 103.727.[91] This number is more realistic, as the big majority of Syrian-origin students were excluded from the number. Syrian students rarely have the status of international students as they predominantly arrive in Turkey as refugees. Similar could be said about the important share of Iraqi-origin students. Thus counting only students that came as international students reduce the number of international students to some hundred thousand for the year 2016. Still, all these numbers remain pretty insignificant in global terms. Especially when compared to traditional destinations of international students like the United States or the United Kingdom. Turkey accommodates only around 2 percent of the global international student population.

If the 2016 statistics are compared to ones from 2012, the picture regarding the Turkish share in global terms is not showing significant change. OECD published data for 2012 on the number of non-resident international students in OECD-member countries. According to OECD, the United States accommodate the largest number

86 This is number of foreign nationals that are studying in universities under the jurisdiction of Ministry of National Education. If schools in 'temporary shelter centers' organized for refugees are included, number of foreign stundets inTurkey would be 795 thousand.; 2016 Türkiye Göç Raporu-Göç İdaresi, p. 46.

87 Ibid.

88 Bill Hicks, "Syria losses students needed to rebuild its future", *BBC*, Accessed on May 14, 2018, doi: http://www.bbc.com/news/business-35969137

89 2016 Türkiye Göç Raporu-Göç İdaresi, 46.

90 Ibid.

91 Ibid, 44.

of students or 740.475 students in 2012.[92] The next was the United Kingdom with 427.686 non-resident students. The third was Australia with 249.588 students.[93] Interestingly, the first three destinations were all English-speaking countries, a fact that demonstrates the dominance of the Anglophone world in overseas education. The two largest Anglophone countries host almost a third of all international students. United States hosted around one-fifth, while the UK one-tenth of all international students.[94] In 2012 statistics OECD shared statistics for the category of "non-citizen students" in Turkey, where the number was 38.590.[95] Turkey was significantly falling back. The country was not even among the top 15 top destinations for non-citizen students. YÖK's figures for the same academic year are similar. In the 2011-12 academic year, Turkey hosted slightly over 30 thousand foreign students.[96] In the same category of non-citizen students, the UK was accommodating 568.816 students. Australia had 291.889, while Germany had 287.353 non-citizen students.[97] Figures of non-citizens students for the US was not provided by the OECD, but it would not be hard to guess that it was highest in the world.[98]

Despite all the shortcomings Turkey is reducing the backlog. Especially if Syrian and Iraqi students are added there is astonishing growth in the number of foreign students. The number of international students rose by 187 percent in five years.[99] Statistics show Turkey is slowly catching up with the leading countries in terms of quantity. But, even this growth is far from being enough, as the number of international students in Turkey is similar to the number studying in Austria, a country some ten times smaller in terms of population. Around 80 thousand foreign students are studying in Austria.

Comparing to other countries the ratio of domestic students to foreign ones is low too. In another report for the academic year, 2014-15 YÖK published statistics on the total number of students in higher education including all stages of university education. The total number of the student population was 6.062.886 this year. If the hundred-thousand international students that studied in the 2016-17 academic year are taken into account, the foreign students would represent less than two percent of the entire student population. In Germany, the rate was 12.8 percent.[100] In other developed countries, the rate was even higher. According to OECD's 2015 statistics, the percentage of international students in Luxemburg was at an astonishing 47%.[101] New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland followed by 21%, 19%, and

92 For more visit: stats.oecd.org
93 Ibid.
94 "Countries Hosting The Most Foreign Students", Worldatlas, accessed November 10, 2017, http://www.worldatlas.com/articles/countries-hosting-most-foreign-students.html
95 For more visit: stats.oecd.org
96 "Yabancı öğrenci sayısı yüzde 182 arttı", Hürriyet, Accessed on May 14, 2018, doi: http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yabanci-ogrenci-sayisi-yuzde-182-artti-40118709
97 For more visit: stats.oecd.org
98 Ibid.
99 "Yabancı öğrenci sayısı yüzde 182 arttı", *Hürriyet*, Accessed on May 14, 2018.
100 "Statista", Accessed on December 7, 2019. de.statista.com
101 *Education at a Glance 2017-OECD Indicators*, OECD, 2017, p. 230., doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2017-en

17%.[102] In Austria, another important destination for Bosnian students, the rate of international students was 16 percent. OECD average for 2015 was around 6%. In the same year, Turkey was much below the OECD average with a little over one percent.[103]

But when all foreign citizens including Syrians that study in educational facilities under the control of the Ministry of National Education are divided with the total number of students, the rate gets higher and represents around 3.8 percent of the student population. The number would go even higher if Syrians that go to schools in shelter towns are included. In that case, Turkey would catch up with the leading countries. All foreign citizens, including Syrian students with a refugee background, represent 13.1 percent of the total student population. But certainly, young people at the student age living in shelter towns for refugees cannot be counted under the category of international students.

But the quantity is not the only deficiency. In terms of quality of education, Turkey still fall-behind the developed countries. Measuring the quality of the provided education to foreign students would go far out of the scope of this research, but official university rankings can certainly give some ideas about Turkey's standing in terms of quality of education. Ratings of the Ministry of National Education show that the quality is far from satisfactory.[104] Turkey is far from the top of the list in many aspects. What is observable from the ranking lists is the fact that the quality of Turkish universities has even fallen in recent years.[105] Something similar was recognized by international students. Many get disappointed with the quality of education upon their arrival in Turkey. In the survey conducted by the Bülent Aras from Sabanci University, foreign students complained about how Turkey didn't meet their expectations in terms of quality.[106] In the survey, many complained about the quality of the Turkish education system. Disappointment gets bigger when having in mind the majority of surveyed students are from poor African or Asian countries.

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid, 290.

104 Various university rankings are provided by different websites according to different categories. But, what is common for almost all the ranking lists is the fact that in all almost none of the rankings Turkish universities managed to position in top 100 best universities of the world. "2018 QS World University Rankings", QS World University Rankings, accessed February 22, 2018, https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2018

According to the statistics provided by the Webometrics that gave the rankings of the universities of all the country's in the world, none of the Turkish universities is in the top 200, and only one Turkish university managed to enter the group of top 500 universities. Compared to Balkans region which has five universities in top 500 list it is quite slim balance sheet. This statistics indicate that Turkish universities should work harder to enter the club of attractive destinations for international students. "Countries arranged by Number of Universities in Top Ranks", Webometrics, accessed February 22, 2018, http://www.webometrics.info/en/node/54

105 Metodology of calculating the university rankings is represenrs very problematic issue. It requires very widde argumentation in explaining the methodolgy that is used while putting together a ranking list. There are pleanty of metodological methods that can be used and yet it could rightly be argued that they are not sufficienty reflecting the truth about the quality and the ranking of universities. Without entering the debates on metodology of calculating the ranking, I would give the rankings that are provided by the few websites that are already dealing with the subject of ranking. On the other hand, the fact that according to all the ranking lists Turkish universities were not able to enter to the top of the lists, probably reflects the reality and provides a clue about the level of education in this country in the most general terms possible.

106 Bülent Aras and Zulkarnain Mohammed, "The Turkish Government Scholarship...", 10, 11.

Table 6.3 The Position of the Best Ranked Turkish University According to Different Ranking Websites:

Academic Year	The World University Rankings[107]	QS World University Rankings[108]	CWUR World University Rankings[109]
2013-14	199	Not found	Not in top 100
2014-15	85	399	396
2015-16	251-300	394	470
2016-17	251-300	411-420	525
2017-18	301-305	421-430	498

The quality issue certainly is decisive for the students during the selection of education destination. Especially for Bosnian students who enjoyed the benefits of geographical proximity to European universities. Being positioned in Europe certainly makes access to one of the best universities in the world much easier. If education quality is not raised in Turkey, the question of why this country should be preferred over other destinations remains.

Another important issue that certainly affects the quality of education is political intervention in the educational system. The interventionist approach predates the AKP government. In the last years, this has become even more frequent. This approach certainly causes harm rather than good for the quality of education. It negatively influences the atmosphere in Turkish universities. One of the recent cases of political-ideological intervention to the education system was the dismissal of the evolution theory from the curriculum in 2017. Another contention that polarized the academic society further was the imprisonment of a large number of academicians on the accusation that they support outlawed PKK. These are only a few among many problems Turkish education is passing through. All these issues are out of the scope of this work, but certainly are important to be mentioned, as the aforementioned issues echoed globally and influenced the overall image of Turkey abroad. As many surveys suggest, the image of Turkey abroad is decisive in attracting foreign students. Wars around Turkey certainly raise in mind the question of the country's long-term stability. Terror attacks in 2015 and 2016, and the political turmoil created by the failed coup attempt of July 15, 2016, are negatively affecting the image of Turkey abroad. If the mentioned issues prolonge Turkey might not have problems attracting students from the Middle East or Africa but might face shortages in bringing students from the Balkans and the rest of Europe.

107 "The World University Rankings", Times Higher Education, accessed January 1, 2018, doi: https://www.timeshighereducation.com/

108 "QS World University Rankings", QS Top Universities, accessed January 1, 2018, doi: https://www.topuniversities.com

109 "CWUR World University Ranking", CWUR, accessed January 1, 2018, doi: http://cwur.org/

6.5. Economic Obstacles in Conducting Student Exchange Diplomacy

Unstable currency represents another challenge for Turkey. In recent years, Turkey struggles with the serious devaluation of its national currency. As scholarships are distributed in YTL, Türkiye Bursları failed to keep a consistency of the scholarship amount. The fall of the value of YTL has affected the value of scholarships to diminish when compared to the more stable national currencies of the countries students came from.[110] Periodically Turkiye Burslari increased the scholarship amount for all levels of higher education. But, it was not done sufficiently enough. The increase of the scholarship amount in YTL didn't follow the fall in the value of the same currency. In other words, the trend of the periodical increase of the scholarships was not reciprocal to international monetary trends. Students that had a certain value in YTL when they arrived have faced the fall in the value of their scholarship when compared to national currencies in their home countries. Not following adequately the currency rates during the periodical increases, has led to the impoverishment of the students in international terms. This was the case with the Bosnian students as well. To get a clearer picture let's give an example of impoverishment in the value of Ph.D. scholarship since 2012, the first year Turkiye Burslari started coordinating the scholarship program.

Let's take an ordinary Bosnian Ph.D. student as a basis for the analysis to get a clearer picture of the mentioned issue. In 2012 scholarship amount for a Ph.D. student was 1000 YTL, which corresponded to 436 EUR according to YTL/EUR Exchange rate from September 2012, a month in which education season starts.[111] (See Table 6.4) With the shift to Türkiye Bursları, the scholarship amount was an increase compared to previous years. (See Table 6.4) Receiving 1.000 YTL in 2012 was a pretty generous amount, especially when having in mind that it is almost equal to the average earning in BiH nowadays. But as the Turkish Lira started losing value amid political tensions and other international factors, overall conditions for foreign students in Turkey started worsening. Only five years later the amount of the Ph.D. grant was 1400 YTL. (See Table 6.4) Increasing the amount of 40 percent was significant. But only in YTL terms. But the increase didn't correspond to the decrease of Turkish national currency in international terms. Despite the forty percent increase Turkiye Bursları's scholarships lost value outside Turkey. Back in 2012 Bosnian student that had a scholarship in the value of 436 EUR, in September 2017 had only 344 EUR or 92 EUR less. Between 2012 and 2017 the loss in value was around a quarter. Towards the end of 2017 and was even gloomier. At the end of November 2017, a Ph.D. student had a scholarship that corresponded to 298 EUR. Compared to the 2012 level this represents a slash of one-third in value. During the 2018 currency crisis, the Turkish Lira deteriorated even more with a further annual devaluation of around 20-25 percent compared to USD. Despite the currency crisis, the scholarship amount for the Ph.D. level remained fixed at 1400 YTL in 2018, causing further financial difficulties for the

110 Yeni Türk Lirası (YTL) or New Turkish Lira is the national currency of Republic of Turkey.

111 Bosnian Convertible Mark or BAM is the national currency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.; For more see: http://www.xe.com/currencycharts/

foreign students.[112] At the peak of the crisis on August 14, 2018 value of the Ph.D. scholarships reached a record low of 177 EUR. If compared to the September 2012 levels, the scholarships lost almost two-and-a-half times in value. Towards the end of the same year, the Turkish Lira slightly stabilized, thus the value of the Ph.D. scholarships in December of the same year was moving between 230-240 EUR, but still representing a cut in half from the September 2012 value.[113] It is important to mention that the same trend was evident for the lower, BA, and MA degrees as well. Having in mind that they receive much lower amounts in YTL the prospect for BA and MA students is even gloomier. It is not hard to guess that financial challenges forced many students to search for a job in Turkey. As Türkiye Bursları forbade students to work, probably many were forced to enter the grey market. Sooner or later Turkiye Bursları would have to address adequately the problem of devaluation if it wishes to preserve Turkey as a favorable destination for students. Otherwise, students might search for alternative destinations. Turkiye Burslari might consider introducing a system that would be effective in avoiding the decrease in material conditions of the students.

Table 6.4 Amount of scholarships for higher education through years (in YTL)[114]

Year	Bachelor Degree (YTL)	Master Degree (YTL)	Doctorate Degree (YTL)
2000	45	50	50
2001	55	60	60
2002	82	90	90
2003	105	115	115
2004	130	150	150
2005	145	165	165
2006	150	175	175
2007	160	185	185
2008	175	200	200
2009	195	220	220
2010	270	340	400
2011	325	450	550
2012	500	750	1.000
2013	500	750	1.100
2016	700	950	1.400

112 "Burs Olanakları", *Türkiye Bursları*, Accessed on December 10, 2018, https://www.turkiyeburslari.gov.tr/turkiye-burslari/burs-olanaklari/

113 "XE Exchange", *XE Exchange*, Accessed on Accesssed on December 11, 2019, http://www.xe.com/currencycharts/

114 Muhammet Fatih Kaya, "Uluslararası Öğrenci Hareketliliğinde Lider 6 Dünya Ülkesinin Yükseköğretim Tanıtım Uygulamaları ve Türkiye Bursları Tanıtım Stratejisi İçin Bir Model Önerisi", 33.; "Türkiye Busları", www.turkiyeburslari.gov.tr; 2013 YTB Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara, Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, 2014), 42.

6.6. Türkiye Bursları's Struggle in Building Effective Network Communication

R.S. Zaharna distinguishes two main types of communication in public diplomacy, Mass Communication, and Network Communication. Mass Communication implies the communication of an institution with the masses in foreign countries mainly via different types of mass media. This type of communication has much larger outreach, but the feedback on the success of communication is much slower and indirect. The message goes in one direction, from the institution to the foreign audience. It implies the "sender-message-receiver" model. While the second type, Network Communication, engages both the sender and the receiver of the message. It creates a synergy between the two, thus has a much larger capacity in reaching wished outcomes. On the other hand, the outreach of this model is more limited.[115] One of the main goals of student exchange diplomacy is what Leonard calls long-term "relationship building."[116] It is noticeable that YTB and Türkiye Bursları try to follow both models of communication in the region.

To get the feedback of the investments into foreign students preserving the communication after graduation with alumni is of fundamental importance. As Nye notices the development of lasting relations with the key individuals through various scholarship programs represents one of the three fundamental dimensions of a country's public diplomacy. Foreign graduates serve as an organic bond between the sending and the hosting country.

> the third dimension of public diplomacy is the development of lasting relationships with key individuals over many years through scholarship, exchanges, training, seminars, conferences, and access to media channels.[117]

Charlotte Beers from the Bush administration speaking about the importance of the Fullbright System for the US foreign policy said how;

> around half of the leaders of the International Coalition were once exchange students to the US. For Beer; this has got to be the best buy in the government.[118]

Understanding the necessity of keeping the bond with the alumni, "key individuals" alive YTB started working on a roadmap aiming to preserve the relations with alumni that have returned to their home countries. Like many student-hosting countries, Turkey uses YTB's wide alumni network to create business and political connections in other countries. The quickest way to create a sphere of influence in other countries is through keeping alive the communication with the former students. As it is stated in the annual report, YTB and Türkiye Bursları perceive alumni

115 R.S. Zaharna, "The Soft Power Differential: Network Communication and Mass Communication in Public Diplomacy", 217-221.
116 Mark Leonard, et. al, *Public Diplomacy*, 18.
117 Joseph S. Nye, Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 107-109.
118 Mark Leonard, Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy*, 19.

students as a bridge between Turkey and the sender country.[119] In one of the articles under the chapter that describe the duties of the *Department for International Students,* it is stated how; "the Department has to continue the relations with the graduates in the countries they live after the graduation."[120] In that context, 32 Turkish alumni associations were formed across the world.[121]

In 2017, YTB and Türkiye Bursları organized a meeting with Bosnian alumni.[122] Recently an alumni association of Bosnian students that have studied in Turkey was formed under the name *TÜMED*. The abbreviation of TÜMED in Turkish is *Türkiye Mezunlar Derneği* or Alumni Association of Turkey. It was launched by the initiative of the graduates.[123] The board of the association is composed of alumni, of which some became relatively successful in business circles upon the return from Turkey. Some graduates preserved close ties with Turkish business circles and nourish close political ties with the Turkish government. Some board members of TÜMED continued the professional career in companies initiated by the Turkish capital, like in the case of the president of TÜMED who is a project manager in BİGMEV.[124] Deputy-president of TÜMED is the deputy editor-in-chief of weekly political magazine STAV financed by the business circles close to the Turkish government. On the other hand, it can not be said that TÜMED has yet achieved efficiency in terms of organizing a wide network of alumni across BiH. In terms of influence TÜMED still falls behind alumni organizations initiated by the students that studied in other countries.

Bosnian graduates from Malaysia are known for having a strong network, as many of them are socially well-positioned in the country. For TÜMED to become successful crucial might be the help and assistance it would get from YTB, which seems lacking at the moment.[125] In that sense, YTB started a tradition of annual meetings with the Alumni associations. But in general, the communication and cooperation between YTB and alumni organizations still seem inefficient. The alumni association for students from the Serbian part of Sandžak was launched with the center in Novi Pazar.[126]

It is a question mark on what the overall effect of these meetings is. If the Turkish government plans its public diplomacy to be efficient, and YTB fulfill the purpose of its foundation, more attention should be paid to a few points. First, there should be better communication with alumni organizations that would result in concrete

119 2014 YTB Faaliyet Raporu (Ankara, Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, 2015)
120 2016 YTB İdari Faaliyet Raporu, 24.
121 2017 YTB İdare Faaliyet Raporu, 27.
122 2017 Kurumsal Mali Durum Beklentiler Raporu, (Ankara, Strateji Geliştirme Daire Başkanlığı – Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, 2017), page 21.; The meeting with Serbian and Montenegrin, thus Sandžak, alumnis was held in 2017 as well.
123 "Bosna Hersekli 'Türkiye mezunları' ofis açtı, Anadolu Ajansı, accessed January 1, 2018, doi: https://aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/bosna-hersekli-turkiye-mezunlari-ofis-acti/784682
124 BIGMEV is foundation working on promotion of investments and economic cooperation in BiH. It is known for close ties to Turkish government and SDA Party. Headquarters of BIGMEV are located in the former house of Alija Izetbegović. For more visit: http://www.bigmev.org/
125 Author of this work is member of the TÜMED, so is familiar with the subject.
126 2017 YTB İdare Faaliyet Raporu, 61.

projects. Secondly, YTB should assist in the employment of its students upon graduation. YTB should have more frequent communication with the Turkish firms to make employment for graduates easier. This would be possible only if Turkey creates a stronger presence in the Bosnian job market. At the moment being Turkish alumni doesn't seem like a privilege. A limited presence of Turkey in the local economy forced many graduates to look for alternatives. Those returning from studies in Turkey face the everyday reality of chronic unemployment and a dysfunctional state. Weak job opportunities in BiH forced many graduates to settle in Turkey or continue their careers in third countries. Especially in the last years, the emigration of qualified Bosnian to Germany is representing a rising problem.[127]

YTB in annual reports claims the above-mentioned suggestions as one of his duties. Among the duties of the Board for International Students is to;

> analyze and research the efficiency of the duties that are accepted as obligatory for the board, and to inform institutions that are concerned about the results that research and analysis have provided, which in turn oblige the board to start with necessary works.[128]

As it is stated in the annual report, one of the duties is to follow the efficiency of the projects, cooperate with other state institutions, and inform them to achieve better results. A similar statement was used on Türkiye Bursları's website, where Turkey's foreign students are described as, "Turkey's heart envoys[129]."[130] Thus, It would be highly beneficial for YTB to be informed about its graduates and to work on their promotion in home countries. The success of Turkish alumni would benefit the YTB and Turkish public diplomacy.

In 2017, YTB launched a website in the Turkish language named *Türkiye Menzunları*[131].[132] The website was launched as a platform for communication between the graduates and Türkiye Bursları. The website shares profiles of Türkiye Bursları graduates publish their human-profile stories, makes announcements of alumni meetings, and publishes other news regarding alumni activities.[133] After analyzing the content it is hard to avoid the impression of how the website is only of promotional and informative character. It mainly informs alumni about annual meetings or human stories. Thus, it is not hard to see how the website is irrelevant to the majority of graduates. Websites of this kind should rather serve as a vibrant platform that would help the graduates to overcome various challenges after their graduation.

127 Adem Džaferović and Fahrudin Bender, "Iz BiH je već otišlo 80.000 mladih", *Oslobođenje*, January 1, 2018, https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/dosjei/teme/iz-bih-je-vec-otislo-80-000-mladih

128 2015 YTB Faaliyet Raporu (Ankara, Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, 2016), 23.

129 Türkiye'nin gönül elçileri "Türkiye Mezunları"

130 "YTB", https://www.ytb.gov.tr/haber_detay.php?detay=5419

131 Turkey Graduates in Turkish

132 2017 YTB İdare Faaliyet Raporu, 27.

133 'Heart geography' or 'gönül coğrafyası' in Turkish is the term that is ocassionaly used by the Turkish government to designate the countries across different regions that government sees as culturally and historicaly close to Turkey.

YTB plans to help the graduates regarding employment with the website. A section named "employment announcements" is found on the website. Announcements can help inform students about job opportunities. But, the content of this section is more than inadequate. In total two employment announcements have been published in 2017 and only one announcement for the whole of 2018. Another similar section is "Job and Career."[134] This section is even poorer with the content. Only four announcements were published in four years since 2015. Türkiye Menzunları Project four years letter seems like a 'dead letter.' It certainly has failed to become a relevant platform for the graduates.

YTB and other public diplomacy institutions should explore how to make their projects more organic, more engaged with the humans, and more of real help to graduates, rather than having its projects constantly ending up as another bureaucratic advertisement. Quality should be targeted rather than a quantity. Turkish public diplomacy certainly doesn't lack the massiveness when it comes to bureaucracy. This is the only way after which YTB can expect to have positive feedback from the projects and all the invested money. Its management should not live under the fallacy that launching a website is enough. One-on-one human contact will be necessary to receive the expected feedback.

