

TURKEY'S CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AND SOFT POWER POLICY TOWARD THE BALKANS*

Muharrem EKŐİ**

ABSTRACT

This article examines Turkey's Balkan policy in 2000s within the framework of cultural diplomacy and soft power. Turkey followed a security-oriented policy due to the conflicting dynamics of the region in 1990s while it chose a cultural diplomacy based soft power diplomacy due to the relative stability in the region in 2000s. In this context, the main research question of this paper was determined to be "what is the changing aspect of Turkey's Balkan policy in 2000s?" The fundamental argument within the framework of this question is that Turkey's Balkan policy during the AK Party reign is that the country mainly followed a strategy to increase cultural-social effectiveness in the region through a soft power policy on the basis of the public-cultural diplomacy. In this framework, the other two arguments of the study are as follows: Firstly, Turkey opted to develop its relations with the Balkans on the societal and cultural levels. The reason is the historical and cultural ties are the most significant ties of Turkey with the region. Turkey desired to revive these ties through cultural diplomacy. Secondly, Turkey followed a policy of being a soft power in the region. Therefore, Turkey opted to implement the instruments of the public and cultural diplomacy. The Yunus Emre Institute, TİKA, TRT and Anatolian Agency were introduced in 2000s as the instruments that generate the soft power of Turkey in the region.

Keywords: Balkans, Turkish Foreign Policy, Cultural Diplomacy, Soft Power, Public Diplomacy, Yunus Emre Institute, TİKA.

ÖZ

Bu makalede 2000'lerdeki Türkiye'nin Balkan politikası, kültür diplomasisi ve yumuşak güç çerçevesinde irdelenmiştir. 1990'larda bölgenin çatışmacı dinamikleri nedeniyle güvenlik odaklı politika izleyen Türkiye, 2000'lerde bölgenin görece istikrarlı olması nedeniyle kültürel diplomasi temelli yumuşak güç odaklı politika izlemiştir. Bu bağlamda bu makalenin temel araştırma sorusu, 2000'lerde Türkiye'nin Balkan politikasının değişen yönü nedir? olarak belirlenmiştir. Bu soru çerçevesinde araştırmanın temel argümanı, AK Parti dönemi

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** Asst. Prof., International Relations, Kırklareli University, ORCID: 0000-0003-2323-7898, muharremeksi@klu.edu.tr.

Türkiye'nin Balkan politikası, ağırlıklı olarak kamu-kültür diplomasisi temelinde yumuşak güç politikası izlenerek bölgede kültürel-toplumsal etkinliği artırma stratejisinin izlendiğidir. Bu çerçevede araştırmamızın diğer iki argümanı ise şöyle devam etmektedir: Birincisi, Türkiye bu dönemde Balkanlarla ilişkilerini toplumsal ve kültürel düzeyde geliştirme politikasını tercih etmiştir. Çünkü Türkiye'nin bölgeyle en önemli bağlantısını tarihsel ve kültürel bağlar oluşturmaktadır. Türkiye, kültür diplomasisi ile bu bağları tekrar canlandırmak istemiştir. İkincisi, Türkiye, bölgede yumuşak güç olma politikası izlemiştir. Bunun için Türkiye, kamu ve kültür diplomasisinin araçlarını uygulamayı tercih etmiştir. Yunus Emre Enstitüsü, TİKA, TRT ve Anadolu Ajansı bölgede Türkiye'nin yumuşak gücünü üreten enstrümanları olarak 2000'lerde devreye girmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Balkanlar, Türk dış politikası, Kültür diplomasisi, Yumuşak Güç, Kamu Diplomasisi, Yunus Emre Enstitüsü, TİKA.

In 1990s Turkey had intrinsically pursued security-focus policy due to instability and conflicts in the Balkans, but it has unlikely adopted a soft power-oriented policy for enhancing societal-cultural effectiveness during AK Party era after the relative stabilization in the region in 2000s. From this point of view, it could be assert that the ruling government has principally formulated Balkan policy through the historical and cultural legacy. In this context, Turkey's Balkan strategy during AK Party decade defines as public diplomacy-based, cultural diplomacy-focus and the instruments of soft power-oriented. Turkey's policy for enhancing its influence by accentuating common culture and history in particular the legacy of Ottoman has led to a perception of threat as Neo-Ottomanist, revisionist and hegemonic policy both in the region and in academic circle. Therefore, the Foreign Minister Davutoğlu's speech of calling for Turkey's leadership to the integration of countries of the region by underling the Ottoman history in the inauguration of the Yunus Emre Institute Turkish Cultural Center in Bosnia has been a mainstay of the Neo-Ottoman perception. Whereas, Turkey's encouraging and supporting the integration of the countries of region with the EU and NATO is in contradiction with the Neo-Ottoman claims. On the other hand, this policy can be defined as public diplomacy that is quite different from the previous periods of Turkey's Balkan policy.

Ak Party has initiated to implementation of soft power institutions such as Yunus Emre Institute Cultural Centers and the Office of Public Diplomacy, The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities opened by the ruling government and previously opened but made more effective institutions of TİKA, TRT, Anadolu Agency and Diyanet Foundation in order to strengthen Turkey's historical and cultural ties in the Balkans by AK Party rule. In the framework of public diplomacy approach Turkey has maintained a policy of building direct relations with the Balkan people. To that effect, this policy provides Turkey both a much wider sphere of influence and building deeper relations with the living people of the region. In

this context, Turkey's social and cultural dimension of the Balkan policy is analyzed in terms of the activities of cultural diplomacy institutions. In this article, Turkey's Balkan policy is scrutinized within the framework of education diplomacy, diaspora diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, TV diplomacy and public diplomacy comprising all of them.

