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## **Turkey's Soft Power and Public Diplomacy: The Case of Serbia Between 2002-2019**

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### **Abstract**

This article explores the concept of soft power and how it's been applied by public diplomacy of Turkey between 2002-2019. In this article, the role of Turkish public diplomacy in developing Serbian-Turkish relations is studied. As a case study, Turkish public diplomacy tools in Serbia as "state to public" and "public to public" and how they are exercised in order to wield soft power are analyzed. Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), Yunus Emre Institute (YEE) as "state to public" actors, and Turkish soap operas, tourism, trade as "public to public" actors are presented in this study.


**Keywords:** Public Diplomacy, Soft Power, Turkish Foreign Policy, Serbia

## **Türkiye'nin Yumuşak Gücü ve Kamu Diplomasisi: 2002-2019 arası Sırbistan Örneği**

### **Öz**

Bu çalışma yumuşak güç konseptini ve yumuşak gücün Türkiye'nin kamu diplomasisi'ni Sırbistan özelinde 2002-2019 yılları arasında nasıl kullandığını incelemektedir. Bu makalede gelişen Sırbistan-Türkiye ilişkilerinde Türkiye'nin kamu diplomasisi'nin rolü çalışılmıştır. Örnek çalışma olarak Türkiye'nin kamu diplomasisinin araçları "devletten kamuya" ve "kamudan kamuya" olarak Sırbistan özelinde incelenmiştir. Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı (TİKA), Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı (YTB), Yunus Emre Enstitüsü (YEE) "devletten kamuya" ve Türk dizileri, turizm, ticaret "kamudan kamuya" kısmında incelenmiştir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Kamu Diplomasisi, Yumuşak Güç, Türk Dış Politikası, Sırbistan

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## **Introduction**

With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the newly born Turkish Republic set a passific and security-oriented foreign policy which dissociated itself from all claims on imperial possessions in the Balkans and the Arab world. Until the end of the Cold war, Turkey continued its cautious and isolated foreign policy in its immediate neighborhood since the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Syria were part of Soviet sphere of influence. However, with the fall of Socialism, the roads to the Turkic republics of central Asia and the Balkans were cleared for Turkey and Özal's government (Öktem, 2011). Turkey under the leadership of Özal started to follow an active public diplomacy in central Asia and Balkans. Özal's vision of Turkey and active foreign policy by creating new public diplomacy institutions and educational networks paved the way to the basis of Turkish Soft Power which would be the center foreign policy tool during the era of the Justice and Development Party (JDP) in 2000's (Öktem, 2011). The efforts to expand Turkey's ties to areas where Turkey has strong historical and cultural links have gained greater impetus under the JDP which heavily influenced by the doctrine of "Strategic Depth" developed by Ahmet Davutoğlu (Rabasa & Larrabee, 2008).

Turkey's new foreign policy parameters initiated to a more professional approach regarding public diplomacy which concluded during 2000's new public diplomacy and soft power appliance institutions were founded by JDP. According to Anholt (2014): "There is only one superpower: Public Opinion" and the Turkish foreign policy implemented an active foreign policy to inform the public opinion abroad about Turkey from the first-hand and tell "the New Turkey's Story" (Kalin, 2011). However, changing a perception of a country does not happen overnight, it needs time and permanent institutions, permanent policies and a vision. Although it is possible to find the experiences of the soft of power and the public diplomacy in the history of Turkey and the Ottoman Empire, they are still new concepts in comparison to the Western Europe.

Turkey has been focusing on Serbia and as during Vucic's visit to Turkish capital in 2018, Erdoğan noted that he was pleased that trade volume between two countries surpassed over 1 billion dollars and would eye 5 billion dollars in the future (Daily Sabah, 2018). Turkey's soft power agents, not only state agents but also non-state agents, has been very active in Serbia especially after 2000's with the JDP's reign. TİKA has been investing in many projects. Serbian students come to Turkey with YTB scholarships. Turkish series have been popular in Serbia along with other Balkan countries. More Serbian tourists have been coming. Turkish business investments have been growing.