At one of the meetings organized by the YTB in Sarajevo in June 2014, a large number of well-known people from BiH including representatives of public institutions, academic circle, and NGO's were invited by at that time the president of the YTB to share their experiences and advice on how to improve Turkey's image in the region.[135] One of the participants shared his decades-long experience with Turkish diplomacy.

Every Turkish delegation comes to Bosnia to plant another tree of cooperation between the two countries, and goes back to his country, and after that nobody comes to water the planted tree. As I now look back from today's perspective, I see a forest of dead trees.[136]

YTB's projects with alumni should not turn into another dead tree in the forest full of already dead trees. YTB certainly should organize more often meetings with the local intelligentsia and listen to the advice of the interlocutor *milieu* in foreign countries, as it is the best way to measure the feedback of the strategies followed in the region.

6.7. YTB's Other Activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Balkans

Besides scholarships program, YTB has a great variety of other activities in the Balkans and BiH, like organizing conferences and panels on different subjects, conducting workshops, organizing excursions, publishing academic works, promoting the institution's projects in the region, and many other activities. Activities are often

134 For more visit: www.turkiyemezunlari.gov.tr

135 2014 Kurumsal Mali Durum ve Beklentiler Raporu, (Ankara, Strateji Geliştirme Daire Başkanlığı-Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, 2014), p. 16.

136 Ibid.

conducted in cooperation with other soft power institutions like TİKA and Yunus Emre Institute. YTB's some projects are conducted in cooperation with different Turkish ministries. There is also a cooperation with the Turkish NGO sector.[137]

One of the wide-scope projects YTB has been part of was the commemoration of the hundred years of the Balkan Wars in 2012, "to strengthen the regional cooperation and to contribute to the peace."[138] The program was organized by a set of Turkish and Balkan state and non-governmental organizations. It lasted for one whole year. A series of workshops named "Activities of 100th Anniversary of Balkan Wars" was organized with the participation of other countries from the region like Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia. Programs were held in the different Balkan capitals. Various academic and scientific institutes from the Balkans cooperated as well. This represented a successful example of YTB's cooperation with regional institutions. From the Turkish side institutions like IRCICA, SAM[139] , and Turkey's General Directorate for Foundations have participated. To one of the sessions, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu was invited as well.[140]

Other region-wide projects supported by the YTB were cultural tours and educational programs in Turkish cities that were organized for 1000 high school students from the Balkans.[141] In the same year, "6th Student Camp for Balkan Students" was organized for 420 students from the region that study in Turkey and the representatives of 160 different NGO's.[142] "Youth Forum for the Balkans Countries" was organized in May 2013.[143] "Akademi Rumeli" project including workshops and seminars for 150 young people from the region was organized in 2013 and in August of the same year, a Youth Camp was held.[144] In May 2014, a visit of 40 students from Balkan universities to YTB under the program "Balkan Youth Bridge Programme" was organized by Turkey's Public Diplomacy Coordination Office.[145]

In June 2015 there was another wide scope manifestation in Ankara sponsored by the YTB. A meeting where the largest Turkish think tank SETA[146] brought together think tanks from Turkey and 11 countries from the Balkans at the meeting known as "Meeting of Balkan Think Tanks." Twenty-two representatives of eleven think tanks met in Ankara with the think tank representatives from Turkey.[147] Another *Akademi Rumeli* was held in August 2015. Philologists, artists, musicians, historians,

137 "Announcements for the Scholarships test was done by the cooperation with Turkish NGO sector in the particular countries", 2011 Faaliyet Raporu, p. 32.
138 2012 Faaliyet Raporu, 32, 33.
139 Center for Strategic Research or Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi is a research institute of Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
140 2012 Faaliyet Raporu, p. 32, 33.
141 2013 Faaliyet Raporu, 36.
142 Ibid. 37.
143 Ibid.
144 Ibid. 38., Ibid. 54.
145 2014 Kurumsal Mali Durum ve Beklentiler Raporu, p. 15.
146 *Siyaset, Ekonomi ve Toplum Araştırmaları Vakfı* (SETA) or *Foundation for Researching Politics, Economy and Society*.
147 2015 Faaliyet Raporu, 38.

and culture workers from nine countries in the region came together. The program was visited by 150 young people from the Balkans.[148] In October 2015 another interesting event named "Romani of the Balkans Come Together for the Future Project" was organized by BAROM (Union of Balkans Romani) in the town of Edirne. The event was supported by the YTB. Young people of Romani origin participated in the educational seminars that included fields like history, culture, and urbanism. The opening of the ceremony was held at the Institue of Romani Language and Culture Studies based at Trakya University.[149] President of YTB Kudret Bülbül said the program was part of the 'Romani opening' launched by the Turkish government.[150]

In 2015 YTB launched a new program called *Bürokrasi Akademisi* (Bureaucracy Academy) organizing a series of "Academy Programmes" where bureaucrats from 18 different countries together with the representatives of the NGO sector were invited to share their experiences about the subject of "Migration and Diaspora." Representatives from Balkan countries were invited as well. The aim of the program was to,

> strengthen the political, cultural, and social ties with the countries that enjoy cultural closeness with Turkey.[151]

The program lasted two weeks.[152] A similar program named *Mevlana Kültürel Etkileşim Programı* (Mevlana Cultural Interaction Programme) was organized the same year. Once again NGO's and counterpart institutions from the regions that YTB recognizes as the area of "field of duty" were invited to the program to "increase the cooperation."[153] Since 2015 YTB organizes a football tournament for international students where students represent their home country.

In 2016 the project named *Balkan Youth School* as a part of the Ramadan feast was organized. The project in Bulgaria's capital Sofia brought together young people from eight Balkan countries. The program was kind of a cultural tour.[154] In 2016 YTB started a practice of declaring a year of a certain country, after which the presidency would intensify its activities with that country. The first was declared the 'Year of Kosovo' in 2016. For that reason, Kosovo was chosen as a host of the "Meeting of Balkan Think Tanks" traditionally supported by the YTB.[155]

For the 2017 action plan, YTB set ambitious goals regarding the region. Activi-

148 Ibid. 41.

149 Ibid. 41, 42.

150 Alongside Kurdish opening launched by the AKP as a widder recouncilation of the state with Kurdish separationist elements, Turkish government also launched a Romani opening aiming to improve the living conditions of its Romani citizens.; "Barom Heyetinde YTB'ye Teşekkür ziyareti", *Milliyet*, Last modified on October 28, 2015, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/barom-heyetinden-ytb-ye-tesekkur-ziyareti-ankara-yerelhaber-1036377/

151 2015 Faaliyet Raporu, 37-38.

152 Ibid.

153 Ibid.

154 "Balkan Gençlik Okulu" katılımcıları Sofya'da bir araya geldi, Time Balkan, accessed February 19, 2018, http://timebalkan.com/balkan-genclik-okulu-katilimcilari-sofyada-bir-araya-geldi/; 2016 Kurumsal Mali Durum ve Beklentiler Raporu, (Ankara, Strateji Geliştirme Daire Başkanlığı-Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, 2016), 21.

155 Ibid.

ties planned to be accomplished were improvement of the cooperation with research centers in the Balkans, organizing programs to improve the cultural cooperation between Turkey and Balkans, producing films, documentaries, and TV programs focused on the Balkans geography to encourage cultural convergence, the arrangement of cultural mobility programs between the region and Turkey, organizing cultural excursions for the students who mastered the Turkish Language in their schools, translating books written in the Turkish Language to Balkan Languages, translating books from Balkan Languages that speak about "Turkey's history and culture", and establishing a digital library of Balkan Countries.[156]

Among YTB's 2017 projects in BiH was the "Project of Support to Graduates of Madrassah Schools in BiH and the Balkans." In this program, YTB financially supported some twenty-five graduates of Islamic religious schools with their university tuition fees. Most of the supported students were from BiH.[157] YTB sponsored the learning of the Turkish Language in BiH by supporting the "Turkish Language Brotherhood Project."[158] Among other cultural projects realized in 2017 were, photograph exhibition named "Project of Promotion of the Ottoman Heritage of BiH and Turkey" and a documentary movie "Voice of Those Who Stayed."[159] YTB also provided five-day expert training to 25 academicians from the region under "Project of Increasing the Qualifications of Teaching Staff in the Balkans and Bosnia and Herzegovina."[160] In the same year, YTB financially supported 75 Bachelor degree students who conduct their education in Macedonia's International Balkan University under the "Balkan On-site Education Project."[161] YTB conducted many other projects in BiH and the Balkans, but only some of them are mentioned in this chapter.

YTB has publishing projects as well. Among the books that concern BiH and the Balkans sponsored or published by the YTB is, "Remembering the Bosnian Genocide: Justice, Memory and Denial" that was put together from the articles of the conference held in 2015. Five hundred pieces of the book are published in English and Bosnian Language and it was sent to many relevant libraries across the world. Another book is "The Attitude of the Ottoman Administration in the Herzegovina Rebellion of 1875-1878."[162] Among other sponsored books that concern the region are, "Ottoman Bulgaria, "History of Balkan Turkology and Turkologists from the Balkans", "Symposium Book of Ottoman Pious Foundations and Works in the Balkans."[163]

As it is seen from the number of organized events in only a few years, YTB worked pretty hard to bring together other institutions and NGO's from the Balkans. In terms of quantity, a lot of events are organized and many protocols of co-

156 2017 Kurumsal Mali Durum Beklentiler Raporu, p. 28.
157 2017 YTB İdare Faaliyet Raporu, 79.
158 Ibid. 32, 74.
159 Ibid. 69.
160 Ibid. 79.
161 Ibid.
162 Ibid, 68.
163 For more see: 2017 YTB İdare Faaliyet Raporu

operation were signed. Needs for protocol formalities are met, but the question of whether all the above-mentioned activities brought expected feedback for Turkey's soft power remains unanswered. The mentioned events are only some of the projects organized in the Balkans.

When it comes to activities regarding BiH particularly, naturally the number of activities is less. In 2014 a meeting in Ankara was organized for Bosnian students that study in Turkey.[164] The same year a meeting with Bosnian alumni, including the alumni of twelve other countries, was organized. Among thirteen countries, Macedonia was the only participant beside BiH from the region. Until 2017 the most alumni meetings, five out of thirteen, were with the African students, which again indicates the significance Africa is having in YTB's strategy and vision.[165] YTB's 2014 annual report gives a slightly different number. It mentions fifteen meetings with alumni for the first six months of 2014. The dominance of the meetings with African and Asian alumni is obvious in this annual report as well. Out of fifteen meetings mentioned in the report, only three were with the representatives from the Balkans, while five with African and seven with Asian representatives.[166] In 2017 in total 48 alumni meetings were organized. Balkans were again underrepresented in 2017 with 10 out of 48 meetings, while Türkiye Bursları held 17 meetings with African alumni and 18 meetings with the Asian alumni. Out of ten meetings with Balkan alumni, Bulgaria was overrepresented with three meetings.[167] The last alumni meeting with the students from BiH and Sandžak was held in 2017.[168] As YTB's other activities don't have much impact in the region, the Türkiye scholarship program remains its most recognized project in this region.

6.8. Comparison of Türkiye Bursları to Other Scholarship Programs in BiH

Turkey is not the only country that provides scholarships for Bosnian students. The country is ranked as the third most popular destination for Bosnian students, after Serbia and Austria. (See Table 6.5) Other countries for decades provide similar opportunities to Bosnian students. The rise in the number of Bosnian students studying in Turkey in recent years positioned this country to high third place after Serbia and Austria in terms of hosting Bosnian students.[169] Turkey is even a latecomer in the sphere of education in this country. According to the data provided by UNESCO, 11494 Bosnian students were continuing their studies abroad in 2016. For the same year, the number of students studying in Turkey was 427, less than 4 percent of the total number.[170]

164 2014 Faaliyet Raporu, 42.
165 Ibid, 44.
166 2014 Kurumsal Mali Durum ve Beklentiler Raporu, 19.
167 2017 YTB İdare Faaliyet Raporu, 64.
168 2017 Kurumsal Mali Durum Beklentiler Raporu, 21.
169 Redakcija Dnevnog Avaza, "Istrazivanje "Dnevnog Avaza" Mladima iz BiH najpristupačnija je Austrija", *Dnevni Avaz*, accessed February 26, 2018, http://avaz.ba/vijesti/teme/167501/istrazivanje-dnevnog-avaza-mladima-iz-bih-najpristupacnija-je-austrija
170 "Education: Inbound Internationally Mobile Students by Country of Origin, Europe: Students from Bosnia

Probably because of the common historical legacy and proximity, Austria historically is among the favorite destination for Bosnian students. Like Turkey, Austria has deep historical ties with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Once a province of Austria-Hungary, Vienna educated many Bosnians through decades. This tradition has been continuing ever since the eighteenth century. Education for Bosnian students is free. Today, around 3.000 Bosnian students are studying in Austria. According to the statistics published by *Statistik Austria,* the actual number of Bosnian students at Austrian public universities for the 2015-16 academic year was 2993.[171] UNESCO gives a slightly smaller number of 2770 Bosnians studying in Austria in 2016.[172] The number is steadily increasing in the last few decades. An astonishing rise can be observed especially in the period between 1995 and 2009. For instance, in 1995 only around 500 Bosnian students were studying in this country. Four years later, in the 1999/2000 academic year, the number of Bosnian students who had permanent residence in Austria was 527 people.[173] But nine years later, in 2009, this number was slightly above 2500. This represents almost a five-fold rise in numbers. Since this year the increasing trend has continued up until today. In the 2016-17 academic year number of Bosnian students was 3.187, and for instance, surpassed the number of Turkish students in Austria.[174] BiH moved from the position of being the fourth largest sender of students in the year before to the third position. Germany and Italy still sent more students than BiH, while Turkey contracted to fourth place. In six years, from 2009 to 2016, the rise of Bosnian students was more than 25 percent, while since 1995 rise is six-fold.

On the other hand, Turkey's interest in students from BiH is slightly diminishing. (See Table 6.5) Numbers certainly display the priorities of the two countries. More than three thousand Bosnian students in a country ten times smaller than Turkey tells much about the priorities. In 2016-17, BiH was the third-largest source of foreign students in Austria, only behind Germany and Italy, countries whose population size cannot be compared to BiH's.[175] This fact shows the high per-capita acceptance of Bosnian students. On the other hand, Bosnian students were holding a slim twentieth place in terms of numbers among the international students in Turkey. In Austria, BiH is the largest source of foreign students among the countries of Former Yugoslavia. In the case of Turkey, the top senders from the Balkans were Kosovo, Greece, Macedonia, and Albania.[176] Austria is a favorite education destination for

and Herzegovina, both sexes (number)", UNESCO, Accessed on January 7, 2019, http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=169

171 Statistik Austria-2017, p. 334.

172 "Education: Inbound Internationally Mobile Students by Country of Origin, Europe: Students from Bosnia and Herzegovina, both sexes (number)", UNESCO, Accessed on December 9, 2018, http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=169

173 Ute Lanzendorf and Ulrich Teichler, *Statistics on Student Mobility within the European Union (SSME) – Final Report*, (Kassel: Kassel University- Wissenschaftliches Zentrum für Berufs- und Hochschulforschung, 2002), 23.

174 "Bildung in Zahlen 2016/17 – Tabelleband", *Statistik Austria*, Wien, (2018), p. 348.

175 Ibid.

176 "Binlerce uluslararası öğrenci 'Türkiye Bursları' projesiyle Türkiye'de, T.C. Başbakanlık Kamu Diplomasisi Koordinatörlüğü

students from other countries in the region as well. Austria was also the number one destination for Serbian and Croatian students.[177]

Germany is another important destination for Bosnian students. Probably because of the massive international student population Bosnian students were not ranked among top-twenty nationalities in 2016.[178] Bulgaria is the only country from the Balkans that is among the top ten sending-countries.[179] German DAAD is a competitor of Türkiye Bursları in the region. DAAD provides scholarships for 100.000 German and foreign students and researchers each year. This makes DAAD the "world's largest funding organization" for the international exchange of students.[180] On the other hand, Türkiye Bursları annually accepts some 4 thousand foreign students to its scholarship program. The gap between the two institutions is enormously high. This gap is natural given the budgets of Türkiye Bursları and DAAD. YTB's total budget for 2015 was 79.39 million EUR compared to 471 million EUR the DAAD has at the disposal.[181] Germany also has ambitions in the sphere of education in BiH. Like the Turkish language, German also entered school curriculums as a selective class in the Bosnian schools.

Besides programs of the particular European countries, the European Union has its student programs active in BiH and the region. The most prestigious among them is Erasmus+ Programme sponsored by the European Commission.[182] Erasmus+

177 Migration Profiles, Croatia, *UNICEF*, Accessed on April 24, 2019. and Migration Profiles, Serbia, *UNICEF*, Accessed on April 24, 2019.

178 Wissenschaft weltoffen kompakt 2017: Daten und Fakten zur Internationalität von Studium und Forschung in Deutschland, DAAD und DZHW, 2017, p. 4.

179 "Education: Inbound Internationally Mobile Students by Continent of Origin", UNESCO, Accessed on December 9, 2018, http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=169#

180 One of the reasons why DAAD has managed to built a rich budget is the fact that it is financed by many sources compared to YTB which is sponsored only fromgovernment's central budget. The largest donor of DAAD is Federal Foreign Office by financing 39% of the budget, next comes Federal Ministry of National Education and Research (BMBF) with 23%, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) with 10%. Even European Union finances 18% of the budget, a luxury that YTB doesn't enjoy. What is interesting fact is that sixteen federal state of the Federal Republic of Germany covers the expanses of the tution cost of the international students. After examining this example, Türkiye Bursları might consider diversifying the source of financing, if it aims to reach goals set by the government.; For more: "DAAD", www.daad.de

181According to Central Government's Budget Law for 2015, 223.896.000YTL were provided for YTB. It is a rise of 15 percent compared to previous year. YTB 2015 Faaliyet Raporu, 61; The amount in EUR is calculated from YTL given in YTB's 2015 annual report, according to exchange rate from January 2, 2015.; YTB 2015 Faaliyet Raporu, 61

182 Erasmus+ (2014-2020), also called Erasmus Plus, is a programme launched in January 2014. Erasmus+programme brough together all the EU's schemes for education, training, youth and sport, including the *Lifelong Learning Programme* (Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig, Comenius,) *Youth in Action* and five international co-operation programmes (Erasmus Mundus, Alfa, Edulink, Tempus, and the programme for co-operation with industrialised countries). With launching the Erasmus+, the budget of the umbrella programme was raised by 40 percent to 14.7 EUR. The programme is the latest in series of Erasmus student exchange programmes that were previously created by the European Commission in 1987. The first in line was The Socrates programme that has ended on 31 December 1999 and was replaced with the Socrates II programme on 24 January 2000. After Socartes II ended it was replaced by the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007–2013 on 1 January 2007, which ended in 2013. By launching Erasmus+ (2014-2020) in January 2014, a programme that joined under one roof EU's education, training, youth and sport programmes was created hence. The programme aims to provide education, training, volunteering and other experiences for 4 million Europeans. "Erasmus+", European Commission, accessed February 26, 2018, https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en;

Programme includes the EU members plus a few other non-member countries like Turkey, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Macedonia, and Norway. Citizens of these countries are under the category of "Programme Countries", and are eligible to take part in all Erasmus+ activities. BiH is not part of the Programme country, but together with Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia belong to a "Partner countries group."[183] Erasmus+ is one of the most massive student programs in the world. In the 2015-16 academic year, some 303.880 students of higher education changed a country of education, and "725 thousand people studied, trained, or volunteered abroad" under the Erasmus Programme.[184] Employees of the Erasmus+ Office in BiH were not able to share the details about the activities of the same in BiH. The only information that was shared was that regarding BiH "4132 (student) mobilities were planned" in 2018. The rest of the details were for "internal use" and the Erasmus Office in BiH was not able to share them.

Table 6.5 Number of Students from BiH Studying Abroad by Destination and Year.[185]

Country	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Serbia	5560	5472	5526	5704	6192	6526
Austria	1965	2193	2097	2354	2770	-
Turkey	629	405	285	401	427	-
Slovenia	228	250	273	275	393	-
Italy	428	458	381	358	319	-
United States of America	330	348	303	303	316	-
Saudi Arabia	75	130	150	150	164	-
Croatia	324	173	127	127	132	-
Czechia	115	114	114	102	94	-
France	153	64	79	87	92	-

6.9. Concluding Remarks

One of the main concerns of public diplomacy institutions should be getting positive feedback from the policies followed. This is another subject that Turkish public diplomacy institutions should improve. Otherwise, many projects might turn into a money waste. Despite the recognizable improvement in the conditions of the state dormitories Turkey will have to bring dormitory accommodation quali-

ERASMUS (The European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students)

183 "The 33 Erasmus+ Programme Countries are the 28 EU Member States plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey. Partner countries are all other countries in the world.", European Commission, 2017.

184 Erasmus Programme has started with 3 thousand student back in 1987, and has rised hunderd-fold in less than three decades.; European Commission, 2017.

185 "Education: Inbound Internationally Mobile Students by Country of Origin, Europe: Students from Bosnia and Herzegovina, both sexes (number)", UNESCO, Accessed on December 9, 2018, http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=169

ty to satisfactory levels if the government has a plan to turn Turkey into a desirable destination for foreign students. Another matter YTB has to focus on is the future carrer of its graduates after their return to the homeland. Probably aware of the gap, YTB has recently launched a set of initiatives to keep the ties with its graduates. But in general, it can be assumed that more energy and focus should be invested.

Everything is not up to YTB. Unless Turkish universities catch up with international quality levels Turkey will not become a top destination for international students. At this level, Turkey can only be a magnet for students from third world countries. If the government aims to become a respectable soft power country, then education mentality must be changed to become a world quality in the education sector rather than an educator of the third world. Launching a website or having a countless number of roundtables simply will not bring Turkey to that goal. Strategies built on the wrong premises won't improve the present weaknesses. Lacking a political and economic presence in the wider region is another obstacle for Turkey to catch up with the leaders of international education. Without a stronger economic footprint in the Balkans, it is unlikely that graduates would preserve an attachment to Turkey. BiH is one of the best examples of this reality. The economic gap Turkey failed to close was filled by other countries like Germany and Austria. These two countries are well-positioned in the Bosnian economic and financial sector.[186] Many German and Austrian alumni certainly decide to stay in these countries after graduation. But, Germany and Austria are even attracting alumni from other countries, like Turkey.

186 Think Tank Populari, *A Political Romance: Relations between Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina*, (Sarajevo: Populari - The Balkan Trust for Democracy-A Project of the German Marshal Fund, 2014) Accessed December 17, 2017. http://populari.org/index.php?bGFuZz1lbiZyPTMmbD0mZT0xOTI=

7.