On the other hand, Turkey had the chance in 1990s to increase its effectiveness by following a joint policy with the US in the Balkans as a NATO member. In 2000s, Turkey was left alone when the US changed its Balkan policy while they acted jointly in 1990s. In other words, the operation area of Turkey in the Balkans was restricted when its ally in the region shifted its focus to other regions. The US transferred the responsibility of the Balkans to EU and started to reduce its (particularly military) presence in the region (Uzgel 2001:691). In 2000s, the US and the EU reached an agreement for the Balkans to be included in the EU integration process. Therefore, the EU and particularly Germany started to increase their effectiveness in the Balkans. On the contrary, Turkey followed a policy to integrate the Balkan countries under the leadership of Turkey within the framework of the foreign policy, the theoretical foundation of which was determined by Mr. Davutoğlu as an advisor. This was the start of a period of rivalry between Turkey and EU-Germany in the Balkans in 2000s. In this soft competition, Turkey chose the cultural diplomacy strategy to increase its effectiveness in the Balkans once again. Thus, Turkey followed a soft power policy by re-strengthening its historical and cultural ties in the region.

1. Cultural diplomacy and Soft power

1.1 Cultural Diplomacy

Cultural diplomacy is essentially accepted as a branch or type of public diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy covers the activities of the public diplomacy in the fields of culture and art. The definition of cultural diplomacy as a separate type of diplomacy is due to the prominence of the fields of culture and art in public diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy, which is a type or a branch of the public diplomacy with regards to the activities of culture and art, is in fact intertwined with public diplomacy. The culture and art activities of public diplomacy clearly show that it involves culture. What is different is the fact that a new art of diplomacy is evolving as cultural diplomacy. Therefore, it acquired a unique place in the diplomacy terminology as a separate concept. In most of the literature, cultural diplomacy is mentioned as a sub component of public diplomacy (Simon 2009:1). While there are many definitions of cultural diplomacy in the literature, the definition of Milton Cummings is the most referred one, which reads as the exchange of values, ideas and culture-art elements (Cummings 2003:1). With this respect, cultural diplomacy can be considered as the building of civil relations directly between individuals and peoples including culture and art activities based upon individuals and civil society. This provides states with the manoeuvre possibility in a broad area as well as with the opportunity to deep-

en their influence. This way states carry out cultural communication and interaction activities through cultural diplomacy.

Furthermore, public diplomacy that includes various types of diplomacy including cultural diplomacy, diaspora diplomacy, foreign aid and humanitarian diplomacy, and digital diplomacy is a concept that emerged in the US in 1960s in the modern sense (Snow and Taylor 2009:6). Edward Murrow, a former diplomat, defined public diplomacy in 1965 as “covering the dimensions of international relations beyond the traditional diplomacy, public opinion making of governments in other countries, interaction of private and interest groups with other countries, intercultural communication process” (Gullion, “What is Public Diplomacy?”). The Turkish Dictionary published by the Turkish Language Agency defines public diplomacy as “the policy implemented in order to explain the thoughts, goals, ideals, current policies, institutions and culture of a nation to the public opinion of foreign countries”. Based on these definitions, public diplomacy is based on state-society relations, society-society relations and cultural relations in particular instead of state-state relations that are different from the traditional diplomacy. As it is, public diplomacy is implemented with the new institutions, instruments, methods and mechanisms of public diplomacy instead of the institutions of the conventional diplomacy. This new diplomacy style is carried out by the cultural institutions addressing to the civil domain instead of ministries of foreign affairs. In public diplomacy, programs such as public relations, image-reputation-prestige management and perception management, propaganda, lobbying, nation branding, agenda setting and information through communication tools are implemented instead of the official mechanisms of the traditional diplomacy with respect to instruments and methods. Therefore, it can be said that the culture-art activities, language teaching, international scholarship programs, different culture and international exchange programs are added to the field of diplomacy which diversifies foreign policy and develops new relation styles for the cultural and social deepening of international relations. In this aspect, states develop and even deepen culture-based international relations through public diplomacy, which involves building society based relation in the civil sphere. Turkey also increases its influence in the Balkans through public diplomacy by establishing civil and sincere relations directly with the people of the region. It can be argued that Turkey gets a far broader area of activity and operation in the Balkans than its rivals through social and cultural activities of the soft power and public-cultural diplomacy institutions like TİKA and Yunus Emre Institute Turkish Culture Centers. Likewise, Turkey uses almost all types, instruments and mechanisms of public diplomacy effectively in the Balkans instead of the limited field and instruments of the conventional diplomacy. Thus, it broadens its influence in the social scope and deepens it in the cultural domain.