In this article, I analyze how Turkey uses public diplomacy to wield soft power in the case of Serbia between 2002-2019. The reason why I chose my research question is that although the image of the Ottoman Empire, and Turks as the "favorite enemy" associated with the Orient and all its negative connotations, (Koulori, 2002), the relations between Serbia and Turkey have been developing positively especially in the era of the JDP and I plan to analyze the role of Turkish Public Diplomacy in these

developing relations. Besides, there are some works on Turkey's soft power on numerous Balkan states, however, in the case of Serbia, there is not regarding Turkish soft power and Turkish public diplomacy. Also, Turkey and Serbia are economically and culturally one of the most influential countries in Balkans. That is why Turkish-Serbian relations deserves more attention regarding soft power.

### **Methodology**

In this article, I use annual plans of the relevant institutions, speeches and views of politicians and diplomats, websites, news of Turkish and Serbian side. I analyze data of Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) in order to see and compare trade volume between Turkey and Serbia and the number of incoming tourists to Turkey and polls of secondary sources. Also, I directly contacted with Yunus Emre Institute (YEE) Belgrade and acquired quantitative data about their activities. The reason why I collected the data is to analyze the role of Turkish public diplomacy in Turkish-Serbian relations between 2002-2019.

However, some limitations should be noted. Although institutions have annual reports, there are only overall data and statistics there. However, country specific data is not mentioned there. Thus, it was expected to acquire primary sources such as the number of students in summer schools of YEE Belgrade, and the number of students of Turkish Language class. Nonetheless, after many formal requests, YEE did not share their data. Regarding their approach of academic help, governmental organizations differ each other. YTB helped me with my academic research while YEE refused with the excuse of some data were confidential and some were not ready which I asked.

### **Public Diplomacy**

Public diplomacy is an instrument used by political actors in order to create soft power. However, Nye (2011) emphasizes that soft power is only partly generated by states. Non-state actors within and outside the country can have their own soft power and affect states' efforts to generate soft power. As one of the most important features of soft power is that its agents are more than one including politicians, artists, writers, academicians, universities, civil society, political parties, media groups, businessmen, newspapers, journalists, religious figures, religious groups etc. Similarly, public diplomacy activities are conducted within two main frameworks as "State to public" and "public to public". "State to public" activities target to explain the state's policies and activities through the use of official tools and channels to the public. "Public to public" activities, civil elements such as NGOs, research centers, public opinion polls, media, opinion leaders, universities, exchange programs, associations and foundations are employed. In this regard, public diplomacy goes beyond official communication between officials, diplomats and foreign communities (Melissen, 2005).

### **Case study: Turkish Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Serbia**

In this chapter, I present the Turkish-Serbian relations between 2002-2019, and how Turkish public diplomacy tools started and improved in Serbia. I analyze both "state to public" and "public to public" public diplomacy tools and their affects to wield soft power in Serbia. In "state to public" public

diplomacy tools part, I present YEE, TİKA, YTB and in “public to public” public diplomacy tools part, I present Turkish soap operas, tourism, trade as these elements of public diplomacy are the main actors of Turkish public diplomacy between 2002-2019.

