



Bosnian Students' Perceptions Of Turkey And Turkish Culture

Mirsad KARIĆ*

International University of Sarajevo

Ešref Kenan RAŠIDAGI**

University of Sarajevo

Recai AYDIN***

Social Sciences University of Ankara

Abstract

Perceptions about other nations or countries are generally formed and shaped by historical events, cultural differences, beliefs, and often prejudices, and they are difficult to change over time. Turkey, as a country with big goals and aspirations as well as a natural interest in the region because of its historical ties with the region, would like to strengthen its image and its relations with Balkan countries. In order to reach this goal, Turkey has poured a substantial amount of money and resources into the region in the last twenty years. This study aimed to investigate if the efforts of Turkey worked and were able to attract the hearts and minds of the young generation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For this purpose, a survey was conducted in five major state universities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2019. The results show that religion and ethnicity still play an important role in forming perceptions. According to survey results, Bosniaks or Bosnian Muslims heavily favor Turkey and are more interested in Turkish culture, while Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats are not very comfortable with Turkish involvement in Bosnia, and they feel suspicious about the motives of Turkey in the region. The results also indicate that Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats feel that Turkey discriminates in its efforts and mostly focuses on the Bosniaks.

Keywords

Public Perceptions, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Balkans, Turkey.

* Assoc. Prof., International University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Business and Administration, Department of International Relations, Sarajevo/Bosnia and Herzegovina, mkaric@ius.edu.ba, ORCID: 0000-0001-7629-3370

** Assoc. Prof., University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Political Science, Sarajevo/Bosnia and Herzegovina, esref.kenan.rasidagic@fpn.unsa.ba, ORCID: 0000-0001-8688-2777

*** Professor, Social Sciences University of Ankara, Faculty of Political Science, Department of Economics, Ankara/Turkey, recai.aydin@asbu.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0001-7552-7163

Bosnalı Öğrencilerin Türkiye ve Türk Kültürü Algısı

Öz

Başka milletler veya ülkeler hakkındaki algılar genellikle tarihi olaylar, kültürel farklılıkla, inançlar ve sıklıkla önyargılar tarafından şekillenir ve zamanla değiştirilmeleri zordur. Türkiye büyük hedefleri ve hırsları olan ayrıca bölge ile de tarihi bağları nedeniyle doğal ilgisi olan bir ülke olarak Balkan ülkeleri ile ilişkilerini ve bu ülkelerdeki imajını güçlendirmek istemektedir. Türkiye bu hedefe ulaşmak için son yirmi yılda bölgeye oldukça büyük bir kaynak ve finansman aktarmıştır. Bu çalışma Türkiye'nin gayretlerinin Bosna-Hersek'te yaşayan genç neslin aklına ve kalbine nasıl etki ettiğini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçla 2019 yılında Bosna-Hersek'te beş devlet üniversitesinde bir anket yapılmıştır. Sonuçlar algıların şekillenmesinde din ve etnik kökenin hala önemli bir rol oynadığını göstermektedir. Anket sonuçlarına göre Boşnaklar yani Bosnalı Müslümanlar ağırlıklı bir şekilde Türkiye'ye olumlu bakmakta ve Türk kültürü ile daha ilgili iken Bosnalı Sırlar ve Bosnalı Hırvatlar Türkiye'nin Bosna'daki çalışmalarından rahatsızlık duymakta ve Türkiye'nin amaçları hakkında şüpheli bir bakışa sahip görünmektedirler. Ayrıca Sırlar ve Hırvatlar Türkiye'nin Bosna'da yaptığı çalışmalar ve yatırımlarda ayrımcılık yaptığını ve çoğunlukla Boşnaklar üzerinde yoğunlaştığını düşünmektedirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Halk Algıları, Bosna Hersek, Balkanlar, Türkiye

Introduction

Public perceptions about another nation or country often are inquired by academicians or politicians in order to find out people's tendencies about "others." Perceptions about other nations or countries are often formed and shaped by historical events, cultural differences, beliefs, and often prejudices, and they are difficult to change over time. However, strong and influential countries usually try to change or reshape the perceptions about themselves through media, propaganda, and public diplomacy or with its more popular term, soft power, because the image of the country is considered as important as its military and economic power (Gültekin, 2005).

Turkey has experienced high economic growth in recent years and at the same time experienced a major shift in its international political decisions by changing its inward approach to a more dynamic and involving approach in its relations with its neighbors and international counterparts. This policy change is very visible in Turkey's Balkan affairs. Since Justice and Development Party took over the administration, Turkey has practiced very dynamic and active involvement in the Balkan region, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Turkey has invested a large amount of money through its government and aid agencies, established schools in all over the Balkan region and provided a large number of scholarships for students from Balkan countries.

Many politicians, intellectuals, or ordinary people in the Balkans view recent Turkish interest and involvement in the region as suspicious and worry that all these efforts by the current ruling Turkish government of Justice and Development Party (AK Party) are the results of the aspirations of AK Party leaders to revive the Turkish control in the region in the form of neo-Ottomanism. On the other hand, Turkish politicians and diplomats reject this claim and state that Turkish involvement in the Balkans is the mere result of new Turkish diplomatic stand for building cordial ties with its neighbors in the region, which was neglected for too long by successive Turkish governments. Turkish leaders claim that Turkey has an equal-distance policy and they would like to embrace all ethnicities and groups in the Balkans. However, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, this claim is often questioned by Serbian and Croatian politicians of Bosnia and they as they note that the majority of Turkish investments and aid is focused on Bosniak areas. They also are worried that the stronger presence of Turkey may hinder their ultimate plans to secede from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bugajski, 2017).

Turkish politicians and the Turkish public have almost a romantic approach when it comes to anything to do with Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, it is likely that the majority of the Turkish public is not even aware of the multi-ethnic composition of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many people in Turkey think that Bosnians can speak Turkish and they are all Muslims. One wonders if similar misperceptions can be true for the Bosnians of Turkey and Turkish culture. This study investigates the perceptions of Bosnian students of Turkey and Turkish culture by analyzing the results of a survey conducted in 2019 in five Bosnian universities. Bosnia is a rather unique country to analyze due to its multi-cultural/ethnic/religious society.

Bosnia is a central South Slavic country located in the Western Balkans, bordering the Adriatic Sea and Croatia on the west and north and Serbia and Montenegro on the east and south and occupies an area of 51,129 km². According to 2013 census results, half of the population identify themselves as Bosnian Muslim or Bosniak, while approximately one-third identify themselves as Bosnian Serb and the rest as Bosnian Croat. Unlike other Balkan countries, Bosnia has never shifted nor been partitioned since the earliest reference in 949 of the name Bosnia ("*horion Bosona*"), which appeared in the "*De administrando imperio*" (The Management of the Empire) by the Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (Imamović, 1997; Bojić, 2001). Since that time, Bosnia has kept its borders almost unchanged despite minor fluctuations in size over time. Bosnia is often referred to as a "bridge between East and West" and a meeting ground where the religious, cultural and political interests and influences of the Christian Catholic West and the Muslim and Orthodox East have confronted throughout history. The various civilization encounters that have occurred in Bosnia have resulted in a heterogeneous Bosnian society throughout its centuries-long history.