In fact, the use of culture in the field of diplomacy is not a new phenomenon. Culture has always been used by the states as a diplomatic in-

strument throughout the history. In general, culture is not merely an instrument of foreign policy, but also one of the elements that affect the identities of the states and the dynamics of global politics. The fact that culture regained importance since 2000s was influenced by the reshaping of new conflict dynamics of the global politics over cultural codes. Particularly after the September 11 terror attacks of Al-Qaeda, a period started where culture elements are effective in the conflict dynamics of global politics. Likewise, it is clearly observed in the media almost every day that the Huntington's thesis of clash of civilizations actually takes place beyond the intellectual framework where the cultural and religious elements are the fundamental conflict dynamics of the new global politics with regard to the terror organizations including Al-Qaeda in the global level, Boko Haram and Al Shabaab in Africa in the beginning of the 2000s and ISIS/DEASH in the Middle East in 2013. In this sense, xenophobia, Islamophobia and radicalization trends increasing in the Balkans in 2000s where global politics entered into the period of cultural conflicts increased the importance of cultural diplomacy once more. Therefore, states started to focus on cultural diplomacy in their foreign policies. Likewise, Turkey reformulated its Balkan policy since 2003 over culture and started to follow strategically a cultural diplomacy based policy. In this framework, Turkey first signed an agreement on "An Exchange Program in the fields of Culture, Education, Science, Youth and Sport" with Bosnia Herzegovina in 2004. The same year, "Cultural Cooperation Agreement" was signed with Kosovo and "Cultural Education Protocol" was signed with Macedonia. After that, "Cooperation Program in the field of Education, Science, Culture and Art, Youth and Sport Areas" was signed with Croatia in 2006 ("Kültür ve Turizm Anlaşmaları Dizini"). "Cultural Exchange Program" was signed with Greece in 2007 and "Science, Culture, Education Exchange Program" was signed with Hungary in 2008 ("Kültür ve Turizm Anlaşmaları Dizini"). "Cooperation Program in the Fields of Science, Education and Culture" was signed with Bulgaria again in 2008 ("Kültür ve Turizm Anlaşmaları Dizini"). Following the signing of "Cultural Cooperation Program" with Serbia in 2009 referred to the diplomatic foundation of the international cultural relations of Turkey in the Balkans ("Kültür ve Turizm Anlaşmaları Dizini").

On the other hand, Turkey opened cultural centers in the region since 2009 with the Yunus Emre Institute that was established in 2007 on the civil and social level and started to follow cultural diplomacy for building relations with the people of the region. Hence, public diplomacy and cultural relations is not a subject that will be carried out only through states. The use of culture as a diplomatic instrument in the civil and social area has been historically carried out through cultural institutes and centers. Hence, states increase their prestige and status in global politics as a soft power with their culture and language institutes serving to the civil area.

1.2 Soft Power

The concept of soft power which is at the common point and ground of the public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy was included in the literature by Harvard Professor Joseph Nye in 1990 and it became the essential component of public diplomacy in 2000s (Nye 1990; Nye 1990:153-71). The soft power concept is also described as cultural power (Ferguson 2006:134). This was because of the fact that Nye conceptualized the cultural element as the primary source of soft power when defining the soft power concept. Nye based the concept of soft power on three resources including culture that is found to be attractive by other societies, political values (Erol 2012:347-75; Erol 2012:239-47) and foreign policy and he defined the concept as shaping the preferences of others without hard power and force and thus ensuring others to want what you want (Nye 2004:11). Based on this, he based the functioning logic of soft power on attraction.

This can be called as building soft power through cultural diplomacy. In other words, soft power is implemented through public diplomacy activities including culture, values and foreign policy, exchange programs, cultural and informational activities. Transforming soft power to policy by the public diplomacy program and methods makes soft power directly related and intertwined with public-cultural diplomacy. In short, public diplomacy is the soft power policy. States implement soft power policy in foreign policy by launching cultural institutes. Turkey started to implement the public diplomacy multidimensionally including culture, foreign aid, diaspora and religious diplomacy.

2. Turkey's Balkan Policy

After the collapse of Yugoslavia in 1990s, the conflicts based on culture, religion, identity and nationality between the communities of the Balkans who once lived side by side pushed states to give importance to the cultural elements in foreign policy they followed. The fact that Turkey formulated its Balkan policy on the basis of culture since 2000s was affected by the increase of culture based conflicts in the global politics since 1990s and particularly after the September 11 terror attacks. When global politics entered to the period of culture based conflicts, the article "the clash of civilizations" by Huntington published in the Foreign Affairs magazine in 1993 and his book "The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order" were a global focus of attention (Huntington 1996). Huntington suggested in his argument of clash of civilizations that the conflicts in the post-cold war era would be over the cultural dynamics (Huntington 1993). Likewise, the conflicts in the Balkans in 1990s, the US's declaration of war against the "Islamist" terrorism after the September 11 terror attacks and the Crusaders blunder invoked the idea that the thesis of Huntington started to take place ("Bush 'Haçlı Seferi' demek istememiş", NTV, 19 Eylül 2001). Within this framework, the fact that the global politics started to transform with respect to the cultural conflicts both factually and intellec-

tually, pushed the states to interpret the fundamental dynamics of the international system over culture like Huntington does as argued by Alexander Wendt, a constructivist thinker.

