

Public Diplomacy Activities of TÜSİAD and MÜSİAD During the AK Party Era

TÜSİAD ve MÜSİAD'ın AK Parti Dönemi Kamu Diplomasisi Faaliyetleri

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Abstract

The evaluation of the role of businessmen associations in Turkey, and the extent to which these organizations have been involved in Turkish foreign policy, depends particularly on how they perceive different norms in line with their identities, and how they try to disperse these norms in society. Although associations of businessmen have diverse interests, goals, and stances, and therefore create a heterogeneous structure in Turkey, they are now being encompassed in public diplomacy plans and activities more and more. Among these organizations, the Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD) and the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association (MÜSİAD) as two associations of businessmen with different political ideologies and cultural backgrounds have played an important role in Turkey's political, economic and cultural relations with the European countries and the USA. In this paper, the activities run by these organizations and their roles in Turkish public diplomacy in Europe and the US during the AK Party era will be studied. The organizations' action plans, and efforts to improve Turkey's image in these regions after the failed July 15 coup attempt will also be analyzed.

Key Words: Public Diplomacy, TÜSİAD, MÜSİAD, 15 July Failed Coup Attempt, AK Party

Öz

Türkiye'deki iş adamı kuruluşlarının Türk dış politikasında ne derece yer aldığına değerlendirilmesi, özellikle kimlikleriyle bağlantılı olarak normları nasıl kabul ettiği ve bu normları toplumda nasıl yaydıklarıyla ilgilidir. Türkiye'deki çok kültürlü yapı içerisinde farklı çıkar, amaç ve duruşlara sahip olan işdünyasını temsil eden kuruluşlar, kamu diplomasisi alanındaki faaliyetlerin içine daha fazla dahil olmaya başlamışlardır. Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği (TÜSİAD) ve Müstakil İşadamları Derneği (MÜSİAD) farklı siyasi ideoloji ve kimlikteki işadamı kuruluşları olarak Türkiye'nin ABD'de ve Avrupa'daki siyasi, ekonomik ve kültürel ilişkilerinde önemli bir yere sahiptir. Bu çalışmada bu kuruluşların, Avrupa ülkelerinde ve ABD'deki kamu diplomasisi alanı içine giren faaliyetleri ve 15 Temmuz darbe girişimi sonrasındaki Türkiye'nin diğer ülkelerdeki imajının ve algısının iyileştirilmesi çabaları ve kapsamdaki faaliyetleri analiz edilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kamu Diplomasisi, TÜSİAD, MÜSİAD, 15 Temmuz Darbe Girişimi, AK Parti

Introduction

Since the 1980s, the visibility of civil society organizations in Turkey has intensified as a result of increasing globalization and neoliberalization. Over this same period of time, Turkey began to open its economy to international markets. For instance, decisions made by the Turkish government on 24 January

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1980 resulted in the opening of the Turkish economy by adopting new export-led growth policies. The new policies reshaped the labor-capital relations to the benefit of capital, as was occurring in many parts the world. Moreover, export-incentive policies and positive initiatives toward membership in the European Community (EC) contributed to the development of the private sector in Turkey. These developments, along with the neoliberal policies and implementations by the ANAP government, resulted in closer relations between the business world and the government. Especially after becoming a candidate country for membership in 1999, Turkey has enhanced its efforts to coincide with EU standards regarding democracy, human rights, and civil society. These efforts to fulfill the requirements of the conditionality affected non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to a great extent as the requirements made particularly of civil society organizations by the EU increased. Correspondingly, after the 1990s NGOs started to become involved more in the democratization process in order to reinforce and empower their social and economical competences. They also began to search various ways to influence foreign policy. The AK Party has used various institutions, instruments and policies of public diplomacy in Turkish foreign policy.¹ The business organizations can be seen as one of these institutions that involved in the public diplomacy activities of the AK Party governments.

The evaluation of the role of businessmen associations in Turkey, and the extent to which these organizations have been involved in Turkish foreign policy, depends particularly on how they perceive different norms in line with their identities, and how they try to disperse these norms in society². NGOs representing the private sector are one of the most influential among these actors, as they are good at providing information and creating new networks, which validates them as complementary actors in the government's foreign policy efforts. In this sense, "economy and trade have turned out to be the practical hand of Turkish foreign policy"³.

This study is mainly on the influence of NGOs representing the private sector on the public diplomacy in Turkey. These kinds of NGOs mostly act in line with the values and identities which they adopt at national and international areas and NGOs and private sector are worth to elaborate in terms of cultivating of the influence in other countries, influencing public opinion positively, and effecting their perceptions, activities, and decisions in support

- 1 Muharrem Ekşi, *The Rise and the Fall of Soft Power in Turkish Foreign Policy During the JDP*, Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken 2016, p. 23-42.
- 2 Derya Büyüktanır, "Conservative and Islamically-oriented Businessmen Associations In Turkey As Norm Diffuser Actors: The Case of MUSIAD", *International Academy of Business Review (IABR)*, (ISSN:2332-8388), Vol:1, No:1 (Winter 2015). p. 31.
- 3 Ziya Öniş, "Multiple Faces of the "New" Turkish Foreign Policy: Underlying Dynamics and a Critique", *Insight Turkey*, XIII/1, 2011, p. 56.

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of policy interests in transnational collaboration. The issue that I would like to bring to the forefront of this analysis is that although associations of businessmen have diverse interests, goals, and stances, and therefore create a heterogeneous structure in Turkey, they are now being encompassed in public diplomacy plans more and more as the patterns in Turkish foreign policy continue to change. In this paper, two associations of businessmen with different political tendencies and cultural backgrounds, and their roles in Turkish foreign policy during the AK Party era will be studied. While the Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD) represents powerful business interests with a secular worldview, and urges the government to adopt a more traditional Western orientation--including membership in the EU, the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association (MÜSİAD), a conservative/Islamist organization ideologically close to the AK Party government, as long been advocating closer ties with Muslim countries, although it has switched its position in favor of EU membership since the end of 1990s. The organizations' action plans and attempts to improve Turkey's image in these countries after the failed July 15 coup attempt will also be analyzed.

1. Soft Power, New Public Diplomacy and Non-Governmental Organizations

Joseph Nye first introduced the notion "soft power" in 1990⁴, putting forward that there were alternative power structures in international relations other than economic and military powers.⁵ According to Nye, soft power is "the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment,"⁶ and it is a kind of attraction that a nation state uses to maintain or create relations with other states and various communities. Persuasion and cogency are fundamental points here, and "the skill of giving a shape to others' preferences" stands out as an important factor.⁷ Persuasion is always at the foreground in the power approach, and it allows that legitimacy is provided in an easier manner in this way.⁸ Soft power takes form in line with the culture, political structure, values, and foreign policy of every country⁹ and state, and "establishes justifying foreign policies and programs"¹⁰ under the name of public diplomacy.