Turkey's City diplomacy in the Balkans: The Case of the Union of Turkish World Municipalities (TDBB)

Republic of Turkey inherited a centralist understanding from the Ottoman Empire regarding the local administrations.[1] With the foundation of the Turkish Republic, a set of new administrative changes regarding the organization of the state will be conducted. These changes included reforms in the local administration as well. Early Republican elite set foundations for the future organization of the local governments, which to an extent will continue until nowadays. For instance, as early as 1924 the Law regarding the villages, Law No. 442., that is in effect today, will be introduced. During the War of Independence, the first constitution by the Republican elite was written in 1921. This constitution, contrary to the next one from 1924, was ordering more decentralization of the local communities and more democratic governance. The constitution secured limited autonomy for the local governments. Local authorities were supposed to be composed of four organs, provincial judicial representations (İl tüzel kişiliği), provincial councils (İl Meclisi) and boards of management (İl Yönetim Kurulu), plus the Provincial president (İl Başkanı). The state appoints a Governor (Vali)[2] as a representative of the central government in the provinces. Governor was supposed to react only in situations where "divisions" between the central and local governments occur.[3] A parallel system where local governments are led by the elected members and the appointees of the central government is preserved until today.

The second Republican constitution of 1924 was promoting stronger centralization in governance. Besides only three of the 105 articles that were speaking about local governments, the new constitution was not giving any details about the composition of the local governments.[4] Until 1946 Turkey was governed by the one-party system. With the shift to the multi-party system, demand for a new constitution appeared.

The change came in the form of the 1961 Constitution. The new constitution to an extent provided a liberalization in the country. Liberalization together with the rapid urbanization of the 1960s created a demand for reforming the conservative organization of the local governance. By Article 116 of the same constitution, local governments are described as: "Provinces (İl), Municipalities (Belediye) and Villages (Köy) that are public judicial bodies who look after the local needs of the mentioned areas and whose general decision-making bodies are elected by the people."[5] (See Table 7.1) Despite the claims in the new constitution about the need for building autonomous and strong

1 For the organization of local governments in Ottoman Empire see: İlber Ortaylı, "Belediye", Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, Vol. 5. (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1992), 400., İlber Ortaylı, *Türkiye İdare Tarihi*, (Ankara: Cedit Neşriyat, 2008): 435-443. and Birgül Ayman Güler, "Yerel Yönetim Tarihi", *Belediye Dergisi*, (July, 1994): 4-6, doi: http://birgulaymanguler.net/files/1-9guler.pdf

2 The word *Vali* comes from Arabic word *Wali* meaning a divenly inspired leader; saint.

3 Rüşen Keleş, *Yerinden Yönetim ve Siyaset*, (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 2012), 163.

4 Articles 89, 90 and 91.

5 1961 Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası, T.C. Resmi Gazete, No. 10816, 1961, doi: http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/10816.pdf

local governance, not much was achieved in that direction.[6] Turkish local governments remained governed by the centralist principles of the early Republic. Political leadership simply didn't feel that the country is ready to leave the centralist policies.

During the 1970s country entered into a phase of internal instabilities caused by the ideological fights between rightist and leftist elements. The anarchic situation forced the military to react. The army decided to organize a coup to bring order to the streets. After containing the situation harshly, the Junta regime led by General Kenan Evren (1917-2015) decided to propose a set of measures to further centralize the state. According to military leadership, one of the main reasons for the chaos of the 1970s to evolve was the too liberal constitution from 1961. The new Constitution of 1982 will come into force, promoting further centralization of the state governance. As it is already mentioned previously, liberalization that came with the Constitution of 1961 didn't have its reflection on local governments. Constitution of 1982 redefined the role of local government in a more centralist spirit. The organization of the local administration's scheme was, Province (İl), Municipality (Belediye) and village (Köy). This organizational structure will remain unchanged. (See Table 7.1) Constitution of 1982 orders local elections to be held every five years.

The first metropolitan municipalities were created in 1984. The three largest Turkish cities Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir were raised to the status of Metropolitan Municipalities. By government order No. 195 and Law No. 3030 these three cities were raised to metropolitan status.[7] The reason for forming Metropolitan municipalities was practical. Urban booming was continuing at uncontrollable levels. The huge influx of rural populations from Anatolia to large cities, in turn, has created more needs for effective local governance, which was not possible to be met by the existing organization structure.[8] Law No. 3030 will pass through certain changes until Metropolitan Municipality Law 5216 was adopted in 2004. With the Metropolitan Municipality Law 5216 fourteen new metropolitan municipalities will be formed.[9]

The latest change in the number of Metropolitan municipalities will be in 2012, when with Law 6360 fourteen new municipalities will be raised to the status of metropolitan municipalities, thus making the number of metropolitan municipalities in Turkey thirty. Turning a province into a metropolitan municipality implied certain restructuring as well. With the change in the status of the municipality, Special Provincial Administration, which represents the highest local administration office, would get automatically abolished.[10] With the formation of the Metropolitan Mu-

6 Özcan Altaban, "1960-1973 Dönemi Belediyeciliğine Genel Bakış" in Türk Belediyeciliği'nde 60 Yıl Uluslar arası Sempozyumu Bildiri ve Tartışmalar Kitabı, Ankara: Ankara Büyükşehir Belediyesi Yayını, 1990, 317-325, quoted in Yavuz Bozkurt and Hüseyin Can, *Yerel Yönetim Birliklerinin Kardeş Şehir İlişkilerine Katkıları*, (Bursa, Ekin Basım Yayın Dağıtım, 2020): 14.

7 Uğur Yıldırım, Zehra Gül and Soner Akın, "İl Mülki Sınırı Büyükşehir Belediye Modelinin Getirdiği Yenilikler", *Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 10 (2), Eskişehir, (2015): 205-229. doi: http://iibfdergi.ogu.edu.tr/makaleler/14495928_10-2_A%C4%9EUSTOS%202015_Makale_0.pdf

8 Migration to cities accelerated especialy during the 1980s after fightings between Turkish Armed Forces and PKK rebels in Southeastern Turkeybroke up.

9 "5216 Sayılı Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kanunu", Mevzuatı Geliştirme ve Yayın Genel Müdürlüğü-Mevzuat Bilgi Sistemi, Accessed on June 23, 2018, http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5216.pdf

10 Vali (Governor) that previously were appointed by the central governmet to Provinces are transfering power to Mayor of Metropolitan Municipality., while the Vali remains as the head of the Valilik Office (Office of the

nicipality, the mayor of the same would get in-charge of coordinating the lower instances, ordinary municipalities. The lowest instances of the local governments, *Köy* (Villages), would automatically receive a status of *Mahalle* (District). (See Tables 7.1 and 7.2) Like in the many countries around the world local governments in Turkey can be divided into two groups, those 'based on representation' where representatives are elected by the people and those instances of a local government which are based on the 'principle of appointment' from the central government.[11] In the second case, the central government is appointing a representative that represents the state at the provincial level. (See Tables 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3)

SCHEME OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN TURKEY:

Table 7.1 Local governments formed by elections

Local government office	Officer in charge
Special Provincial Administrations (Il özel idareleri)	Provincial General Assembly (İl Genel Meclisi)[12]
Municipality (Belediye)	Mayor (Belediye Başkanı)
Village (Köy)	Village representative (Muhtar)

Table 7.2 Elected local governments after being raised to the status of Metropolitan Municipality

Local government Office	Officer in charge
Metropolitan Municipality (Büyükşehir Belediyesi)	Mayor of Metropolitan Municipality
Municipality (Belediye)	Mayor (Belediye Başkanı)
District (Mahalle)	District representative (Muhtar)

Table 7.3 Local government offices formed by the appointment from the central state authority

Local government office	Officer in charge
Special Provincial Administrations (Valilik)	Governor (Vali)
District Governorship (Kaymakamlık)	District Governor (Kaymakam)
Ministry Representatives-Province/County (Bakanlık Temsilcilikleri-İl/İlçe)[13]	Provincial Director/County Director (İl Müdür/İlçe müdürü)

Governor). (See Tables 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3)

11 Rüşen Keleş, *Yerinden Yönetim ve Siyaset*, 30.

12 Members of the Assembly are elected by the people. After being elected through elections, Head of the Assembly and provincial comitee are formed among the elected members of the Assembly.

13 Some Ministries, like Ministry of Education or Ministry of Health, have their representative offices at the local government level.

7.2. City diplomacy

In the era of strong interconnectedness and globalization, local administrations are not limited to local areas anymore. As the world is turning into a global village day by day, local governments are forced to follow the trends and to open up to the everyday needs of modern society. For the first time in history, more people will live in cities than in rural areas. This represents a precedent in human history. Mentioned global trends plus the professionalization of municipalism has created a need for local governments to invest in networking and nourish cooperation with other local administrations. These developments have turned the local administrations into international players, thus a need for the developments of a new form of diplomacy that would operate among the local governments was born. Form of international relations run among the local administrations is popularly known as *city diplomacy* or *city diplomacy*.[14] This kind of diplomatic activity among the different local communities whether in or outside the national borders is used to share mutual experience and knowledge among the local governments to improve the quality of the services. City diplomacy often represents an important element of the bilateral relations between the two countries. Dense traffic in the relations between two foreign municipalities can be a sign of effective bilateral ties at the state level. Thus, city diplomacy is a supportive factor of state diplomacy. For Alexandra Sizoo and Arne Musch,

> city diplomacy doesn't eliminate the role of the state in diplomacy, but rather provides support for it.[15]

Van Der Plujim and Melissen also recognize the rising role of local governments in public diplomacy, where some cities are developing consistent "municipal foreign policies."[16] For Van Der Plujim and Melissen city diplomacy plays an important role in the aspects of six dimensions; security, development, economy, culture, networking, and representation.[17] In the last years "city diplomacy" started exercising an active role in projects aiming for the improvement of environmental problems, conflict prevention, conflict resolution, post-conflict reconstruction, preservation of cultural heritage, and many other aspects of everyday life.[18] City diplomacy also became active in spreading the recently defined concept of "Human Rights City."[19] As

14 Sabiha Tuğba Ekşi, *Dünyada ve Türkiye'de Kardeş Şehircilik*, (İstanbul, TDBB, 2018): page 27, 28.

15 Alexandra Sizoo and Arne Musch, "City Diplomacy", in City Diplomacy, ed. Arne Musch, The Hague, Deltahage, 2008, 4. Quoted in, Sabiha Tuğba Ekşi, *Dünyada ve Türkiye'de Kardeş Şehircilik*, (İstanbul, TDBB, 2018): 28.

16 Rogier ven der Plujim and Jan Melissen, "City Diplomacy: The Expanding Role of Cities in International Relations", *Netherlands Institute of International Relations-Clingendael*, Paper No. 10. (April, 2007), doi: www.uclg.org

17 Ibid.

18 Alexandra Sizoo and Arne Musch, City Diplomacy: The Role of Local Governments in Conflict Prevention, Peace-building and Post-conflict Reconstruction, in City Diplomacy: The Role of Local Governments in Conflict Prevention, Peace-building and Post-conflict Reconstruction, ed. Arne Musch, Chris van der Valk, Alezandra Sizoo and Kian Tajkhsh, (The Hague: VNG International, 2008), 7-27.

19 "Human rights cities" is a concept that emphasizes improvement of human rights, social, economic and cultural rights among the residents of a municipality according to international human rights standards. Concept of human rights cities has settled in modern local government sector with the emergence of global human rights movements. More and more cities around the globe are receiving a status of 'human rights cities.' This concept has just recently started being practiced in Turkey. In November, 2017 TDBB brought together its few Turkish

it is understood city diplomacy has a wide range of possibilities for cooperation and takes a growing role in international relations.

7.3. Sister Cities Concept

Through time city diplomacy has developed a set of different platforms for improving cooperation among the foreign municipalities. The most widespread platform used between the municipalities is the "sister city model." Two municipalities from two different countries sign a protocol after which they enter into sister cities relation. This is a mutual commitment to improving the cooperation between the signatory municipalities. Signing the sister city protocol doesn't necessarily imply that cooperation will be active because it depends on the commitment of the two sides.

Different terms are used to describe the sister city relations around the world. The term *jumelage* is used in French meaning 'twinning.' In the German language, it is *Gemeindepartnerschaft*, meaning 'local-community partnership', in Russian *Goroda-pobratimy*, meaning 'brotherhood cities, and in Chinese, *Yǒuhǎo chéngshì* meaning 'friendship cities.' In the Turkish language, the term *Kardeş şehir* meaning sibling city is in use.

The first known example of the town twinning in history was conducted in the Middle Ages between towns of Le Mans of France and Paderborn in present-day Germany.[20] During the twentieth century twinning of cities will be raised to a more professional level. The Sister city model was first practiced among the Western European cities. After the First World war, the sister city model will spread across the continent. But the sister city model will pass through expansion especially after the Second World War when former enemy countries joined forces to rebuild the continent. The destruction caused by the Second World War forced European cities to invest more energy in sister city relations. The mutual assistance was of great importance for the rapid post-war reconstruction throughout the continent. Especially Franco-German post-War cooperation and reconciliation process was important for the development of the sister city model in the continent. Both countries used the cooperation between the local governments as part of their national public diplomacy strategy. In 1947 mayors from the French and German local governments formed the *Union Internationale de Maires* (UIM)[21], which aimed to bring together municipalities with similar characteristics.[22] Thanks to the energy invested by both sides today out of almost 40 thousand sister city relations on the continent France tops the list with almost seven thousand sister city, followed by Germany that has more than six thousand sister city relations. It is not hard to guess that a large share of sister city relations is between the two countries. France and Germany have 2281 sister relations with each other. Franco-German public diplomacy model of cooper-

member municipalities together with Sweden's Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights (RWI) in order to sign the 'The Human Cities Project' protocol. For more see: "Human Rights Cities Project Cooperation Protocol was Signed Between the TDBB and RWI", *TDBB*, Accessed on January 12, 2019, doi: http://www.tdbb.org.tr

20 Twinning happened in 830s.

21 International Union of Mayors in French

22 History of our Movement, UCLG, Accessed on January 2. 2020, https://www.uclg.org/en/centenary

ation through local government twinings in a way represented an introduction for the wider continental integration process of making a common economic union that will grow into what today is known as the European Union. This process boosted the sister city relations among the European cities. (See Table 7.4)

Municipal relations will get another dimension with the start of the European Union integration process across the continent. As a part of the Europeanization process, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) was formed in 1951 to boost the cooperation between the European cities and municipalities.[23] Since the early 1980s, the EU started giving more and more importance to the co-operation of the local government among its member and candidate countries. The twinning of the cities in the continent serves in a way as a catalyst that helps closer integration between the cities of the member states. At the same time, in Europe development and cooperation between the local administrations are understood in the spirit of the democratization process. Thus, the Union supports the development of the local communities as well as their cooperation with other cities and further decentralization of the member states and candidate countries. After the sister city model was proved beneficial, it will spread from Western Europe to other parts of the world.[24] In the US local administrations were encouraged to enter into sister city relations by President Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953-1961) under his "people-to-people concept" initiative also known as *Citizen Diplomacy* that would be launched in September 1956. This concept was based on Eisenhower's premise that "if only people will get together, then so eventually will nations."[25] As a part of the initiative, a nonprofit diplomatic network *Sister Cities International*[26] was formed in 1953 to support the efforts for global peace.[27] Also, in the case of the US, the civil sector is very active in boosting the sister city relations.[28] Besides the reconstruction, municipalities will slowly expand the area of cooperation by adding different segments like culture, economic development, environmental issues, preservation of historical legacy, and many other reasons.

23 For more visit: http://www.ccre.org/

24 Wilbur Zelinsky, "The Twinning of the World: Sister Cities in Geographic and Historical Perspective", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 81, Issue 1, (2010): 1-31., doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8306.1991.tb01676.x

25 Dwight D. Eisenhower, (Speech, White House Conference on Citizen Diplomacy, September 11, 1956), Pyxera Global, https://www.pyxeraglobal.org/citizen-diplomacy-timeless/

26 For more visit: sistercities.org

27 Sister Cities International, *Peace Through People: 50 Years of Global Citizenship*, (Louisville: Butler Books, 2006), page 5.

28 Sabiha Tuğba Ekşi, *Dünyada ve Türkiye'de Kardeş Şehircilik*, 12.

Table 7.4 Sister City Relations Among the European Countries[29]

COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN MUNICIPALITIES AND REGIONS

EUROPEAN SECTION OF UNITED CITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

TABLE SHOWING THE NUMBER OF TWINNINGS IN THE WIDER EUROPE IN 2010

| | | |

Today sister city relations are formed for different reasons, varying from ideological, cultural, economic, symbolic, historical, and many other purposes. For instance, during the Cold War, the sister cities model was used as a diplomatic tool between the two ideological camps. During the 1970s Seattle and Tashkent became sister cities, as a part of a goodwill gesture and normalization of ties between the US and Soviet Union.[30] Another example of reconciliation is the sister city relation between St. Paul, Minnesota, and the Japanese town of Nagasaki. This relation was built as a part of a reconciliation process between the US and Japan after a nuclear bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The two cities were twinned on December 7, 1955, at the anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. As a part of the twinning, various bits of help were delivered to the victims of the Nagasaki nuclear bomb attack, and a Peace Park was constructed in Nagasaki.[31]At the same time, this case represents the first twinning between American and Asian cities. Sister city relation between the Turkish town of Çanakkale and New Zealand's Wellington is another example where the historical experience was taken as a basis for the twinning, despite the bitter experience of war between the two countries.[32] The case of the cities of Haparanda in Sweden and Tornio of Finland is another specific example.[33] These two cities share a common border. They were twinned to improve cross-border cooperation and mutual emergency, social, geographical, and other challenges. Sometimes even the name of two cities can be a reason for sister city relations to be established. Two cities that share the name Dunkirk[34], one in the United States other in France, have sister city relations.[35]

The first examples of sister city relations in Turkey go back to the 1960s. Istanbul became a sister city with Rio de Janeiro in 1965. The first sister relation was established for economic purposes. Later examples will incorporate cultural character as well. During the 1990s the number of twinning relations will boost.[36] After Central Asian Turkic Republics gained independence with the dissolution of the Soviet Union Turkish municipalities entered into a large number of sister-city relations with their Turkic counterparts. The 1990s were years when Turkey under Özal was aiming to create pro-active foreign policy in Central Asia which also found its reflection on the work of the local administrations. (See Table 7.5) During the 1990s Turkish municipalities also became more active in the other post-Socialist-bloc countries like Bulgaria, Romania, and Former Yugoslavia. This was a decade when Turkey started building relations with Balkan countries on a municipal level.[37] During the 2000s

30 "Tashkent, Seattle celebrate 35 years of a sister-city relationship" Seattle Times, accessed on April 16, 2018, https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/tashkent-seattle-celebrate-35-years-of-a-sister-city-relationship/

31 Sabiha Tuğba Ekşi, Dünyada ve Türkiye'de Kardeş Şehircilik, 41.

32 Ibid, 65.

33 Ibid, 71,72.

34 In the same time Dunkirk is the first US town to entered into a sister city relation.

35 Yavuz Bozkurt and Hüseyin Can, *Yerel Yönetim Birliklerinin Kardeş Şehir İlişkilerine Katkıları*, (Bursa, Ekin Basım Yayın Dağıtım, 2020): 129.

36 Fahri Solak, Interview by Jahja Muhasilović, Interview with Fahri Solak, Secretary-General of the TDBB, Conducted on January 9, 2019.

37 Özcan Sezer and Tuğçe Bayram, "Yerel Yönetimler Arası İşbirliğini Geliştirmede Yerel Ağların Önemi: Balkan

even more twinnings will be signed with Turkic counterparts.[38] Turkey's EU accession ambition represents another drive for the Turkish municipalities to extend their sister cities network. On the other hand, Municipality Law No. 5393[39] from 2005 stressed the importance of the sister city relations, which in turn pushed municipalities to raise the number of their sister cities abroad.[40]

By mid-2017 Turkish municipalities had in total of 1619 sister cities around the world.[41] The most sister cities, 646 of them, came from Europe, representing around forty percent of all sister city relations.[42] Municipalities from the Balkans take an important place in Turkish city diplomacy. Municipalities from this region represent more than a quarter of all sister city relations Turkish municipalities have abroad. Four-hundred-thirty-nine municipalities from the Balkans have sister city relation to Turkish municipalities. If Greece is added to this number, then it rises to 525 municipalities, representing 32 percent of all sister cities Turkish municipalities have.[43] According to 2017 statistics provided by *kardesehirler*, a website launched by the TDBB, Europe together with the Balkan region is responsible for more than two-thirds of all sister city relations Turkey nourishes.[44] (See Table 7.6) The fact that Turkish municipalities have the most sister city relations to a Balkan country clearly show the importance this region plays to Turkish city diplomacy. Hundred and twenty-three Bulgarian municipalities have sister city ties to Turkish counterparts. This neighboring country by far takes the first place in the list. (See Table 7.7) The second comes BiH with 101, third Germany with 96, fourth is Greece with 86 municipalities, and the fifth-place belongs to another Balkan country, Macedonia with 75 sister cities to Turkish counterparts.[45] Among the five countries with whom Turkey has the most sister city relations, four are from the Balkans. Except BiH other four countries traditionally have a large Turkish population. After Bulgaria, BiH takes the high second place in terms of the number of sister cities. For a country of only three and a half million people, this represents a pretty high number. The number gets meaning if compared to Central Asian cities which in total have only

Ülkeleri Yerel Yönetimleri ile İşbirliğini Geliştirme Potansiyeli" 1. Karadeniz ve Balkan Ekonomik ve Politik Araştırmalar Sempozyumu Bildiriler Kitabı, *Batı Karadeniz Kalkınma Ajansı Yayını*, Zonguldak (2014), quoted in Yavuz Bozkurt and Hüseyin Can, *Yerel Yönetim Birliklerinin Kardeş Şehir İlişkilerine Katkıları*, (Bursa, Ekin Basım Yayın Dağıtım, 2020): 105.

38 Tarkan Oktay, "Türkiye'deki Belediyelerin Türk Cumhuriyetleri ile Kardeş Şehir İlişkileri", in *Türk Dünyasında Yerel Yönetimlerin Sorunları*, ed. Deniz İşçioğlu, KKTC, 11-28., doi: http://www.tarkanoktay.net/index_htm_files/tarkan%20oktay-%20turk%20dunyasi%20kardes%20sehir%20iliskileri.pdf

39 Çiğdem Akman, "Evaluating the Current Situation via Town Twinning Practices in Turkey", *Journal of Süleyman Demirel University Institute of Social Sciences-Süleyman Demirel University*, CIEP Special Edition, (2016): 1058, doi: http://dergipark.gov.tr/uploads/issuefiles/446c/eeb1/af3b/58a4208447b16.pdf

40 Ibid. 1055-1071

41 Special Provincial Administrations are excluded from this number.

42 Balkan region is not included in the statistic.

43 Sister Cities of Turkey All Over the World", Kardeş Şehirler, Accessed on November 10, 2018, http://www.kardessehirler.org.tr

44 Union of Turkish World Municipalities

45 Greece is fifth if Turkish Republic of Norther Cyprus is counted. TRNC has 88 sister cities, two more than Greece. Turkey is the only country in the world that recognizes the TRNC as a state, thus this entity is not counted in the statistics provided above.