### **Turkish-Serbian Relations**

After the victory in 1389 against the Serbian army in Kosovo in Balkans the Ottomans’ dominance started and with the conquest of Belgrade in 1521 by the Suleiman the Magnificent the rule of the Ottomans was fortified which continued till 19<sup>th</sup> century. Between the end of the Ottoman Empire in 1923 and 1980s, there were only formal relations between Turkey and Yugoslavia. In 1953, Turkey, Greece, and Yugoslavia even signed an “Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation” later called the Balkan Pact. Since the beginning of the Yugoslav turmoil in the late 1980s, with big powers like the US, Russia, Europe and some Muslim countries like Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia have become engaged the events on the ground (Boskovic, Reljic & Vracic, 2015). After the dissolution of the Yugoslavia, the JDP paid attention to improve relations with Serbia after democratic parties gained power in October 2000 in Serbia. With the correlation of efforts to expand Turkey’s ties to areas where Turkey had strong historical and cultural links resulting of Turkey’s new active foreign policy which prioritizing soft power, Serbia has become one of the most important countries regarding its significant geopolitical position and potential in Balkans. Therefore, Turkey has started investing on soft power by using its public diplomacy in Serbia in order to improve Turkish-Serbian relations. The Serbian president at that time Boris Tadić visited Turkey in 2007, in 2010 and then Prime Minister Mirko Cvetković visited Turkey in 2011. Turkish President Abdullah Gül visited Serbia in 2009 becoming the first Turkish president to visit Serbia since 1986. Former Prime Minister Erdoğan visited Serbia in 2010, when the visa-free agreement between two countries was signed (Türbedar, 2011). During this period, tripartite consultation meetings between Bosnia and Heregovina, Serbia and Turkey were carried out. Turkey and Serbia signed a free trade agreement in 2009. Besides mediating with Bosniaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey has also mediated between divided blocs of Muslims in Sandzak region in Serbia. However, the recognition of the independence of Kosovo by Turkey in 2008 deteriorated the relations between the countries. Also, then prime minister Erdoğan’s statement in Prizren: “Kosovo is Turkey and Turkey is Kosovo”, at that time president of Serbia received that statement as “an aggression without arms.” (Al-monitor, 2013). Despite of the issue of Kosovo, Vucic and Erdoğan have realized the cooperation of the countries would be more beneficial for everyone (Zivanovic & Büyük, 2018). While visiting Erdoğan in Ankara to discuss infrastructure projects, Serbian President stated that “Turkey is the biggest power, the strongest country in the Balkans” and thanked Erdoğan for bringing investors to Serbia (Politico, 2018). Besides, in October 29, 2018, Vucic was one of the leaders who attended the inauguration of the Istanbul airport, one of the symbol projects of Erdogan, in order to show solidarity with Turkey (N1, 2018).

So why Turkey is interested in Serbia? Ankara is highly interested in the Balkans and it has been so since 1989, which became a power vacuum with the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Besides, the interest in the

Balkans is not only limited to Turkey, also observed in many international actors such as the EU and Russia (Rüma, 2010). What is new in Turkish foreign policy towards the Balkans is the increasing importance of economic relations in Turkish foreign policy. In this sense, Turkish foreign policy is becoming more tied to the liberal understanding of international politics, which prioritizes the role of enhanced economic relations. Trade between two countries reached 1 billion dollars which makes Serbia one of the biggest trade partner in Balkans. Besides Turkey is aware of the fact that the stability and the peace in the region goes through Serbia. The importance of Serbia for the stability of the Balkans is clear. For example, Serbia has a significant influence over the Bosnian Serbs which constitute great deal of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Rüma, 2010).

In the following part I analyze the role of Turkish public diplomacy in Serbia regarding the developing relations between two countries. I present as TİKA, YEE, YTB as state actors and tourism, Turkish soap operas, trade as non-state actors since these actors has become the main catalyzers of Turkish public diplomacy during the rule of the JDP between 2002-2019.

### **Turkish Public Diplomacy's "state to public" Tools in Serbia**

#### **YEE Belgrade**

Yunus Emre Institute (YEE) Belgrade was opened in 2015 with the attendance of then Prime-Minister Ahmet Davudođlu (Daily Sabah, 2016). Since then, the YEE Belgrade has been continuing its activities in order to promote Turkey. YEE serves under building lasting relations dimension of public diplomacy in Serbia. YEE Belgrade's has two objectives. First one is teaching Turkish. Second one is promoting Turkish culture by organizing activities. Besides, YEE brings successful students to Turkey under "Turkey Summer School" project.