In this context, the importance of public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy started to increase in 2000s and states started to reformulate their foreign policies within the framework of soft power, public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy. Turkey implements the strategy during the AK Party rule to increase its influence in the Balkans on the basis of culture. In this context, the main research question of this article has been determined to be "what is the changing aspect of Turkey's Balkan policy in 2000s?". The fundamental argument of the study within the framework of this question is that Turkey's Balkan policy during the AK Party rule is the strategy to increase cultural-social effectiveness in the region by following a soft power policy mainly on the basis of public-cultural diplomacy. In this framework, Turkey's Balkan policy during the AK Party rule can be defined to be a culture oriented diplomacy strategy based on public diplomacy and soft power instruments. Within the framework of this strategy, Turkey introduced soft power instruments in the Balkans including the Prime Ministry Office of Public Diplomacy, TRT, and Anatolian Agency as the public diplomacy institutions; Yunus Emre Institute as cultural diplomacy; TİKA as foreign aid diplomacy; Directorate of Religious Affairs as religious diplomacy and Presidency For Turks Abroad And Related Communities (YTB) as diaspora diplomacy. Other than that, the activities of NGOs to increase cultural relations between communities can be added within the framework of public diplomacy. In this context, it can be argued that Turkey followed a different and unique diplomacy style compared to the previous periods with the addition of new institutions, instruments and mechanisms to Turkey's Balkan policy in 2000s. With respect to continuity, Turkey has always followed a proactive diplomacy in the Balkans since 1990s. In 2000s, Turkey diversified its Balkan policy compared to the previous periods in the context of both the issues that it is interested in and the instruments, methods and mechanisms it applies. It is the public-cultural diplomacy that provides this diversity and difference in the Balkan policy.

2.1 Soft Power-Based Changing Instruments and Applications in Turkey's Cultural Diplomacy-based Balkan policy

First of all, the soft power of Turkey in the Balkans is based on its historical and cultural ties with the countries and people of the region. Due to these ties, the countries of the region feel Turkey close to themselves. This is the common ground of soft power between Turkey and Balkans. In addition, the importance of the region for Turkey is clear from the beginning when we consider that the word Balkan originates from Turkish. Based on this fact, it is understood that Turkey has cultural and historical depth in the Balkans. It needs to be emphasized that Turkey, with its established cultural, linguistic, religious and historical ties, has great advantage compared to

other countries with respect to public-cultural diplomacy and soft power in the Balkans. The Balkans still maintains the deep influence of the 500-year old Ottoman sovereignty and heritage that is called as Pax Ottomana (Demirtaş 2013:166). The Ottoman-Turkish-Islamic culture left its mark in the Balkans (Erol 2007:47). The Muslim Ottoman remnants in the region, Turkish minorities and Balkan originated population living in Turkey are the direct historical and cultural ties of Turkey in the Balkans which is at the same time a feature that necessitates constant interest of Turkey in the region (Uzgel 2001:170). Likewise, the view of the Turkish and Muslim communities in the Balkans regarding Turkey as a protector-guardian obligates Turkey to have constant attention in the region (Uzgel 2001:170). When we look at the historical development of the Turkish foreign policy in the Balkans, we can say that the region has always been important for Turkey. Turkey always emphasized its Balkan identity since its establishment, i.e. that it is Balkan country like the Ottoman State (Uzgel 2001:167). The historical and cultural ties of Turkey with the Balkans shape its foreign policy.

This clearly indicates that the strategy of Turkey in the region during 2000s based on cultural diplomacy and soft power-oriented policy has been so well-directed. On the other hand, the importance of Balkans for Turkey arises from a strategic point of view in addition to cultural and historical ties and proximity. The fact that Trace is geographically a Balkan region provides Turkey with a Balkan identity. Furthermore, the fact that the Ottoman State, the predecessor of Turkey, was established as a Balkan state and expanded from this geography reveals the strategic importance of the region. From the military point of view, Turkey's border with the Balkans with a small Trace region points out the lack of country depth in the country defense strategy. In this aspect, the Balkans has a strategic importance with respect to military and security in the context of defense strategy of Turkey. In addition, the Balkans is the opening gate of Turkey to Europe. It is also an indispensable trade route as it is the only land connection for Turkey's trade with the European countries. The instability in the region has a direct negative effect on Turkey's land trade. Therefore, Turkey's Balkan policy has always being built on supporting stability. In addition, the Balkans has an important place for the Turkey-EU relations. Developing relations between Turkey and Balkan countries would open the way to the EU while the Balkans are also a strategic point for the pipeline routes which is the most important leverage of Turkey in the energy needs of the EU. The transfer lines from Turkey to Europe makes Turkey an energy corridor as well as making Europe in need of Turkey. On the other hand, it needs to be emphasized that the greatest rival of Turkey in the Balkans is the EU and Germany. With its huge economy in the region, the EU is advantageous compared to Turkey while Turkey's advantages are historical and cultural ties. The EU policy of integrating the Balkans under its roof contradicts with the regional leadership policy of Turkey in the Balkans during 2000s. In this

sense, both players consider each other as rivals. Therefore, Turkey's foreign policy for the Balkans was determined by its strategic, historical and cultural importance.