The medieval Bosnian state was dominated by the autochthonous Bosnian aristocracy led by its governors who carried the title of *Ban*¹ and later on a king. Sovereign medieval Bosnian state was marked by the effective authority of the rulers, existence of the ruler office but also the parliament (*Stanak*), which limited the power of the Bosnian rulers in the time when Europe was dominated by the concept of the absolutistic monarchy (Ćorović, 2005). After 1463 and the end of the medieval independent Bosnian state, it was a unit in the framework of the Ottoman Empire, first as one of the *sanjaks* of the Ottoman Empire until 1580, and after that as the *eyalet* until 1878. In the post-Ottoman period, five different regimes have succeeded one another in Bosnia until today. Austria-Hungary ruled Bosnia between 1878-1918; royal Yugoslavia ruled it between 1918 and 1941; during the four years of the Second World War, Bosnia was occupied and incorporated into the fascist "Independent State of Croatia"; it was governed as a unit in the Socialist Yugoslav

1 The title *Ban* is extracted from Avarian basic word *bajan* which means rich or president.

Federation from 1945 to 1991. It became an independent state in March 1992 and finally was granted full membership to the United Nations on May 22, 1992 (A/RES/46/237).

It has been popular among the Western journalist and politicians and even some scholars to describe Bosnian history as that of “tribalism” and “ancient ethnic hatred” (Kaplan, 2005). However, through its history Bosnia was not a country in which ethnic conflict and confrontation were widespread. Although the three different ethnic groups in Bosnia have practiced three different religions, still, they share many similar cultures, values, speak the same language and subscribe to similar social norms and values. One of the main reasons for the coexistence that has prevailed among the different ethnic groups in Bosnia needs to be addressed to the long-standing of the Ottoman Empire in the region and its struggle to promote the civilizational values of Islam, which call for the tolerance and acceptance of others irrespective of their religious, cultural, political backgrounds. The Ottoman arrival to Bosnia, rule, legal system, culture, language, religion as well as withdrawal from the country following the treaty of Berlin in 1878 and the Balkan wars, left a lasting legacy, both in positive and negative terms.

Turkey, in a way as the heir of the Ottomans, is still able to utilize significant historical capital in the Balkan region in general and Bosnia in particular. After all, it once created and maintained a thriving cosmopolitan society in the Balkans, which by means of the *Millet* system accorded significant autonomy to various religious and ethnic communities. Socially inclusive, the Ottoman Empire was upwardly mobile, with numerous examples of non-Turk and non-Muslim subjects advancing to occupy some of the most important administrative and military posts in the empire. Contrary to popular belief, the Ottomans never enforced mass conversion of their subjects to the Islamic faith (Braude and Lewis, 1982). Throughout the Balkans, Muslims remained a minority population during much of Ottoman rule. Even in Bosnia, which together with Albania was the site of the only en masse reversion, Muslims in the early 16th century stood at around 38% of the total population. At the very end of the Ottoman rule, the population census of 1875 varyingly estimated the total Muslim population in Bosnia between 32-51% of the total (Pejanović, 1955).

Even though at times some people were treated as less equal than others (only non-Muslims paid taxes, the main reason why Ottomans did not encourage conversion to Islam), the Ottoman Empire nevertheless treated myriad clans, tribes, religions, races and ethnicities as members of single political and social entity. For instance, following the Spanish Reconquista, tens of thousands of Jews fleeing the Inquisition managed to find refuge in the realms of the Ottoman Empire, resettling with full citizenship rights as far north as present-day Bosnia. The role of the Orthodox Church in the Balkans was actually

strengthened by the Ottomans, who viewed it as a useful counterweight to the organized hierarchy of the Catholic Church. In comparison to this vibrant collection of religions and ethnicities maintained for centuries by the single political authority spanning three continents, with the situation where hundreds of years later, the European Union (EU) could comprehend and deal with tiny Bosnian cosmopolitan society only by sanctioning its destruction and breaking up into small mono-ethnic reservations ruled mainly by right-wing nationalists and secessionists.

De jure withdrawal of the Ottoman state from Bosnia was followed by the forty years of the Austro-Hungarian occupation. This rule of the Hapsburg Monarchy and the modernization process left significant changes in education, economy, society, culture, public administration and politics of the local Bosnian population (Karčić, 1999). The Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia witnessed the final stage of the process of national self-identification of the population. The clear sign of the affirmation of the national idea in Bosnian public life was the emergence of political parties formed on ethnic bases (Imamović, 2006).

Between the two world wars, the first serious rifts among the Bosnian people came into being. Political life and the voting patterns of the Bosnian population in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes continued to be communitarian and organized along ethnic lines. However, different ethnic groups had different stands vis-à-vis the Kingdom and their own ethnic interests. Thus, for the Orthodox Serbs, the Kingdom was simply the realization of their dreams to create Greater Serbia at the cost of other parts of the Kingdom, most predominantly Bosnia where a quite big number of Serbs lived. The Croats and Slovenes wanted the kingdom to be a federal structure that would unite all of the South Slavs on the basis of equality and not to be treated as Serbian subjects (Friedman, 2004).

After the end of World War II, Bosnia was incorporated as a federal unit in (Communist) Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. Constitutionally and following the formal-legal principles, Bosnia was a republic equal to other republics of Federal Yugoslavia. However, the main difference between Bosnia and the rest of the republics was that its statehood was based upon historical and territorial-political and not on the national principles exclusively. Other republics, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia, were national-political units of one dominant people- Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Montenegrins and Macedonians- while Bosnia was a political unit of three dominant peoples, Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks. Thus having no national-political unit to dominate its decision-making apparatus, Bosnia was an exception to the federal creation of Yugoslavia. Furthermore, with a large number of Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks scattered throughout Bosnia, the republic was truly multinational (Friedman, 2004).

The Bosnian Serbs and Croats dominated Bosnia's political relations in the early years of the Yugoslav federation. The Bosniaks as the largest Bosnian community were considered to be only a religious, not a national unit and thus had none of the prerequisites that other national groups possessed within Yugoslavia. Accordingly, the Bosniaks were an object of rivalry between the Serbs and Croats (Filandra, 1998). Bosnia's decision-making apparatus reflected this multiplicity and coalition games were often played within Bosnia, with the Bosniaks being the targets of Serb-Croat discussions.

At the level of the federation, the loyalty of the Bosniak political elite and the secular Communist Bosniak scholars to Yugoslavia was unquestioned. Though the support for Yugoslavism was declining in the 1970s and 80s, however, Bosnian political and intellectual circles remained very loyal to that idea. Yet this political loyalty could not be transformed into political influence in the federation, where the determination of federal policies remained concentrated in the hands of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. In Bosnia itself, recognition of the Bosniaks as a nationality and the growing share of the Bosniaks in the republic population raised the possibility that they will ask for being a constituent nation. This aroused unease among the Serb political elite (Burg & Shoup, 1999).