92 sister city relations with Turkey. Lower than Bosnia and Herzegovina alone. After Europe and Balkan come the Middle East with 134, Central Asia with 92, Asia-Pacific with 86, South Caucasus with 80, Sub-Saharan Africa with 62, North America with 37, Latin America with 23 and South Asia with 20 sister city relations to Turkish municipalities. (See Table 7.6)

Table 7.5 Number of Sister Cities of Turkish Municipalities Through Years.[46]

Year	Number		Year	Number
1992	1		2005	536
1993	14		2006	595
1994	28		2007	672
1995	43		2008	764
1996	84		2009	793
1997	121		2010	872
1998	131		2011	1023
1999	160		2012	1167
2000	206		2013	1293
2001	256		2014	1372
2002	333		2015	1480
2003	390		2016	1589
2004	455		2017	1619

Graphic 7.1 Regional Distribution of Turkey's Sister Cities Abroad[47]

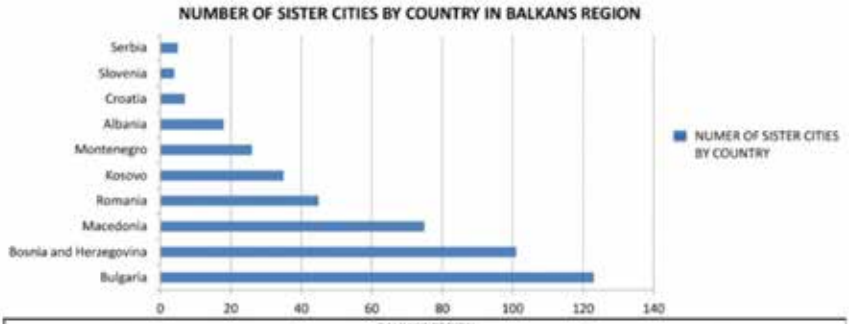
46 "Kardessehirler", kardessehirler.org.tr, 2017

47 "Sister Cities of Turkey All Over the World", Kardeş Şehirler, Accessed on March 4, 2018, http://www.kardessehirler.org.tr

Table 7.6 Regional Distribution of Turkey's Sister Cities Abroad[48]

REGION	TOTAL NUMBER OF SISTER CITIES	RATE (%)
Europe	646	39,9
Balkans	439	27,1
The Middle East and North Africa	134	8,3
Central Asia	92	5,7
Asia-Pacific	86	5,3
South Caucasus	80	4,9
Sub-Saharan Africa	62	3,8
North America	37	2,3
Latin America	23	1,4
South Asia	20	1,2
Total	1619	100

Table 7.7 Number of Sister Cities in the Balkans Region (Without Greece)[49]



BALKANS REGION		
COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF SISTER CITIES	RATE (%)
Bulgaria	123	28,0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	101	23,0
Macedonia	75	17,1
Romania	45	10,3
Kosovo	35	8,0
Montenegro	26	5,9
Albania	18	4,1
Croatia	7	1,6
Slovenia	4	0,9
Serbia	5	1,1
Total	439	100

7.4. Municipality Unions and Coordination Between the Local Governments

First examples of the municipality unions stretch back to the mid-nineteenth century. Scandinavian countries were the first to introduce municipal unions. From there, practice slowly spread to other European countries. As cities were cooperating more and more after two World Wars, municipality unions started being formed to boost the cooperation between the local administrations. Today municipal unions exist all over the world. According to their geographical frame municipality unions can be divided into two main groups. The first group is national unions that are in charge of bringing together municipalities of a certain country, while the second

48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.

group of municipality unions operates on the international level. Municipality unions generally operate on international, regional, national, city, and rural levels.[50] The first example of international municipal unions was the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) that was launched in 1913 in the Netherlands. The aim of founding the IULA was the promotion of the idea of local self-government among the European cities. Today IULA is still among the largest international municipality unions. Municipalities can also be organized thematically, according to common geographical, cultural, industrial, and other denominators.

International unions especially settled in Europe with the EU integration process. Since the mid-twentieth century international unions like CEMR (Council of European Municipalities and Regions)[51] and UTO (United Towns Organizations)[52], later UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments) are organizations that play important role in spreading the sister city model and expanding the municipal cooperation.[53] Like the unions operating at the national level, international unions also can be launched thematically by geographical, historical, civilizational, industrial, and other parameters. Some of the thematical unions are sponsored by multilateral organizations like the UN or the EU. For example, the *Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe* (NALAS) is an EU sponsored union that gathers municipalities of South-eastern Europe as a part of the wider Euro-Atlantic integration process in the region.[54] Another example of the thematic union is the *European Association of Historic Towns and Regions*[55], where towns and cities with historical significance launched a union to improve the cooperation on common matters like preservation of the historical heritage. Few other municipality unions like, *Eurocities*[56], *METREX*[57] (Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas), *Douzelage*[58] , and *CTA* (City Twins Association)[59], operate on the European level. An example of a regional municipality union is *BaltMet* (Baltic Metropoles Network) that aims to connect the local administrations in the Baltic states. Sometimes even religion can be taken as a base for launching a municipality union, like in the case of the *Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities.*[60]

50 Yavuz Bozkurt and Hüseyin Can, *Yerel Yönetim Birliklerinin Kardeş Şehir İlişkilerine Katkıları*, (Bursa, Ekin Basım Yayın Dağıtım, 2020): page 43-44.

51 "The Council of European Municipalities and Regions-CEMR", accessed on April 17, 2018, doi: http://www.ccre.org/

52 *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia, 3rd Edition*. S.v. "United Towns Organization." Retrieved on April 17, 2018,doi: https://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/United+Towns+Organization

53 "United Cities and Local Governments-UCLG", Accessed on April 17, 2018, doi: https://www.uclg.org

54 "Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe", NALAS, Accessed on March 5, 2018, http://www.nalas.eu

55 "European Association of Historic Towns and Regions", Accessed on April 17, 2018, doi: http://www.historic-towns.org/

56 For more visit: http://www.eurocities.eu/

57 For more visit: http://www.eurometrex.org

58 For more visit: douzelage.eu

59 For more visit: http://www.frankfurt-oder.eu/en/

60 "Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities", Accessed on April 17, 2018, doi:http://www.oicc.org/

7.5. Turkish Domestic Municipality Unions

It can be said that Turkey has a very dynamic municipal sector. Across the country, dozens of unions operate on different levels. The first examples where the state was trying to regulate the cooperation between local governments can be traced back to the late Ottoman period, to the Law known as *Idare-i Umumiye-i Vilayet Kanunu Muvakkatı* from 1913.[61] After this year various regulations regarding the local governments and unions will be implemented. As it is already mentioned with founding the Republic state will bring some new laws and practices to the organization of the local governments. During the 1920s local community unions on the village-level were formed to meet their common necessities. As early as 1924 an act of forming a union between two or more villages was approved by the central government.[62] But, the first constitutional order in the modern sense concerning the local government unions came with the Constitution of 1961. In this decade constitutional regulations regarding the municipality unions will be introduced. The liberties that came with the Constitution of 1961 will increase the number of unions. The unions aimed to improve the cooperation and communication between the local governments. These were the years when regional unions like Municipality unions of Aegean[63], Marmara[64], Black Sea, and other regions were founded. A decade later in 1978, even a Ministry for Local Governments will be founded. But, it was a short living. It will be abolished only a year after being founded.[65]

As it is already mentioned, Turkish municipal unions can be divided into two main groups in most general terms, those operating domestically and unions in charge of running overseas operations. When it comes to unions that are active nationwide, their numbers exceed those of the international reach. National unions can be found on all instances of local government from villages to those operating on micro-regional or nationwide instances. In this chapter, I will not mention the unions that are active on rural, city, municipality, or regional level as they are irrelevant for the subject, but will shortly say few words only about those unions that are operational across the country. The largest among the nation-wide municipal unions is Turkey Municipality Union (TBB).[66]

61 Cenk Reyhan, "Yerel Yönetim Metinleri (XX): 1913 Tarihli Vilayet Genel İdaresi Geçici Kanunu", Çağdaş Yerel Yönetimler Dergisi, Vol. 9, No. 1, 129-154. doi: http://www.todaie.edu.tr/resimler/ekler/91fbf770f89b0c2_ek.pdf?dergi=Cagdas%20Yerel%20Yonetimler%20Dergisi

62 Yakup Altan, Uysal Kerman and Mehmet Aktel, "Köy Kanunu Tasarısı Taslağı Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme", *Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi-Dumlupınar Üniversitesi*, No. 26, (2010): 56-65. doi: http://www.acarindex.com/dosyalar/makale/acarindex-1423876635.pdf

63 Founded in 1986 by Mayor of Izmir. doi: http://www.ebb.gov.tr/

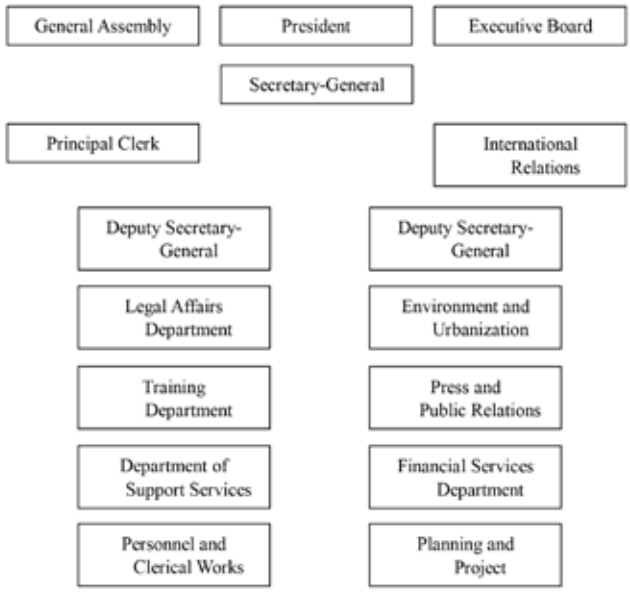
64 Founded in 1975 as *Municipality Union of Marmara and Straits* (Marmara ve Boğazları Belediyeler Birliği). Union will get its to present name of *Municipality Union of* Marmara (Marmara Belediyeler Birliği) in 2009. doi: http://marmara.gov.tr/

65 Rüveyda Kızılboğa Özaslan and Orhan Veli Alıcı, "Türkiye'de Yerel Yönetim Bakanlığı Deneyimi ve Günümüzdeki Gerekliliğin Sorgulanması", *International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, Vol. 10/1, (2015): 351-366. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.7627

66 Türkiye Belediyeler Birliği,

TBB was launched in 1945 as a "public interest association."[67] In 2002 by the decision of the Council of Ministers it will be reshaped as a Union with a status of local administrative authority that is a public legal authority. The aim of changing status was to create a union that would gather Turkish municipalities across the country under a single platform. Since the legal status of the TBB has changed all municipalities in Turkey are obliged to become its members. TBB is led by its General Assembly[68], Executive Board[69] , and the President. (See Graphic 7.1) Besides domestic obligations, the union has some international responsibilities as well. Among the duties of the TBB are, "representing municipalities in presence of international authorities" and "cooperating and conducting joint projects with international institutions and their co-institutions in the country."[70] The union is involved in Turkey's EU accession process by "assisting the works of municipalities in the process, assisting municipalities to benefit from the EU grants and providing technical assistance."[71] One of the regions where the TBB is most active with its international activities is Balkans.[72]

Graphic 7.2 Organizational structure of the TBB[73]



67 "History", *TBB*, Accessed on December 27, 2019, doi: https://www.tbb.gov.tr/en/home-page/history/

68 General Assembly is composed of 801 members of which 252 are "elected members" consisting of mayors of Turkish cities, while the rest 549 members are elected.

69 Executive Board is consisted of the President of the Union and fourteen mayors.

70 "Power, Functions and Responsibilities", *TBB*, Accessed on December 27, 2019, doi: https://www.tbb.gov.tr/en/home-page/power-functions-ve-responsilities/

71 "Power, Functions and Responsibilities", Union of Municipalities of Turkey-TBB, Accessed on April 6, 2018, http://www.tbb.gov.tr/en/home-page/power-functions-ve-responsilities/

72 2010 TBB Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara, Türkiye Belediyeler Birliği, 2011): 84, 86-87, 97and 2016 TBB Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara, Türkiye Belediyeler Birliği, 2017): 140-141

73 "Organizational structure", *Union of Municipalities of Turkey-TBB*, Accessed on April 6, 2018, http://www.tbb.gov.tr/en/home-page/organizational-structure/

7.6. International Municipality Unions - the Case of TDBB

Besides the unions that are oriented towards domestic municipalities, Turkey has municipality unions that are focused solely on international cooperation. These unions are responsible for the coordination of projects and relations Turkish municipalities have abroad. The best example of this kind of institution is the Union of Turkish World Municipalities (TDBB).[74]

Foundations for the creation of the TDBB were laid in dynamic foreign policy that was run by Turkey during the mid-1990s when Ankara was trying to build a more active role in Central Asia and other post-Eastern bloc countries. As the Secretary-General of the TDBB Fahri Solak recognizes sister city relations with the Central Asian and Balkans states were intensified after Cold-War was over.[75] For that purpose *IV. Summit of the Statesmen of Turkic-speaking countries* was organized in 1996. After the meeting a declaration that is known as the *Tashkent Announcement* calling for the improvement of economic, educational, cultural, tourism, and other ties among the Turkic countries. In another Summit held in 2000 in Baku, Azerbaijan it was decided to work on the "improvement of the cooperation between the local communities."[76]

TDBB will get its present shape and international status in 2003 with decision No. 2003/6464 of the Council of Ministers which will be published the same year in the *Official Gazette*.[77] With the launching of TDBB, Turkey got an institution that is in charge of running and coordinating international operations of the local government sector. Ten municipalities were founding members.[78] Without entering into details it is important to say that TDBB is composed of four main bodies:[79]

- General Assembly
- Administrative Board
- Supervisors Board
- Higher Advisory board

The President of the Union acts as the main representative of the institution. He is elected every 3 years from the members of the General Assembly of the Union. Besides the President, Secretary-General plays an important role in the Union's operational part. It is the Secretary-General who is directly involved in the operations and is in direct contact with the working personnel of the Union, thus plays an important role in defining the strategies and the vision of the institution.[80]

74 Türk Dünyası Belediyeler Birliği

75 Fahri Solak, Interview by Jahja Muhasilović, Interview with Fahri Solak, Secretary-General of the TDBB, Conducted on January 9, 2019.

76 2016 TBB Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara, Türkiye Belediyeler Birliği, 2017): 13

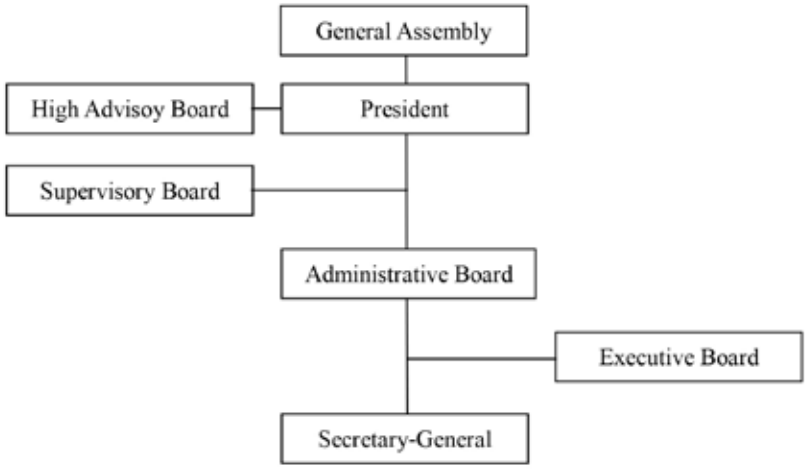
77 Ibid.

78 2014 TDBB Faaliyet Raporu, (Istanbul, Türk Dünyası Belediyeler Birliği, 2015): 5

79 For the rights and obligations of TDBB's main organs see: "About us", Union of Turkish World Municipalities-Official Website, Accessed on April 10, 2018, http://www.tdbb.org.tr

80 For the rights and obligations of the president of the Union see; "About us", Union of Turkish World Munici-

Graphic 7.3 Organizational Structure of the TDBB[81]



Activities of the Union of the TDBB are divided into five main areas:

- City and Urban Management
- Municipal Services
- Social and Cultural Services
- Training Services
- Developing International Relations.[82]

Although the name of the Union suggests the Turkic World, TDBB is active in non-Turkic-speaking countries as well. Besides Central Asia, the Union is active in the Balkans, Middle East, Russia, Caucasus, Central Europe, South Asia, and Africa. Municipalities from many non-Turkic countries like Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro in the Balkans; Russia[83] Ukraine and Moldova in the Eurasia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia in the Caucasus, Pakistan in South Asia, Hungary in Central Europe and Arab-majority countries of the Middle East are members of the TDBB. Even Sub-Saharan countries like Kenya and Somalia have municipalities that are members of the TDBB. The total number of the TDBB member municipalities by early 2018 was 1140, of which

palities-Official Website, 2018, http://www.tdbb.org.tr

81 Burak Koçak, "Belediyeler ve Uluslararası İşbirliği: Türk Dünyası Belediyeler Birliği Örneği", Master Thesis, T.C. Abant İzzet University, Bolu (2014): 71.

82 "Charter of Union of Turkish World Municipalities", *Union of Turkish World Municipalities (TDBB)*, Accessed on April 11, 2018, http://www.tdbb.org.tr

83 Russian local governments that are members of the TDBB are mainly represented through municipalities from some of the Federative Republics of Russia like Bashkortostan, Dagestan and Tatarstan. In total 12 municipalities from Russian Federation are members of the TDBB, nine from Dagestan, two from Tatarstan and one from Bashkortostan.

149 municipalities were from Turkey.[84] The rest of the member municipalities come from 28 different countries from the above-mentioned regions.[85]

Today, Balkans is the region where TDBB is the most active. This was not always the case. In the initial phase of its foundation, TDBB was primarily focused on Central Asia's Turkic countries. As it is stated on the union's official website:

> TDBB was established ... to carry out studies on the cities and towns where Turkic languages and dialects are spoken or have a geographical, historical, and cultural relationship with the Turkophone areas.[86]

This was confirmed by the Secretary-General of the Union with the words,

> development of the local administration relations between the countries that speak Turkic languages inevitably stood out as a foundational goal.[87]

But, through the years activation of the Balkan region started challenging the "foundational aim" as the number of activities in this region suddenly rose in the last few years. After analyzing the annual reports it is evident that TDBB especially activated its capacities in this region after 2015. All of the 41 ongoing or finished projects by the TDBB in Bosnia and Herzegovina are conducted after that year. Besides stimulus from the governments and the vision of the unions' leadership, the reasons for the rise of activities in a certain region sometimes can be concerning the personnel working in the institution. It seems that the combination of the two was the case with TDBB's active strategy in the peninsula in recent years.

> In the institutions like this the performance, motivation, and will to work of the administrative board and the managerial structure is, of course, important... we can not say that the performance of the members of the administrative board, persons and the institutions from abroad (represented in the leadership of the Union), personnel in the managerial structure is not effective, this (performance of the Union) is the sum of all the factors. Harmonious administrative board, diligent administrative board members from abroad in terms of representing the Union, and the managerial personnel that is in harmonization with the vision and the mission of the Union create synergy and all these factors naturally reflect the activities of the Union.[88]

84 Unlike many municipality unions across the world membership to the TDBB is free of charge. Big part of the Union's budget is provided from the fee that Turkish municipalities pay according to the size of their population. The bigger population of the member municipality is the larger amount of money it pays."Charter of Union of Turkish World Municipalities", Union of Turkish World Municipalities-Official Website, Accessed on April 11, 2018, http://www.tdbb.org.tr

85 Not all foreign members are sovereign countries. Some are special administrative units like various Russian federal republics, some are autonomous regions like Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia of Moldova, or internationaly unrecognized states like Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus."Members", Union of Turkish World Municipalities-Official Website, Accessed on December 24, 2018, http://www.tdbb.org.tr

86 "About us", *TDBB*, Accessed on January 6, 2019, doi: http://www.tdbb.org.tr

87 Fahri Solak, Interview by Jahja Muhasilović, Interview with Fahri Solak, Secretary-General of the TDBB, Conducted on January 9, 2019.

88 Ibid.

Vedad Halilović who worked as a foreign relations expert at the TDBB until 2017 has a similar view. Frequent contacts of the central authorities from Ankara with the central authorities in the Balkans, especially of those from BiH and Macedonia, increased the scope of trade, tourism, and other aspects, but the cooperation among the local community as well. The municipalities signed twinning protocols especially in the period after 2007. There were some very good examples of cooperation, however, many of them remained only as a signature on the paper. TDBB appears as an institution that revives and speeds up communication. Especially because it (TDBB) possessed good contacts and the knowledge of the local languages (by some personnel from the Balkans). After the stage of "revival," we launched a "strategic" twinning initiative. Strategic twinning is a process of merging similar municipalities (between the Balkans and Turkey). It should be pointed out that TDBB served as a mediator and often the active initiator of the processes.[89]

For Solak unfolding in the mentioned direction was a result of overall 15-years long general developments regarding the neighboring regions and the developments in the Union in this period which for all this him is not surprising. He believes the activation regarding the Balkans was foreseeable.[90]

According to the regional distribution of TDBB's foreign members, Balkans comes third after Central Asia and Caucasus regions.[91] Sixty-six municipalities, excluding Moldovan municipalities, from the region are members of the union.[92] Compared to 514 Central Asian members this number is insignificant. Central Asian members represent almost half of all members, while the share of members from the Balkans is little above five percent. After 2015 there is a sudden rise in the number of members from the Balkans. Bosnia and Herzegovina with 26 members as of January 2019 is the regional leader, representing almost forty percent of all memberships from the Balkans. BiH is the only country from the region besides Bulgaria and Macedonia, both with a strong Turkish minority, that is represented in the TDBB's administrative board. If Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Moldova, all having Turkish minority, are excluded, then Bosnia and Herzegovina is the only non-Turkic country that enjoys this privilege.

If member countries are analyzed as particular, Bosnia and Herzegovina is the fourth most represented country in the Union behind Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan.[93] The fact that the three most represented states in the union are Turkic countries demonstrates the reality that TDBB as a Union is still pretty much oriented towards the "Turkic World", at least in its name. On the other hand, it also shows that

89 Vedad Halilović, Interview by Jahja Muhasilović, Interview with Vedad Halilović, former foreign relations expert at the TDBB, Conducted via web on 12.04.2018.

90 Fahri Solak, Interview by Jahja Muhasilović, Interview with Fahri Solak, Secretary-General of the TDBB, Conducted on January 9, 2019.