The argument that Turkey was always interested in the Balkans since its establishment can be followed factually through the Balkan Pact signed in 1934 and thereafter the Balkan Alliance, Friendship and Cooperation Agreements between 1953-75. It can be said that Turkey did not have a dedicated Balkan policy only during the Cold War period. However, it is argued that the interest of Turkey in the Balkans has been uninterrupted from 1960s through today when Turkey adopted multidimensional foreign policy in the detente period of the Cold War between 1960s and 1970s (Uzgel 2001:175). There was a gap of power in the Balkans with the collapse of the Soviets in 1990s in the post-Cold War period. This made the region open to international struggle of influence. Turkey, the US, Germany and Italy started to follow a policy to increase their effectiveness in the Balkans. Following the collapse of the Soviets, almost all states and people of the region applied to Turkey for support and for the recognition of their independence (Uzgel 2001:491). This is a clear indication of the importance given to Turkey by the Balkan countries. In such an environment, Turkey first had an emotional approach to the Balkans just like it did in the Caucasia and Central Asia. Following a policy with the idea of New Ottomanism that was discussed during the AK Party Rule in 2000s also appeared initially during the Özal rule with the idea of ensuring Pax Ottomana-Ottoman Peace- in 1990s followed by the cultural diplomacy and soft power policy under the TİKA leadership. However, Turkey had a short policy of filling the power gap in the region and providing an Ottoman like order. The collapse of Yugoslavia and rising of nationalism in the region caused the Balkans enter to a conflict period giving pejorative qualities to the region like conflict, disintegration, instability and ethnic cleansing. The 1990s were a period of complete conflict and instability for the history of the Balkans. Therefore, Turkey's Balkan policy in 1990s was security oriented to ensure stability. Although the policy of providing an Ottoman order failed, Turkey proved that it is a vital player in the Balkans through its effective presence by following the most active and the longest diplomacy of its history particularly during the War in Bosnia.

In 2000s, Balkans entered into a relatively stable period and the AK Party rule started in Turkey, a new soft power oriented foreign policy based on public-cultural diplomacy was formulated instead of the security and stability based foreign policy of 1990s. It can be said that Turkey's Balkan policy in 2000s was formulated over historical and cultural codes in parallel to the identity of the AK Party governments. The governing elites, particularly the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Davutoğlu, defined Balkans once again within the circle of Ottoman-Turkish-Islam civilization. During the AK Party rule, they considered Balkans to be "*Evlad-ı Fatihan*", i.e. as the Ottoman remnant, an extension of the approach of making peace with the Otto-

man history. Therefore, the Turkey's Balkan policy was built on cultural cooperation and integration with the Muslim-Ottoman remnants in the Balkan communities. This policy is attempted to be realized by following a public-cultural diplomacy. However, it can be said that Turkey's Balkan policy became active generally from 2009 during the AK Party rule. This was affected by the initial focus of Turkey on the Middle East policy depending on the regional development. The US invasion of Iraq in 2003 naturally pushed Turkey to point its attention to the Middle East. Again, with regard to the regional developments, Turkey started to follow an active policy in the Balkans against the rise of conflict possibility in the Bosnia Herzegovina Federation in 2009. In this respect, it is generally accepted that the ruling governments followed an active foreign policy from 2012 to 2014. Likewise, after the appearance of fragile conflict possibility in the Balkans, Turkey established a mechanism of dialogue and cooperation in Bosnia and Serbia and followed an intense and proactive diplomacy.

On the other hand, Turkey's active diplomacy and effectiveness in the Balkans develop mainly through public-cultural diplomacy. Turkey preferred to carry out its Balkan policy by formulating it to the institutions launched and reorganized within the framework of public diplomacy instead of the traditional way of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Embassies. In this context, Turkey started to follow a multidimensional public diplomacy in the Balkans in 2000s including cultural diplomacy through the Yunus Emre Institute, foreign aid diplomacy through TİKA, TV and information diplomacy through TRT and Anatolian Agency.

3. Yunus Emre Institute

The Yunus Emre Institute was established in 2007 as a soft power institution responsible for the cultural diplomacy of Turkey (<http://www.yee.org.tr/turkiye/tr/kurumsal/vakif-kanunu>). It became operational in 2009 by opening the first cultural center in the Balkans, which determined its area of influence and region to expand. The Foreign Affairs Minister Davutoğlu made a speech in the opening of the Yunus Emre Institute Turkish Culture Centre and said "the opening of the first cultural center in Bosnia is not a coincidence but a carefully thought strategic decision" (Yunus Emre Bülteni, 2009: 3). Therefore, Turkey determined the Yunus Emre Institute as an organization carrying out its foreign policy to be followed mainly in the Balkans and the cultural diplomacy as its diplomatic method and tool. Turkey's formulation of a strategy based on cultural diplomacy in the Balkans was affected by its historical and cultural ties in the region, as already emphasized before, and by the fact that the culture-based policies provide states with new areas of power. By following a policy in the cultural sphere, Turkey deepens its relations with the Balkans on the community level and obtains a chance of manoeuvre to increase its influence on a broader area than its rivals. In addition, it needs to be said that Turkey's goal of re-writing hits historical past in the Balkans and building new, Tur-

key-centered discourse also affected its preference to follow a culture-based foreign policy. Establishing Turkey's Balkan Policy over the rhetoric of the Ottoman heritage and aiming at cultural integration with the region, which is also referred as Neo-Ottomanism, were perceived as the strategy of Turkey to build cultural patronage in the Balkans. Particularly, the speech of the Minister Davutoğlu during opening of the Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Centre in Bosnia in 2009, which invoked the countries of the region for integration under the leadership of Turkey by emphasizing on the Ottoman history, was the inherent ground of the Neo-Ottomanist perception. On the other hand, Turkey's encouragement and support to the countries of the region for the integration with the EU and NATO contradict with the Neo-Ottomanist ideas. Turkey's foreign policy under the AK Party leadership caused the critics and perception in the Middle East as well as in the Balkans that Ottoman state is coming back. The restoration of the Ottoman-Islam structures in the Balkans and its activities to revive its historical and cultural presence through soft power organizations like the Yunus Emre Institute, TİKA and the Directorate of Religious Affairs were perceived as Neo-Ottomanism. In fact, the ruling elites are clearly observed to have an ottomanphilia. It is natural that the governing elites with Islamic references set eyes on the Ottoman state and long for it when they look at the history. However, it is problematic when they adapt this longing to foreign policy both with regard to the conjectural impossibility to have the Ottoman period back and with regard to the power, capacity and instruments of the country. Turkey already recognized during 1990s that the Neo-Ottomanism policy in the Balkans was inadequate and that it could not fill the power vacuum in the region. Although the economic growth of Turkey since 2002 to be the 16th greatest economy of the world allowed it to switch to an assertive foreign policy, it is yet out of possibility that it can overshadow the EU, the economic power of the Balkans, within the framework of the current parameters.

