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THE REDISCOVERY OF THE BALKANS? A BOSNIAK-TURKISH FIGURATION IN THE THIRD SPACE BETWEEN ISTANBUL AND SARAJEVO

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PREFACE

This Working Paper delienates the construction of diasporic spaces by Bosniak communities residing in İstanbul and İzmir. Based on an ongoing multilocal anthropological field research conducted by Thomas Schad, a PhD Candidate in Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies, Free University Berlin, this research extensively discusses the rediscovery of the Balkans by the contemporary Turkish State and the AKP Rule. Deriving from the findings acquired in ethnographic field studies in three Bosniak neighborhoods and hometown associations in İstanbul and İzmir, this research explores the emerging “third space” between Turkey and Bosnia. It investigates the role of late and post-Ottoman Muslim migration (*Muhacirlik*) in Turkish cultural diplomats’ rediscovery of the lost Ottoman lands, and how contemporary neo-Ottomanism, conversely, is perceived by Bosniaks in Turkey and beyond. On behalf of the European Institute, I would like to thank Thomas Schad for his invaluable contribution to the Institute.

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Introduction

This study of the *Rediscovery of the Balkans* inquires into the interrelationship of Muslim migration from the post-Ottoman lands of Europe, and Turkey's current commitment and cultural diplomacy in the Balkans. Anchored in ethnographic field studies in three Bosniak neighborhoods and hometown associations in İstanbul and İzmir, this research project explores the emerging "third space" between Turkey and Bosnia. It investigates the role of forced, late and post-Ottoman Muslim migration (*Muhacirlik*) in Turkish cultural diplomats' rediscovery of the lost Ottoman lands, and how Neo-Ottomanism, conversely, is perceived by Bosniaks in Turkey and beyond.

In the 1990s, neo-Ottomanist soft power started to gain momentum in Turkey's cultural diplomacy. This resulted in the country's increased visibility all over the Balkans, especially in countries with large Muslim populations like Albania, the former Yugoslav states Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, and the transnational region Sandžak between Serbia and Montenegro. Simultaneously, post-migrant hometown associations under Bosniak auspices started to form across Turkey as charities, offering solidarity to the victims of the war in Bosnia (1992-1995), stressing the members' connectivity and origin in their *Bosniak homeland*.

The socio-genesis of Bosniak post-migrant groups in Turkey dates back to the shared Ottoman past of Anatolia and the Balkans. However, due to the fluidity of identity concepts, it is difficult to determine when exactly over the course of Ottoman and post-Ottoman history originally Slavic-speaking Muslims from the Balkans in present-day Turkey began to perceive themselves as *Bosniaks*. Because of former Yugoslavia's nationality politics and the ongoing controversy over the concept of *Bosniakness* in the Balkans, it is even difficult to merge Slavic-speaking Muslims from former Yugoslavia and the wider transnational sphere together in a *Bosniak diaspora*. Nevertheless, there are growing numbers of people in Turkey and in the Balkans today who identify themselves as *Bosniaks* (Tr.: *Boşnak*; Bs.: *Bošnjak*), and under that identity umbrella, they are connected throughout the virtual and non-virtual social space; they organize themselves, they visit each other, they share, commemorate, and create collective memories, they write about themselves and to each other, they make political claims, and often —not always— they share the same language(s). In that sense, *Bosniaks* are here conceived as a *diaspora in the making*, and the umbrella term *Bosniak* refers to all people who denominate themselves as *Bosniaks* — whether in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Serbian and Montenegrin Sandžak, Kosovo, Macedonia, Turkey or elsewhere.

Turkey's *Bosniaks* account for one of the country's largest groups of *Muhacirs* (Muslim immigrants),¹ alongside numerous other groups from the Balkans and the Caucasus. However, their case is somewhat different from many other post-migrant groups. Most *Muhacir* immigrants between Thrace and Anatolia found themselves cut off from their old homelands, left behind the opaqueness of the iron curtain, separating the countries of the Eastern Block (like Bulgaria, Romania, the Soviet Union, and the isolated case of Albania) from the NATO member state Turkey. Unlike its socialist neighbors, the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (1943–1992) was a core member of the Non-Aligned Movement, and as such, its borders stayed permeable towards East and West for most of the time. This special situation allowed Yugoslav and Turkish citizens to continue visiting each other throughout the Cold War, and resulted in the establishment of a long-lasting and continuing personal interconnectivity between family members who stayed in the old homeland (Yugoslavia and its successor states), and those who became citizens of Turkey.