4 Joseph S. Nye, "The misleading meyhaphor of decline", *The Atlantic Monthly*, 1990.

5 Joseph S. Nye, *Power in a Global Information Age*, Routledge, London and New York, 2004, p. 1-10; 68-80.

6 Joseph S. Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, 2008 (March): 94-108, p.94.

7 Nancy Snow and Philip M. Taylor, *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, Routledge, New York, 2009, p. 3.

8 İbrahim Kalın, "Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Turkey", *Perceptions*, XVI:3, Autumn 2011, p. 8.

9 *ibid.*, p. 5, 20.

10 Craig Hayden, *The Rhetoric of Soft Power- Public Diplomacy in Global Contexts*, Lexington Books, Lanham, Boulder, New York 2012, p.6

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Although public diplomacy and soft power are different concepts, they are nevertheless linked to each other. Public diplomacy, a phrase first used by Edmund Gullion, Dean of Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University in 1965, has become one of the necessary instruments of soft power for government diplomats¹¹, and can be seen as “practical implications of soft power”¹². According to Ekşi, “public diplomacy is the functioning mechanism of soft power and transforms it from potential to practical power” and it is “the method of converting soft power to policy as an umbrella concept”.¹³ If a country wishes to persuade other countries, it should do so by means of public diplomacy, thus increasing the capacity of soft power.

Public diplomacy can be defined as “the communication of an international actor’s policies to citizens of foreign countries”¹⁴, and aims to persuade people in other countries without using force. Information and relation building are the two important concepts¹⁵ in public diplomacy, which is perceived as a communication process where national goals, culture, and ideals are conveyed to communities in other countries. This way of creating a relationship can be seen as “shaping the pictures in the minds of individuals,” as Lipmann put it. ¹⁶ These communities include civil society representatives; NGOs; multinationals; journalists and media institutions; specialists across different sectors of industry, politics, and culture; and members of the general public. They are influenced by foreign ministers, NGOs, and civil society organizations through various communication methods such as social media, conferences and events, projects, and exchange programs.¹⁷ Among these actors, science diplomats have also started to take active roles to create bridges between various states and under the term “Science Diplomacy” they have an effort to create collaborative actions among different nations to tackle and solve problems and conflicts.

In the early 21st century, “old” public diplomacy, which relied upon a one-way flow of information and limited interaction, and focused on short-term objectives, has changed¹⁸, and a new public diplomacy concept has emerged.¹⁹

- 11 Muharrem Ekşi, *The Rise and the Fall of Soft Power in Turkish Foreign Policy During the JDP*, Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken 2016. p.16.
- 12 Craig Hayden, *The Rhetoric of Soft Power- Public Diplomacy in Global Contexts*, Lexington Books, Lanham, Boulder, New York, 2012, p.9.
- 13 Muharrem Ekşi, *The Rise and the Fall of Soft Power in Turkish Foreign Policy During the JDP*, Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken 2016, p. 21.
- 14 James Pamment, *New Public Diplomacy in the 21st Century*, Routledge, 2013, p. 1.
- 15 R. S. Zaharna, “ Mapping Out a Spectrum of Public Diplomacy: : Informational and Relational Frameworks, Edited by Philip M. Taylor, Nancy Snow, *Routledge Handbook ad Public Diplomacy*, 2008, p. 86-87.
- 16 Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, Free Press Paperbacks, New York 1997, p. 18.
- 17 James Pamment, *New Public Diplomacy in the 21st Century*, Routledge, 2013, p. 1.
- 18 Pamment, 2013, p: 3
- 19 Jan Melissen(ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, Basingstoke, UK, 2005.

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As boundaries are blurred in our highly globalized world, the ways of using information and communication have become one of the most influential tools that states use in their relations with other communities²⁰. As the role of cultures and ideologies have become more visible in international politics, and more non-state actors have emerged in the global arena, states have started to take into consideration the importance of new public diplomacy in their foreign relations. NGOs, for instance, can influence and motivate target groups to take a particular course of action through the use of new instruments and communication techniques more effectively than government institutions and officials. Especially after the 9/11 terrorists attacks in the US, soft power and its essential role have been widely accepted as a necessary component in foreign policy.²¹ In addition, the need for new thinking and interdisciplinary analyses in public diplomacy are accepted to a large extent by most of the actors in foreign policy²². As a result of these changes, today's public diplomacy has become different than that of the 20th century's "old public diplomacy," and governments have started to find new ways of communicating in foreign relations. Public diplomacy is no longer viewed as just a state-based instrument used by mostly foreign ministers and government agencies, but more as a tool to use to influence other states and communities, and build and manage relationships not only by states, but also by various non-state actors.²³

This new public diplomacy, with "diagonal, collaborative and inclusive"²⁴ characteristics, has paved the way for an inclusion of various actors involved in governments' foreign relations with other actors. Some theorists consider that the general aim of the new public diplomacy is to find ways to adapt old public diplomacy to our changing environment. Melissen, who was the first to edit a volume on new public diplomacy, provided three main aspects of the concept²⁵:

1. New actors, such as intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and the private sector have been more involved in public policy activities in the multi-actor international environment.
2. Public diplomacy is increasingly "interconnected" with the realities of global relationships, and domestic and international communication with the public has developed increasingly complex tasks for foreign ministries.

20 Muharrem Ekşi, *Kamu Diplomasisi ve AK Parti Dönemi Türk Dış Politikası*, Siyasal, Ankara, 2014, pp. 45-51.

21 Joseph Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, 2008 (March), p. 94-108.

22 Bruce Gregory. "Public Diplomacy: Sunrise of an Academic Field." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616.1 (2008): 274-290.

23 Bruce Gregory. "Public Diplomacy: Sunrise of an Academic Field." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* DCXV/1, 2008, p.353.

24 James Pamment, *New Public Diplomacy in the 21st Century*, Routledge, London, New York 2013, p. 3

25 Melissen, Jan, (ed.) 2005, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave Macmillian, p. 12-14.

3. Two-way information flow focusing on dialogue and engagement is more important than one-way flow.

NGOs have emerged as more active partners for governments in the field of new public diplomacy ²⁶, and have become front line agents who can strengthen traditional communication. In other words, international relations have ceased to be a relationship carried out only by “states” in this process; in parallel, the effects of several actors, including NGOs, have gradually increased their decision-making influence, thus accelerating the process of forming new notions of diplomacy in political life. Governments nowadays regard them as complementary actors in addition to the classical methods used in diplomacy in order to push their policies through, as these organizations also have more flexible structures in terms of information and creativity to supply information in an easier way. Not only the highly recognizable international NGOs, such as Greenpeace and Amnesty International, have proven that they play increasingly active roles in influencing foreign politics, but also other relatively smaller local and national NGOs have turned out to be successful players in mobilizing international public opinion.