91 From Caucasus region only Azerbaijan provides members to the Union.

92 Depending on the definition Moldova is sometimes included as a part of the Balkans, but mainly this is not the case.

93 Kyrgyzstan is the most represented with 485 member municipalities, followed by Azerbaijan having 291 and Kazakhstan 28 member municipalities. "Members", Union of Turkish World Municipalities-Official Website, Accessed on April 11, 2018, http://www.tdbb.org.tr

BiH holds an important place in the Union's vision, as this country is one of the most represented countries in terms of membership and the realized projects, despite not being a Turkic country. At the same time, BiH is among the countries where the Union is very present in its activities. This reality can be seen in the number of projects that were conducted in BiH. By early 2019, there were in total 41 completed or still ongoing projects that TDBB conducted alone or in cooperation with its member municipalities. Especially in the last few years, from 2015 to 2019, BiH and the Balkans as a region are dominating TDBB's project agenda. (See Table 7.8) In four years period since 2015, TDBB as a union has oriented towards the Balkans. A lot of projects conducted in other Balkan countries throughout 2018 and 2019 proves this point as well.[94]

According to the financing model of the projects, TDBB's operations in BiH can be separated into three major groups. The first group would are projects financed solely by the TDBB. These are projects like the construction of Martyr's Memorial in Doboj Istok. In the second model, TDBB plus one more side can be included in the implementation of the project. For example, projects like Doboj-Istok Children and Youth Center-TDBB Culture Houses are built with the cooperation of Turkish member municipalities and the Union. Sometimes it can be another public relations institution like TIKA or YTB. The third group is projects conducted in cooperation with more than one institution. Here, the Union with a member municipality and another public diplomacy institution work together on a project. The third model was followed in the construction of Turkish Language classes in Bosnian schools that adopted Turkish as an elective class. TDBB was responsible for the coordination of the construction of more than twenty Turkish Language classes across BiH. Classroom reconstruction was part of Yunus Emre's "My Choice is Turkish" project.[95] TDBB also provided Turkish Language reading sets for the attendees of the Turkish Language.[96] TDBB's Turkish member municipalities were responsible for the financial part of the project. Union's Turkish member municipalities were financing Yunus Emre's project while TDBB was responsible for coordinating between the two sides and supervising the construction in the name of a member municipality that was providing the money. This project was representing a good example of successful cooperation between Turkish local administrations and public diplomacy institutions.

Membership of the Bosnian municipalities in the Union comes mainly from the Federation part of the country. These are mainly Bosniak-majority municipalities.[97]

94 For more see: 2015 TDBB Faaliyet Raporu, 2016 TDBB Faaliyet Raporu, 2017 TDBB Faaliyet Raporu, and 2018 TDBB Faaliyet Raporu

95 "Bosna Hersek'te 17 Türkçe Dil Sınıfı Eğitim-Öğretime Açıldı", Türk Dünyası Belediyeler Birliği-TDBB, Accessed on April 18, 2018, doi: http://www.tdbb.org.tr

96 2015 Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara, Yunus Emre Enstitüsü, 2015), 132.

97 "Actually, when it comes to profile of its members or planning the activities TDBB doesn't put any ethnic priorities or faith restrictions, this can be seen very openly. There is not a condition which says that the member should be Muslim or speak Turkish. Also, there is not a condition which orders that while a project is been conducted that it should be directed towards the Muslim area or Turkish-speaking area. When you analyze Union's social media accounts and its official website it can be concluded that the Union has members from vast area stretching from Mongolia to Romania that has different ethnic background, language, and religion and that various projects had been directed and conducted to these areas without making any separation (ac-

The exception to the rule is the Serb-majority Municipality of Doboj. Obren Petrović, the Mayor of the Doboj, was strongly criticized by the ruling SNSD in Republika Srpska because of the membership in the union.98 When asked about the policies and vision of the TDBB regarding the Republika Srpska, Solak said,

> albeit local authorities and city authorities look like local units we can not say that they are completely separate from the general politics. Despite TDBB declaring on many occasions its openness to a wide spectrum in written and verbal form and proving this through its practice, some political sensitivities and the domination of nationalistic sentiment in certain countries define the relationship with the TDBB. Membership of Doboj to TDBB has paved the way to criticism in the domestic political scene (of Republika Srpska)... here the approach from TDBB is not influential, but the approach of the interlocutor (other side).99

The municipality of Vareš is another similar case. Although it is located in the Federation part of the country Vares has a strong Croat minority and a Croat mayor. When it comes to the party background of the Bosnian member municipalities it can be said that almost all the major Bosniak parties are represented among the TDBB's members. In Serbia, the situation is similar. Among the four members of the Union from this country, two are from the Bosniak-majority region of Sandžak, while the other two are from the Albanian-majority region of Preševo Valley. This was confirmed by Solak, but he also added that for instance, he would like to see "Belgrade and other Serbian municipalities as the members of the Union", stressing out that TDBB is open for the membership of non-Bosniak and non-Albanian municipalities as well.[100]

TDBB is active in a wide range of projects in BiH, from infrastructural projects like the construction of a bridge that connects two entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federation of BiH and Republika Srpska, to religious projects like the construction of the Madrassah101 building in the town of Mostar, educational projects like supporting the construction of Turkish Language classes, renovation of a historical legacy like the revival of Ottoman-era bridge in the town of Goražde, financially supporting festivals like Ajvatovica Festival, to publishing activities like the book on Bosnian tombstones. (See Table 7.8)

One of the strategies the Union follows is working on intensifying cooperation among its member countries. In 2016 TDBB organized a summit in Sarajevo aiming to improve the cooperation between Bosnian municipalities and its Turkic counterparts.[102] Another recognizable example was the visit of the Bosnian delegation com-

cording to the mentioned criteria)." Fahri Solak, Interview by Jahja Muhasilović, Interview with Fahri Solak, Secretary-General of the TDBB, Conducted on January 9, 2019.

98 "Doboj izlazi iz 'Turskog sveta'", *Novosti*, 10.03.2015. Accessed on January 12, 2019, doi: http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/republika_srpska/aktuelno.655.html:537628-Doboj-izlazi-iz-Turskog-sveta

99 Fahri Solak, Interview by Jahja Muhasilović, Interview with Fahri Solak, Secretary-General of the TDBB, Conducted on January 9, 2019.

100 Ibid.

101 Islamic teological high-school

102 2016 TDBB Faaliyet Raporu, (Istanbul, TürkiyeDünyası Belediyeler Birliği, 2017): 24.; "TDBB Bosnia and

posed of mayors and businessmen to Azerbaijan in the Summer of 2018, and the return visit by the Azerbaijani delegation to BiH in December 2018.[103] With these two visits, TDBB has started the new practice of connecting member countries to each other rather than providing the contacts to continue exclusively through Turkey.[104] Also as a part of the new practice TDBB launched a platform website named "TDBB Kardeş Şehirler Platformu"[105] where its member municipalities can more easily communicate with each other through the website.[106] It is expected that these practices would speed-up the communication and the fusion between the member countries. In BiH, TDBB is not working only with municipalities. For instance, in 2018 a project of constructing a 'Knowledge House' in the town of Mostar was launched in cooperation with BiH's Federal Ministry of Education and Science.[107] Cooperation with BiH's religious institutions is evident as well. An ongoing project of the construction of the madrassah building in Mostar is continuing in cooperation with the local mufti's office.[108] Another example of the cooperation with Bosnian religious authorities was followed in the Northwestern Bosnian town of Glamoč where TDBB helps the construction of a multipurpose "Youth Center."[109] Some of the Union's Bosnian operations are done through cooperation with the local NGO sector. TDBB together with Emmaus, an international non-governmental organization, has built a youth center and bungalow houses in Doboj-Istok as well as financially supported the student dormitory in Srebrenica.[110]

In recent years, TDBB is trying to be more active in Republika Srpska. This ambition is seen in the recently launched projects like the financial support for a student dormitory in Srebrenica, reconstruction of the roof at the exhibition hall at the Memorial Center in Srebrenica-Potočari, and the construction of a bridge between Doboj and Doboj Istok that would connect this entity to Federation of BiH.[111] These projects can represent a good example of the Union's will to work on the ethnic reconciliation in BiH.[112] Certainly, there should be more projects of this kind. Without entering into an analysis of all the activities in BiH one can look at Table 7.10 to see the Union's projects over the last four years.

Herzegovina Program has Completed", Türkiye Dünyası Belediyeler Birliği-TDBB, Accessed on April 18, 2018, doi: http://www.tdbb.org.tr

103 "TDBB Azerbaijan Delegation Visited Bosnia and Herzegovina", TDBB, Accessed on January 6, 2019-01-06 doi: http://www.tdbb.org.tr

104 Fahri Solak, Interview by Jahja Muhasilović, Interview with Fahri Solak, Secretary-General of the TDBB, Conducted on January 9, 2019.

105 TDBB Sister Cities Platform in Turkish.

106 Ibid.

107 2017 TDBB Faaliyet Raporu, 48.

108 Ibid. 39.

109 "TDBB Cultural Houses in Doboj Istok-Kids and Youth Center were Inaguarated", TDBB, Accessed on April 18, 2018, doi: http://www.tdbb.org.tr

110 "Appreciation Plaquet for TDBB from Bosnia and Herzegovina's EMMAUS Association", TürkiyeDünyası Belediyeler Birliği-TDBB, Accessed on April 18, 2018, doi: http://www.tdbb.org.tr

111 TDBB November Executive Board Meeting was Held in Istanbul, TDBB, Accessed on January 6, 2019, doi: http://www.tdbb.org.tr

112 2016 TDBB Faaliyet Raporu, 72, 73.

Table 7.8 TDBB's Activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (until early 2019)[113]

No.	Name of the Project	Status	Type	Year
1	TDBB Local Communities meeting in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 10 April 2015 in Travnik	The meeting was conducted with municipalities 10 Bosnian member municipalities and 8 non-member municipalities	Meeting	2015
2	Doboj-Doboj Istok Bridge project	Preparation of the Project is going on despite many objections from Republika Srpska. The municipality of Doboj is waiting for necessary approvals from Republike Srpska authorities.	Infrastructure	2015
3	Turkish Language Classrooms	With the help of TDBB's member municipalities, nineteen Turkish Language classrooms across BiH are finished during the first stage of the project. For the second stage, six new classes are planned to be built.	Education	2015-ongoing
4	1.000 Turkish Language sets (Yunus Emre Institute)	Each set includes 10 books, which in total makes 10.000 distributed books.	Education	2015
5	"Ajvatovica Festival"	Every year financial aid was given to Travnik Municipality	Cultural	Every year since 2015
6	Support for Sarajevo Fair organized by the International Women Club (IWCS)	Successfully held	Cultural	2015

113 Beside the projects mentioned in the list, TDBB had at least a dozen more activites with Bosnian municipalities, state institutions and NGO's, like mutual visits, seminars, conferences and Ramadan programs. Some projects that are done with more than one country where Bosnia and Herzegovina was included as well are not mentioned in the list, but only the projects that are directed to BiH only. TDBB's routine activities like programs of Sharing a Knowledge and Experience or Expert Trainings are not mentioned in the table. But it is important to mention that Bosnia and Herzegovina is among the countries with whome TDBB works the most actively in the mentioned fields.; 2014 TDBB Faaliyet Raporu, 2015 TDBB Faaliyet Raporu and 2016 TDBB Faaliyet Raporu

7	"Turks and Bosniaks work together in Africa project"	The project was organized in cooperation with GBDİ (Young Bosnians Student Association) and TİKA.	Humanitarian	2015
8	Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Turkish press	The book was published by TDBB in 2015	Publishing projects	2015
9	TDBB Eurasian Summit of Local Governments	The program was held in Bosnia-Herzegovina on 27-20 May 2016. A delegation from 9 different countries and 150 members participated in the program.	International Summit	2016
10	Support for the Conference "Investment Opportunities in Bosnia and Herzegovina"	The Conference was held on May 5, 2016, with the cooperation of the Consulate of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Marmara Group Strategic and Social Research Foundation.	Conference	2016
11	Municipality of Bihać" Stomatology Unit of the Health Clinic "	Near to date of launching the project Bihać Mayor was arrested, which in turn led to postponing the project. Despite getting approval from the new Mayor there have not been any happenings regarding the project.	Health	2016
12	Bungalow houses in Doboj Istok	Out of a total of 5 bungalows that will be built 3 of them are finished. Construction of the rest 2 bungalows has started.	Youth	Started in November 2016
13	Glamoč Culture Center	Construction of the center is ongoing	Culture/ Youth	2016-ongoing
14	Restoration of Ottoman bridge in Goražde town	For financing, the Project approval was reached by Keçiören Municipality and the General Directorate of Foundations. There has been a little adjournment because the Mayor of Goražde asked for some changes regarding the concept of the project. Waiting for adjournments to be solved.	Culture/History	2016-ongoing
15	Children's Park Project - Donji Vakuf	In collaboration of Municipality Şehzadeler (Manisa) Municipality and TDBB	Infrastructure	2016-ongoing

16	Sports hall in Donji Vakuf	With the coordination of TDBB, 35 thousand EUR from the municipality of Sehzadeler were provided for the completion of the sports hall in Donji Vakuf	Infrastructure	2016-ongoing
17	Bosnia-Herzegovina-Educators Delegation, 23-28 October 2016	A program for delegation composed of 42 people was organized in Istanbul	Visit	2016
18	Doboj-Istok Children and Youth Center - TDBB Culture Houses	Three culture-houses were built by the cooperation of the TDBB, Tavşanlı Municipality, and Beykoz Municipality. The Center was opened in August 2017	Youth	2017
19	Construction of building for Mostar Madrasah	The decision to support the project by the Union and its members was made. The project is still ongoing.	Education	2017-ongoing
20	"2017 Knowledge and Experience Sharing Programme with Bosnian Member Municipalities"	Various programs were organized in Ankara and Istanbul where 16 Bosnian member municipalities have participated. The program was done in cooperation with IBB, TİKA, Keçiören and Altındağ Municipalities. The delegation also paid a visit to the Turkish Parliament.	Delegation visit	2017
21	Doboj-Istok Memorial Center for the 300 martyrs of the Bosnian War	The project was expected by the TDBB's board. Construction will start in the early spring of 2018. The project will be finalized until May 2018.	Memorial	2017-ongoing
22	House of Knowledge in Mostar	Construction of the House of Knowledge was accepted by the TDBB. the necessary documentation from the Federal Ministry of Education of BiH is awaited to start with the construction.	Education	2018-ongoing

23	Financing of the student dormitory in Srebrenica built by the EMMAUS	TDBB's four member-municipalities decided to finance all the expenditures of the dormitory for two consecutive years of 2018 and 2019.	Education	2018, 2019
24	Anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide	Anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide was financially supported by the TDBB	Commemoration	2018
25	A book about "Bosnian Gravestones"	Printing of the book in three languages Bosnian/Turkish/English is in preparation.	Publishing projects	2018
26	Bus transportation for 30 students and teachers from Goražde	A transport fee was paid for a group of 23 students and 7 teachers from Goražde, who expressed a wish to visit their sister school in Istanbul	Transport	2018
27	V. International Hidrelez Festival in Kocaeli	Transportation fee was paid for three groups of the students coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria and Macedonia to Kocaeli, Turkey	Transport	2018
28	Visit by Sarajevo's Gazi Husrev Begova Medresa to museums in Istanbul	Museum fees for the three historical museums in Istanbul were paid by the TDBB to the students of Sarajevo's Gazi Husrev Begova Madrasah	Educational fee	2018
29	Visit of the Doboj Istok delegation to Tavşanlı, Kütahya	Visit of the Doboj Istok delegation to its sister city Tavşanlı, Kütahya was paid by the TDBB	Transportation fee	2018
30	BH Armed Forces Day Reception	Reception cocktail for the celebration of the "Day of the Armed Forces of BiH" was sponsored by the TDBB for the two consecutive years of 2017 and 2018	National day celebration fee	2018, 2019
31	Celebration of Bosnia's Day of Independence	Celebration of Bosnia's Day of Independence organized by the GBDI Student Association of Young Bosnians) was financially supported by the TDBB	National day celebration fee	2018

32	Commemoration of Alija Izetbegović on 15th Anniversary of his death	The program of "Commemoration of Alija Izetbegović on 15th Anniversary of his death" was organized in cooperation with the Museum of Alija Izetbegović. The program included a photography exhibition and panel.	Photo Exhibition/ Panel	2018
33	Visit of Bosnian delegation to Azerbaijan	Under the new concept of promoting cooperation between TDBB's member countries, Bosnian delegation composed of mayors businessman paid a seven-day visit to Azerbaijan	Delegation visit	2018
34	Visit of the Azerbaijani delegation to BiH	Under the concept of promoting cooperation between TDBB's member countries, Azerbaijani delegation composed predominantly of mayors paid a four-day visit to BiH	Delegation visit	2018
35	Firetruck to Doboj Istok	TDBB purchased a firetruck for its member municipality Doboj Istok	Donation	2019
36	Restoration of the Historical Archive in Sarajevo	Restoration of the Historical Archive in Sarajevo is in the planning phase. All the necessary documentation to start with the project is in preparation. The project is planned to be implemented in cooperation with TIKA. Negotiations are ongoing.	Restoration	2019-ongoing
37	Bihać Martyr's Monument	A monument for the martyr's of the Bosnian War is planned constructed with the financial support of the TDBB.	Construction	2019-ongoing
38	Restoration of the school in the town of Srebrenik	TDBB will help the restoration of a primary school in the town of Srebrenik	Reconstruction	2019-ongoing
39	Reconstruction of a roof in Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Center	TDBB will finance the reconstruction of a roof in Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Center	Reconstruction	2019-ongoing
40	Gallipoli monument in Stari Grad, Sarajevo	TDBB together with Stari Grad of BiH and few other Turkish municipalities is planning to support the construction of a monument for the martyrs of the Battle of Gallipoli	Construction	Planned to start in 2019
41	Bus for the dormitory of the Islamic Community of BiH	Bus purchase for the student dormitory of the Islamic Community of BiH is still under the evaluation stage	Donation	Planned for 2019

Understandably TDBB is less active in the Sandžak region than in BiH. As a distinct administrative organization for the region doesn't exist, Sandžak is not treated as a separate unit by the TDBB, but its municipalities are members of the Union as Serbian or Montenegrin local administrations. By early 2018 four Serbian and two Montenegrin municipalities were members of the Union. It can be said that municipalities from Sandžak are overrepresented when it comes to membership from these two countries. Both Montenegrin members in the Union are Sandžak municipalities and two out of four, or half of the members from Serbia are Sandžak municipalities, even though the region represents less than three percent of the total national population. The other two Serbian municipalities are from the Albanian majority region of Preševo.[114] TDBB has a limited number of activities in the Sandžak region. The only recognizable activity was organizing an event called "International Festival of Forgotten Values" in Novi Pazar that was sponsored by the Kocaeli's Kartepe Municipality.[115]

It is not important to say that it is not only unions like TDBB that are only responsible for coordinating the foreign relations of municipalities in Turkey. The majority of municipalities in Turkey have their foreign relations departments that are directly involved in coordinating international relations. When communication is not going directly via mayor to the mayor, these departments are in charge of communicating with institutions like TDBB and maintaining international sister cities relations of their municipalities.

7.7. Turkey's Relations with BiH at the Municipal Level

Not all sister city relations between the two countries are working via platforms like municipality unions. It is possible to say that in most cases local government relations between the two countries are running directly between municipalities. For a researcher of the subject, it is much easier to trace the cooperation that is running through platforms like TDBB than the relations numerous municipalities have with their sister municipalities, as in the first case the information about the cooperation is gathered and recorded in the one place. Cooperation between the two countries at the local government level is very dynamic and too extensive, thus it would be unnecessary to enter all the details and to mention all the cases, but it would be much more beneficial to say a few words about the relations in general and mention only the most remarkable examples of this type of diplomacy.

It is already mentioned that BiH and the Balkans hold an important place in Turkish local government diplomacy. The majority of the sister city relations Turkish municipalities have are with European countries, two-thirds of them. Half of this number or a third of all sister city relations are with the Balkan countries. Bosnia

114 "Members", Union of Turkish World Municipalities-Official Website, Accessed on April 14, 2018, http://www.tdbb.org.tr

115 "Sırbistan'da "Uluslararası Unutulmuş Değerler Festivali"", Milliyet, Accessed on April 14, 2018, doi: http://www.milliyet.com.tr/sirbistan-da-uluslararasi-unutulmus--yerelhaber-2245900/

and Herzegovina are among the countries where Turkish Municipalities have the most twinning cities. According to the 2014 data town of Girne from the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as a particular city had the most sister city relations with Turkish counterparts. In 2014 Girne had eight sister cities from Turkey. Next comes Bahçesaray from Crimea, Sumgayit from Azerbaijan, and Gaza all having seven sister cities in Turkey, followed by another Turkish Cypriot city, Famagusta that had six sister cities in Turkey. According to the same data two Bosnian cities, the capital Sarajevo and Goražde belonged to a group of cities that had five sister cities in Turkey.[116] According to the number of sister-city relations, Bosnian towns are again among the leaders.[117] As of April 2018, both municipalities raised the number of sister cities in Turkey. In that year Sarajevo's Stari Grad (Old Town) municipality had nine twinnings with Turkish counterparts, while the Municipality of Goražde had seven.[118]

It can be said that most of the time Bosnian municipalities enjoy the great benefits from their sister city relations with Turkish partners. Sometimes Bosnian local communities are blamed to have better cooperation with foreign municipalities than among themselves.[119] The reason for the absurdity in the Bosnian is in the absence of a municipality union at the national level.[120] As Turkish local governments have larger budgets than the Bosnian ones, cooperation chiefly goes in the direction where Turkish municipalities are investing in BiH rather than vice versa. BiH is among the countries where Turkish local governments are most actively working. Many Bosnian municipalities saw the benefits of this cooperation. There are plenty of projects Turkish municipalities have conducted in this country, but only the most representative examples will be mentioned.