The fact that the increase in public visibility of Bosniaks in the public discourse in Turkey (including the emergence of Bosniak hometown associations) coincides with the rise of Neo-Ottomanism in the formerly introverted Turkish foreign policy, raises the question how both phenomena are interrelated. Whenever high-ranking Turkish politicians of the AKP-led governments, like present Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu or President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, visit the Balkans, they conjure up the commonalities and connections between Turkey, the Balkans in general, and Bosniaks in particular. They emphasize the meaningfulness of the Bosniak cause for Turkey due to the shared cultural heritage, and stress the kinship-like intensiveness of Turkish-Bosniak relations due to immigration. Their visits are flanked by prestigious renovations of Ottoman heritage sites under the aegis of the *Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency* (TIKA), like the world-famous Old Bridge of Mostar. Moreover, an impressive number of recently opened Yunus Emre Cultural Centers have been successfully promoting Turkish as a foreign language, and are attracting students from and to the Balkans with educational prospects and scholarship programs.² Together with the popularity of Turkish soap operas, the perception of Turkishness and the Ottoman past in the Balkan streets has changed tremendously and positively.³

By investigating the correlation of both phenomena, the central claim of this study is that Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish cultural diplomacy as its soft power is intrinsically interwoven with the context of *Muhacirlik*. It maintains that the unprecedented extent and success of the neo-Ottomanist Turkish soft power in the Balkans can't be explained by merely ideological positions amongst members of the AKP governments. The historic depth of the human interdependencies between the Balkans and Turkey must be taken into consideration.

Revisiting scholarship on Bosniak migrations to Turkey, a major challenge for this research is the fact that the Balkans and Turkey have been treated for a long time like two separate regions alongside the borders of nation-states, neglecting pre-national and transnational dynamics beyond these lines. Scholars have mostly focused on states as actors, or overemphasized

- 1 The term *Muhacir* in Turkish signifies only Muslim immigrants, mostly in the context of forced migration following the Ottoman decline. Hereafter, the term will be used for *Muslim immigrants*, and its denominal nominalization *Muhacirlik* for (*forced*) *Muslim migration*.
- 2 Cf. Kaya, Ayhan and Ayşe Tecmen (2011). *The Role of Common Cultural Heritage in External Promotion of Modern Turkey: Yunus Emre Cultural Centres*. İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi University (European Institute/Jean Monnet Center Center of Excellence) Working Paper No: 4 EU/4/2011, http://eu.bilgi.edu.tr/media/files/working-paper4_2.pdf.
- 3 Stagl-Škaro, Natalia (2013). "Black Turk – Magnificent Sultan: Turkish Images on the Balkans Today", *European Review*, Vol 21, Issue 3: 336-348.

the perspective of essentialized, sovereign ethnic groups, by writing the history of *the Albanians*, *the Serbs*, *the Bosniaks*, or *the Turks*. In order to overarch this gap, this study adapts Norbert Elias' figurational sociology as a broader theoretical frame. Consequently, the above-mentioned chain of interdependencies between Muhacirlik and neo-Ottomanist cultural diplomacy will be coined the *Bosniak-Turkish figuration*. The figuration's sociogenesis, the performances and interdependencies between Turkish cultural diplomacy and (post-)migrant Bosniaks in Turkey and in the Balkans, in the past and in the present, are the central human figuration at the center of interest in this study.