According to the head of YEE Belgrade, Selim Demirtaş, in 2015 they had 40 students learning Turkish, and they had 70 Halkbank employees, a Turkish bank operates in Serbia, which in total 110 students. As Demirtaş says, Serbians have two main motivations to study Turkish. First is to find a job. Turkish business is growing in Serbia or Serbs want to come to Turkey to find a job. Second motivation is growing interest in the region to Turkish soap operas. Many people are just learning Turkish just because they want to speak the same language as their favorite characters speak (Daily Sabah, 2016). Besides according to Demirtaş, Serbian people used to have a cold stand to Turkey but this is changing now. Many people are coming to Turkey to spend their holiday. Turkey is the third place after Greece and Montenegro for Serbian people to spend holiday (Daily Sabah, 2016). YEE also organized a symposium "Belgrade 1521-1867" which was based on the structure of state and people in the Balkans during the Ottoman Empire which brought academicians not only from Serbia and Turkey but also from other countries like Russia and the Netherlands. The symposium was financed totally by the YEE. According to Demirtaş, now they have students in Belgrade and Novi Sad which are the major cities of Serbia. And they are planning to

open a branch of YEE in Novi Pazar which is a Muslim majority region of Serbia if they can get the necessary permissions from the Serbian authorities (Daily Sabah, 2016).

According to information I acquired from YEE Belgrade, I present below a rough guess of the participant number and the list of activities which they organized so far, however, they don't ticket %80 of the activities which makes it harder to evaluate their performance. So far, 5480 people have attended to cultural activities of YEE Belgrade. Cultural activities range from movie nights to concerts about Turkish culture. 1270 people have attended to academic activities of YEE Belgrade. Academic activities of YEE Belgrade range from seminars to symposiums on different topics related to Turkey and the Ottoman Empire. In total, to cultural activities and together with academic activities 6750 people have attended (YEE Belgrade, 2019). Considering YEE started with 40 Serbian students in 2015, given the numbers reached today as thousands one can say that there is an increasing trend of YEE's participants while the numbers are still humble.

YEE promotes Turkish culture through activities. I will present some examples. For instance, YEE organized an Ottoman musical concert in Belgrade (Yunus Emre Enstitüsü, 2018). Furthermore, YEE Belgrade organizes activities not only in Belgrade but in different parts of Serbia. For instance, one activity is Turkish classical music performance of Altın Orda choir from Kazakhstan, the organization was made by the YEE Belgrade and took place in Novi Sad which is the second largest city of Serbia (RTV, 2019). Moreover, YEE Belgrade does Turkish not only teach Turkish in its center but also, they cooperate with local schools. For example, the cooperation regarding teaching Turkish between the YEE and a Serbian elementary school in the city of Palanka can be given example (Palankadanas, 2018).

### **TİKA in Serbia**

Turkish development agency TİKA which was founded in 1992 started to operate in Serbia in 2009. According to TİKA's 2017 Serbia Report, in Serbia since 2009 has been realized 223 projects. %35 educational, %16 health, %14 restoration and %5 agricultural projects such as building and renovating schools, assisting the physical infrastructure of existing healthcare facilities, supporting families with greenhouses, renovating building of the common cultural heritage etc.

According to Director of TİKA Belgrade, Mehmet Bayrak, TİKA applies the "Turkish Assistance Model" based on sincerity and empathy with its local and official partners, transparent governance and collective wisdom (Diplomacy & Commerce, 2017). TİKA was one the first institutions in the world which helps Serbia after the flood in 2014. TİKA promised Serbia 1 million 350.000 euros to recover from the flood and Turkey realized its projects. In total, Turkey has invested 20 million euros in projects of assistance until 2016. In 2017 two big projects were financed as the Ram Fortress (a historical fortress reconstructed by the Sultan Bayezid 2<sup>nd</sup>) and the part of Kalemegdan which is the most popular park of Belgrade (Serbian Government, 2016). TİKA organizes projects in numerous areas such as education, health,