At the end of the 1980s, Slobodan Milošević captured the Serbian political structure and assumed the leadership of a growing Serb nationalist movement that cut across republic boundaries, including those of Bosnia (LeBor, 2004; Sell, 2002). From the end of 1988 and especially in the months preceding the elections of 1990, the polarization of the Bosnian society along national lines was increasing. As a result of this, many political organizations were established in the republic in the course of 1990. However, most of these political parties were small and they either had to form coalitions or were of no consequence in the politics of the republic. The electoral competition was dominated by three explicitly ethnic and *de facto* nationalist parties created in 1990: SDS, HDZ, and SDA.

As soon as Bosnia declared its independence in March 1992, local paramilitary troops supported by Serbia and later by Croatia invaded the country and the aggression lasted until the end of 1995. The war was ended by the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA), which secured its full membership in the United Nations, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia with some internal administrative changes. According to the DPA, the country consists of two entities and one district; the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska and the District Brčko. Political authority is divided between the state, entity, cantonal and municipality levels. However, due to the unique political system and the very complex decision-making process state has suffered from permanent political instability and, as such, has not been able to meet the basic requirements on its road to Euro-Atlantic integration. Furthermore,

due to the inability of the European Union to position itself and clearly define its goals towards Bosnia and Herzegovina and the isolation of the United States from this process for the last almost 15 years, this political vacuum in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been filled by some other political actors such as Russia, Turkey and China.

In more recent years, another development has been changing and reshaping perceptions of Balkan people of Turkey and Turkish culture; an increasing number of Turkish TV series have been aired on television channels all over the Balkans. These series have been aired especially by the television channels in the federation and are watched by all Bosnians. They seem to be very popular among people of all ages, genders, and ethnicities. Studies find that Turkish TV series trigger interest in Turkey and Turkish culture and increase the number of tourists coming to Turkey from Balkans and Arabic countries (Nuroğlu, 2013; Berg, 2017).

This paper specifically focuses on the perceptions of Turkey as Turkey and Turks have a special role in Bosnian history. There is a large Balkan diaspora in Turkey today, which forms a significant bond between the two sides. These ties are, however, largely symbolic, as more migrants left a long time ago, following the end of Ottoman rule in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The migrants usually moved in large population groups with extended families and left their villages and small towns, migrating en masse, leaving behind their properties, houses, land, or selling them at a very low price (Gunduz, 2016). Thus, they maintained practically no family ties with their former homelands. Furthermore, after arrival to Turkey these migrants were subject to intensive *turkification*, which resulted in changed family names and inability to use mother language. Very few of the estimated four million ethnic Bosniaks who live in Turkey today (twice the number remaining in Bosnia itself) can speak Bosnian, and almost none retained surname in their original (non-Turkified) form (Rašidagić, 2013).

Literature Review

There is extensive literature on public perception of countries and nations. A small fraction of these studies is similar to this study in terms of methodology and tools employed. The closest study to this paper was published by Mulać & Kulanić (2016), where they surveyed 230 students and academicians from the International University of Sarajevo (IUS) to find out their perceptions about Turkish culture, Turkish investments in Bosnia, and Turkish foreign policy towards Bosnia via 24 survey questions. However, this study has major flaws in survey design, methodology and participant selection. Authors provide detailed information about the distribution of gender, age, student status etc. but fail to mention the most important information about the participants; their nationality. This information is crucial because at the time of the survey, more than half of the students of IUS were Turkish. In the paper,

there is no mentioning of this point. In addition, there are statistical issues in the methodology and interpretation of the results.

Yiğit (2021) investigated the perceptions of Bosnian student who was learning Turkish in the Yunus Emre Institute in Sarajevo of Turkey and why they were interested in learning the Turkish language. The study found that majority of the students had a positive opinion about Turkey and Turkish culture as a result of living together for 500 years and having a common history and shared values. Watching Turkish series, having a lot of common words in Turkish and Bosnian languages are important factors in motivating Bosnians to learn the Turkish language². The study also suggests that the increasing number of Turkish tourists from Turkey could be another important factor motivating them to learn Turkish. As a matter of fact, Turkey is at the top of the list in terms of the number of tourist arrivals to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Aydos (2017) analyzed the opinion of Bosnian university students about Turkish TV series by conducting a survey on viewers of particular Turkish TV production: *The Magnificent Century*. Although the sample was small, only 43 students, including all three major ethnicities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The study finds that the show is well-received by all ethnicities but praised for different reasons. Bosniak participants liked the show especially because of the similarities between Bosnian and Turkish cultures, and stated that their opinions about Turkey and Turkish culture did not change much after watching the show. On the other hand, Serbian and Croat participants liked the show for promoting similar family values and traditions in the show, without making any reference to the word "Turk." While the series has reminded Bosniaks of the close links between Bosnian and Turkish culture, Serb and Croat participants perceived the show as Turkish propaganda.

An extensive report on perceptions about Turks and Turkey in Balkans written by Bilgiç & Akyürek (2012) found that sympathy towards Turks, not surprisingly, is especially high in all Muslim populations in Balkans. However, it is also not that low among Christian populations in Albania and Macedonia. Perception about life in Turkey is more positive in Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, while it is relatively less positive in Kosovo. The report also finds that Turkey is considered as a model for Balkan people for their countries, though this view is more common among Muslim populations compared to Christian populations. The majority of the survey participants supported Turkey's accession to European Union, while the lowest support comes from Christian populations of Croatia and Bulgaria. Christian participants consider Turkey as more like a Middle Eastern Country, while Muslim participants consider Turkey more like a European country.

2 However, it should be noted that overwhelming majority of students attending Yunus Emre Institute are Bosniaks.

Zhumabaeva et al. (2019) investigate Turkey as a case study from the nation branding approach and report that Turkey is perceived well by tourists across the world who have already visited the country. However, there are issues with the perception of people who have never visited Turkey from some countries like Russia as they have negative perceptions of Turkey due to historical reasons, and 77 percent of the Russian surveyed declared that they are not likely to visit Turkey³. For example, they report that French people perceive Turkey as an Arabic country and 40 percent of the respondents from Denmark had no opinion or information about Turkey.

Hoxha (2018a; 2018b) investigates and compares the perception of Albanians for Turkey and China as well as for Turkey and Russia. Both studies were done through surveys in relatively small samples from the members of a particular political forum for young Albanians. Perceptions of young Albanians were measured in three dimensions; economic, political, and cultural. The main question was to identify if Turkish, Chinese or Russian influence in Albania could be considered as a barrier to the European Union accession process. Studies find that, in general, influences from all three countries are not perceived as strong barriers to the entry process into the EU. However, even though the threat is perceived weakly, the influence of Turkey in Albania was perceived as a stronger barrier to the EU process compared to Chinese or Russian influence.