On the other hand, it is important to underline that not all of the Turkish municipalities are actively running their twinning relations with Bosnian partners. Only some municipalities gained a reputation in the country and the region as active municipalities. Many of the sister city relations didn't go beyond a protocol of cooperation. Without mentioning all the municipalities that are active in BiH, I will single out only those that are the most active and the municipalities that in the past conducted important or at least some representative projects in BiH. The reasons for some municipalities to work more actively in the region are different. In some cases municipalities are active in the region because of the mayor's vision, some be-

116 The numbers has changed since 2014. Today there are more sister city relations Turkish municipalities have with the Bosnian counterparts. Numbers are continuing to rise over years. See also: www.kardessehirler.org.t

117 Tarkan Oktay, "Türkiye'deki Belediyelerin Türk Cumhuriyetleri ile Kardeş Şehir İlişkileri",

118 "Opcine prijatelji-linkovi", Opcina Stari Grad, Accessed on January 5, 2019, doi: http://starigrad.ba/v2/txt.php?id=883; "Pregled odluka, sporazuma, deklaracija o bratimljenju/prijateljstvu opcine Goražde", Opcina Goražde, Accessed on January 5, 2019, doi: http://www.Goražde.ba/files/2014/pregled%20sporazuma,%20odluka%20o%20bratimljenju.pdf

119 "Bh. gradovi bolju saradnju imaju s evropskim gradovima nego unutar drzave", Klix, Accessed on April 23, 2018, https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/bh-gradovi-bolju-saradnju-imaju-s-evropskim-gradovima-nego-unutar-drzave/171109035

120 Two major municipality unions exist in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Both, Association of Municipalities and Cities of FBiH (SOGFBIH) and Union of Municipalities and Cities of Republika Srpska (SOGRS) are on entity level.

cause of the pushing from their Bosnian partners, some because of the pushing from municipality unions like TDBB, but also some of them because of the strong Balkan population living inside the borders of the municipality. The so-called "kinship bond"[121] is often a very important driving force for the Turkish local administrations to develop relations with foreign municipalities.[122] Especially in the Marmara and Aegean region, many municipalities are accommodating large *Muhacir*[123] population from the Balkans as well as their lobbying organizations. Having a large number of voters originating from the region pushes the leadership of some municipalities to pursue more active policies in the Balkans. The most representative example of the mentioned phenomenon is Istanbul's Bayrampaşa and Pendik municipalities.

Since the early Republican period, Bayrampaşa as Istanbul's working-class municipality has a strong presence of Bosniak and other populations originating in the Balkans. It is estimated that 48 percent of the population residing in Bayrampaşa has an origin from the region.[124] Bayrampaşa is also home to NGO organizations like *Bosna-Sancak Association* that at the same time is the strongest non-state actor among the well-established Bosniak community of Turkey. The presence of the Balkan community with its non-governmental sector has made Bayrampaşa Turkey's important city diplomacy tool in the region. The municipality has a set of different activities in the region but the municipality's leadership in its vision emphasizes cultural diplomacy through local communities.

Since 2005 during the months of Ramadan, the municipality organizes "Bereket Konvoyu"[125], provides mass *iftars*[126] across the region.[127] This event is turned into a kind of annual ritual for the municipality. Convoy's starting point is Istanbul and travels as north as Croatia's capital Zagreb. The convoy goes for one month from city to city in the region delivering iftar meals for hundreds of people in each city it stops. Even the mayor himself is participating in the program. This practice became almost a trademark of the Bayrampaşa Municipality. Bayrampaşa is also active in hosting cultural events like the annual "Commemoration programs of Alija Izetbegović"[128] or supporting Bosna-Sancak Association with organizing "Bosnia-Sancak Culture

121 'Soydaşlık bağı' in Turkish

122 Sabiha Tuğba Ekşi, *Dünyada ve Türkiye'de Kardeş Şehircilik*, 109-112.; Kerem Öktem, "Global Diyanet and Multiple Networks: Turkey's New Presence in the Balkans", *Journal of Muslims in Europe*, (2012): 54.

123 Old Ottoman Turkish term for the Muslim emigrants and refugees from the Balkans that settled in the Anatolia and other Ottoman lands that were not lost to the Balkan nation states and Russian Empire. The root of the word Muhacir is Arabic meaning a 'migrant.'

124 Özgenur Reyhan Güler, "Bayrampaşa İlçesindeki Demografik Yapının Bayrampaşa Belediyesi'nin Kültür Politikalarım Üzerindeki Etkileri", *Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi (RTEÜ Journal of Social Sciences)* 1: 67-88.

125 'Fertility Convoy' in Turkish

126 Ramadan evening meal

127 Marija Mitrović, Dušan Reljić and Alida Vračić, "Elsewhere in the Neighborhood: Reaching Out to the Western Balkans", in *Turkey's Public Diplomacy*, ed. B. Senem Çevik and Philip Seib, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 115.

128 "Bilge Kral Alija İzzetbegoviç Bayrampaşa'da anıldı", Bayrampaşa Belediyesi, Accessed on April 22, 2018, http://www.bayrampasa.bel.tr/icerik.asp?is=9999q12024q10q10q10q10q10q1hadq1qpis

Days" in Turkey that promotes Bosnian culture through theatre plays, *Sevdalinka*[129] concerts, showing Bosnian movies to the Turkish public, hosting famous Bosnian singers and many other cultural activities.[130] Bayrampaşa Municipality can serve as a good example of how the demographic structure of a municipality can be turned into a useful diplomatic tool in projecting Turkey's soft power.

Beside Bayrampaşa that has become a sort of trademark in the region because of its cultural activities, among the other Turkish municipalities that are working actively in Bosnia and Herzegovina are Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Bursa Metropolitan Municipality, Ankara's Keçiören and Altındağ municipalities, and Konya's Selçuklu Municipality and many others. These municipalities have supported projects in infrastructure, sports, youth, religion, culture, and various other areas. Among the projects of the Turkish local administrations in BiH worth of mentioning is the restoration of the destroyed Ottoman-era stone bridge in Goražde that Ankara's Keçiören Municipality is helping to restore. TDBB and Directorate General of Pious Foundations are also involved in this project. Another example of cooperation between local administrations, unions, and public diplomacy institutions. Like in the case of the Herzegovinian town of Konjic where TIKA restored a stone bridge from the Ottoman period when completed, Goražde will get a new historical monument of great importance.[131] This project has the potential to boost tourism in this small city. As a part of the macro plan, besides the bridge, reconstruction of Ottoman-era square is planned as well.[132] (See Table 7.8) In 2014, Keçiören Municipality also supported the construction of a large Islamic complex in the town of Goražde.[133] Ankara's Altındağ Municipality built a modern culture center in its sister city Visoko.[134] Bursa Metropolitan Municipality and its Osmangazi Municipality have been active in cooperation with their sister municipality, Sarajevo's Stari Grad Municipality, where they have supported many projects of significance from the aspect of preserving a common Ottoman cultural heritage to various construction ventures. Turkish municipalities in the past supported sports projects as well. In the small town of Donji Vakuf, a sports hall was constructed with the cooperation of three Turkish municipalities. Understandably proportion of the projects supported in Sandžak is smaller compared to BiH, but still, there are some. For instance, Novi Pazar's sister city Pendik Municipality helped with the construction of a sports hall.[135] Pendik, that like Bayrampaşa is home to a large Bosniak population, also

129 Traditional Bosnian folk song.

130 "Bosna-Sancak Kültür Günleri başlıyor", *Posta*, Accessed on, April 22, 2018, http://www.posta.com.tr/bosna-sancak-kultur-gunleri-basliyor-haberi-1341936

131 TIKA 2009 Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara: TİKA, 2009): 53 and TIKA 2008 Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara: TIKA, 2008): 62

132 "Muhamed Ramovic: Goražde smo ucinili privlacnim investitotrima, moramo se nastaviti boriti", Klix, Accessed on April 23, 2018, https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/muhamed-ramovic-Goražde-smo-ucinili-privlacnim-investitorima-moramo-se-nastaviti-boriti/180101048

133 Keçiören Belediyesi 2014 Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara: Keçiören Belediyesi, 2015): 157

134 Amra Babic, a Mayor of Visoko has gained a positive reputation in Turkey among the Islamist circles for being the first Bosnian mayor with a headscarf.

135 "Pendik'ten Novi Pazar'a spor salonu", Mimdap, 5.7.2012, Accessed on December 31, 2018, doi: http://www.mimdap.org/?p=91574

named a sports hall inside the municipality borders after the Novi Pazar.

The above-mentioned projects are only some of the dozens, maybe hundreds of projects Turkish municipalities conducted in BiH in the last decade or so. Building a sports hall, culture complex, helping a school with the equipment, or restoring a square and bridge from the Ottoman era are low-budget projects for the Turkish municipalities, but certainly means very much for small Bosnian towns and its citizens. These kinds of projects serve in the best interest of Turkey's soft power in the region. They are certainly much more effective in shaping the perception of ordinary people regarding Turkey than much of the top-down diplomacy.

Another striking fact regarding Turkey's city diplomacy in BiH is that almost all of the significant projects in the country were conducted by the municipalities controlled by the AKP. It can be said with certainty that the cooperation on the local government level between the two countries was boosted under the AKP. Both CHP and MHP still didn't demonstrate an effective strategy towards local governments in the Balkans. The cooperation levels between Bosnian local governments and the municipalities controlled by the two parties are at trivial levels.[136] Probably it will not be wrong to say that both parties have failed to benefit from the channels of cooperation opened by the AKP in the last decades.

7.8. City Diplomacy Activities of Other States in Bosnia and Herzegovina

As Bosnia and Herzegovina are streaming towards EU membership, the EU is commonly emphasizing the cooperation between Bosnian municipalities with their European counterparts as an essential part of the country's path towards full membership. This stance overlaps with the EU's overall vision regarding the development of the local communities in the Western Balkans.[137] The EU also gives an important place in the development of the local communities in the region as a part of the democratization process. In that context, *NALAS*[138], a network of local authorities that brings together 14 municipality unions from Southeastern Europe, was created in 2001 as a part of the region's Euro-Atlantic integrations.[139] The membership to the Network is divided between 14 full members and six associate members. The later groups are composed of countries neighboring Southeastern Europe, like the

136 "Metropolitan Municipality of Izmir, a CHP majority municipality, has done some minor projects in the past through Kemal Baysak, a prominent Bosniak living in Turkey." Vedad Halilović, Interview by Jahja Muhasilović, Interview with Vedad Halilović, former foreign relations expert at the TDBB, Conducted via web on 22.04.2018.

137 "Local-government involvement 'absolutely essential' is Western Balkan states are to join EU", European Committee of the Regions, Accessed on April 22, 2018, http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/Local-government-involvement-Western-Balkan.aspx

138 Network of Associations of Local Authoritiesa of South-East Europe

139 "NALAS is affiliated with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. It enjoys the observer status in both Committee of the Regions of the European Union and Congres of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.", "NALAS Brochure", NALAS-Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe, Accessed on June 23, 2018, http://www.nalas.eu/AboutUs#About-NALAS

unions of Austria, Turkey, Ukraine, while the first group belongs to Balkan countries, excluding Greece.[140] Through membership to national municipality unions, some 9000 local authorities are represented in the NALAS.[141] Bosnia and Herzegovina is represented in the Network through its two entity-based municipality unions.

One of the strategic aims of the EU in the region is promoting the decentralization of the local government management to "bring the local governance in South-East Europe in line with the European standards."[142] Activities followed in the region are from the areas of urban planning, local finances, fiscal decentralization, solid waste and water management, development of the institutions, energy efficiency, sustainable tourism, and many other activities. Mainly conferences and discussions, seminars, education programs, training programs, workshops on the mentioned subjects are organized by the NALAS. The network has publishing activities as well, where a guide material is prepared on the above-mentioned subjects. Even the issue that is not tightly attached to the local governance, like the issues of gender equality and youth is on the agenda of the network.

Other important European local administration union that is active in BiH is CEMR (Council of European Municipalities and Regions). It is the oldest and the union with the broadest scope among the European municipality unions. CEMR was founded in 1951.[143] The membership to the Union is composed of the local governments from 41 out of 47 member states of the Council of Europe.[144] The Council gathers around 130.000 local and regional authorities and 60 member associations from across the continent. From BiH 131 municipalities and 13 cities are members of the CEMR. Two Bosnian entity municipality unions are represented in the Council. Turkish local authorities and the municipality union of TBB are members of the Council as well.[145] CEMR is cooperating with the municipalities on issues like equality, environmentalism, transportation, and many other areas. Like NALAS, CEMR is also an assisting factor in the EU integration process in the region.

7.9. Concluding Remarks

As it is understood from this chapter, Turkey is playing a more and more active role in BiH and the Balkans when it comes to cooperation between the municipalities and municipality unions. Turkish municipalities like Bayrampaşa, Pendik, Keçiören and Altındağ and municipality unions like TDBB with their dynamic approach are becoming visible actors in this country and its region. This dimension of

140 Union of Turkish World Municipalities (TDBB) is associated member of the NALAS, while Marmara Municipalities Union is full member of the network.

141 "About us", NALAS, Accessed on April 24, 2018, http://www.nalas.eu/AboutUs#About-NALAS

142 Ibid.

143 "CEMR is the European section of the world organization United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), through which European local and regional governments are represented on the international stage."

144 "Introducing CEMR", *Council of European Municipalities and Regions-CEMR*, Accessed on April 25, 2018, http://www.ccre.org/en/article/introducing_cemr

145 "Members", *Council of European Municipalities and Regions-CEMR*, Accessed on April 25, 2018, http://www.ccre.org/en/article/introducing_cemr

Turkish foreign policy has some obstacles that prevented Turkey to become more visible in the region. According to the writer of this research, the main obstacles for the Turkish local administrations are more or less the same inefficiencies that other public diplomacy institutions have. Some of the problems Turkish local administrations face in their overseas activities ar:

- Lack of independence in decision making
- The political orientation of the parties that govern the municipality plays an important role in defining the strategies, vision, and goals
- Only AKP municipalities are active in the region, while opposition parties have a very passive approach to foreign relations
- Lack of coordination between the municipalities
- The lack of interest in the municipality unions
- Low budget of the municipality unions
- Fluctuating Turkish Lira
- Lack of cooperation based on new concepts such as human rights cities' or 'environment-friendly cities'

Centralization remains one of the fundamental problems for the well-functioning of the Turkish foreign policy. Although this model provides some benefits, primarily those that concern security, it diminishes the effectiveness of Turkey's foreign policy. For many of their moves, local administrations have to have approval from the Ministry of Interior Affairs and their moves should be synchronized with the foreign policy.[146] Countries that follow the centralist model in managing the local administrations are not rare. Some western countries like France follow this kind of model.[147]

In BiH, municipalities have more freedom for twinning. They are not subordinate to central state institutions but can decide for themselves with whom they wish to twin.[148] The US is another country that follows a more flexible model. American cities enter into sister city relations even with the countries that the US central state authority has not recognized like in the case of the State of Palestine or Taiwan or with whom Washington has hostile relations, like in the case of municipalities from Cuba.[149] For Sabiha Tuğba Ekşi one of the main reasons for the centralized approach to the local governments lies in the fact that one party, AKP, governs 43% of the country's municipalities and that behind the majority of the twinnings lie ide-

146 Sabiha Tuğba Ekşi, *Dünyada ve Türkiye'de Kardeş Şehircilik*, 132
147 Ibid.
148 Ibid. 51.
149 Ibid. 131,132.

ological motivations.[150] Municipalities are too attached to the government's policies when it comes to running international relations. Diplomatic rifts in the past had a negative reflection on local administrations when they had to severe some sister city relations abroad. Mayors of the opposition parties, primarily CHP, are criticizing the centralist approach and strong attachment to the government's foreign policies. In the past when bilateral relations with some countries were strained and many local governments had to abolish their sister city relations, some mayors from the CHP were suggesting that local administrations should remain as an open channel of communication. On the other hand, despite the criticism, as it is already mentioned previously, municipalities governed by the opposition parties didn't demonstrate an enthusiasm to run more dynamic foreign relations.

Another serious challenge for Turkish local administrations are too often elections in Turkey. In seventeen years under the AKP government, Turkey passed through twelve elections of which two were presidential, six parliamentary, four local, and three were nation-wide referendums. On average that is almost one election or a national referendum per year. Although Solak agrees that elections have some impact on the activities of the Turkish municipalities, he thinks that because of the good planning done by the TDBB too often elections have a limited impact on the Union's activities.[151] It is not expected for Turkey to have another election until 2023, which might provide a chance for the local governments to improve their overseas performance.

A common problem for the Turkish institutions, in this case for local governments as well, is a lack of coordination among the institutions. When it comes to a roof organization Turkey doesn't lack them. Municipality unions like TDBB exist, yet it is a question to what extent they are a relevant factor in directing the municipalities in their foreign relations. Fahri Solak, the Secretary-General of the TDBB, also confirmed that an institution that would gather and coordinate local communities is lacking. According to Solak both Ministry of Interior Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are aware of the mentioned problem.[152] The issue of coordination was also raised at the "Sister Cities Work" meeting organized in 2017 by the TDBB for the directors of the foreign relations, social and cultural departments of the Union's Turkish member municipalities.[153] Directors of the departments from the participating municipalities emphasized the need for a roof platform that would coordinate their work. At the "Sister Cities Work," the participants from various municipalities underlined the need for Turkish ministries and public diplomacy institutions to meet annually to improve the cooperation and coordination among the sister municipalities. Even more initiative from the municipality unions was suggest-

150 Ibid. 133.

151 Fahri Solak, Interview by Jahja Muhasilović, Interview with Fahri Solak, Secretary-General of the TDBB, Conducted on January 9, 2019.

152 Ibid.

153 2017 TDBB Faaliyet Raporu, (İstanbul: Türk Dünyası Belediyeler Birliği-TDBB, 2018) page. 32-34

ed by the participants.[154] It is important to underline that local governments lack an institution that would coordinate their activities.

In the case of the TDBB, it can be said that the majority of overseas projects were conducted through municipalities that are members of the administrative board of the TDBB and a few more outside the board, while the majority of 151 Turkish member municipalities remain passive members of the Union. Many municipalities are small and distant, so understandably have limited capacity for foreign operations. Especially considering the weakening of the Turkish Lira against USD, the capacity for Turkish local governments and municipality unions to work abroad has been significantly reduced.

Similar to the case of other public diplomacy institutions like Diyanet and YTB, Turkish municipalities have the problem of geographical overstretch when it comes to foreign relations. Many of the Turkish local governments are active across a wide geographical area stretching from Central Asia to Balkans. In recent years, many Turkish municipalities are trying to become more visible in the Middle East and Africa. With weak budgets and a lack of other resources, it is hard for them to be present in these vast geographical areas. Contrary to Turkey's ambitious goals, for Mark Leonard, a known writer on public diplomacy, "prioritization" of some countries over others in international operations is one of the most important preconditions for successful public diplomacy.[155] In that context, TDBB as a union has concentrated its activities more on the Balkans in recent years. Solak said that TDBB didn't spread to new geographies like Middle-East purposely, as there are other municipality unions like UCLG-MEWA that are focused on that region. According to him,

> as the activities stretch too much the focus decreases and the chance to achieve positive outcomes becomes more difficult.[156]

Today an important share of TDBB's projects is conducted in the Balkans. It has even become recognizable in the region, sometimes even causing harsh political debates as it was the case when Bosnia's Serb-majority municipality of Doboj became a member of the union. Mayor of Doboj Municipality Obren Petrović was staunchly criticized by the former president of Republika Srpska Milorad Dodik and his SNSD Party for entering a 'Turkish municipality union.' Even the Serbian Orthodox Church negatively reacted to Petrović's membership in the union.[157] When TDBB's foreign operations in the last years are examined a smooth shift from distant Central Asia to neighboring Balkans and diversified cooperation from the narrow circle of Turkic countries to non-Turkic ones is recognizable. But, the mentioned shift is mainly connected to changes in the leadership and the personnel from the

154 Sabiha Tuğba Ekşi, *Dünyada ve Türkiye'de Kardeş Şehircilik*, 134.

155 Mark Leonard, Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy*, 27, 28.

156 Fahri Solak, Interview by Jahja Muhasilović, Interview with Fahri Solak, Secretary-General of the TDBB, Conducted on January 9, 2019.

157 "Načelnik Doboja: Od ambasadora Turske ću tražiti da nastavi pomagati BiH", *Patria*, 10.04.2015, Accessed on January 01, 2019, doi: http://nap.ba/new/vijest.php?id=10318

region that is working in the union. Yet there was not an intentional decision to go in that direction, but rather a set of mentioned circumstances, which in turn raises the question of whether this approach towards the region is sustainable and what would happen when the change in the leadership and the personnel comes. Whether TDBB will remain still in its increased activism towards the Balkans remains to be seen.

As municipalism improves globally developed countries are redirecting their energy to more sophisticated projects like the concept of "Humanitarian cities" to improve the quality of life inside the municipal borders. This concept is also supported by the UN.[158] At the moment Turkey seems like a latecomer to this phase of municipal development.[159] There is a need to focus on other aspects like improving the conditions of women, youth, elders, refugees, environment, culture, and so on. To upgrade the municipal service in Turkey to a more 'human-focused' level, TDBB has signed a protocol with Sweden's Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights (RWI)[160] to implement the mentioned model in Turkey. But, it can not be said that anything concrete happened in this area, except for a few meetings and signed protocols.

158 Fahri Solak, Interview by Jahja Muhasilović, Interview with Fahri Solak, Secretary-General of the TDBB, Conducted on January 9, 2019.

159 As a consequence of the Syrian War since 2011 more the 3.5 million Syrians entered Turkey as refugees, thus some municipalities like Gaziantep's Şahinbey Municipality managed to develop 'Refugee-friendly' model. Fahri Solak, Interview by Jahja Muhasilović, Interview with Fahri Solak, Secretary-General of the TDBB, Conducted on January 9, 2019.

160 For more visit: https://rwi.lu.se/

8.
Conclusion

The analysis of three different types of Turkish public diplomacy in BiH and Sandžak, faith-based diplomacy, student exchange diplomacy, and city diplomacy between the years 2002 and 2017 are at the center of this study. Diyanet as an official state organization for conducting religious affairs in Turkey and overseas became a serious religious actor in the Balkans. With its human and material capacities, Diyanet is not only the largest Islamic organization in the Balkans but one of the largest in the world. Today the Presidency has serious global ambitions, certainly Balkans and its Muslim communities are an important stop in Diyanet's ambitions. An important share of its international activities, like sending imams, restoring religious infrastructure, opening new mosques, publishing activities, and others, are executed in this region. Diyanet's activities have created different reactions in the Balkans. Among some in the region, like in the case of the Mešihat of Islamic Community in Serbia based in Novi Pazar, Diyanet's regional ambitions, strategies, and the rising visibility have created discomfort. The inability to successfully lead the process of reconciliation among the Islamic Communities in Serbia has created a group of regional imams that see Diyanet as a threat to the very existence of their national Islamic Communities. Diyanet was accused of pursuing its interest without considering the regional balance of power and established institutional order. Many Islamic institutions, but some governments as well accuse Diyanet of trying to create a monopoly among the Muslims in the region. On the other hand, there are imams like in the case of Grand Mufti of Montenegro Rifat ef. Fejzic, that nourishes good relations with the Diyanet and Turkish government.

Overall, in a short period, Turkey became an important destination for international students. Today thousands of students primarily from Central Asia, Caucasus, Balkans, and Africa study in this country. Previously founded "Great Student Project (BÖP)" that was launched during the 1990s was much improved under YTB's Türkiye Bursları program. YTB took over the role of coordinating official student exchange diplomacy from the Ministry of National Education (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı) in 2011. Despite the much improvement YTB and Türkiye Bursları face a serious challenge when it comes to the accommodation of foreign students such as the absence of enough educational infrastructure, quality of education provided by the Turkish universities, quality of the foreign students, low scholarship amount in terms of money because of the devaluation of Turkish Lira, keeping the vital relationship with the alumni that return to their home countries and many other challenges.