This approach, of course, embodies several challenges for the researcher. First, the spatial dispersion of the figuration's members and the multitude of their stages, whether in the past or in the present, exacerbate the confinement of the research field. It asks for an appropriate definition of "the field" that is fairly broad to cover the whole context, and coherent enough in order not to lapse into a catch-all category. Therefore, Homi Bhabha's concept of the third space will be introduced and conceptualized as the geographic field and discursive-symbolic stage where the Turkish-Bosniak figuration's members interact. The cultural concept of the *third space*, emerging from translations and hybridity, will interrelate the geographical and mental maps as the reference frame of the figuration, and show how notions of Bosniakness, Ottomanness, Turkishness and *Muhacirlik* are meshed together, to finally accumulate in the symbol of the bridge, omnipresent and prominent in the figuration's narratives and symbolic iconography. Concerning the local Turkish context, from where the rediscovery starts, and where the empirical material in the form of one Muhacir's autobiographic writings stems from, cognate scholarship on the social phenomenon of *hemşehrilik* as a concrete pattern of spatialized local solidarity will show how the supranational third space is enmeshed with a widespread (post-)migrant practice of settlement and sociability.

In its wider geographical dimension, the *third space* of this study consists of the post-Ottoman lands that are directly concerned with *Muhacirlik* and Neo-Ottoman cultural diplomacy. They stretch between Turkey in the southeast and Bosnia in the northwest. The locations for research were chosen based on the information from secondary literature and first ethnographic observations in Turkey in April and May 2014. Thus, the migrants' trails were retraced from İzmir and İstanbul in Turkey to key locations of *Muhacirlik* in the Balkans. Kosovo and Macedonia (FYROM) are important locations as gates of exit from the old to the new homeland for most of the immigrants contacted in this study. Another crucial research area is the transnational historical region of *Sandžak*, one of the last Ottoman possessions (until 1912), between present-day Montenegro and Serbia, from where the overwhelming part of post-Second World War Bosniak migrants originate. Finally, research was conducted in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the eponym of the Bosniak diaspora in the making. Besides its outstanding symbolic meaningfulness, Bosnia-Herzegovina is the physical site of Mostar's Old Bridge as the pictogram of the *bridge* notion, and the focal point for Turkish cultural diplomacy on behalf of Bosniak-Turkish kinship.

Together with the preceding evaluation of cognate scholarship, secondary literature, newspaper articles, internet-based journals, homepages, and output from social networks, the empirical material for this study was collected during ethnographic field work between April 2014 and September 2015 in all of the above-mentioned places. *Pars pro toto* for the Bosniak diaspora in Turkey, three of the oldest and largest Bosniak hometown associations and their neighborhoods in İstanbul-Bayrampaşa, İstanbul-Pendik, and İzmir were selected as the starting point for research. From there, the rediscovery was traced back along the migrants' trail in the opposite direction. On the *Muhacir* trail through the third space, interviews were conducted across the fig-

uration, with émigrés in and around the hometown associations, with cultural workers, journalists, local politicians, and former refugees. Moreover, local media production, materials from local archives, photographs, autobiographic and fictive writings, ego-documents (like travel documents and photographs), and ethnographic observations complete the empirical basis of this study. All findings presented in this paper are part of an ongoing dissertation project, which is scheduled to terminate in 2017, after an additional year of field studies in the *third space*.

In the following, a detailed literature review will outline the achievements and some of the shortcomings of the existing scholarship as an indispensable basis for this study. Then, I will shed light on Turkey's neo-Ottomanist cultural diplomacy towards the Balkans, while special attention will be paid to the way that Turkish politicians refer to the topic of Bosniaks in Turkey, Bosniaks in the Balkans, and how the issue of *Muhacirlik* legitimizes and underpins Turkey's current commitment in the *third space*. In order to conflate the interplay of *Muhacirlik*, the lasting connections between old and new homeland, and Turkish cultural diplomacy, Norbert Elias' figurational sociology will be introduced as a broader theoretical frame of interdependency chains. Together with Homi Bhabha's concepts of translations and hybridity in the *third space*, the whole mesh of spatial and mental interdependencies will be conceptualized as the Bosniak-Turkish figuration in the third space. Finally, the symbol of the bridge will be highlighted as the condensed meeting point where the historical experience of *Muhacirlik* and Turkey's rediscovery of the Balkans come together.