Pajaziti (2011) analyzed the perception of Albanian society about Turk and Turkey in a historical context and argued that the majority of the Albanians have a positive attitude towards Turks and Turkey because Turkey helped Albanians to fight against despotism and supports Albanians in their causes. He also argues that Albanian elites are poisoned with pathologic anti-Ottomanism and anti-Turkism as well as Occidentalism because of the textbooks written after independence and later under communist rule. He claims that ordinary Albanians in Albania have a positive perception of Turks and Turkey, but this is more prevalent among Albanians in Macedonia and the culture of Albanians in Kosovo is the closest to the Turkish culture among Albanians.

Bozkuş & Arı (2019) surveyed 129 university students who study in Turkey coming from Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia about their experiences in and perceptions of Turkey. The majority of the students had some knowledge about Turkey and only 17.1 percent of the participants, interestingly mostly from Georgia, claimed that they had no prior information about the country. Seventy-five percent of the participants wanted to study in Turkey because of perceived higher quality of education, curiosity, and love towards Turkey and Turkish people. Although the majority of the students stated that they had no problem in forming a friendship with Turkish students, 40 percent of

3 However, it should be noted that above-mentioned survey was done after the Russian aircraft was shot down by Turkish F-16 and before Turkish-Russian relations improved.

them indicated that they had issues with finding Turkish students and felt somewhat excluded. Almost half of the students report that they had difficulties in getting used to the customs of the country. Another interesting finding is that around 50 percent of the students perceived Turkish culture as similar to theirs before they came to Turkey, but this ratio fell to 32 percent after they had some experience in Turkey.

Işık (2016) investigated the perceptions of Arab students in Jordan about Turks, Turkey and the Ottoman Empire and found that their perception seemed to be heavily influenced by the history textbooks used in primary and high school education. The study also found that more than half of the students learned about Turkey through TV series and these series generally created a more positive image of Turkey in their minds. The study also found that the TV series increased the interest in Turkey and Turks but did not affect the interest in the Turkish language much.

Similarly, Uçak (2017) investigated the Iraqi students who were learning Turkish in Turkey about their perception of Turkey. Iraqi students perceive Turkey as a neighboring Muslim country with substantial natural beauties and historic remains. They perceive Turkey as a highly developed country in terms of industry, commerce, health, and education. The majority of the students think that they could easily consider settling and living in Turkey because of their religion and similar culture despite the high cost of living. Some students report that they do not feel comfortable in Turkey because of the high level of nationalism in the society.

Dursun-Özkanca (2019) note that through economic statecraft and Turkish economic interest in the Western Balkans, Turkey has managed to gradually transform its increasing cultural power in the region into economic power. The causes of this transformation of Turkish foreign policy are numerous and might be attributed, among others, to Europeanization and the EU's "conditionality" principle, country's domestic developments, geopolitical factors, reformulation of how the Turkish state defines its own identity internally and externally and to the concept of soft power in Turkish foreign policy. This has been possible, according to Kirişçi (2009), due to the fact that Turkey has transformed itself into a "trading state" in which the national interest is no longer considered to mean national security alone. Davutoğlu's strategy of zero-problem policy with the neighbors, although primarily related to the strategic position of Turkey and its geopolitical role in international affairs, could be considered a blueprint manifestation of the foreign policy of a trading state (Davutoğlu, 2010).

For Rašidagić (2013), Turkey is an important regional power and will remain as such in the future. According to him, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been an important Turkish partner, and Turkey has proved it many times through various government and non-governmental organizations, meetings,

investments, institutions, visits etc. Turkey's growing economic power boosts its self-awareness of its importance and political and economic influence in the region. Bechev (2012) claims that for a long time Turkey has been linked to the Balkans in its security strategy and diplomacy, geography, demography and political imaginaries. The current increased activism of Turkey in the Western Balkans in general and Bosnia and Herzegovina, in particular, has been driven largely by structural shift related to the spread of democracy, Europeanization and globalization, rather than by ideology or Ottoman nostalgia. The EU's expansion has deepened interdependence across the Balkans, added to "Turkish confidence and prestige, bolstering a go-it-alone approach," and transformed the Turkish presence in the Balkans from power politics to a multidimensional policy reliant on trade, cross-border investment, and projection of soft power.

A study conducted by Bozkuş and Ari (2019) found that among the international students in Turkey, Azeri and Armenian students had quite substantial knowledge about Turkey even before their arrival to the country, former because of linguistic and cultural similarities between Azerbaijan and Turkey and later because of the quite negative common history of these two nations. The same study found a significant number of international students who enrolled to one of the Turkish universities had had a will to study in Turkey what indicates their perception of the high-quality university education in Turkey.

Methodology, Data, and Results

Perceptions are generally measured through surveys. Data for this study come from a survey conducted in 2019 in 5 universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Due to the divided political structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina, student distribution in these universities is not homogenous. The survey was conducted at University Sarajevo (heavily Bosniak), University Zenica (heavily Bosniak), Mostar University (heavily Croat), Banja Luka University (heavily Serb), and the University of East Sarajevo (heavily Serb). The details of the survey participants are given in Table 1. The representation of ethnicities in the sample is not perfect though it is not very different from the actual proportions of the ethnicities in the population; Serbs are underrepresented and Croats are overrepresented in the survey. One major problem which may need some form of correction is gender. The survey suffers from a significant overrepresentation of female students.

The survey was randomly conducted in various faculties and departments of these universities. In the original surveys, eight different income levels with 500 KM (Bosnian Convertible Mark) increments were given for the monthly family income. During the analysis, however, four different income levels with 1000 KM increments were used for simplicity as family income was found to be insignificant in all models. In the survey, respondents were asked to choose the political party that they felt was the closest among 14 specifically

named parties. During the statistical analysis, the responses were grouped as right-wing and left-wing parties, and two dummies as “Right Parties” and “Left Parties” were created. For this variable, the missing dummy represents 271 of the participants who indicated that they have no party preference or prefer other parties or they failed to respond to the question. The “Member” variable represents if the participant is a member of a political party, while “NGO” indicates that the participant is a member of a non-government organization. Finally, the “vote” variable represents if the participant voted in the 2018 elections.

The survey included questions inquiring the opinions of students about Turkish, Russian and European Union involvement in Bosnia and the Balkans. In total, 645 surveys were filled by the students. However, some of the responses for most questions were left unanswered. Details can be seen in Table 1. Using regression analysis, missing data of the survey were estimated and all calculations were repeated using this complete version as well. However, the results did not differ significantly and therefore, it is decided by the authors that it would be best to use the original data set despite the missing values.