All the above-mentioned factors prevent Turkey from competing with the student exchange diplomacy of other countries like the USA, UK, or Germany. YTB also has a problem with getting feedback. It is debatable to what extent Turkey is managing to get satisfactory results from the money invested in foreign students. Partly, wrong

strategies can be blamed for this. YTB is forbidding foreign students to enter the domestic job market, no matter how successful they are. Official policy dictates for foreign students to return to their country upon finishing education in Turkey. Another reason why Turkey is not getting necessary results from its student exchange diplomacy lies in the fact that the graduates from one stage of higher education can not apply for the next one. At least they are not eligible for Türkiye Bursları's scholarship. International students are obliged to return to their country of origin and apply some years later, without any guarantees that they will be accepted again. Despite launching various web-platforms for keeping the communication with the alumni, which is evident after analyzing those web sites is that they are empty shells without any significant impact on the lives of the alumni. Those platforms are not kept updated as they should. Besides annual meetings with some of the alumni in foreign countries, it can be concluded that the relationship is not organic enough for Turkey to get feedback from its student exchange diplomacy.

Like other public diplomacy institutions, YTB is changing its regional preferences. From year to year number and the share of students coming from more distanced places like Sub-Saharan Africa is rising. This process is happening at the expense of students coming from Europe and the Balkans. On the other hand, Turkey is not the only country that provides scholarships to students from the Balkans. Some countries like Germany and Austria are providing even more scholarships. Many traditional education destinations like France, Germany even Russia, and China all have clearly defined regional frames from which they educate students. From these regional pools, those countries are getting feedback which is the main aim of student exchange diplomacy. This is not the case with Turkey's student exchange diplomacy as YTB is trying to reach vast geographical areas from Central Asia to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. If the shift to places like Africa or Latin America continues further Turkey will face even more geographical overextension while its budget remains very limited due to weak Turkish Lira and other economic challenges. This could leave Turkey without any significant soft power impact neither on the Balkans nor Africa as other countries have more capacity to educate students in those places because of their clearly defined regional preferences and economic capacities. Geographical overextension is preventing Turkey to get the expected outcomes of educating international students. For a country of very limited capacity, it would be wrong to become a 'country for all seasons.'

For the Turkish government, local governments are one of the most important fields of domestic and foreign politics. Their importance is often emphasized by the country's political leadership. As the party's popularity derives from the period when its leadership were mayors and local governors, AKP is aware of the fact that the service provided by the municipalities and other local government instances is one of the greatest vote collectors in the elections. For that reason, Turkish metropolitan municipalities, municipalities, provinces, and other local authorities are active in conducting city diplomacy. Balkans is among the regions where Turkish municipal-

ities are most active. Active city diplomacy is partly because of the large population with Balkan origins in Turkey. For instance, those municipalities that have a high share of the population that originate from the region, like Bayrampaşa or Bursa are pursuing more active policies in the region. Aware of the fact that an important part of the population has sensitivity when it comes to the region Mayors are forced to be more active in the Balkans.

To boost cooperation with the foreign local governments, many countries founded municipality unions that would coordinate those relations. Although the practice is old, Turkey launched such a union in 2003. Union of Turkish World Municipalities (TDBB) is responsible for coordinating the local government relations of its Turkish and foreign member municipalities. Although the majority of its projects are oriented towards the Balkans and Bosnia-Herzegovina particularly, like other public diplomacy institutions TDBB is also having too widely defined geographical scope stretching from Mongolia to Kenya and from Hungary to Somalia.

Turkish soft power and public diplomacy are causing a lot of debate in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Sandžak region, as well as across the region. For a long-time Turkish foreign policy was analyzed through the prism of the country's soft power and public diplomacy as they represent the stronger dimension of Ankara's influence in the region. Although Turkey's hard power presence in the region, both in terms of military and economic presence is limited it is the soft power that represents the largest share of what we call Turkish presence in the Balkans. To understand what are the real aims of Turkey in the region, the first thing that should be analyzed is the country's official public diplomacy or 'track-one' diplomacy.

Also, track-two diplomacy led by Turkey's vibrant non-state sector is shortly mentioned in the work. The author only tried to provide an insight regarding the activities of the Turkish non-state actors in the Bosnia-Herzegovina and Sandžak region. The majority of works are dealing with the mentioned types of public diplomacy in a very general manner. Specifics of this work are that the author didn't go beyond the strictly defined geographical frame and focused on particular examples, like in the case of the Turkish Initiative for the unification of Islamic Communities in Serbia. It would not be wrong to state that the issue of the Turkish initiative over the Islamic Communities in Serbia is academically evaluated for the first time.

In focusing on the mentioned types of diplomacy some characteristics common to almost all Turkish state public diplomacy institutions were identified. The characteristics of Turkey's public diplomacy are; The lack of a grand strategy, too centralized state structure, geographic overextension, reorientation of the limited state resources to distant geographical locations, weak coordination among the public diplomacy institutions overseas, hijacking of the public diplomacy by the neglected actions of the non-state actors.

The pattern that Turkish public diplomacy institutions have shown in the Balkans

proves that there is an ambition to become a reputable regional power in the Balkans, but not a clear strategy in Ankara. What all the public diplomacy institutions that are subject to this work have in common is the problem of lacking a general strategy when it comes to overseas operations. Even some other institutions like TİKA, Yunus Emre Institute that are mentioned only briefly in this work have similar problems when it comes to having a clear grand strategy.

The reason why public diplomacy institutions lack a long-lasting and consistent strategy lay probably in the fact that their strategies are often victims of daily politics. There is also too much interference in their work by the government**.** Interference was made possible by the centralist organization of the Turkish state. On the other hand, Turkey has defined its 'kinship communities very broadly. This causes Turkey to overextend its limited capacity and resources. The rift among the political parties inked to the ideological differences causes inconsistency in Turkish foreign policy. Turkish foreign policy is often multitracked which is seen in the case of city diplomacy, where municipalities close to the ruling party show the same enthusiasm when it comes to public diplomacy, while on the other hand municipalities controlled by the opposition party are not synchronized with the state's strategies and do not share the same amount of enthusiasm.

The mentioned phenomenons are creating serious obstacles for Turkish foreign policy. To some extent, those issues are causing harm to the general image of the Turkish public diplomacy overseas. They generate insecurity regarding the Turkish public diplomacy institutions and making them lose credibility among the foreign public, which is the target population of public diplomacy in the first place.

While during the 1990s Central Asia was the primary destination for Turkish public diplomacy under the AKP government there is a trend to focus on other distant and underdeveloped regions like the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. This is evident when the numbers published by the public diplomacy institutions like YTB, Yunus Emre Institute, or TIKA are examined. From year to year, the number of projects and the amount of money spent in these regions is on the rise.

On the other hand, the opposite trend is happening when it comes to Europe, the Balkans, and Central Asia. After Central Asia, Balkans was one of the regions where Turkey was most active during the 1990s and this trend continued in the first fifteen years of AKP's rule. Once the region was the main focus of the Turkish foreign policy. But as years are passing Balkans is losing its primacy. As the government's interests are shifting to other regions public diplomacy institutions are following.

Although public diplomacy institutions have some coordination and cooperation among themselves, there is a deficiency in coordination between the state and non-state institutions abroad. Heedless actions of Turkish NGOs or foreign interest groups that Turkish diplomacy is closely working with is often causing discontent among foreign audiences. As it is seen in the case of Diyanet's mediation efforts in Serbia, foreign interest groups are sometimes able to hijack the whole public diplomacy

process. All this causes damage to Turkey's soft power and diminishes the efficiency of the country's public diplomacy. Both the government and the Turkish embassies are failing to coordinate and oversight the different levels of public diplomacy activities.

Non-governmental organizations conduct the so-called 'track-two diplomacy' in foreign countries. As the majority of Turkish non-state organizations are coming from the pious background, they are active in conducting a 'track-two' faith-based diplomacy. Some heedless actions by those organizations in the past, like the mass circumcision of children according to the local Anatolian tradition have caused mass distress in the region regarding Turkey's policies. Lack of effective coordination between the non-state actors and the official state institutions led to the hijacking of the process of conducting public diplomacy by the previous.

Even some serious state-sponsored processes like the 'Turkish initiative for the unification of Islamic Communities in Serbia' to an important extent were influenced by the actions of various non-state interest groups. At the end of the process Diyanet, which was coordinating the process, became involved more as a side in the conflict rather than an independent broker. Making Diyanet and Turkish diplomacy a defender of one position has damaged the process and caused Turkey to be seen as a harmful factor by one of the sides. By doing this Diyanet and Turkish foreign policy lost its credibility among the important part of Bosniaks in Serbia and angered Sarajevo, while on the other hand failed to create outcomes that would be in the general interest of Ankara in the region. The inability to limit the influence of interest groups whether they are regional or Turkish is an important issue for Turkey's future diplomats to deal with.

Appendix A

Figure A1 Poster for the event of the commemoration of the 15th of July, 2016 failed coup attempt under the name "All the Aspect of the Coup Attempt" held in Sarajevo on October 15, 2016. Source: Stratis.ba

Figure A2 Scene from the Kid's Festival organized by Yunus Emre Institute in the Bosnian town of Zenica in 2018. Source: (Anadolu Agency)

Appendix B

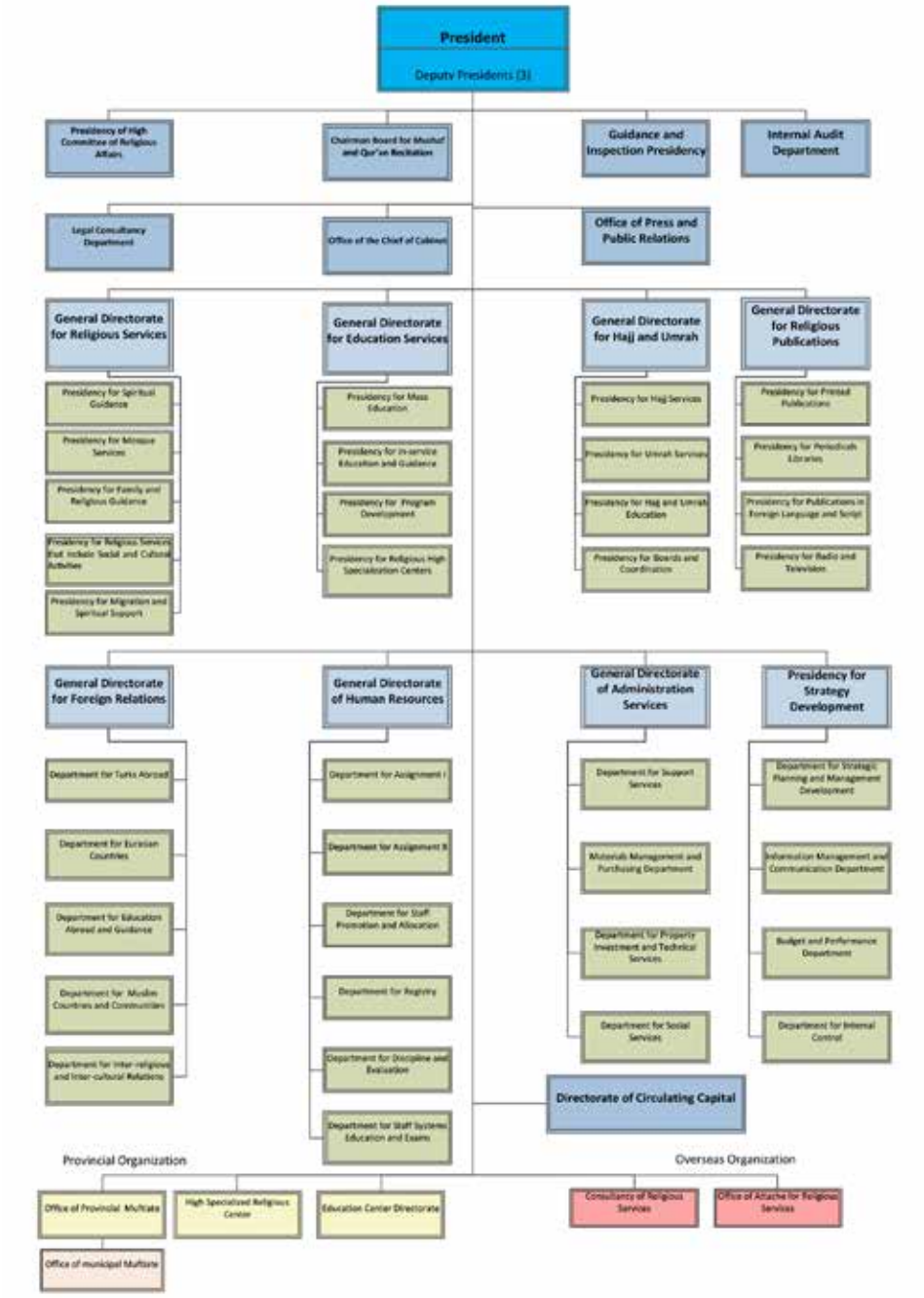


Figure B1 Diyanet's Organizational Scheme 2012 Diyanet Faaliyet Raporu, (Ankara, T.C. Diyanet Işleri Başkanlığı, 2013, p. 8.)

Figure B2 A scene from the 9th Eurasian Islamic Council organized by Diyanet. The 9th Eurasian Islamic Council was held in Istanbul in 2016. President of the Diyanet Mehmet Görmez is in the middle, the first from the left next to Görmez is Reisu-l-ulema of Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina Husejin ef. Kavazović. SOURCE: Diyanet TV (October 14, 2016)

Appendix C

Figure C1 Geographical position of the Sandžak region in the Western Balkans. "The Troubles of Sandžak: Together We Are Strong", The Economist, August 27, 2011, Accessed on September 28, 2019, doi: Https://www.economist.com/node/21526933/all-comments

Figure C2 Handshake of reconciliation between Ugljanin (far right) and Ljajić (far left) in Novi Pazar's Hotel „Tadž" in July 2009 after the mediation process sponsored by the Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu (second from right). Serbian Foreign Minister at the time Vuk Jeremić (second from left) was also present at the ceremony. The hotel where the ceremony of reconciliation between the two political leaders was held became infamous in 2007 when the group of imams conducted a putsch against the Mešihat of Islamic Community in Serbia and proclaimed Adem ef. Zilkić as their religious authority. "Ljajić i Ugljanin javno se rukovali u Novom Pazaru", Politika, 24.07.2009, Accessed on September 28, 2019., doi: Www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/96973/Љајић-и-Угљанин-јавно-се-руковали-у-Новом-Пазару.

Figure C3 Inscription on the Podgorica's Mehmet Fatih madrassah during the 1st year of commemoration of the 15th of July failed coup attempt saying in Turkish, "Praying for Erdoğan, greeting Turkey, Islamic Community of Montenegro." Source: Anadolu Agency

Appendix D

EMBASSY OF THE
REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
Belgrade

H.E. Mr. Vuk JEREMIĆ
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the
Republic of Serbia
Belgrade

Belgrade, 29 July 2009

Your Excellency
Dear Friend,

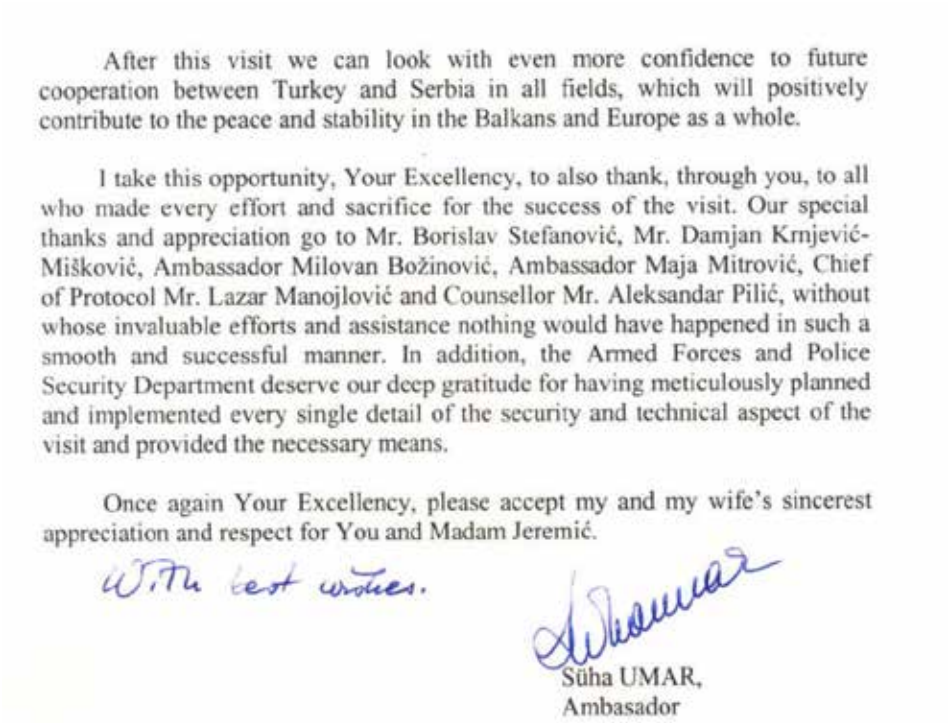
Allow me Your Excellency to express our deep gratitude to You and to Madam Jeremić for the excellent outcome of the visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey His Excellency Prof. Dr. Davutoğlu and Madam Davutoğlu to the Republic of Serbia. This visit has, in my opinion, once again proven how strong the historical bonds between our two countries are and how easy it is to overcome differing opinions, if any, and look into the future.

Your determination to follow the vision His Excellency President Tadić had developed for the future of the relations between Turkey and Serbia has made the visit most beneficial.

The short visit to Sandzak by Minister Davutoğlu, to which you kindly accompanied him, did not only demonstrate how the region was seen by both our countries as a bridge of friendship between Turkey and Serbia but also proved to be a historic step thanks to the fact that the leaders of the two Bosniac parties were, for the first time after so many years, able to join forces in your presence. I believe this event was one of the most important achievements of the visit.

Your determination to conclude the TIKA Memorandum of Understanding was crucial and has led to the result that will surely add to the improved relations between the two countries. Once operational, TIKA will be able to contribute in many ways to the economic, social and cultural projects all over Serbia, thus further strengthening our bonds.

../.



After this visit we can look with even more confidence to future cooperation between Turkey and Serbia in all fields, which will positively contribute to the peace and stability in the Balkans and Europe as a whole.

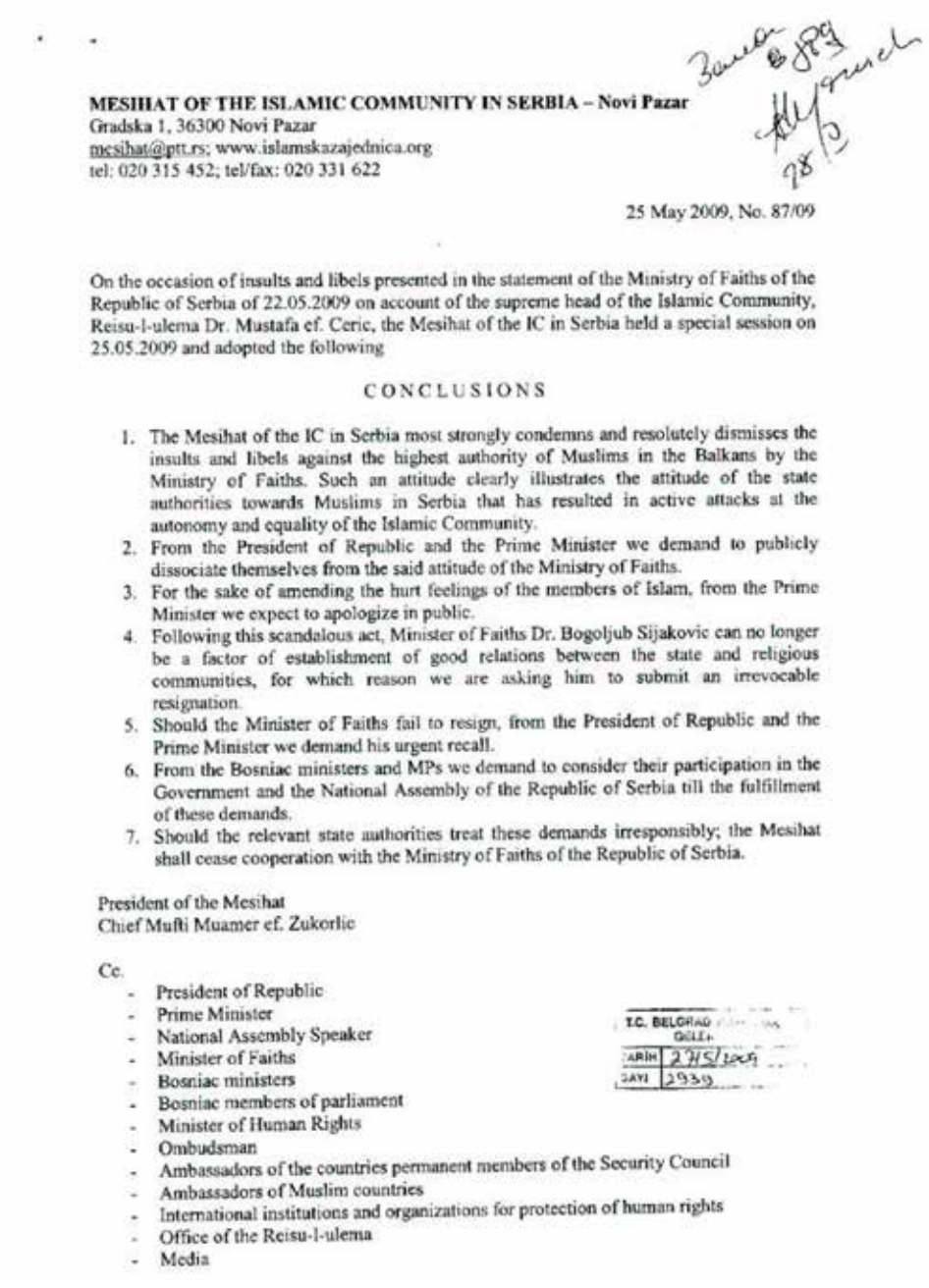
I take this opportunity, Your Excellency, to also thank, through you, to all who made every effort and sacrifice for the success of the visit. Our special thanks and appreciation go to Mr. Borislav Stefanović, Mr. Damjan Krnjević-Mišković, Ambassador Milovan Božinović, Ambassador Maja Mitrović, Chief of Protocol Mr. Lazar Manojlović and Counsellor Mr. Aleksandar Pilić, without whose invaluable efforts and assistance nothing would have happened in such a smooth and successful manner. In addition, the Armed Forces and Police Security Department deserve our deep gratitude for having meticulously planned and implemented every single detail of the security and technical aspect of the visit and provided the necessary means.