Non-governmental organizations representing the private sector are the most influential ones among these actors. These organizations act in line with the values and identity which they adopt in national and international arenas. Additionally, NGOs directly convey the developments, actual position or projected activities in their activity field to other states, international organizations, and societies. In some cases, some NGOs are labeled more reliable than governments, and some individuals and organizations regard them as important communication channels, as they sometimes have better contacts and networks with individuals and organizations than governments. For these reasons, the creation of networks among NGOs and the establishment of new partnerships will create more effective elbowroom supporting public diplomacy in this way.

2. Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD)

TÜSİAD, established by 12 leading Turkish businessmen in 1971, defines itself as liberal, democratic, and progressive non-governmental organization. Representing powerful business interests with a secular worldview, TÜSİAD has shaped its identity by focusing on more elitist, secular, and Western values. While the organization focused mainly on economic and political issues during 1970s, it did not want to limit itself to merely economic issues, and started to express its ideas on domestic and international issues at the end of 1980s, especially within the scope of EU relations. As a result, the organization

26 Jan Melissen, “Wielding soft Power: The New Public Diplomacy”, *Clingendael Diplomacy Papers*, Clingendael, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, No: 2, May 2005.

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turned from an ordinary interest group into an effective pressure group after the 1990s.

Different from most other associations of businessmen, TÜSİAD follows a selective membership policy by asking for references from its members and requiring a high membership contribution fee. Operating mainly in big cities and the Marmara region, TÜSİAD members provide important contributions to the Turkish economy. According to 2017 data, member businessmen, representing 4,000 companies, contribute to the Turkish economy approximately 50% in industrial production and 80% in foreign trade volume, except for energy. In addition, 50% of registered employment other than public is employed in members companies in Turkey. Moreover, TÜSİAD members provide tax income, which is the most important element of public revenues and especially significant part of corporate tax²⁷

2. 1. TÜSİAD-AK Party relations

TÜSİAD congratulated the AK Party, which formed a single-party government, after its victory in the elections of November 2002 in Turkey, which had been previously ruled for many years by coalition governments. While the association criticized the AK Party government from time to time in its first years, it supported the government primarily because the AK Party advocated EU membership and rapidly started to embrace new reforms on economy and law. TÜSİAD considered the reforms of the new government as important steps toward economic progress and stability in the country²⁸, and enhanced its lobbying activities during this period. These lobbying activities transformed into a platform on which the interaction between the AK Party and TÜSİAD was enhanced²⁹. It is also important to note that another reason for TÜSİAD's AK Party support was the result of major business environments having found a political actor to which they could express their requests, especially in various high-level meetings organized by the prime minister, president, and ministers³⁰.

Approximately one year after the start of negotiations in October 5, 2005, Turkey's EU membership process entered into a recession period.³¹ Although the AK Party changed its EU-friendly approach, it continued giving

27 TÜSİAD, About TÜSİAD, 2017, <http://www.tusiad.org/tusiad/tusiad-by-numbers/> [Accessed: 17 June 2017].

28 TÜSİAD, *Türkiye Ekonomisi*, TÜSİAD, İstanbul 2003.

29 Devrim Yavuz, "Testing Large Business's Commitment to Democracy: Business Organizations and the Secular-Muslim Conflict in Turkey", *Government and Opposition*, XLVI/ 1, 2010, p. 84.

30 İlhan Uzgel, "AKP: Neoliberal Dönüşümün Yeni Aktörü" In: Uzgel & Duru (eds.) *AKP Kitabı Bir Dönüşümün Bilançosu*. Phoenix, Ankara, 2009, p. 27-28.

31 Belgin Akçay and Derya Büyüktanır, "Changing Patterns in Turkey-EU Relations: From Association to Full Membership" in Belgin Akçay and Şebnem Akipek (eds.), *Turkey's Integration into the European Union*, Lexington Books, NewYork, Toronto, Boylder, Lanham, Plymouth, 2013, p. 14.

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weight to legal and constitutional operations in areas such as reducing military influence and improving religious freedoms. Therefore, after 2006, when the AK Party's EU reforms slowed down, relations between the government and major TÜSİAD members worsened when the number and severity of mutual criticisms between TÜSİAD and the government increased. TÜSİAD criticized the government mainly about issues directly connected with EU norms, and continued its criticism even it frequently received harsh reactions in return. TÜSİAD members, despite being uncomfortable about such an environment, refrained from reacting. Although it could have responded when the government disagreed with the USA on the Iraq issue³², and at many other points when the government didn't act as the businessmen association wanted, TÜSİAD remained silent in order to avoid more conflict with the government³³. Perhaps the most significant incident that alienated TÜSİAD and Erdoğan from each other occurred during referendum discussions before the Constitutional Amendment in 2010 when Prime Minister Erdoğan, on a TV show, said TÜSİAD should support the referendum, and stated that "those who are neutral will be eliminated"³⁴. TÜSİAD considered the statement "unfortunate," and reacted harshly³⁵. Relations intensified again in 2013 after the Taksim Gezi Park protests against the government's plans to replace Taksim Gezi Park with a shopping mall and a possible residence. As a result of these tensions, the mutual interaction between TÜSİAD and the AK Party at the beginning of the 2000s weakened. Although TÜSİAD, has given a great importance in lobbying activities and supporting the public diplomacy efforts of AK Party governments, the organization did not give up expressing some problems and concerns related to the AK Party policies and implementations. For instance, after the 15 July failed coup attempt, TÜSİAD started global image campaigns in various countries to recover Turkey's image in abroad but at the same time, it also has mentioned its concerns about some points such as the death penalty, long state of emergency conditions, and some others related to rule of law and democracy in Turkey³⁶.

2.2. The foreign policy approach of TÜSİAD

TÜSİAD tries to create networks with countries from various regions of the world, making no discriminations, such as West-East or Muslim-non-Muslim,

32 Baskın Oran , *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1919–2006 Facts and Analyses with Documents. (Utah Series in Turkish and Islamic Study)*, The University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City 2011, p. 920.

33 Erdal Sağlam, "Başbakan, TÜSİAD'a ABD'yi şikayet etmiş" *Hürriyet*. 18th July 2005.

34 Erdal Sağlam, "İş aleml, sivil toplum bertaraf edilirse" *Hürriyet*. 19th July 2010.

35 *Hürriyet*. (2010) Erdoğan'dan TÜSİAD'a Sert Cevap. August 18 2010.

36 *Hürriyet Daily News*, Prominent business group TÜSİAD wants Turkey's state of emergency to end, (10 December 2016), [Online] Available from: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/prominent-business-group-tusiad-wants-turkeys-state-of-emergency-to-end-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=106773&NewsCatID=345>, [Accessed: 12 June 2017].

in its external relations. The affiliation of the association to some international businessmen organizations and unions reveals the multi-directional external policy of the association. TÜSİAD is a member of the Tunis-based UMCE (Union of Mediterranean Confederation of Entrepreneurs), which brings together the business world in Mediterranean countries; Istanbul-based UBCCE (Union of Black Sea and Caspian Confederation of Enterprises and Business World), which brings together the business world in the Black Sea and Caspian countries; and Brussels-based BUSINESSEUROPE, which is composed of business world organizations in EU countries. TÜSİAD is a unique for being a concurrent member in all three of these organizations³⁷. Still, European states occupy a more privileged place than others in TÜSİAD members' external trade activities.