Table 1: Distribution of Survey Participants and their Characteristics by Ethnicity

		Bosniaks		Serbians		Croats		
Variables		n	%	n	%	n	%	Total
Gender	Male	107	30.3	45	29.2	39	28.3	191
	Female	238	67.4	98	63.6	93	67.4	429
	No Response	8	2.3	11	7.1	6	4.3	25
University	University of Sarajevo	182	51.6	14	9.1	9	6.5	205
	University of Zenica	167	47.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	167
	University of Mostar	3	0.8	0	0.0	127	92.0	130
	University of Banja Luka	1	0.3	91	59.1	2	1.4	94
	University of East Sarajevo	0	0.0	49	31.8	0	0.0	49
Faculty	Social and Human Sciences	242	68.6	112	72.7	120	87.0	474
	Natural and Medical Scien.	51	14.4	10	6.5	6	4.3	67
	Technical Sciences	48	13.6	27	17.5	3	2.2	78
	No Response	12	3.4	5	3.2	9	6.5	26
Study Year	Freshman	125	35.4	46	29.9	34	24.6	205
	Sophomore	80	22.7	38	24.7	14	10.1	132
	Junior	91	25.8	14	9.1	53	38.4	158
	Senior	56	15.9	49	31.8	35	25.4	140
	No Response	1	0.3	7	4.5	2	1.4	10

Area	Urban	214	60.6	102	66.2	68	49.3	384
	Rural	130	36.8	47	30.5	68	49.3	245
	No Response	9	2.5	5	3.2	3	2.2	17
Income	0-1000 KM	124	35.1	47	30.5	30	21.7	201
	1001-2000 KM	164	46.5	65	42.2	57	41.3	286
	2001-3000 KM	44	12.5	22	14.3	28	20.3	94
	Above 3000 KM	12	3.4	12	7.8	16	11.6	40
Party	No Response	9	2.5	8	5.2	7	5.1	24
	Right Parties	132	37.4	67	43.5	79	57.2	278
	Left Parties	75	21.2	14	9.1	7	5.1	96
	No Party or Other Parties	146	41.4	73	47.4	52	37.7	271
Member	Yes	36	10.2	33	21.4	21	15.2	90
	No	316	89.5	118	76.6	116	84.1	550
	No Response	1	0.3	3	1.9	1	0.7	5
NGO	Yes	76	21.5	42	27.3	14	10.1	132
	No	275	77.9	110	71.4	122	88.4	507
	No Response	3	0.8	2	1.3	2	1.4	7
Voted	Yes	306	86.7	108	70.1	91	65.9	505
	No	46	13.0	44	28.6	44	31.9	134
	No Response	2	0.6	2	1.3	3	2.2	7

Source: Authors' calculations.

The survey consisted of five sections. The first section collected data about personal characteristics of the participants such as gender, faculty, year of study, type of residential area, monthly family income (originally in 8 different income levels), political party orientation and membership status, NGO membership status and if the participant voted in 2018 elections.

The second part (Part A) included 63 five-point Likert scale questions in total. This study only focuses on the perceptions of Turkey and Turkish impact on Bosnia and the Balkans. As a result, the study uses only 24 questions from this section which are directly related to Turkey. Nine of these questions inquire about the Turkish foreign policy in the Balkan region; four of the questions are about the knowledge of the participants in Turkish culture; another four of the questions ask about the opinions of the participants about the current situation in Turkey; three of the questions ask about the economic activities of Turkey in Bosnia and Balkans; two of the questions ask about EU-Turkey relations and finally two questions ask about general knowledge about the Turkish history and its connection to Balkans. The majority of the questions are asked in the same direction where "1" indicates that a participant strongly

disagrees with a positively worded question and “5” indicates that the participant strongly agrees with the same question. However, two questions (A-42 and A-53) imply a negative connotation. Therefore, the transpose (inverse) of the response matrix was used in the calculations.

The third part of the survey asks about general interest in the Turkish language, history, literature, culture and movies. The first seven questions are asked in the form of a five-point Likert scale and the rest of them are binary questions. This section also asks if the participants ever visited or plan to visit Turkey in the future. This part also asks if the participants have any Turkish friends and also if they would mind having a romance or marriage with a Turkish person. In other words, this section aims to measure how the participants are connected with Turkish culture and people. The fourth part of the survey is about Russian culture and therefore, it is completely ignored. The final section asks the participants to rank their top three country choices for the study abroad if they are given a chance. According to data, 30 students indicated that Turkey would be their first choice, while 61 students chose Turkey as a second choice and 26 of them chose Turkey as their third choice. Out of 645 students, 528 did not choose Turkey or did not make any choice for this question.

Table 2 presents the mean comparison of responses to 24 questions selected for this study from section A of the survey. As explained above, these questions aim to find out the perception of Turkey and Turkish policies in the region of Bosnian students. Mean comparisons of the questions A-10 through A-62 reveal that, as expected, Bosniak students have a more favorable perception towards Turkey and they are followed by Serbian students. The only exception is question A-46, which is a history-related question. In this question, all ethnicities claim to have a similar level of knowledge on the impact of the Ottoman Empire on the Balkans. This finding is not surprising considering the historical, cultural and religious ties between Bosniaks and Turks. Though it is not presented in Table 2, one interesting situation worth mentioning is that the mean responses of Bosniak students who are feeling close to the right parties compared to the Bosniak students who feel close to the parties on the left are significantly higher (15-20 percent higher in most cases). This is, of course, in line with expectations as conservative Bosniaks are thought to be better connected to Turkey and are known for their more favorable views of Ottoman heritage in the Balkan region.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Selected Survey Questions (Section A)

Code	Questions	Bosniaks		Serbians		Croats	
		Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n
A-10	If available, I would attend free of charge Turkish language courses in my university/faculty.	3,48***	353	2.83	149	2.57	138
A-12	It would be good to have a Turkish cultural center in my hometown.	3,32***	352	2,78**	149	2,40**	138
A-16	Turkey provides a significant financial support to Bosnia	3,65***	351	3,15**	150	2,85**	136
A-17	I am happy that Turkey participates in projects which are important and contribute to the economic development of Bosnia	3,80***	347	2.96	146	2.89	137
A-20	If given a chance I would go and study at universities in Turkey.	3,41***	352	2,91***	150	2,77***	137
A-22	Turkey does not have any other expectation except to have a good relationship with all Balkan countries.	3,02***	347	2,75***	150	2,40***	136
A-24	Turkey does not favor any of ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina.	2,56***	348	2,18**	147	1,91**	138
A-25	Turkey favors Bosniaks in its activates in Bosnia.	3,46***	351	3.86	148	3.88	136
A-26	Turkey favors Serbs in its activates in Bosnia.	2,27!	350	2.11	150	2,06!	137
A-27	Turkey favors Croats in its activates in Bosnia.	2.15	338	2.25	150	1,88***	136
A-36	I believe that Turkey should become a full member of the EU.	3,39***	344	2.77	150	2.79	138
A-37	It is in the interest of Bosnia for Turkey to become a full member of the EU.	3,22***	339	2.61	148	2.79	135
A-42	Turkey's presence here is mainly to promote its own interests in Bosnia.	3,00***	350	3.39	150	3.49	136
A-43	Turkey is present here mainly to provide a help and support to Bosniaks.	3,19 β	346	3,55 β	148	3,38 β	137
A-46	I am very much familiar with the impact of the Ottoman Empire on the Balkans and its peoples.	3.92	346	3.81	149	3.67	136
A-47	I would consider dating to a Turkish boy/girl.	3,87 α	349	2.78	148	2,70 α	137
A-49	I would consider marrying to a Turkish person.	3,83***	349	2,85**	150	2,45**	135
A-51	Turkey has a capacity to bring more stability to the Balkans.	3,60***	346	3.00	151	2.86	135

A-53	Turkey, by its activities, causes and brings more political instability to Bosnia.	2,47*** 344	3.00 152	3.13 135
A-55	Turkey has an economic capacity to bring more prosperity to the Balkans.	3,66*** 350	2.94 151	3.04 137
A-57	Turkey is an example of a Muslim majority country that has been able to synthesize modernity, democracy and Islam	3,96*** 351	3.11 149	3.15 137
A-58	My knowledge of Turkish culture and heritage is very good.	3,66*** 352	2.94 149	2.93 137
A-60	Current political and security situation in Turkey is very stable.	3,12*** 352	2.61 148	2.43 136
A-62	Current economic situation in Turkey is very good.	3,54*** 352	3,25*** 151	2,82*** 137

Source: Authors' calculations.