restoration and agriculture in different parts of Serbia. For instance, one of renovation projects is that TİKA restored historical Sokullu Mehmet Pasha Bridge which is one the famous historical bridges in the city of Vishegrad (TİKA, 2019a), and TİKA renovated a school in the city of Pripolje (TİKA, 2019b). Besides, as health project, for example, the agency donated medical devices to a hospital in Belgrade (Öztürk, 2018). As part of education projects, TİKA sent young volunteers to take part in projects in Serbia which fosters young people exchange between two countries (Independent Balkan News Agency, 2018). Furthermore, as development projects, TİKA trained Serbian security forces (TİKA, 2018a). Another example, TİKA helped a project to employ disabled people in the city of Uzice (TİKA, 2018b), and TİKA donated material and trained Serbian people to produce honey in the city of Novi Pazar and Tutin (TİKA, 2017a). Also, TİKA helped Serbian farmers to plant raspberry in the city of Novi Pazar (TİKA, 2017b). TİKA assisted Serbian tourism by restoring Avala Tower (TİKA, 2018c). It is noticed that most of the projects are in the southwestern part of Serbia which is underdeveloped part of the country. TİKA invests not only on cities like Tutin and Novipazar are the Muslim majority Serbian cities but also Belgrade, Uzice, Pripolje which shows TİKA is trying reach different parts of Serbian society. With these projects TİKA aims to improve Turkish image in different parts of Serbia among Serbian public.

### **YTB in Serbia**

Between 2002 and 2010, 120 students from Serbia were granted scholarships. Between 2010 and 2018, 457 students were granted which shows that giving scholarships was given more importance after the establishment of YTB in 2010 (YTB, 2019a). It is claimed that international educational exchange is a way to improve the image of a country in the context of public diplomacy (De Wit, 2002). These students as bridges between the countries will help to strengthen the relations and promote Turkey since they know Turkey from the first hand.

The presidency has organized supported 7 projects regarding Serbia which organized by Turkish and Serbian associations and NGOs. Such as, in 2013, the project “Let’s learn Turkish” organized called which teaches Turkish language to Turkish diaspora in the region of Sandjak.

In 2016, 55 university students participated an education program including literature, art, civilization, politics, philosophy, psychology, history, religion, sociology, media, law, and economics under the Project “Balkan Youth School”. In 2017, Serbia Turkey Graduates Association was opened with the support of the presidency. In 2018, the project of researching the daily life, and traditions of Muslims was supported by the presidency (YTB, 2019b). Although the number of the activities are very limited, via these projects YTB aims to promote Turkey among Turkish diaspora and YTB graduates.

### **Turkish Public Diplomacy’s “public to public” Tools in Serbia**

#### **Turkish Soap Operas as a tool of Public Diplomacy**

Popular culture, such as music, cinema, television and other forms of art, is a major agent of soft power. In this context, popular culture is another type of public diplomacy. As a tool of public diplomacy, popular

culture attains a cultivation effect amongst the intended audience, through the exposure of values and messages emerging from the source country (Kunzchik, 1997). According to Nye (2004), the achievement of desired outcomes can be realized by setting an example such as attractive personalities, culture, political values, institutions and policies.

Turkish soap operas has gained popularity and become a global phenomenon since 2000's in the world and especially in Balkans. Serbia is not an exception in this case. According to Darko Brocic, director of the AGB Nielsen, conducts media research across the Balkans, the popularity of Turkish shows has become immense in recent years and shows no sign of fading. The most popular Turkish Soap Opera is the "1001 nights", a modern-day version of the classical story of love. A research published in July 2010 has shown that this program was the leader in TV ratings in Serbia, with around 40 percent share (Blic, 2010).