TÜSİAD has enacted a great number of institutional amendments to execute international activities more efficiently. It established the EU Research Group in 1987 to coordinate activities about the EC and provide cooperation with various European institutions³⁸. Afterwards, the Harmonization Committee for the EU was activated in 2000. One year later TÜSİAD International was established to act in a more planned and programmed manner in "Business Development," aimed at developing institutional relations with counterparts abroad and increasing mutual commercial and investment relations by organizing joint activities. Furthermore, the Foreign Communication Commission was established in 2005 for coordination and execution of activities targeted at affecting foreign public opinion. Finally, the "Bosphorus Institute" was established in France in 2009 with the initiative of TÜSİAD to emphasize the importance of and strengthen Turkey-France relations. In conjunction with these efforts, representative offices in Washington and Brussels, and offices in Berlin, Paris, and Beijing, were founded by the association to make direct contacts with politicians and businessmen in various parts of the world in order to represent both itself and Turkey in the international arena. Activities are executed in various ways in these countries through political contacts, media, academic, and cultural events, as well as through relations with the private sector. All of these were undertaken not only to create new networks for TÜSİAD members, but also to strengthen the relations between Turkey and other countries.

2.2.1. TÜSİAD as an active agent in Turkey-EU relations during the AK Party Government era

TÜSİAD believes that membership in the EC/EU is an important path for Westernization and integration with Western countries.³⁹ From this per-

37 TÜSİAD, *1 Ocak 2014 tarihinde Avrupa Birliği'ne tam üyelik hedefine doğru: güçlü demokrasi, güçlü sosyal yapı, güçlü ekonomi*, TÜSİAD, İstanbul 2007, p.6

38 TÜSİAD, *1971-2005 TÜSİAD'ın AB yolculuğu - sivil toplumun gücü*, TÜSİAD, İstanbul 2005, p.9

39 TÜSİAD, *Türkiye'de Demokratikleşme Perspektifleri ve AB Kopenhag Siyasi Kriterleri - Görüş ve Öncelikler*

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spective, EU membership is important for a more stable economic, political, and social life. The EU has played the most important role in TÜSİAD's agenda during almost every period of the organization's existence.

TÜSİAD enhanced its lobbying activities when the AK Party was enthusiastic about EU membership in its early years in power. These lobbying activities turned into a platform on which the interaction between the AK Party and TÜSİAD was enhanced⁴⁰. During this period, TÜSİAD accelerated its lobbying activities, especially toward Germany, Greece, France, Belgium, and Denmark⁴¹ scheduling public relations campaigns before these summits by organizing meetings with journalists, ministers of state, representatives of think tanks, and businessmen in some European countries. Several meetings were also held with high-ranking officials, including the European commissioners⁴². To impress people in Europe positively regarding Turkey's membership, it placed advertisements in newspapers in European countries in each country's native language⁴³. TÜSİAD also created close links with large corporate business organizations and unions to strengthen relations with European institutions and companies, including "Movement of the Enterprises of France (MEDEF) and the European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT). TÜSİAD'S lobbying efforts inside the EU became more important after 2006 because the government lost interest in the membership process.

Because the situation in Cyprus remains one of the most controversial issues in Turkey's bid for EU membership, and EU membership is of paramount importance to businessmen in Turkey, TÜSİAD places a great importance on its activities there. Initially, the organization considered Cyprus, a key point in resolving conflicts with the EU, a problem to be solved at all costs⁴⁴. Applying the term "national interest" to its statements about Cyprus, TÜSİAD considers resolution of the issue of Cyprus important for welfare and peace of the Cypriot Turks beyond the dimension of Turkey-EU relations⁴⁵. TÜSİAD severely criticized the Cyprus policy of the AK Party government for not being active enough, and recommended not to act passively on this issue while expressing concerns about associating the EU process with Cyprus issue. To enhance the interaction between Turkey and both sides of Cyprus, TÜSİAD, organizes conferences, pays visits to state officials and businessmen organiza-

3- 4, TÜSİAD, İstanbul 2002 (May).

40 Devrim Yavuz, "Testing Large Business's Commitment to Democracy: Business Organizations and the Secular-Muslim Conflict in Turkey", *Government and Opposition*, XLVI/ 1, 2010, p. 84.

41 *Hürriyet*, TÜSİAD, Avrupa'da Başbakan turuna çıkıyor. Sept 15 2002

42 TÜSİAD, *1971-2005 TÜSİAD'ın AB yolculuğu - sivil toplumun gücü*, TÜSİAD, İstanbul 2005, p.19.

43 Eylem Türk, *TÜSİAD Patronlar Kulübü - Ekonomi ve Siyasetin Merkezindeki Bir Derneğin Öyküsü*. Alfa, İstanbul 2009, p. 106

44 TÜSİAD, *KKTC Ekonomisi: Sorunlar Çözüm Önerileri*, TÜSİAD, İstanbul 1998 (July).

45 *Hürriyet*, TÜSİAD: Kıbrıs'ta Çözüm Elzem. 12 February 2002.

tions, and issues reports on the progress of the situation. Moreover, it makes contacts with businessmen both in Northern and Southern Cyprus to ensure efficient interaction with businessmen throughout Cyprus.

TÜSİAD has worried about the Turkey EU relations especially after the mid 2016, as Turkey-EU deal about the Syrian refugees did not work well. Also, tensions between Turkey and the EU rose after the 15 July failed coup attempt because of the AK Party's statements on the death penalty and the disputes between some European countries such as Austria and Germany before the referendum on the constitution. Although TÜSİAD has mentioned its concerns about some issues such as death penalty, long state of emergency conditions, and some other concerns related to rule of law and democracy in Turkey from time to time⁴⁶, the organizations has worked on the public policy activities in the European countries and stressed the importance of western values and the importance of being part of the EU in every platform.

2.2.2. TÜSİAD – US relations

TÜSİAD relegates high importance to the relations with the USA not only for economic, but also political and military reasons. Relations between Turkey and the USA, as a global power, are not regarded as an alternative to the EU, but can be considered as complementary to EU relations. Since TÜSİAD is a business association, it assigns a particular significance to the economic dimension of Turkish-American relations. In line with this, a US working group was set up under TÜSİAD International in 2010 to foster trade and investment relations between the US and Turkey, and to extend relations to a higher level of partnership between the private sectors and relevant government bodies of both countries. To this end, a memorandum of understanding was signed with the US Chamber of Commerce, one of the most influential business organizations in the US that maintains close contacts with the US Ex-Im Bank, Overseas Private Investment Cooperation (OPIC), US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA), and big thinks tanks⁴⁷. These relations gained momentum when the Washington DC representative office was established in 1998. TÜSİAD was the first non-governmental organization that opened a representation in the USA. Through this representative, TÜSİAD maintains contact with Turkish-American organizations in the USA, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the World Affairs Council; organizes joint activities; and attends events

46 Hürriyet Daily News, Prominent business group TÜSİAD wants Turkey's state of emergency to end, 10 December 2016, [Online] Available from: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/prominent-business-group-tusiad-wants-turkeys-state-of-emergency-to-end-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=106773&NewsCatID=345>, [Accessed: 12 June 2017].