* Significant at $\alpha=0,10$ level; ** Significant at $\alpha=0,05$ level; *** Significant at $\alpha=0,01$ level.

α Significant at 0,05 for comparison of population means between Bosniaks and Croats.

β Significant at 0,01 for comparison of population means between Bosniaks and Serbs; at 0,10 for Bosniaks and Croats.

In the majority of the questions, the survey finds that the population means of Serb and Croat responses do not differ significantly. Almost in all questions, Croats have the least favorable perception towards Turkey or anything related to Turkey. Only in a few questions about Turkey and EU, Croats seem to have more favorable opinions about Turkey than Serbs though the difference is not statistically significant. This can be explained by the desire of Bosnian Serbs to see Serbia as a member of the EU before Turkey becomes a member.

Table 3 presents the mean comparison of responses to 13 questions in section B and the only question in section D. These questions intend to capture the information about the participants in terms of their knowledge, interest, and connection to Turkey, its culture, and Turkish people. The only question in Section D is not directly related to Turkey, as participants were asked to write down their top three country choices to study. In this study, the response to this question was used as part of both dependent and independent variables in different models. If the participant did not include Turkey as one of the choices, the response was recorded as "0" for Turkey. If the respondent chose Turkey as a third choice, "1" was recorded for Turkey and "2" for the second choice, and finally "3" for the first choice. In addition, in models 2, 4, and 6 in Table 4, the responses were entered as "0", "5", "10", and "15" respectively to reflect the significance of this choice as a favorable perception towards Turkey.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Selected Survey Questions (Section B and D)

Code	Questions	Bosniaks		Serbians		Croats	
		Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n
B-1	I follow news on Turkey's internal affairs.	2,27***	350	1,95**	151	1,70**	138
B-2	I follow news on Turkey's role in the Balkans.	2,68***	351	2,28*	151	2,06*	138
B-3	I follow news on Turkey's role in global affairs.	2.55	350	2.38	151	2,04***	137
B-4	I listen to Turkish music.	2,59***	349	1,89***	151	1,48***	137
B-5	I watch Turkish series.	2,87***	352	2,22*	152	1,93*	137
B-6	Turkish series properly portray Turkish history, culture, and heritage.	2,98***	350	2.56	149	2.49	136
B-7	Watching Turkish series positively affect my opinion about the image of Turkey and its people.	2,80***	340	2.40	149	2.31	131
B-8	Do you have Turkish friends? (1=Yes, 2=No)	1,64***	347	1,82*	148	1,91*	132
B-9	Have you read any book written by Turkish writer? (1=Yes, 2=No)	1,54***	346	1.73	146	1.72	130
B-10	Have you ever visited Turkey? (1=Yes, 2=No)	1,61***	339	1.91	137	1.96	126
B-12	I would like to visit Turkey again. (1=Yes, 2=No)	1,14***	158	1,42*	50	1,65*	23
B-13	If you had never visited Turkey would you like to do that if given a chance. (1=Yes, 2=No)	1,06 ^β	265	1,15 ^β	139	1,11 ^β	125
B-15	I would accept to live in Turkey if got a job there. (1=Yes, 2=No)	1,24***	335	1,49*	140	1,60*	128
D-12	If given a chance to go and study abroad I would you like to have my education in Turkey (ordered)	0,63***	353	0.08	154	0.03	138

Source: Authors' calculations.

* Significant at $\alpha=0,10$ level; ** Significant at $\alpha=0,05$ level; *** Significant at $\alpha=0,01$ level.

^β Significant at 0,01 for comparison of population means between Bosniaks and Serbs; at 0,10 for Bosniaks and Croats.

In all questions, Bosniaks have significantly more favorable responses for Turkey and Turkey-related questions. Similarly, in all questions, it appears that Serbs provide more favorable responses on average compared to Croats. This is in line with the findings of section A. However, in this section, the difference between the population mean comparisons for Serbs and Croats tend to be more significant compared to section A.

Based on the results of Tables 2 and 3, it is obvious that ethnicity plays a major role in the mean value of responses. This is especially through Bosniak responses. As a next step, this study aimed to determine other factors besides ethnicity affecting the mean value of responses. This was done through the use of ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions. As it is well known, the OLS method does not work properly with Likert scale responses. In this survey, dependent or response variables are the responses to the questions from A-10 to A-62, and they are expressed in Likert scale; 1 to 5. In order to convert these numbers into some range of relatively continuous numbers, the authors added all the responses to those 24 questions (from A-10 to A-62 but inverse versions of A-42 and A-53 were added for consistency) and created a new variable called TOTALA. Theoretically TOTALA is expected to have values between 24 and 120. In our sample, TOTALA ranged from 39 to 113 and this was used as a dependent variable in Model 1, Model 3 and Model 5 in Table 4. In addition, another dependent variable called TOTALABD which was calculated as the sum of TOTALA and responses to 13 questions in section B and one question in section D. However, binary responses were first converted into 0 or 5 before they are added to the dependent variable (0 for 1 and 5 for 1 in the original response). This was done to achieve relative consistency in the calculation of the new dependent variable. The response to the question in section D was also converted into 0,5,10 and 15, as explained earlier. TOTALABD was used a dependent variable in regressions in models 2, 4 and 6 in Table 4.

Table 4 presents the result of OLS estimations. R2 for the models, which measures what percentage of the total variation in response (dependent) variable can be explained with the variations in explanatory (independent) variables, ranges from 35 percent to 55 percent. It can be considered as relatively high considering that the survey was not originally designed for this kind of analysis. Almost in all cases, from model 1 to model 4, the same variables turn out to be statistically significant; ethnicity, year of study, want to study in Turkey, urban, right parties oriented, world citizen, Bosnia and Herzegovina belongs to the West. Model 1 and 2 do not include the last two variables.