Another research shows that in January 2013 the top two Turkish series were "*Magnificent Century*" which ranked fourth, and "*As Time Goes By*," which came seventh in Serbia (Cabric et al., 2013). A Serbian sociologist Ratko Bozovic reasons why Serbian people show interest to Turkish soap operas that Serbs identify with the patriarchal values of the Turkish shows, and enjoy spotting the many cultural and linguistic similarities that they recognize while watching the shows. Snježana Radenković, one of Turkish soap operas' fan from Serbia, says was so thrilled with some of the shows that she watched that she went all the way to Istanbul to find out more. She says her friends also watch these shows, and they are a frequent topic in their conversations. According to Amela Bicic, a student from Belgrade, nearly all of her family in Belgrade, as well as those spread across the world, like watching Turkish shows. Her two grandmothers both buy magazines in which they follow the latest gossip about their favorite actors together. Although she does not watch much television herself, she sometimes only watches with them in order to spend time together – and adds the Turkish shows look better than their Spanish and Indian rivals (Cabric et al., 2013). Serbs have different reasons to watch Turkish soap operas such finding similarities with their culture, spending time with their family or finding them entertaining. Turkish Soap Operas are influential instruments of soft power in Balkans and different geographic areas. When they are taken into consideration as instruments of soft power, they act for the benefit of Turkey and Turkey's public diplomacy. Apart from direct financial contribution, the soap operas play more important role in contributing to several sectors, attitude towards Turkey and its vision (Ağırseven & Öрки, 2017). Given the success and the popularity of Turkish soap operas in Serbia, one can say that Turkish Soap Operas generate soft power by promoting the image of Turkey in Serbia. Besides, the interest in learning the Turkish language was bursting during the last years in foreign language schools in Belgrade. Boris Bursac, the organizer of the Mogi Foreign Language School, said that since she began broadcasting "1001 Nights" there has been an increased interest in Turkish-language courses at the language school. Bursac said that initially the majority of students were among the younger population, but as the series' popularity grew, so did a large number of older students who began enrolling in Turkish courses (Glasjavnostirs, 2011). Apart



from learning the Turkish language, the visit to Istanbul is a great interest for the citizens. Ljubica Todorovic from the travel agency "Odeon", the visit to Istanbul exists throughout the year (Glasjavnostirs, 2011):

In the autumn months, there is a higher demand for a facultative tour of Istanbul, and this destination is mostly chosen by retirees, who are also the biggest fans of the mentioned series.

Another dimension of how Turkish series generate soft power is the soap operas are actually helpful in making Balkan nations remove their negative stereotypes on Turkey. The image of the Ottoman Empire as the “favorite enemy” has been clearly discerned in various history textbooks of the Balkan peoples (Greeks, Bulgarians, Macedonians, Serbs): “The Ottoman Empire, associated with the Orient and all its negative connotations, constituted a negative example and was held to be the main cause for the ‘backwardness’ of the other Balkan peoples. Although the Turks remained in the Balkans for half a millennium, they were always considered as outsiders and their presence was seen as temporary” (Koulori, 2002). According to the article of Der Standard entitled "Ottoman Television Runs Like Clockwork", it was claimed that Turkish series had effect on removing the negative impression remaining from the Ottomans to Turkey in the Balkans. (Sofia Press Agency, 2011 reporting from Der Standard).

### **Tourism as a tool of Public Diplomacy**

Turkey is an important summer destination for Serbian holidaymakers, as the example of the Serbian president, who spent his summer holidays in 2014 at the Aegean coast of Turkey (Boskovic, Reljic & Vracic, 2015). Besides, Serbian Envoy Markovic stated (Anadolu Agency, 2019):

Over 100,000 Turks visited Serbia in 2018 and around 150,000 Serbs spent their summer vacation in the Western coast of Turkey. For most of them who were there for the first time, it was a big discovery, like Columbus discovered America. I was posted in Greece, my son was born in Greece if someone knows Greece, it is me. But the quality of tourism here in Turkey is not comparable to any country I have been to in the world. This quality you cannot find anywhere. If you want the best money can buy, it is in Turkey. Ankara and Konya are as big as Serbia. Serbians so far only know Istanbul and Antalya. Cappadocia, for example, is very important to Christians. Imagine what will happen when Anadolu (Anatolian) people in the smaller cities in Turkey find the same mentality, habits, and culture in the middle of Europe. There is a big potential for tourism. We will organize events in Turkey.