Once again Your Excellency, please accept my and my wife's sincerest appreciation and respect for You and Madam Jeremić.

With best wishes.

Süha UMAR,
Ambasador

Figure D1 Letter of gratitude by the Turkish Embassy in Serbia to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia regarding the visit of Turkey's Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu to Serbia. Source: From the private archive of Süha Umar.



MESIHAT OF THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY IN SERBIA – Novi Pazar
Gradska 1, 36300 Novi Pazar
mesihat@ptt.rs; www.islamskazajednica.org
tel: 020 315 452; tel/fax: 020 331 622

25 May 2009, No. 87/09

On the occasion of insults and libels presented in the statement of the Ministry of Faiths of the Republic of Serbia of 22.05.2009 on account of the supreme head of the Islamic Community, Reisu-l-ulema Dr. Mustafa ef. Ceric, the Mesihat of the IC in Serbia held a special session on 25.05.2009 and adopted the following

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Mesihat of the IC in Serbia most strongly condemns and resolutely dismisses the insults and libels against the highest authority of Muslims in the Balkans by the Ministry of Faiths. Such an attitude clearly illustrates the attitude of the state authorities towards Muslims in Serbia that has resulted in active attacks at the autonomy and equality of the Islamic Community.
2. From the President of Republic and the Prime Minister we demand to publicly dissociate themselves from the said attitude of the Ministry of Faiths.
3. For the sake of amending the hurt feelings of the members of Islam, from the Prime Minister we expect to apologize in public.
4. Following this scandalous act, Minister of Faiths Dr. Bogoljub Sijakovic can no longer be a factor of establishment of good relations between the state and religious communities, for which reason we are asking him to submit an irrevocable resignation.
5. Should the Minister of Faiths fail to resign, from the President of Republic and the Prime Minister we demand his urgent recall.
6. From the Bosniac ministers and MPs we demand to consider their participation in the Government and the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia till the fulfillment of these demands.
7. Should the relevant state authorities treat these demands irresponsibly; the Mesihat shall cease cooperation with the Ministry of Faiths of the Republic of Serbia.

President of the Mesihat
Chief Mufti Muamer ef. Zukorlic

Cc.
- President of Republic
- Prime Minister
- National Assembly Speaker
- Minister of Faiths
- Bosniac ministers
- Bosniac members of parliament
- Minister of Human Rights
- Ombudsman
- Ambassadors of the countries permanent members of the Security Council
- Ambassadors of Muslim countries
- International institutions and organizations for protection of human rights
- Office of the Reisu-l-ulema
- Media

T.C. BELGRAD GELEN
TARİH 27/5/2009
SAYI 2939

Figure D2 Letter of condemnation from the Mešihat of Islamic Community in Serbia to Ministry of Faiths of the Republic of Serbia regarding the insults of the Ministry of Faiths of the Republic of Serbia against the Bosnian Reisu-l-Ulema Mustafa ef. Cerić. Source: From the private archive of Süha Umar.

FROM :RIJASET ISLAMSKE ZAJEDNICE SRB FAX NO. :0203293B1 12 May. 2009 12:17 P1

U ime Boga
Islamska zajednica Srbije
Rijaset IZS
Ul. G. Jevremova 11, (P. Fah 278)
11000 Beograd, R. Srbija
Web site: www.izs.org.yu
PIB 102776320
Tel. +381 11 2622 428;
Reg. br. Reg. No:
Mjesto Place
Datum Date
Firma Firm
Na ruke Attn.
Predmet Title

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
جماعة صربيا الاسلامية
رئاسة جماعة صربيا الاسلامية

Matični broj 17292773
+381 11 2622 337;
242/ 09
Novi Pazar
12.05.2009.godina

In the name of God
Islamic Community of Serbia
Riasah of ICS
Str. G. Jevremova 11, (P.O.Box 278)
Belgrade 11000, R. of Serbia
E-mail: reis@izs.org.yu
Šifra delatnosti 91310
Tel. / Fax. +381 20 329 301
الرقم التسجيلي
محل
تاريخ
المؤسسة
إلى
العنوان

Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı

Avrasya Şurası Organizasyonu'na

Turkiye Cumhurijeti

Büyük elçilik, Belgrad

Sırbistan İslam Birliği Sırbistan'da Kilisleri̇n ve di̇n bi̇rli̇kleri̇n kayıt i̇çeri̇ği̇ üzeri̇ne ve i̇ç yapısı yazılı kurallara göre, Bölüm VII (Sırbistan Cumhuriyeti Resmi gazete s. 64/2006.) kayıtlıdır.

Kilisler ve din birliklerin kanunu, 10 maddesine göre, Sırbistan'da İslam din birliği geleneksel bir din birliği olarak kabul edildi. Aynı kanunun 15 maddesine göre, Yugoslavya Kraliyet'in İslam din birliği'nin kanuna göre (Yugoslavya Kraliyeti Resmi gazete s. 29/1930.) kazanmış olan hukuki özerkliği Sırbistan'daki İslam birliği'ne kamu birliği statusu geri verdi ve süreklilik taktir etmiştir.

Sırbistan İslam Birliği organiyasyon yapısı şöyle:

- Sırbistan İslam Birliği Meşihatı; merkez Belgrat'ta; temsil eden: müftü mr Muhammed ef. Yusufspahiç

-Preşevo İslam Birliği Meşihatı; merkez Preşevo'da; temsil eden; başkan dr Adnan ef. Ahmeti

-Sancak İslam Birliği Meşihatı merkez Yeni (Novi) Pazar'da; temsil eden: müftü Hasib ef. Sulyoviç ve

reisu-l-ulema Adem ef. Zilkić temsil eden en üst olan Sırbistan İslam birliği Riyaseti bulunmaktadır.

İslam dini tercume etmek ve temsil emek hak ise İslam birliği ve kanuna gore sadece İslam birliği tarafından görevlendirmiş memurlar sahiptir.

Sırbistan Cumhutiyeti içinden ve dığından hukumsuz olan bireylerın ve derneklerın olumsuz etkisi nedeniyle İslam birliği'nin memerları dışında her hangi başka birinin tarafından din unsurları tercume etmek ve din hayati organizasyona etkilemek izin verilmez.

T.C. BELGRAD BÜYÜKELÇİLİĞİ GELEN EVRAK	
TARİH	12/5/2009
SAYI	2571

Bizi, Diyanet İşleri Başk. ile görüşüldü. Sırbistan'a davet edilmemiz öğrenildi.
14/5/09

FROM:RIJASET ISLAMSKE ZAJEDNICE SRB FAX NO. :02032930 12 May. 2009 12:18 P2

Hatırlatmak istiyoruz ki, Sancak İslam birliği Meşihati eski başkanı Muamer Zukorliç mart ayında 2007'de, Novi Pazar'daki İslam birliğinin resmi binanın önünde, (sanki) „Birleşmiş meclisi" adı vererek bir toplantı organize etmiş ve bu toplantıda İslam birliğinin memurların çoğunluluğu omazken, Bosna-Hersek, Karadağ ve Makedinoya İslam birliğinin temsilcileri kulanarak İslam birliğinin düzeni, iç ve hukuki yapısı değiştirmeye denemiş.

Bu toplantının ürünü ve etki olarak, bugüne kadar müslümanların ve İslam birliği memurların acı veren problemleri var. İslam etiği ve medeni toplum açıdan kabul edilemez o toplantı karşılıklar ve çatışmalar ortaya çıkarttı. Bunlardan Sancak'ta bir çok vatandaşın hayatlarına ve malları emniyetsiz hale geldi.

Bosna'daki Reis'in Mustafa Ceriç'in Sancak'a ziyareti Mayıs 2009 ayı boyunca planlanmış duyurusu katıyen kınıyoruz. Çünkü şimdiye kadar o İslam birliğiyle her hangi bir şekilde ne görüşmedi, ne İslam birliğinden mekanlarda kalmak için izin istedi ne de Sancak İslam Birliğin Meşihatin'dan müslümanlara hitab etmek için her hangi bir irtibata geçmedi.

Bosna'daki müftülere, imamlara, Meclis uyelere ve Bosna-Hersek İslam Birliği'ninin müminlere gereken saygı gösterek, relsu-l-ulema Mustafa Ceriç 2007. Mart ayındaki topantıda yer aldığı için ve daha sonra Sırbistan İslam birliğiyle ilgili duyarsız ve zararlı basına açıklama yaparak temel İslam ve insan ilkeleri yıktı ve İslam birliği içindeki bölünmeleri, özellikle Sancak'taki Boşnakları arsındaki derinleşmeye katkıda bulundu. Bununla ilgili Bosna Reisi Mustafa Ceriç'in Sancak'ta kalması ve kamoyuna hitab etmesi Sancak'ta istenilmeyen şeydir. Öte yandan müminlerin arsındaki huzuruna ve barışa değildir ve sadece olumsuz etki oluşturabileceğini kanatindeyiz.

Ön planda şunu açıklamak istiyoruz ki, Bosnada'ki Reisi Mustafa Ceriç Sırbıstan vatandaşı olan müslümanlara temsil etmek için yetkisi yoktur. Ceriç'in, kendine Avrupa müslüman lideri olarak gösterek, yetkisiz Avrupadaki kamukuruşlara önünde çıkması da kınıyoruz.

Noktalamak isiyoruz, Sırbistan İslam birliği çevredeki tüm yasal ve meşru İslam birliklerle işbirliği kurmak istiyoruz.Özellikle Ankara'da merkezi olan, tarihi ve her hangi başka bir hak sahibi, Avrupa merkez Müslüman olmak için tek o hak sahibi olan Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı ve Turkiye Cumhuriyetidir.

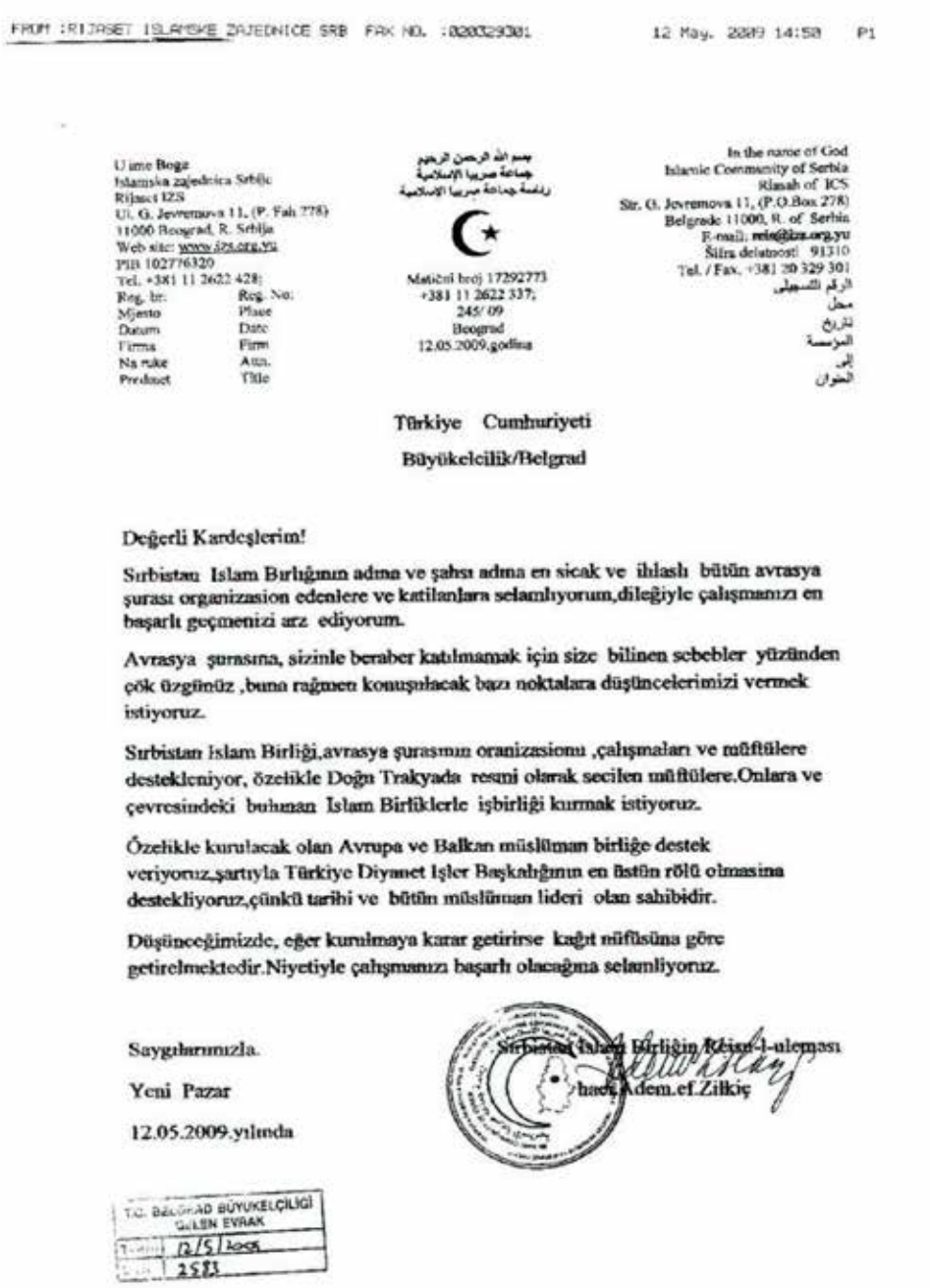
Bahsedilen sorunların üstesinden gelmek için, Sırbistan İslam Birliği'nin karlara saygı yanı sıra daha önce elde rızası olmadan, bizim Birliğin çalışmalarında ülke ve yurt dışından yetkisiz kişilerin karışmamasını ısrar etmekteyiz.

Saygılarımızla,

Yeni Pazar, 12.05.2009 sene

Reisu-l-ulema Adem ef. Zilkić

Figure D3 Letter of complaint sent by the Islamic Community of Serbia to Diyanet's Eurasian Islamic Council regarding the activities of the Mešihat of Islamic Community in Serbia and the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Source: From the private archive of Süha Umar.



FROM :RIJASET ISLAMSKE ZAJEDNICE SRB FAX NO. :0200329301 12 May. 2009 14:58 P1

Ujme Boga
Islamska zajednica Srbije
Rijaset IZS
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11000 Beograd, R. Srbija
Web site: www.izs.org.yu
PIB 102776320
Tel. +381 11 2622 428;
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Mjesto Place
Datum Date
Firma Firm
Na ruke Attn.
Predmet Title

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
جماعة صربيا الإسلامية
رئاسة جماعة صربيا الإسلامية

Matični broj 17292773
+381 11 2622 337;
245/ 09
Beograd
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In the name of God
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الرقم التسجيلي
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تاريخ
المؤسسة
إلى
العنوان

Türkiye Cumhuriyeti

Büyükelcilik/Belgrad

Değerli Kardeşlerim!

Sırbistan Islam Birliğinin adına ve şahsı adına en sicak ve ihlaslı bütün avrasya şurası organizasion edenlere ve katilanlara selamlıyorum,dileğiyle çalışmanızı en başarlı geçmenizi arz ediyorum.

Avrasya şurasına, sizinle beraber katılmamak için size bilinen sebebler yüzünden çök üzgünüz ,buna rağmen konuşulacak bazı noktalara düşüncelerimizi vermek istiyoruz.

Sırbistan Islam Birliği,avrasya şurasının oranizasionu ,çalışmaları ve müftülere desteklenıyor, özelikle Doğu Trakyada resmi olarak secilen müftülere.Onlara ve çevresindeki bulunan Islam Birliklerle işbirliği kurmak istiyoruz.

Özelikle kurulacak olan Avrupa ve Balkan müslüman birliğe destek veriyoruz,şartıyla Türkiye Diyanet Işler Başkalığının en üstün rölü olmasına destekliyoruz,çünkü tarihi ve bütün müslüman lideri olan sahibidir.

Düşünceğimizde, eğer kurulmaya karar getirirse kağıt müfüsüna göre getirelmektedir.Niyetiyle çahşmanızı başarlı olacağına selamliyoruz.

Saygılarımızla.

Yeni Pazar

12.05.2009.yılında

Sirbistan Islam Birliğin Reisu-l-uleması
hadž Adem.ef.Zilkić

T.C. BELGRAD BÜYUKELÇİLİĞİ
GELEN EVRAK
12/5/2009
2583

Figure D4 Letter of the Islamic Community of Serbia to the Turkish embassy in Serbia where the Islamic Community of Serbia declares its support to the Diyanet as the leading religious authority of Balkan and European Muslims. Source: From the private archive of Süha Umar.

ISLAMSKA ZAJEDNICA U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI
VIJEĆE MUFTIJA

Broj: 03-2-91/16
Datum, 26. ramazan 1437. hg.
01. Juli 2016. godine

Vijeće muftija Islamske zajednice u Bosni i Hercegovini je na svojoj 8. redovnoj sjednici održanoj u Srebrenici dana 30. juna 2016. godine, odnosno 25. ramazana 1437. hg., izdao je sljedeće

SAOPŠTENJE ZA JAVNOST

Vijeće muftija podsjeća sve muslimane u Sandžaku i Srbiji da postoji samo jedna tradicionalna legalna i legitimna Islamska zajednica na čelu sa predsjednikom Mešihata Muftijom dr. Mevlud-ef. Dudićem sa sjedištem u Novom Pazaru.
Vijeće muftija očekuje od Vlade Republike Srbije da, poštujući ustavom utvrđeni princip jedankosti, konačno stavi tačku na opstruiranje jedinstva Islamske zajednice. Očekujemo od državnih organa Srbije da se uz saradnju i sa punim uvažavanjem odnose prema ovoj činjenici.

Husein-ef. Kavazović
Reisu-l-ulema

Adresa: Zelenih beretki 17, 71000 Sarajevo, Bosna i Hercegovina · tel/fax: +387 (0)33 533-000 · tel: +387 (0)33 239-404
www.islamskazajednica.ba

Figure D5 Letter by the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina where it declares its support for the Mešihat of Islamic Community in Serbia and calls Serbian institutions to recognize the Mešihat as a such. Source: From the private archive of Süha Umar.

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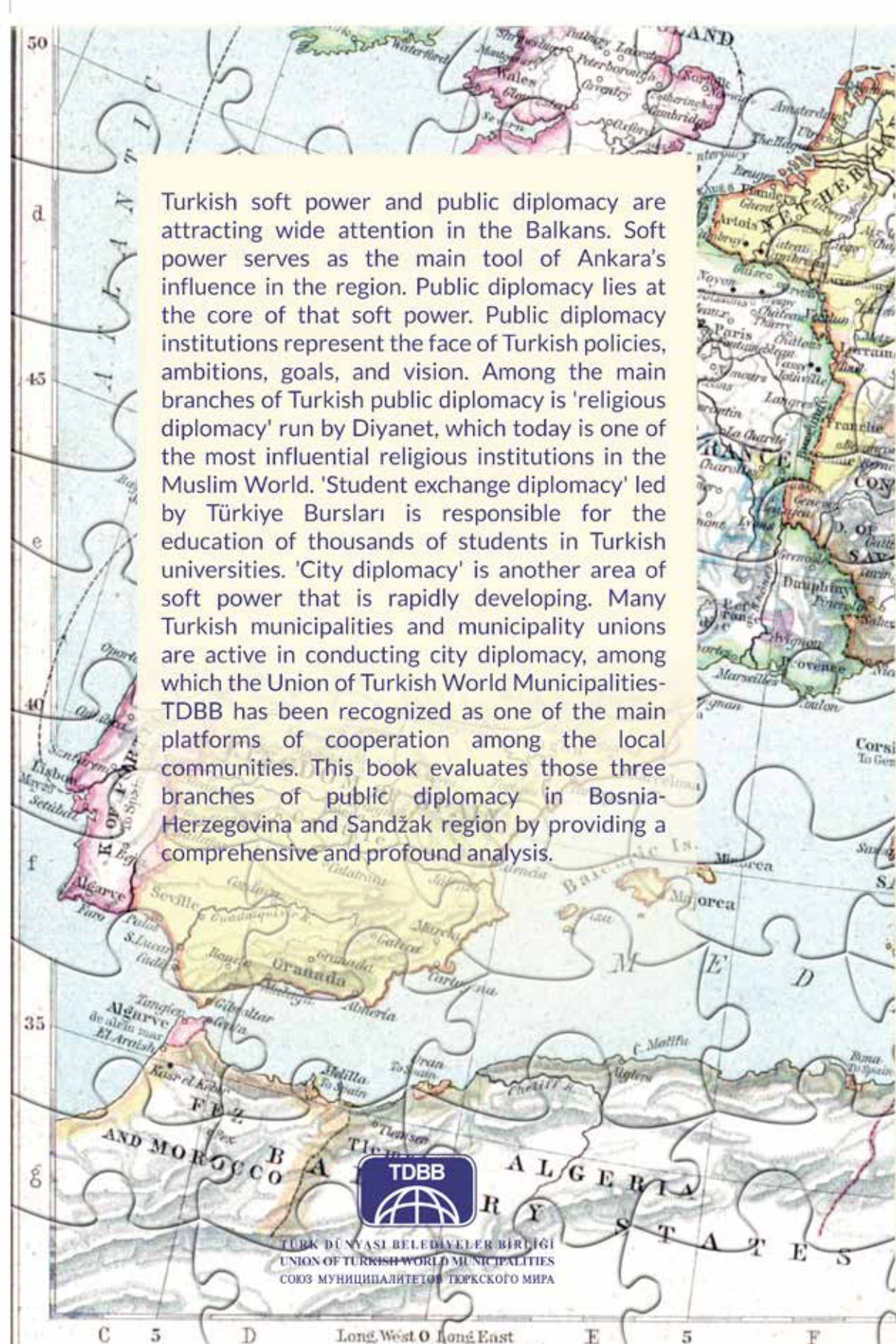

Turkish soft power and public diplomacy are attracting wide attention in the Balkans. Soft power serves as the main tool of Ankara's influence in the region. Public diplomacy lies at the core of that soft power. Public diplomacy institutions represent the face of Turkish policies, ambitions, goals, and vision. Among the main branches of Turkish public diplomacy is 'religious diplomacy' run by Diyanet, which today is one of the most influential religious institutions in the Muslim World. 'Student exchange diplomacy' led by Türkiye Bursları is responsible for the education of thousands of students in Turkish universities. 'City diplomacy' is another area of soft power that is rapidly developing. Many Turkish municipalities and municipality unions are active in conducting city diplomacy, among which the Union of Turkish World Municipalities-TDBB has been recognized as one of the main platforms of cooperation among the local communities. This book evaluates those three branches of public diplomacy in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Sandžak region by providing a comprehensive and profound analysis.

TDBB

TÜRK DÜNYASI BELEDİYELER BİRLİĞİ
UNION OF TURKISH WORLD MUNICIPALITIES
СОЮЗ МУНИЦИПАЛИТЕТОВ ТЮРКСКОГО МИРА