47 TÜSİAD, *US Presidential Elections and What They Mean for Turkey and the Region*, TÜSİAD-Brookings Institution: İstanbul 2012, [Online] Available from: <http://tusiad.org/en/reports/item/5899-tusiad-brookings-institute---us-presidential-elections-and-what-they-mean-for-turkey-and-the-region-seminar> [Accessed: 28th July 2017].

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held by these organizations. It also maintains contact with the business world in the USA, and tries to keep relations alive. The office acts independently, and works in cooperation with major think-tanks with important contacts with the U.S. Congress⁴⁸. The Brookings-TÜSİAD cooperation, started in 2007, is also an important relationship through which the association works to create positive impacts regarding Washington's perception of Turkey.

Regarding the Armenian issue, TÜSİAD acts generally in parallel with the AK Party government. The activities and statements of the association are more in cohesion with the policies of the government, and there is a more successful cooperation in terms of public diplomacy. For example, on May 5, 2006, TÜSİAD, along with other organizations, such as TOBB, TİSK, TÜRKONFED, TESK, TÜRK-İŞ, HAK-İŞ, İKV, and TESEV, released statements to the important newspapers in France, including Le Figaro and Le Monde, advocating for the withdrawal of the draft law on "penalization of denial of the Armenian genocide" included in the agenda of the National Assembly of France⁴⁹. In the announcement, opinions were expressed about the proposal of the law on denial of assertions about the Armenian genocide, and it was warned that "history cannot be written with laws"⁵⁰. This businessmen's announcement, which was successful in affecting the French public opinion, is also an example of joint operations between non-governmental organizations. In addition, TÜSİAD held discussions in Washington and New York about the so-called Armenian genocide drafts presented to the US Congress in 2007, presenting its opinions about the genocide draft to the House of Representatives and the Senate⁵¹. Elevating its reactions, TÜSİAD sent a letter to US President Barack Obama, arguing that it would be an unfortunate incident if the Armenian draft is passed by the US Congress in a period in which Turkey and Armenia enjoy such close relations⁵².

3. Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (MÜSİAD)

Comprised of owners of mostly small and medium-sized companies, which increased in number after neoliberal economic policies in Turkey were put into practice in the aftermath of the 1980s, MÜSİAD was founded in 1990. MÜSİAD sees Islam as a basis for cooperation and solidarity on national and international levels, and characterizes itself as "a platform of change-dialogue-cooperation, and coalition"⁵³, where the members can make themselves heard and express their common personal, organizational, sectorial, cultural, and

48 Ornarlı, Barış, [Interview-TÜSİAD Washington Representative]. 11 December 2014.

49 Erdal Sağlam, "Özel sektörün diplomasisi başarılı", *Hürriyet*, 4 February 2007.

50 *Hürriyet*, Fransa'ya ilanla soykırım uyarısı, May 6 2006.

51 *Hürriyet*, TÜSİAD'dan Ermeni tasansına karşı girişim, March 19 2007.

52 *Hürriyet*, TÜSİAD Başkanı Yalçındağ'dan Obama'ya mektup, 25 March 2009.

53 MÜSİAD, *Üye Hizmetleri Rehberi-Üyeler MÜSİAD'dan Nasıl Faydalanır?*, MÜSİAD, İstanbul 2002, p.5

social development needs and concerns. It has acted with the rhetoric from the grassroots by emphasizing conservative, religious, and cultural values.

Religious elements play an important role in defining MÜSİAD's identity, providing voice to values such as "family, social harmony, and national identity"⁵⁴. The slogan "High Morality-High Technology"⁵⁵ is a reflection of the importance accorded to moral values by the association. MÜSİAD emphasizes that morality is not limited to culture, but is also significant in terms of economic development. MÜSİAD has also tried to create a synthesis of business and moral values by combining modern business acumen with traditional Islamic conservative values. The association defines its members as "Homo Islamicus," meaning a person who "earns well and doesn't waste his money," and avoids the use of interest except in obligatory cases and only to keep pace with the inflation rate.⁵⁶ MÜSİAD embraces the Prophet Muhammed as a guide, on one hand, but doesn't ignore free market principles on the other.

MÜSİAD members take a pragmatic position in Turkish politics. MÜSİAD membership increased dramatically between 1990 and 1997. However, in the aftermath of the events of the 28th of February 1997, MÜSİAD's membership dropped from 2900 to 2300⁵⁷. In spite of this, MÜSİAD's economic power increased, and the organization was able to regain its social image once the political climate changed and the AK Party became the ruling party. MÜSİAD membership has more than tripled since the events of 1997, increasing to 8000 by the end of 2013. In 2017 MÜSİAD reached 11.000 members. Active in almost every sector of the country, MÜSİAD members are positioned to produce roughly 20% of the Turkish GNP by the end of 2016. Most of the MÜSİAD members have achieved their considerable growth rates in fields such as construction, textile, media, and food sectors, and are located not only in Anatolia, but throughout Turkey. When we look at the geographic distribution of these firms, we can't say that the association represents the "periphery" in an exact manner.

Representing 60,000 companies, MÜSİAD's Head Office is located in İstanbul, and is organized in 86 branches and contact points that represented almost every part of Turkey by 2017⁵⁸. In an effort to create a profile more closely aligned with the common public, MÜSİAD provides services, especially for the needs of the emerging middle class, and enhances its relations with busi-

54 Erol Yerar, "Önsöz", *21. Yüzyılda Türkiye'nin Hedefleri*, MÜSİAD, İstanbul, November 1994.

55 Ömer Cihad Vardan, *CHAD ve MÜSİAD*, Timaş Yayınları, İstanbul 2012, p. 69.

56 MÜSİAD, *İş Hayatında İslam İnsanı: İslami Duyarlılıkla Yönetilen Firmalarda Örgütsel Davranış Biçimleri*, MÜSİAD, İstanbul 1994.

57 Dilek Yankaya, "28 Şubat, İslami Burjuvazinin İktidarı Yolunda Bir Milat", *Birikim*, No: 278-279, (July 2012), p. 30.

58 MÜSİAD, *MÜSİAD'la tanışın*, 2017, [Online] Available from: <http://www.musiad.org.tr/tr-tr/musiadla-tanisin> [Accessed: 17 June 2017].

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nessmen of the Anatolian origin by organizing forums, fairs, and conferences⁵⁹. An ever-increasing number of overseas trips provides opportunities for members to get to know each other and increase their international presence.