In 2018, Turkey became the second place where Serbian tourists spent the most money (Sajam Turizma, 2018). According to data of Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK), in 2015 178.997, in 2016 110.594, in 2017 146.852, in 2018 225.312 number of tourists visited Turkey (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2018). We see %53 increase trend of Serbian tourists from 2017-18, however, between 2015 and 2016 there was a decrease because of the terror attacks happened in Turkey. Turkey is 3<sup>rd</sup> most visited location for summer holiday after Greece and Montenegro. In 2018 it was the highest number of incoming tourists to Turkey from Serbia of all times. Antalya, İstanbul, Kuşadası, Muğla, Kapadokya are the favorite places for Serbs (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2018). Tourism is an important tool for Turkish public diplomacy since thanks to tourism more and more people come to Turkey and see Turkey in the first place which prevents the stereotypes and prejudices and get chance to make people to people contacts and build lasting relations.

### **Trade as a tool of Public Diplomacy**

Like tourism, business also is the goal and the agent of public diplomacy. International corporations play an important role in a country's public diplomacy. Mostly there are more business people abroad than diplomats and multinational corporations invest more financially than governments (Zaharna, 2010). According to Goodman (2006), international corporations in host countries affect how the country is perceived. In this sense Turkey has been using Turkish business in "public to public" public diplomacy tool in order to build lasting relations with Serbia as one of the three dimensions of public diplomacy (Nye, 2011). In the recent years the business between Serbia and Turkey has been growing dramatically as Serbian Envoy Markovic stated (Doğantekin, 2019):

The most important development is that we overpassed 1 billion euros in trade volume and the goal is to reach two billion euros soon. In Serbia, we have a need for construction companies to build highways and skyscrapers and Turkish companies are more experienced and much cheaper compared to the Western companies. Serbian companies are not big enough to do these by themselves so Turkish companies can be sub-contractors. I see many opportunities in many fields for cooperation. We have a saying in Serbia, when hunger comes to the door, the love leaves from the window. Let's think the opposite, when wealth comes to the door, hate leaves from the window. When everyone is satisfied, there is no space for hate.

Another example of this cooperation can be given as Serbian state and Turkish company Tasyapı signed framework agreement of important infrastructural projects which total value estimated 1.5 billion euros (Ekapiya, 2018). The most important project is the Turkish company Tasyapı and Serbian state on December 19 signed a \$285 million contract to build the Sarajevo-Belgrade Highway which is also important that the road will help to improve the peace and stability in the region (Hurriyetdailynews, 2018). The Sarajevo-Belgrade Highway project was brought up 3 years ago, but it stopped when relevant institutions could not agree on a route which are 16 possible routes to the table. While Serbia wanted the highway to run through eastern Bosnia, the Bosnian side asked it to run through northeast Bosnia. However, the dispute over the routes ended following a meeting in Turkey between President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, Former Bosnian Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Bakir Izetbegovic which agreement was reached to build the highway via two different routes. Besides, Serbia and Turkish company Taşyapı on Oct. 29 signed a 24 million euros contract for the reconstruction of a road connecting two southern cities, Novi Pazar-Tutin (Serbian Government, 2018). Halkbank, one of Turkey's biggest banks, bought a 76.76 percent stake in Serbian bank Cacanska Banka in 2015. Turkish bank opened its 33rd branch in the country, the number of employees increases over 500 people and the bank widened its network throughout Serbia. Halkbank grew more than 70 percent in three years reaching more than 450 million euros in size of assets in Serbia (Anadolu Agency, 2018). Furthermore, Turkstream gas pipeline which will carry Russian gas through Turkey, Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary to Europe, will be a new another dimension which contributes Turkish-Serbian relations positively (Öztürk, 2019). According to Medjedovic, the chairman of Turkish-Serbian business council of Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK), recently Turkish investments grew noticeably as he states while Turkish firms in Serbia was 136, in 2017 increased to 454 firms which means