1. Bosniak *Muhacirlik* in literature

As an introductory approach to a well-known, general problematic in the realm of migration studies, one could summarize that “(t)he construction of national identity was a crucial part of the nationalist project, and this meant forgetting the history of conquest, incorporation and migration upon which European nation-states were based (...). In this model of ‘methodological nationalism’ (...) border crossing was seen as exceptional and destabilizing”.⁴ The ubiquitous habit of writing history as the history of a particular nation or of an ethnic group through the lens of one or more nation-states, and taking the nation-state as a quasi-natural unit for analysis, doesn't mean that alternative historiographies and studies were never produced. In recent years, migrations and forced migrations have become more and more a subject of research, often conflicting with national grand narratives.⁵ Moreover, a new generation of scholars has engaged in transnational studies, which has helped to shift the perspective to multi-layered dimensions and varying directions of migrations, often emphasizing migrants and diasporas as actors.⁶

4 Castles, Stephen: Migration and Social Transformation, Inaugural Lecture for the Migration Studies Unit (MSU), LSE 15 November 2007, p.3 <http://www.lse.ac.uk/government/research/resgroups/MSU/documents/eventsRelated/castles151107-presentation.pdf>

5 Cf. Şeker, Nesim (2007). “Demographic Engineering in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Armenians,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 3: 461-474, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/17444904/Seker-2007-Demographic-Engineering-Ottoman-Empire>

Cf. Dündar, Fuat (2006). “The settlement policy of the Committee of Union and Progress 1913-1918”, in: Hans-Lukas Kieser (Ed.) *Turkey Beyond Nationalism. Towards Post-Nationalist Identities*, London/New York: I.B. Tauris: 37-42;

Cf. Ümit Üngör, Uğur (2011). “Geographies of Nationalism and Violence: Rethinking Young Turk ‘Social Engineering’”, *European Journal of Turkish Studies* [online], Vol. 7 (Demographic Engineering - part I), <http://ejts.revues.org/index2583.html>

6 İçduygu, Ahmet and Kemal Kirişçi (Eds.) (2009). “Land of diverse migrations: Challenges of emigration and immigration in Turkey”, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi University Press.

Concerning historiography in Southeastern Europe, historian Fikret Adanır summarizes in his review of post-Second World War historiography from the Balkans on the Ottoman Balkans that historiography was predominantly structured by the national view on history, inspired by diverse paradigms of modernization and modernity, ranging from early romantic nationalism to emancipatory socialism, and their most authoritative exaltations. The Ottoman past is generally perceived as a dark chapter, as the “Turkish yoke”, responsible for the Balkans’ backwardness and underdevelopment. Whether in Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, or elsewhere, the evolving hegemonic view of historiography eagerly tried to present proofs for its mythic cosmology, with the reborn nation at its center, giving birth to a myriad of national academies and institutions, producing a continuous intellectual output, leaving behind traditions that can’t easily be written away.⁷ Thus, it is not surprising that the perception of Turkishness, and the Ottoman past in the Balkan street, is by and large informed by the notion of the Turk and Islam as the threatening Other.⁸ This generalization is, of course, problematic in the case of Balkan Muslims. However, Halide Velioglu’s ethnographic study about the aesthetic, habitual, and sentimental registers of some Bosniaks’ daily lives in post-war Sarajevo shows that ambivalent conceptions of Ottomanness and Turkishness didn’t necessarily spare Muslims.⁹

When it comes to scholarship that could offer us the most evidence on the formation of the Turkish-Bosniak figuration between İstanbul and Sarajevo, the problematic rift between the persevering, state-centric focus on actors in the name of the nation-state and the genuinely transnational character of the figuration reappears. By their respective focus, the existing scholarship on migrations can be subdivided into two groups alongside the confines of both nation-states, either written *from within* or *on* the nation-state — even if general assumptions on nation-states are debatable, deniable, or outdated, as in the case of multinational Yugoslavia, which has disappeared twice, to finally vanish from the stage of European nation-states in the 1990s. It has left behind —for the time being— seven new states and statehoods, including the transnational historical region of *Sandžak* between Serbia and Montenegro, from where most of the post-Second World War Bosniak *Muhacirs* originate.¹⁰

The first group consists of Turkey-centered studies, written from the perspective of Turkey as the receiving country, mostly referring to a particular, ethnically defined group of migrants, such as Albanians, Bosniaks, or Turks, including all the difficulties involved in distinguishing them. Examples of this current are the most recent studies in Turkish by Tufan Gündüz¹¹ and Fahriye Emgili¹² on Bosniak migrants, and by Nurcan Özgür Baklacioğlu on Yugoslav Albanians in the field of political science.¹³

7 Adanır, Fikret and Faroqhi, Suraiya (Eds.) (2011). “Osmanlı ve Balkanlar: Bir Tarihyazımı Tartışması [The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography]”, İstanbul: İletişim.