3.1. Ever Increasing Relations with the AK Party Government

Basing its identity on the traditions of Islam, and adopting its ideology in favor of “conservative democracy,”⁶⁰ the AK Party adopts a “multi-faceted” and “proactive” foreign policy, and supports closer economic and social relations with neighboring and Muslim countries, providing incentives to both large and small-sized businessmen. The party explicitly places more emphasis on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), thereby underlining social justice and conveying the impression that it would attach more importance to these issues than other parties⁶¹. As a result of this emphasis the AK Party had begun to place on non-western connections, the businessmen with Islamist leanings began to both acquire more power and realize the burgeoning economic opportunities in Muslim countries. This change in direction has resulted in the Islamic capital having won back its power lost after the events of 1997. The resulting uptrend, which has occurred parallel to the increasing relations with Muslim countries within the framework of the newly adopted foreign policy on the international level, paved the way for the rapid growth of MÜSİAD. The association welcomed the incentives granted to businessmen by the government to enhance economic relations with these countries, and some of the members have started to play active roles in Turkish politics in addition to their economic activities⁶². After the local and presidential elections of 2014, in which the AK Party again succeeded in dominating politically, MÜSİAD is accelerated its activities and further increased its effectiveness with an increasing number of members and support from the government.

3.2. MÜSİAD's foreign policy approach

MÜSİAD attaches profound importance to the countries in Central and Eastern Asia, Africa, and especially to Muslim countries, not only from an economic point of view, but socially and culturally as well.⁶³ This preference has played

59 Karin Vorhoff, “Türkiye’de İşadamı Dernekleri: İşlevsel Dayanışma, Kültürel Farklılık ve Devlet Arasında”, Stefan Yerasimos et al. (der.), *Türkiye’de Sivil Toplum ve Milliyetçilik*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul 2001, p. 336.

60 Yalçın Akdoğan, *AK Parti ve Muhafazakar Demokrasi*, Alfa Yayınları, İstanbul 2004.

61 Fuat Keyman ve Berrin Koyuncu, “AKP, MÜSİAD, Ekonomik Kalkınma ve Modernite”, *Düşünen Siyaset*, No: 19, Lotus Yayınevi, Ankara 2004, p.129.

62 Aydın Uğur ve Haluk Alkan, “Türkiye’de İşadamı-Devlet İlişkileri Perspektifinden MÜSİAD”, *Toplum Bilim*, No: 85, 2000, p.140.

63 Ömer Cihad Vardan, “Başkandan”, *Çerçeve Dergisi*, MÜSİAD, No: 57, Year:20, 2011 (December), p. 4; Natık Akyol, “Niçin Afrika’da Olmayalım?”, *Çerçeve Dergisi*, MÜSİAD, No: 7, Year: 3, 1994(Jan-Feb), p. 6; Sami Güçlü and Cengiz Ceylan, “Değişen uluslararası dengeler karşısında Türkiye ve Türk Cumhuriyetleri arasındaki işbirliğini geliştirmenin önemi”, *Çerçeve Dergisi*,

an important role in shaping the foreign policy approach of the association. Even though the association was well aware of the significant size and strength of the European market, MÜSİAD considered the countries in the Middle East and Central Asia as an alternative to the EU in the 1990s, and designed projects to be realized in these countries. For example, the Cotton Union was projected as a development model as part of a larger project designed to create an economic partnership among Muslim countries based on the development model of the “Silk Union” for the Far East countries⁶⁴. According to MÜSİAD, this idea of a union of Turkic and Muslim countries, which was underlined especially in the first years of MÜSİAD, was convenient for the national and moral structure of Turkey, and could serve as an alternative to Turkey’s EU accession in the future as the Silk Union would extend from the Far East to the Balkans⁶⁵. In the following years, the association gave priority to the relations with Turkic Republics in a similar way⁶⁶, and projected the creation of an Islamic-Turkic bloc, taking the cultural and geographical vicinity into consideration⁶⁷. In these years, the association similarly gave emphasis to organizations supporting the cooperation between Muslim countries, and searched for alternatives to such organizations like IMF or the EU. For example, MÜSİAD supported the cooperation within the D-8 (Developing Eight) during Erbakan’s period, and demanded that Turkey take part actively in this organization⁶⁸. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the second largest organization in the world after the UN, is another organization to which MÜSİAD attaches great importance.

MÜSİAD attaches great importance to international fairs and meetings than most of the businessmen associations⁶⁹. The most important fair organized by MÜSİAD is the International Business Forum (IBF) of Muslim countries. The increasing number of businessmen and companies who participate in fairs shows that the IBF meetings have gained more and more popularity.

No: 13, Year: 4, 1995 (Jan-Apr), p. 44-49; MÜSİAD, *Çerçeve Dergisi*, No: 9, Year: 3, 1994 ((May June), p. 42-43. (“Gözümüzü statükocu batıdan dinamik doğuya çevirmeliyiz” An Interview with the President Erol Yazar upon his Far East Trip).

- 64 Aydın Uğur ve Haluk Alkan, “Türkiye’de İşadamlı-Devlet İlişkileri Perspektifinden MÜSİAD”, *Toplum Bilim*, No: 85, 2000, p.150.
- 65 Karin Vorhoff, “Türkiye’de İşadamlı Dernekleri: İşlevsel Dayanışma, Kültürel Farklılık ve Devlet Arasında”, Stefan Yerasimos et al. (der.), *Türkiye’de Sivil Toplum ve Milliyetçilik*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul 2001, p. 330.
- 66 Sami Güçlü ve Cengiz Ceylan, “Değişen uluslararası dengeler karşısında Türkiye ve Türk Cumhuriyetleri arasındaki işbirliğini geliştirmenin önemi”, *Çerçeve Dergisi*, No: 13, (Ocak-Nisan 1995), p. 44-49.
- 67 Şennur Özdemir, *MÜSİAD Anadolu Sermayesi’nin Dönüşümü ve Türk Modernleşmesinin Derinleşmesi*, Vadi Yayınları, Ankara 2006, p. 101.
- 68 MÜSİAD, D-8 Doğu’nun Yeni Soluğu. *Dergisi*. 20. (Year 5-October), MÜSİAD, İstanbul 1997, p.6.
- 69 Mahmut Özgün, “Medine Pazarı’ndan, Küresel İşbirliğine”, *Çerçeve Dergisi*, MÜSİAD, No: 48, (Ekim 2008), p. 78.

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In addition, over the course of time these fairs have turned into meeting platforms for not only businessmen, but also bureaucrats, politicians, and media. For example, multiple bureaucrats, including 36 ministers from 22 countries, and 3402 foreign businessmen from 71 countries participated in the 14th IBF meeting held in İstanbul in 2012⁷⁰. Aimed at establishing communications and cooperation with Muslim businessmen, these fairs have become highly influential forums for the establishment of good relations in overseas markets.