Table 4: Ordinary Least Regression (OLS) Results

Explanatory Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Bosniak	12,55*** (1,46)	18,37*** (2,51)	12,19*** (0,40)	18,09*** (2,47)	12,60*** (1,37)	15,62*** (1,84)
Serbian	5,07*** (1,60)	5,56** (2,68)	4,00*** (1,57)	3,87 (2,64)	4,36*** (1,54)	---
Male	-0.52 (1,16)	-0.90 (1,95)	-0.01 (1,15)	0.18 (1,93)	---	---
Want to Study in Turkey	5,06***	14,12***	4,87***	13,73***	4,79***	13,70***

Bosnian Students' Perceptions Of Turkey And Turkish Culture

	(0,67)	(1,13)	(0,67)	(1,12)	(0,64)	(1,08)
Faculty	0.89	0.37	0.98	0.15	---	---
	(0,81)	(1,45)	(0,79)	(1,41)		
Year of Study	-1,12**	-1,82**	-1,11**	-2,03**	-1,26***	-1,87***
	(0,48)	(0,82)	(0,47)	(0,80)	(0,45)	(0,73)
Urban	2,59**	3,44**	2,59***	3,85**	2,75***	3,58**
	(1,07)	(1,87)	(1,02)	(1,83)	(1,04)	(1,77)
Family Income	-0.32	1.03	-0.20	0.70	---	---
	(0,59)	(1,00)	(0,58)	(0,99)		
Right Parties Oriented	3,38***	4,88***	3,51***	4,74**	3,35***	4,01**
	(1,20)	(2,02)	(1,20)	(2,02)	(1,04)	(1,78)
Left Parties Oriented	0.45	3.60	0.39	3.48	---	---
	(1,60)	(2,77)	(1,58)	(2,72)		
Party Member	-0.06	-2.23	-0.08	-2.40	---	---
	(1,57)	(2,69)	(1,54)	(2,64)		
NGO Member	1.77	2.75	2,09*	3.30	2,51**	---
	(1,33)	(2,23)	(1,21)	(2,20)	(1,25)	
Voted in 2018 Election	0.87	1.74	0.75	0.97	---	---
	(1,37)	(2,34)	(1,35)	(2,30)		
World Citizen	---	---	1,62***	2,56***	1,63***	2,70***
			(0,40)	(0,71)	(0,40)	(0,69)
Bosnia belongs to West	----	----	-1,07**	-1,87***	-1,04**	-1,81***
			(0,45)	(0,74)	(0,44)	(0,72)
Constant	57,90***	80,74***	55,16***	78,15***	55,90***	84,73***
	(4,78)	(8,28)	(5,04)	(8,81)	(3,64)	(4,47)
Number of Observations	486	341	476	336	476	336
R-Square	0.3562	0.5271	0.3858	0.5533	0.3832	0.5434

Source: Authors' calculations.

Note: Standard errors are given in parentheses.

* Significant at $\alpha=0,10$ level; ** Significant at $\alpha=0,05$ level; *** Significant at $\alpha=0,01$ level

It should be noted that Model 1 and 2 include the variables related to the personal characteristics of the participants, which are obtained in the first section of the survey with the exception of “wants to study in Turkey”. The last one comes from section D, as was explained earlier. Model 3 and 4 are the expanded versions of Model 1 and 2. Additional variables include “world citizen,” “Bosnia and Herzegovina belongs to the West” are the responses to questions A-4 and A-9, which are not listed in Table 2. A-4 asks the participants if they identify themselves internationally rather than locally, nationally, or regionally. A-9 asks respondents if they think that Bosnia and Herzegovina belong to

the Western world and culture. Response to both questions is on the Likert scale. These two questions were not added to the model arbitrarily. Each model was tried with different combinations of extra independent variables to see which could lead to a significant improvement in the R^2 . Model 5 and 6 are the OLS results suggested by the stepwise method. Stepwise regression method could be useful in the presence of data sets with a large number of independent variables to find out which one of them could be more important or not important. This study used backward stepwise regression model as it has some advantages over forward stepwise method. Model 5 and 6 present results with only significant variables. However, the list of significant variables does not change much regardless of the model. This shows that the results are robust and consistent.

Another way of doing this was to conduct ordinal (ordered) logistic regression analysis since the responses to the questions in section A were on the Likert scale. Several different models were tried using the response of each question from A-10 to A-62 as a dependent variable and treating gender, faculty, year of study, family income, type of residential area, party orientation, party membership, NGO membership, and voting in 2018 elections as independent variables. In all trials, pseudo R^2 , which is a partial substitute of R^2 in the ordinary least square regression method, turned out to be very low but produced some significant coefficients. Moreover, some general questions from section A part of the survey (A-1 through A-9) were added as independent variables along with some responses from sections B and D. These additions improved the pseudo R^2 slightly but did not make a significant difference in the results. In addition, it is quite cumbersome to present the results of 24 separate ordinal logistic regression results in a paper. As a final effort, the mean value of responses from A-10 through A-62 (24 responses) were used as dependent variables in a single ordinal logistic regression and the results still did not change significantly compared to the results of the ordinary least squares method.

Conclusions

All major countries do everything in their power to protect their positions and interests both regionally and globally, from international espionage to training and feeding large and expensive armies. However, no country can protect its global position and its assets alone, and hard power may not be sufficient alone. Each major country needs friends and allies to deal with other coalitions of common interest. Today, powerful countries use soft power along with traditional hard power and economic capacity as the perception of a country by others might play an important role in swaying public opinion in potentially friendly and supportive countries. Soft power can best be exercised through spending to promote the image of the country and to improve the perceptions abroad about the country. In recent years, Turkey has had the

ambition and aspiration to be a regional power in the Middle East and in the Balkan regions.

Along with this desire, Turkey has increased its spending in the Balkan region substantially, mainly through its public diplomacy institutions like the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities, Red Crescent and Turkish Maarif Foundation. TİKA established coordination offices in all major Balkan centers and spent a substantial amount of its resources in the Balkans on rebuilding infrastructure and Ottoman remains as well as providing aid to Balkan societies in the education and health sector. Turkey offered a limited number of scholarships for Balkan students in the past but the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities provided significantly increased the number of scholarships in the last ten years. Increasing number of Turkish TV series aired in the Balkans are well received by the local populations and also act as a soft power policy tool for Turkey in the region.

Turkish efforts are often criticized for being selective and discriminatory in favor of Muslim populations in the Balkans, although Turkish officials reject those claims. However, it is also understandable that the majority of Turkish efforts are channeled through familiar channels like local Muslim groups or Muslim-controlled NGOs, as these groups are more connected to Turkish society and institutions as a result of historical ties. It is very critical for Turkey to be careful and balanced in its effort if Turkey aims to win the heart and minds of the people in the region. There is no doubt that these efforts help to improve the already positive image of Turkey among Muslim people in the Balkans, but it also is expected to improve the perceptions of the other people, mostly Christians, in the region.

This study provides a good basis to somewhat measure or have a feeling of current perceptions of Turkey in the region based on the example of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As it is explained in the introduction part, Bosnia is a unique country with its violent and turbulent ethnic-conflict inflicted history. These groups live together, or more correctly, they try to live together, as dictated by Dayton Peace Agreement. This study aims to shed light on how Bosnian people perceive Turks, Turkey, and Turkish involvement in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the last 20 years using a small sample of Bosnian university students from five state universities across the country.