On the other hand, the facts that Turkey increased its trade in the Balkans three times to reach 1 billion Euro in parallel to its economic growth and that the Turkish companies in the region had an investment of 4.4 billion Euro are important developments compared to the previous periods (Ekinci 2014: 113). This economic rise of Turkey enables it to follow an effective public-cultural diplomacy in the region. Following a soft power policy is only possible by a strong and growing economy (Schneider 2005:163). Turkey reflects its economic growth since 2002 to its public-cultural diplomacy activities in the Balkans. In this sense, Turkey opened total 13 Yunus Emre Institute Turkish Cultural Centers in the Balkans in seven years from 2009 to 2015 and included in its plans to open 3 more in 2016. And 3 Yunus Emre Turkish Culture Centers in were opened in Bosnia-Herzegovina in Sarajevo, Fojnica and Mostar. 3 culture center branches were opened in Kosovo in Pristine, Prizren and Peje. Two centers were opened in Albania in Tiran (the second center in the Balkans after Bosnia)

and in Shkodër. Culture centers were opened in Skopje, Macedonia, in Podgaritsa, Montenegro, in Belgrade, Serbia, in Bucharest and Constanța, Romania. There are plans to open one culture center each in Zagreb, Croatia, in Moldova and in Sofia, Bulgaria until 2017 (Yunus Emre Enstitüsü 2014 Faaliyet Raporu: 12).

Besides, there are Turkish courses supervised by the Turkish teachers sent from Turkey in the universities of the countries of the region in almost everywhere in the Balkans within the scope of the Turcology project. Turkey also increasing its influence by establishing universities by not being content with the culture centers and Turkish courses in universities. The International University of Sarajevo (IUS) was established in Bosnia completely by the Turkish state in 2004. Turgut Özal Foundation established the Epoka University in Albania in 2008. On the other hand, Turkey is also setting up the chairs of Turcology, Turkish Language and Literature in the Balkan universities. In 2005, department of Turkish Language and Literature was set up in the Zenica University, Turkish Language department in the Mostar Cemal Biyediç University, Turcology chair in Zagreb, Croatia, Turkish Language departments in Kosovo Pristine University, in Azi Kiril Metodiy University in Macedonia, in İştup Gotse Delçev University, in Kalkandelen University, Turcology department in Romania Bucharest University, Turkish Language department in Serbia Novi Sad University, in Belgrade University, in Bulgaria Plovdiv Paisiy Hilendarski University and in Shumen Episkop Konstantin University. This is a kind of Turkish educational diplomacy attack in the Balkans. Germany, Turkey's rival in the Balkans, was uncomfortable with this policy of Turkey in the Balkans as this policy was successful with the inclusion of Turkish language as an elective course in the schools of the Balkan countries (<http://www.dirilispostasi.com/bosna-modeli-ile-balkanlarda-egitim-acilimi/>). The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina had three cantons with Turkish being elective foreign language in the primary and secondary education. The cantons of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Federation, i.e. Hersek-Neretva, Bosnia-Podrinje and Zenitsa-Doboy took a decision to teach Turkish as the second elective foreign language between grades 6 to 13 in the primary and secondary education in the academic year of 2012-2013. Hence, 6 thousand students in Bosnia-Herzegovina started to learn Turkish as an elective foreign language from Turkish teachers as of the academic year of 2012-2013 (Ekşi 2014:209).

On the other hand, the Yunus Emre Institute carries out huge budget cultural diplomacy programs including the Re-building the Cultural Heritage in the Balkans, Rejuvenation of the Traditional Turkish Hand Crafts in the Balkans, 100 Turkey Libraries, History On-site and Kosovo Scripts ("Yunus Emre Institute Projects"). Various activities and events are organized to strengthen the historical and cultural ties of Turkey with the Balkan countries including the Balkan and Anatolian Songs, Ottoman Heritage in the Balkans, Ottoman Traces, Sufism in the Balkans, and Turkish Language in the Balkans ("Yunus Emre Institute's activities in the Balkans"). Therefore, it

is possible, as mentioned earlier, to see all dimensions of the public diplomacy in the region although the focus of the Turkey's Balkan Policy consists of the Yunus Emre Institute and cultural diplomacy.