8 Jezernik, Božidar (Ed.) (2010). “Imagining ‘the Turk’”, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing:1-16.

9 Velioglu, Halide (2011). “Bosniak Sentiments: The Poetic and Mundane Life of Impossible Longings”, Unpublished Dissertation thesis, The University of Texas at Austin.

10 Besides Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro, these are Slovenia and Croatia, Kosovo, and Macedonia. As for *Sandžak* (in Turkish *Sancak*), the term originally refers to an Ottoman administrative unit, and has lexicalized as the toponym for the borderland between present day Serbia and Montenegro, formerly part of the Ottoman Empire until 1912.

11 Cf. Gündüz, Tufan (2012). *Alabımanet Bosna. Boşnakların Osmanlı Topraklarına Göçü 1879 – 1912* [*Alabımanet Bosnia. The migration of Bosniaks to Ottoman Lands 1879-1912*]. İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi

12 Cf. Emgili, Fahriye (2012). *Boşnakların Türkiye’ye Göçleri (1878 - 1934)* [*The Migrations of Bosniaks to Turkey (1878 -1934)*]. İstanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat.

13 Cf. Baklacioğlu, Nurcan Özgür (2010). *Yugoslavya’dan Türkiye’ye Göçlerde Arnavutlar (1920-1990)*[*Albanians amongst the immigrants to Turkey(1920-1990)*]. İstanbul: Derin Yayınları.

The second group can be classified as Yugoslavia-focused studies that seek to understand the political agenda of the “sending country”, whereas the migrants and their whereabouts in the “receiving country”, including Ottoman and Turkish sources and scholarship, remain mostly untouched.¹⁴ Here, the interest in emigration to Turkey has gained new impetus in recent years. For instance, Vladan Jovanović from Belgrade has published, mostly in Serbian, a large number of studies on the Interwar period’s project of forced resettlement of Muslims from so-called “Southern Serbia”.¹⁵ Undeniably, Safet Bandžović from Sarajevo has delivered the most comprehensive works on forced Muslim migrations across the post-Yugoslav sphere. Unlike most other authors in Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, he is less focused on state archives and more emphatic on local historiography and collective memory studies. By doing so, he captures the *longue durée* of a cross-generational chain of forced Muslim migrations from the Balkans, starting with the early *Muhacirs* in the seventeenth century, contextualizing them with consequent migrations, including the most violent interludes of the Balkan Wars, the First and Second World War, up to the most recent migrations from both Yugoslav states, including the meltdown of Socialist Yugoslavia and the wars of the 1990s.¹⁶ Bandžović’s mistrust in state archives is also one of the major critiques of a German scholar, Edvin Pezo, who has written a meticulous compilation of archival material and minutes, offering us a critical and vast overview of both Yugoslav states’ policies and stances vis-à-vis their Muslim populations and state-directed resettlement initiatives to Turkey.¹⁷

Hence, this article addresses some of the problems that are reflected by the binary rift in the present scholarship, where migration is overwhelmingly understood as a definite process of border crossing from one nation-state to another, even bolstered by a tradition of separate historiography either on the Balkans (or Southeastern Europe), or on Turkey (all together within the realm of Ottoman studies). As this study of the Turkish-Bosniak figuration with its inherent and ongoing process of border crossings will show, the coming and going of nation-states, as well as the fluidity of identity constructions, complicate research perspectives which mainly focalize the nation-state or a given ethnic category as a fixed and decisive unit; therefore, the approach of this research transcends present and past national borders physically and mentally, and includes multi-sited field research in İstanbul and in the Balkans.

¹⁴ Less recent works on the topic are not included in this review.