Such diverse relations have also brought about institutional changes, and MÜSİAD could expand its overseas organization to a large extent. The structure of the department handling foreign relations was changed in 2011, when four departments were established for the purpose of benefitting from the association's connections abroad apart from MMN (MÜSİAD Multi-National). This institutional expansion not only shows the increasing importance MÜSİAD attaches to foreign relations, but also reflects its effort to bring together Turkish businessmen with entrepreneurs abroad. MÜSİAD has maintained 169 contact points, including representative offices, and MÜSİAD overseas associations and representatives in 65 countries, by mid 2017⁷¹.

3.2.1. Changing dynamics of MÜSİAD-activities in the EU

Prior to 2000, MÜSİAD had maintained a strict anti-EU stance, expressing its views explicitly in its discourses by underlying the intercultural, religious, and social differences between the EU and Turkey, while ignoring the economic and social advantages of membership. In its place, the association advocated for a new world perspective with Muslim communities in the forefront, and focused on the strengthening of relations with mostly Muslim countries.

After Turkey's EU membership process entered into a more dynamic period with the Helsinki Summit in 1999, and the reform process in Turkey accelerated, MÜSİAD began to soften its anti-EU discourses in order to avoid being excluded from the developments and the process⁷². Especially regarding economics, MÜSİAD believed that "Turkey was in need of the external anchor coaxial with the EU to maintain the dynamism of change captured after years" in spite of the fact that membership wouldn't be realized for some time, and accepted the effect the EU would have in transforming the country⁷³. Additionally, its desire for legitimacy in society, in other words, the social dimension, played an important role changing the association's perspective.

70 Ömer Cihad Vardan, *CIHAD ve MÜSİAD*, Timaş Yayınları, İstanbul 2012, p.140.

71 MÜSİAD, MÜSİAD Şubeler, 2017, [Online] Available from: <http://www.musiad.org.tr/tr-tr/subeler> [Accessed: 17 June 2017].

72 Berkan Ayhan ve Seher Sarioğlu, "İslami Burjuvazinin Siyasal İktisadı-MÜSİAD Örneği", *Praksis*, No: 27, 2012, p.136.

73 MÜSİAD, *2007 Türkiye Ekonomisi Raporu*, MÜSİAD Araştırma Raporları: 51, MÜSİAD, İstanbul 2007 (June), p.91

As previously indicated, MÜSİAD is of the opinion that EU isn't its only alternative, and the relations established with other countries could provide positive motivation for Turkey in its EU accession process. This emphasis the association places on a multi-faceted foreign policy parallels the active foreign policy understanding of Ahmet Davutoğlu, the former Foreign Minister and prime minister⁷⁴. Similarly, the understanding of the association, that Turkey is a centre country, rather than a country on the periphery, and EU membership of Turkey shouldn't automatically mean that it gives up its position as a centre country, is exactly in harmony with the ideas of Davutoğlu.

The relations of the association with the European countries were limited to business trips to the European countries in its first years, mainly in an effort to provide opportunities for its members to learn work ethic and working conditions, create new networks, and make new contacts. However, by the beginning of 2000s, the change in Turkey, and the transformation within the association itself, paved the way for MÜSİAD to establish more public policy activities.

The networks and relations established through economic objectives in European countries at the beginning of 2000s can be considered public diplomacy activities. Because MÜSİAD took the initiative to engage in activities with various business organizations, think-tanks, fairs, and NGOs in order to close the gap between itself and economic developments in Europe, and began to grant importance to activities promoting the country as a whole during such initiatives. In 2002 MÜSİAD participated in the civil society platform realized under the coordination of the Economic Development Foundation (İKV) and with the participation of 175 organizations. The Association called on 11 prominent NGOs in Europe to agree to a common stance aimed at granting Turkey a fixed date for full membership in the Copenhagen Summit, to be held on the 12th of December, and to encourage Turkey in its efforts for full membership in the EU. In this context, it sent letters to prominent NGOs in Europe demanding they support Turkey in its endeavors to become a full member of the EU⁷⁵. MÜSİAD also became a member of the European Confederation of Associations of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (CEA-PME) in an effort to follow up on the negotiation process in Brussels. Before the summit on the 17th of December, MÜSİAD hosted the General Assembly of CEA-PME, and pleaded its case for the promotion of Turkey⁷⁶. Lobbying activities have continued at a low level in recent years parallel to a slowing down in relations with the EU. Nevertheless, MÜSİAD opened representative offices in Germany and France, two countries with effective voices in the EU accession process of Turkey.

74 Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu*, Küre Yayınları, İstanbul 2005.

75 Hürriyet, MÜSİAD Avrupa'ya mektup gönderdi. December 28 2002.

76 Yeni Şafak, Avrupa KOBİ demeklerinin başkanları İstanbul'a geliyor, December 22 2004.

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3.2.2. Relations with the USA

MÜSİAD's relations with the USA developed gradually, but in an intense way. MÜSİAD expanded institutionally more and more after its foundation by means of overseas trips; establishment of contact points; and development of its relationship with international organizations, NGOs and institutions in the USA. Both business trips and visits with important US organizations have begun to be organized frequently on different and more enhanced levels in recent years. Not only businessmen, but also important political personalities, were visited during these trips. MÜSİAD also hosts representatives of various organizations, such as the IMF and World Bank. Such visits to MÜSİAD show that the organization is now considered an important actor by influential international organizations and businessmen associations.

MÜSİAD USA which is located in Washington DC and was founded in August 2013 has been working very active in terms of public diplomacy in the USA to improve relationships between Turkey and the US in trade, political, sociocultural, and economic. By organizing various activities, such as business trips, education programs, conferences, and seminars, and attending events held by the business organizations, NGOs and governmental bodies, the association aims to contribute to the development of politics, socio-cultural relations, and economics between Turkey and the US. The recent aim of the association is to open new offices or representatives where Turkey hosts most cultural and trade activities in the US. For instance, as of April 2015, MÜSİAD USA opened its New York branch to strengthen its presence in the US, and focused more activities in the US. All of these accelerated activities support Turkey's political, economic, and cultural relations with the US. The next plan of the association was to establish new representatives in Canada and South America⁷⁷ to strengthen the relations not only with the US, but also with the whole continent.

4. Global Image Campaigns and Action Plans by TÜSİAD and MÜSİAD After the Failed July 15 Coup Attempt

MÜSİAD and TÜSİAD prepared a detailed action plan to improve the worsening perception of Turkey abroad as well as to accelerate business activities at home and in the other countries immediately after the failed July 15 coup attempt by the officers linked to the Gülenist Terror Organization (FETÖ). They organized various activities within the scope of their action plan to improve Turkey's image in the other countries. In the first stage, the main aim of these efforts made by these two business organizations was to show that the daily life and working conditions in Turkey were not affected by the coup attempt, and to emphasize that the economic activities went on as usual. This effort can

77 İbrahim Uyar, [Interview- Executive Director of MÜSİAD-USA]. Washington DC, 2 May 2015.

be seen as creating the perception that Turkey is still a safe country for foreign investors. Instead of creating new areas of cooperation, the organizations have focused mainly on providing messages about Turkey's current situation to its counterparts, governments, business circles, and media channels.