4. Prime Ministry Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA)

Prime Ministry Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) was established in 1992 and restructured in 2011 within the framework of public diplomacy. During 1990s, it generally dealt with the construction and restoration of schools and hospitals damaged by war. In 2000s, it started to operate on project basis involving soft power oriented development aids. With the effect of the Ottoman-Islam references of the AK Party elites, its activities of restoration of the Ottoman heritage and Islamic structures and construction of mosques increased in 2000s. In this period, it can be said that the activities of TİKA mainly involving the restoration of the Ottoman Heritage Islamic works increased including the interior restoration of the Parruce Mosque in Albania, restoration of five mosques in the country like the Nazire mosque, restoration of the Mustafa Pasha Mosque and İshak Çelebi Mosque in Macedonia (TİKA's projects and activities in the Balkans and Eastern Europe)"", restoration of the Sancakbeyi and Hünkar mosques in Bosnia and restoration of the Prizren Emin Pasha Mosque (Balkan Günlüğü: "Prizren Emin Paşa Camii TİKA'ya emanet") in Kosovo (TRTTÜRK: "TİKA Osmanlı Mirasına Sahip Çıkıyor").

TİKA, the first soft power institution of Turkey, carries out various projects in the Balkans on a broad spectrum in addition to the restoration activities including culture-art, education, health and technical structure and manufacture. Only in 2013, TİKA realized 400 projects in the Balkans (TİKA 2013 Faaliyet Raporu: 11). In Albania for instance, TİKA carries out various activities and projects including student dormitory, hospital, administrative and civilian infrastructure, cyber security, law, equipping the disabled children development center, women shelter house project, elderly care center, library digitalization center, agriculture and forestry, tourism and mosque restorations (TİKA 2013 Faaliyet Raporu: 26-30). The activities in Bosnia includes university refurbishment, supplying technical equipment to the Şarkiyat University, establishment of the Balkan Research Centre, school refurbishment, Madrasa construction, sport hall refurbishment, setting up a distance education system, construction of health centers and hospital, construction of culture and education complex and other social infrastructure services (TİKA 2013 Faaliyet Raporu: 33-39). In Kosovo, various activities were completed including the restoration and refurbishment of the Prizren University, computer room and laboratories in schools, law and education programs, construction and restoration of 4 mosques (TİKA 2013 Faaliyet Raporu: 49-53). In Macedonia, activities include scholarship support to 620 students, trip programs for students, school building construction and refurbishment, technical support to Tetova and Kirli Metodi Universities, res-

toration, refurbishment and construction of madrasahs and mosques, health, social infrastructure, agriculture and transportation and similar public services to be done by the state and municipality (TİKA 2013 Faaliyet Raporu: 55-61). Accordingly, TİKA provides great contribution on behalf of Turkey to various sectors to ensure integration with the Balkans. In this sense, it can be argued that no country in the region can compete with the activities of TİKA. It can also be suggested that there is not any other country in the Balkans with such an ambitious policy like Turkey. When the activities of the EU in the integration process with the Balkan countries are studied comparatively, the activity reports clearly show that TİKA provided the Balkans with unprecedented services.

The main great contribution of TİKA to the Balkan countries is the development aids. Particularly, during the AK Party government, the development aids of TİKA in the Balkans increased more than 7 times. The development aids increased from USD 8 million in 2002 to USD 70 million in 2012. The development aids of TİKA always continued to increase and reached as of 2013 to USD 85,47 million including USD 22,28 million to Bosnia, USD 15,26 million to Kosovo, USD 13,32 million to Montenegro, USD 13,19 to Macedonia, USD 9,24 million to Albania, USD 6,12 million to Moldova, USD 6,06 million to Serbia (TİKA 2013 Kalkınma Yardımları Raporu:11 and 91). Accordingly, the importance given to Bosnia by Turkey is clearly shown by the fact that it is the country with the biggest aid by TİKA in the Balkans and the 6th country in the world among 170 countries with 58 offices in 5 continents (TİKA 2013 Kalkınma Yardımları Raporu:20). TİKA carries out restoration of churches and monasteries as well without making any discrimination (Muhasilović 2016). On the other hand, although the mosque activities of TİKA are highlighted, the mosque restoration is the fourth priority of the institution. In addition, the activities of TİKA are usually done upon demands. Therefore, Turkey follows an inclusive policy in the Balkans.

5. TRT and Anatolian Agency

Together with the development of the communication technologies, the period of information wars started among the states in the global politics (Vivienne 2007:9). States started to follow policies to persuade and influence international public by providing their own policies with legitimacy and support. Therefore, states adopt the strategy of using their own mass media as an instrument of foreign policy and apply the TV diplomacy, a type of public diplomacy. TV, news agencies, radio, newspaper, films and TV series, which are the most critical instruments of public diplomacy, have been turned into an instrument where countries tell their stories to attract international community. Mass media were started to be used for public diplomacy purposes for the first time in Turkey during the AK Party rule. The Balkans is the focus point of the informational public diplomacy strategy of Turkey. A special importance was assigned to the Balkans and the

Anatolian Agency chose Sarajevo as a center ("Bosnia and Herzegovina Anadolu Agency"). In 2012, the Anatolian Agency started publications in Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian languages ("AA: "BHS" 3 yaşında"). In addition, the Anatolian Agency opened branches in Belgrade, Pristine and Sofia becoming a Turkey brand in the Balkans and a face of Turkey. Furthermore, the Anatolian Agency became the leading the news source in the Balkans in a very short time. This way, Turkey successfully implements its strategy of presenting news with the Turkey's point of view to the communities in the Balkans.