The study finds that, not surprisingly, Bosniak students have a more favorable perception towards Turkey and they are followed by Serbian students. The favorite response from Bosniak participants is not surprising considering the historical, cultural and religious ties between Bosniaks and Turks. When Bosniak participants' responses were analyzed closely, the data reveals that Bosniak students supporting right-wing parties favor Turkey significantly higher compared to their peers supporting left-wing parties.

Croat students consistently perceive Turkey least favorably in all measures except the questions about Turkish accession into the EU. This can be explained by the fact that Serbians, despite their historical animosity towards

Ottomans and Turks, they lived together with Turks for over 400 years and had significant cultural interaction with them. As a result, they have a better understanding of Turkish people and culture compared to Croats, whose direct exposure to Turkish culture and experience of living together with Turks in the past are limited.

References

- Aydos, S. (2017). Popular Culture and National Identity: A Study on University Students in Bosnia and Herzegovina Who Are "The Magnificent Century" Viewers. Series - International Journal of TV Serial Narratives, 3(2), 63-75. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2421-454X/7629>
- Bechev, D. (2012). Turkey in the Balkans: Taking a Broader View, *Insight Turkey*, 14 (1), 131-146.
- Benjamin, B. & Bernard, L. (1982). *Christians and the Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Central Lands (Volume 1)*. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers.
- Berg, M. (2017). The importance of cultural proximity in the success of Turkish dramas in Qatar. *International Journal of Communication*, 11, 3415-3430.
- Bilgiç, M. S. & Akyürek, S. (2012). *Balkanlarda Türkiye ve Türk Algısı*, Rapor No:49, Ankara: Bilgesam Yayınları.
- Bojić, M. (2001). *Historija Bosne i Bošnjaka (History of Bosnia and Bosniaks)*. Sarajevo: Šahinpašić.
- Bozkuş, Y. D. & Arı, E. B. (2019). Southern Caucasian Students' Perceptions of Turkey and Turkish People, *Ankara Üniversitesi Çevrebilimleri Dergisi*, 7(2), 106-124.
- Bugajski, J. (2012). Turkey's Impact in the Western Balkans, *Atlantic Council*, February, 1-5.
- Burg, S. L. & Shoup, P. S. (1999). *The War in Bosnia: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*. New York: M.E. Sharpe.
- Ćorović, V. (2005). *Ilustrovana istorija Srba (Illustrated History of Serbs)*. Beograd: Politika-Narodna Knjiga.
- Davutoglu, A. (2010). Turkey's zero-problems foreign policy. *Foreign Policy*, 20 May 2010.
- Dursun-Özkanca, O. (2019). The Western Balkans in the Transatlantic Security Context: Where Do We Go from Here? *Insight Turkey*, 21(2), 106-128.
- Filandra, Š. (1998). *Bošnjačka politika u XX. stoljeću (Bosniak Politics in the XX Century)*. Sarajevo: Sejtarija.
- Friedman, F. (2004). *Bosnia: A Polity on the Brink*. London: Routledge.
- Gültekin, B. (2005). Türkiye'nin Uluslararası İmajında Yükselen Değerler ve Eğilimler, *Selçuk İletişim*: 4(1);126-140.
- Gündüz, T. (2016). *Alahimanet Bosno: migracija Bošnjaka na teritoriju Osmanskog carstva 1879-1912 (Alahimanet Bosnia: Migration of Bosniaks to the Territory of the Ottoman Empire 1879-1912)*. Istanbul: Yeditepe.
- Hoxha, E. (2018a). Turkey vs. China: Assessing Perceptions of the Economic, Political and Cultural Influence in Albania, *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 1(3), 7-13.

- Hoxha, E. (2018b). The Economic, Political and Socio-Cultural Influence of Turkey and Russia in Albania: Perceptions from Youth Political Forums, *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 1(3), 14-20.
- Imamović, M. (1997). *Historija Bošnjaka (History of Bosniaks)*. Sarajevo: Preporod.
- Imamović, M. (2006). *Bosnia: Evolution of its Political and Legal Institutions*. Sarajevo: Magistrat.
- Işık, H. (2016). The views of Arab students regarding Turks, The Ottoman Empire, and The Republic of Turkey: A case of Jordan. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 11(7), 377-389.
- Karčić, F. (1999). The Bosniaks and the Challenges of Modernity: Late Ottomand and Hapsburg Times. Sarajevo: El-Kalem.
- Kirişçi, K. (2009). "The Transformation of Turkish foreign policy: The Rise of the Trading State", *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 40, 29-57.
- LeBor, A. (2004). *Milošević: A Biography*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Mulalic M. & Kulanic, A. (2016). "Perceptions of Turkish Cultural Diplomacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina," in Muhidin Mulalic, Nudzejma Obralic, Almasa Mulalic, and Emina Jeleskovic, (eds.), *Education, Culture and Identity: The Future of Humanities, Education and Creative Industries*, Sarajevo, 494-508.
- Nuroğlu, E. (2013). Dizi Turizmi: Orta Doğu ve Balkanlar'dan Gelen Turistlerin Türkiye'yi Ziyaret Kararında Türk Dizileri Ne Kadar Etkili. *Uluslararası İstanbul İktisatçılar Zirvesi, Küresel ve Bölgesel Değişim Sürecinde Yeni Türkiye'nin Ekonomik Vizyonu*, 1-13.
- Pajaziti, A. (2011). "Turk and Turkey perception at Albanians in the beginning of 21st century", Past, Present and Future of Turkish-Albanian-Macedonian Relations, International Symposium, Skopje, Macedonia-Prishtinë, Kosovo. Ankara Center for Thought and Research & International Balkan University.
- Pejanović, Đ. (1955). *Stanovništvo BiH (Population of Bosnia and Herzegovina)*. Beograd: SAN.
- Rašidagić, E. K. (2013). A Critical Analysis of Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Western Balkans, in *Turkish-Balkans Relations: The Future Prospects of Cultural, Political and Economic Transformation*. Eds. Mulalić, Muhidin. Korkut, Hasan. and Nuroglu, Elif. Istanbul: Tasam.
- Sell, L. (2002). *Slobodan Milošević and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Uçak, S. (2017). Irak'ta yabancı dil olarak Türkçe öğrenen öğrencilerin Türkiye, Türkler ve Türkçe algısı. *Turkish Studies*. 12 (14), 491-512.
- United Nations Security Council Resolution, (A/RES/46/237). Available at: <https://undocs.org/A/RES/46/237>, accessed on June, 18, 2021.
- Yiğit, M. (2021). Saraybosna Yunus Emre Enstitüsündeki Kursiyerlerin Türkiye Algisi ve Türkçe Öğrenme Sebepleri, *Kırıkkale Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 11 (1), 207-216.
- Zhumabaeva, A., Nurmukhan, A. & Jin, Z. W. (2019). Nation branding – case study of Turkey, *Akademia Zarządzania*, 3(2), 124-135.