TÜSİAD emphasized mainly the Turkish nation's will to defend democracy along with its commitment to the rule of law in its public diplomacy activities. TÜSİAD has intensified its activities mostly in European countries and in the US in line with the "mobilization" declared following the failed July 15 coup attempt. Within this scope, the organization launched a global campaign to steer international public opinion and improve the perception of the country. It placed an advertisement underlining the country's devotion to democracy and the strength of the Turkish economy in a number of the leading papers in the United States, Germany, France, and Britain just after the failed coup attempt⁷⁸. Advertisements were published in English, French, and German in leading newspapers such as the U.K.-based Financial Times, France-based Le Monde, U.S.-based Washington Post, and Germany-based Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung⁷⁹. TÜSİAD also arranged meetings with high level delegations with thinks tanks, government officials, NGOs, and leading opinion leaders in the US and some European cities, such as Berlin, Paris, and Brussels⁸⁰, and attended high level meetings in other countries organized by Turkish ministers and politicians.

Within the scope of its action plan, MÜSİAD also intensified its lobbying attempts to improve Turkey's image in the other countries. On July 18th, the first Monday after the coup attempt, the organization, along with several other leading Turkish business organizations, emphasized the importance of the national will and democratic values in a joint declaration. The representatives of MÜSİAD voiced, "The business world requires peace, trust and stability" and vowed that "the country's strong image would rule out the initial negative impacts in the domestic and international market." They also noted that "it was now time to act with common sense and fuel togetherness."⁸¹ MÜSİAD

78 Hürriyet Daily News, Bosses see Turkey's image abroad as 'weakest link', 18 March 2017 [Online] Available from: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/bosses-see-turkeys-image-abroad-as-weakest-link.aspx?pageID=238&nID=102753&NewsCatID=345> [Accessed: 16 June 2017].

79 Daily Sabah, TÜSİAD launches international campaign criticizing the coup, defending democracy in Turkey, 25 July 2016, [Online] Available from: <https://www.dailysabah.com/economy/2016/07/25/tusiad-launches-international-campaign-criticizing-the-coup-defending-democracy-in-turkey> [Accessed: 16 June 2017].

80 TÜSİAD, TÜSİAD, ABD'de 15 Temmuz ve sonrasını anlatacak, 19 October 2016, [Online] Available from: <http://www.sabah.com.tr/ekonomi/2016/10/19/tusiad-abdde-15-temmuz-ve-sonrasini-anlatacak>, [Accessed: 15 June 2017].

81 Hürriyet Daily News, Top business organizations praise democratic values in joint declaration after coup attempt, 18 July 2016, [Online] Available from: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com>

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opened new branches in other cities in order to reach target groups such as politicians, think-tanks, and NGOs from other countries. They focused not only on American and European countries, but also on regions such as Australia, Japan, Holland, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Pakistan, France, England, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Sudan, and Belgium. It also stressed that they would attend all the programs organized by the Turkish Ministry of Economy⁸². Along with other leading business organizations, MÜSİAD made the first visit to Denmark under the leadership of the Economy Minister Nihat Zeybekci⁸³. Within their plan, the organization's actions additionally included:

* organizing speeches, publishing articles, becoming more visible in the news, and giving television interviews in various countries,

*focusing more on international fairs and explaining the regional and sector potentials of Turkish companies.

*Organizing business to business (B2B) and business to government (B2G) meetings not only in the countries with whom the organization has contact points, but also in various other countries.

The public diplomacy effort made by these business organizations helped the Turkish government contain the negative perceptions in some countries that are more importance to Turkish foreign relations. All these public diplomacy activities can be seen as examples of how business organizations have helped the AK Party government to strengthen the country's image in other countries. We can also assert that although both organizations have organized various activities within the scope of their action plans to improve Turkey's image in the other countries, they have chosen different counterparts, governments, business circles, and media channels in line with their political identities, cultural backgrounds, and norms that they try to disperse in society.

Conclusion

The new foreign policy model espoused by the AK Party government has affected the way business associations perform as foreign policy actors. Some of these associations have gained more self-confidence as a result of being supported by the government and gaining more legitimacy in society. Turkey's EU accession process has also encouraged the active participation of civil society organizations in all parts of social, economic, and political life. TÜSİAD and

com/top-business-organizations-praise-democratic-values-in-joint-declaration-after-coup-attempt.aspx?pageID=238&nID=101771&NewsCatID=345 [Accessed: 10 June 2017].

82 Sabah, MÜSİAD'dan lobi hamlesi, 12 August 2016, [Online] Available from <http://www.sabah.com.tr/ekonomi/2016/08/12/musiaddan-lobi-hamlesi>, 12.08.2016; [Accessed: 20 May 2017].

83 Hürriyet Daily News, Bosses see Turkey's image abroad as 'weakest link', 18 March 2017, [Online] Available from: <http://www.hurriyetcailynews.com/bosses-see-turkeys-image-abroad-as-weakest-link.aspx?pageID=238&nID=102753&NewsCatID=345> [Accessed: 16 June 2017].

MÜSİAD, which have come into the prominence in Turkish political and economic life, each differentiated by their unique political tendencies and cultural backgrounds, have played various roles in Turkish foreign policy and became an active actor in public diplomacy. MÜSİAD's large-scale international trade fairs and high-level bilateral-meetings, with the participation of a number of businessmen (especially from Muslim countries), have noticeably supported the AK Party's foreign policy. MÜSİAD expanded institutionally more and more by means of overseas trips, international fairs, and the establishment of contact points abroad with international organizations and institutions. Even though it grants importance to relations with the European countries, MÜSİAD strives to place relations with Islamic countries and the countries in Central and Eastern Asia and Africa in the forefront. On the other hand, although TÜSİAD has criticized the government about political, economic, and cultural issues, mostly connected with the EU norms, and the mutual interaction between TÜSİAD and the AK Party at the beginning of the 2000s is no longer viable, the association has become an efficient actor in public diplomacy, especially in Turkey's EU accession process and regarding the Armenian issue.

It is clear that the state remains the main policy maker in Turkey, and Turkish foreign policy makers have cooperated with business organizations only to a limited extent. Although the effectiveness of the associations of businessmen has increased in recent years, the role and the effect of these associations in public diplomacy has increased. Their influences have been constructive and guiding only on issues where they have expertise.

Within the new public diplomacy concept, these both business organizations have started to play more active roles in Turkey's public diplomacy activities during the AK Party governments. In this regard, July 15 coup attempt can be seen as a good case to illustrate how business organizations, as public policy actors, can play influential roles in improving Turkey's image in the other countries.

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