States turned towards the strategy of presenting the news from their own perspectives following the increasing importance of the information wars in global politics. The language and discourse used in the mass media build reality and image in order to the shape global politics over languages and ideas (Xie and Oliver 2015:66). Aware of this fact, AK Party rulers started the works to transform TRT, the biggest news channel in Turkey, into an international tool of public diplomacy in the name of TRTWORLD. In addition, the TRT AVAZ channel was turned in 2009 to a mass communication instrument to address to geography with a population of around 250 million in 27 countries from the Balkans to Central Asia, from the Middle East to Caucasia ("TRT AVAZ Programs"). In 2010, the TRT TURK channel adopted a strategy to cover the Balkan geography in every aspect and to build a Turkey-centered Balkan geography to the viewers. This way, Turkey generates daily relation with the Balkan communities continuously for 7/24 through these mass media. Turkey intends to develop relations by setting social bridges with the Balkan countries through TV channel, TV series, films and news agencies. It needs to be emphasized that the demands from the Balkans are decisive in the determination of this Balkan policy for Turkey. Just like the fact that the Yunus Emre Institute Turkish Culture Centers were opened on the basis of demands by the Balkan countries (Milliyet: "Kosovalılardan "TRT Balkan kurulsun, merkezi bursa olsun platformu"na destek"), TRT decided to increase Balkan programs following the intense demands to set up TRT Balkan TV. Therefore, programs like TRT Balkan Voice, Balkans and Migration Documentaries, Balkan Atlas and Balkan Stories. Finally, the Turkish TV Series, particularly "*Muhteşem Yüzyıl*" (The Magnificent Century) about the period of Suleiman the Lawmaker, which is the golden and peak age of the Ottoman Empire, became a popular TV show of the Balkans (Jovanovic and Tokyay: 2012). The coordination of public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, diaspora diplomacy, foreign aid diplomacy and TV diplomacy of Turkey is carried out by the Prime Ministry Public Diplomacy Coordination Office.

Conclusion

In addition these soft power institutions, Public Diplomacy Coordination Office (KDK) carries out various activities towards the Balkans. Among these, Youth programs are remarkable. KDK organizes trips to Turkey for

the students from the Balkan countries by covering all expenses through the Youth Bridge program between Turkey and the Balkan Countries (KDK: “Balkanlar Türkiye Gençlik Köprüsü” programı, 5 ülkeden 37 gencin katılımıyla düzenlendi”). This way, it is intended to provide the youth of the Balkans with sufficient knowledge about Turkey and with chance to establish communication and interaction with the Turkish society. As a result, this would develop common socio-cultural relations between Turkey and the Balkan countries and consequently to build a common agenda between communities.

Within this framework, Turkey’s effectiveness in the Balkans in the field of education diplomacy in 2000s. Likewise, the number of university and education institutions set up in the countries of the region and the amount of scholarships granted to the students of these countries increased. Therefore, Turkey followed a policy of increasing cultural and social effectiveness in the Balkans. Even at this point, Turkey started a rivalry with EU. However, as the majority of the countries of the region give priority to the EU membership due to economic concerns and to NATO membership due to security concerns, their relations with Turkey remained secondary.

Nevertheless, the fact that Turkey’s Balkan strategy is culture based does not mean that Turkey ignores the political and economic aspects of the relations with the Balkan countries. Likewise, as mentioned earlier, Turkey proved that it has the instruments and possibilities to set up a triple mechanism by promptly intervening a political blockage in Bosnia. In addition, the trade of Turkey with the Balkan countries increased 7 times from USD 2 billion in early 2000s to USD 21 billion in 2014 (Bugün: “Türkiye’nin 12 Balkan ülkesiyle ticaret hacmi 21 milyar dolar”). However, it needs to be emphasized that current economic relations of Turkey are behind its rivals the EU and Germany with regard to the goals of Turkey and the foreign trade of the Balkan countries. In addition, the Turkey-Balkan relations are not limited to the public diplomacy institutions of the state and one needs to consider the activities and programs of NGOs, business world and municipalities towards the Balkans. Likewise, these non-governmental actors have indispensable contributions to the development of the relations between Turkey and the Balkan countries and to the production of soft power. The subject of this present study is determined on the level of public diplomacy institutions of Turkey, therefore the roles of non-governmental actors is the subject of another research.

To sum up, this study examines Turkey’s relations with the Balkans within the framework of its strategy to increase its social and cultural effectiveness. Accordingly, it is argued in this study that Turkey’s Balkan Policy during the AK Party governments was formulated “*culture based, soft power based and public diplomacy centered*”. Institutions like Yunus Emre Institute Turkish Cultural centers, TİKA, Presidency For Turks Abroad and Related Communities work as the instruments generating the soft power of Turkey

in the region. Thus, it is understood that the method to develop and deepen the state to society and even community to community relations beyond the state to state relations is adopted as a foreign policy strategy. Likewise, the historical and cultural ties in the Balkans create a bond of soul. Keeping this bond of soul constantly alive through public and cultural diplomacy is the most important parameter to influence the success of the policies in the region. Therefore, Turkey's Balkan Policy has been diversified with respect to foreign policy instruments, organizations and mechanisms differently from the previous periods. In this context, Turkey followed a unique foreign policy implementing new method and instruments on the cultural and social level in the Balkans on the basis of cultural diplomacy during 2000s. In conclusion of the study, it is argued that the fact that Turkey follows an economic integration policy with the Balkans is also sine quo non in addition and in parallel to the cultural/public diplomacy.

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