% 234 increase. Turkish firms mostly do business on textile and automotive products (Aslanhan & Topç, 2017). According to data of TÜİK, in 2002 when the JDP got in power the trade volume between Serbia and Turkey was 133 million dollars as export of from Turkey was 122 million dollars and import 11 million dollars, since then with an increasing trend the trade volume reached 1 billion 194 million dollars in 2018. In 2018, export from Turkey is 867 million dollars, import 326 million dollars, which total trade volume is 1 billion 194 million dollars (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2019). We see almost %800 increase between 2002 – 2018 during the era of the JDP in trade volume between Serbia and Turkey, %610 increase in the export of Turkey. As seen in the examples and Serbian Envoy mentioned above “*when wealth comes to the door, hate leaves from the window*”, in this sense, Turkish business improves the image of the country and strengthening the relations between Turkey and Serbia, as it is an important agent of Turkish public diplomacy.

### **Conclusion**

In “state to public” public diplomacy tools part, in each state institution, there has been a steady increase since their foundation. For example, YEE Belgrade started with 40 students in 2015 and in 2018 reaching to 5480 people in its activities. Similarly, TİKA in Serbia since 2009 has been realized 223 projects gradually increasingly every year. In total, Turkey has invested 20 million euros in projects of assistance until 2016. Most of the projects are in the southwestern part of Serbia which is underdeveloped part of the country. YTB between 2002 and 2018 the presidency granted 577 students. Between 2010 and 2018, 457 students were granted which shows that giving scholarships was given more importance after the establishment of YTB. These students are expected to become bridges between the countries will help to strengthen the relations and promote Turkey.

Turkish soap operas, representative of Turkish popular culture, has gained popularity and become a global phenomenon since 2000’s in the world and especially in Serbia promoted the image of Turkey. For instance, in 2010 the “1001 nights”, has become the leader in TV ratings in Serbia, with around 40 percent share (Blic.rs, 2010) and in 2013 the top two Turkish series were “*Magnificent Century*” which ranked fourth, and “*As Time Goes By*,” which came seventh in Serbia (Cabric et al., 2013). Moreover, Turkish series not only generate soft power by promoting Turkey’s image but also, they are helpful in making Serbians remove their negative stereotypes on Turkey. Tourism shapes a positive international perception of a country (Ngwira, 2016) and in this sense “public to public” Turkey’s public diplomacy tool part Turkish tourism contributes Turkish public diplomacy in case of Serbia. Turkey has become the 3rd most visited location for summer holiday and in 2018 and has become the second place where Serbian tourists spent the most money (Sajam Turizma, 2018). We see %53 increase trend of Serbian tourists just in between 2017-18. Besides, Turkish business improves the image of the country and strengthening the relations between Turkey and Serbia, as it is an important agent of Turkish public diplomacy. Moreover, it should be noted that each public diplomacy agent also helps each other as the more popular Turkish Soap

Operas becomes, the more people decide to learn Turkish language and come to YEE or they come to visit Istanbul where the Turkish series shot which contributes to the Turkish tourism.

To sum up, as Turkey's "state to public" public diplomacy tools in Serbia, YEE, TİKA, YTB have strategic importance, however, given the numbers of the participants their performance is low. Nonetheless, it might be considered that these organizations are quite new, only established couple of years ago except TİKA. Moreover, these organizations differ each other in terms of institutionalism. For example, YEE Belgrade does not even ticket %80 of its activities which makes harder to evaluate their performance. Another example is that YEE is a closed organization which they denied to share their information and media visibility while YTB was eager to share their information openly. As Turkey's "public to public" public diplomacy tools in Serbia, Turkish soap operas, tourism, and trade have an influence on Serbia in promoting Turkey's image considering TÜİK data which shows an increasing number of the participants and TV ratings in Serbia.

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