¹⁵ Jovanović, Vladan (2008). “In Search of Homeland? Muslim Migration from Yugoslavia to Turkey 1918-1941”, in: *Currents of History/Tokovi istorije*, No. 1-2: 56-67.

¹⁶ Cf. Bandžović, Safet (2013). *Bošnjaci i deosmanizacija Balkana: Muhadžirski pokreti i pribježišta “sultanovih musafira” (1683.-1875.)* [Bosniaks and the de-ottomanization of the Balkans: Muhajir movements and the refuge of “the Sultan’s guests” (1683 - 1875)]. Sarajevo: Author’s edition. Bandžović, Safet (2013). *Deosmanizacija Balkana i Bošnjaci: Ratovi i muhadžirska pribježišta (1876.-1923.)* [The De-Ottomanization of the Balkans and the Bosniaks: Wars and the Refuge of Muhajirs (1876-1923)]. Sarajevo: Author’s edition. Bandžović, Safet (2014). *Bošnjaci i Turska: deosmanizacija Balkana i muhadžirski pokreti u XX stoljeću* [The Bosniaks and Turkey: The De-Ottomanization of the Balkans and Muhajir movements in the 20th Century]. Sarajevo: Author’s edition.

¹⁷ A broad overview of bibliography on migration from Yugoslavia to Turkey – excluding Turkish sources and secondary literature – is offered by the same author. Cf. Pezo, Edvin (2013). *Zwangsmigration in Friedenszeiten? Jugoslawische Migrationspolitik und die Auswanderung von Muslimen in die Türkei (1918 bis 1966)* [Forced Migration in Peacetime? Yugoslav Migration Policy and the Muslim Emigration to Turkey (1918-1966)]. München: Oldenbourg Verlag: 33-48.

2. The neo-Ottomanist soft power of Turkey's cultural diplomacy

The Muhacirs are the national memento of our lost lands
*Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk]*¹⁸

Approaching the interplay between cultural diplomacy and *Muhacirlik* by physically and mentally transcending national borders, transnational migration studies seem to offer a theoretical solution to the predicament of history writing from the narrow lens of nation-states, most convincingly expressed in their core critique of the methodological nationalism bias. Rather than in the national container, advocates of the transnational paradigm suggest conceptualizing a *transnational social space*, which comes close to the theoretical and methodological sample of this study.¹⁹ Yet, transnationalism is also problematic in this particular historical context. Even though the transnational paradigm attempts to transcend the narrowness of the nation, it assumes the existence of the nation as a category in the first place. However, in light of the current constitution of the statehoods succeeding Yugoslavia, the givenness of the nation is debatable. Moreover, the transnational concept becomes anachronistic as the Turkish-Bosniak figuration insinuates collective memories of the pre-national imperial (Ottoman) past and shared cultural heritage. But the real *problematique* with the transnational attempt to tackle migrant contexts “beyond the state” lurks behind the fact that agents of the emerging post-Ottoman states, some of which the Bosniak diaspora has managed to outlive, have significantly contributed to the sociogenesis of the Turkish-Bosniak figuration. Violent expulsions of Muslims from the Balkans and Christians from Anatolia, population exchanges, resettlement agreements, pogroms, killings, and genocide in the name of the nation can absolutely not be ignored.²⁰ Contradictively enough, Turkish cultural diplomats themselves may be classified transnational actors for facilitating the spread of neo-Ottomanist soft power across national categories and boundaries; and yet they are still very explicitly acting on behalf of the Turkish nation-state.

In the case of Neo-Ottomanism as Turkey's soft power that feeds on the shared, pre-national Ottoman past, studies of Turkish cultural diplomacy have suggested reading Neo-Ottomanism as a compound of the AKP governments' neo-liberal form of governmentality.²¹ Governmentality in the Foucauldian sense doesn't sharply distinguish between *the state* and the *subject population* in terms of a strictly hierarchical, top-down state power, but rather “invites” the governed to participate in the process of governance.²² As then Turkish President Abdullah Gül put it in 2009, institutions which address the shared cultural heritage “(...) are Turkey's invisible power. I mean preserving the vitality of her cultural heritage is Turkey's big-

18 This well-known quotation of Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk] is displayed on the front page of the hometown association *Pendik Bosna Sancak Derneği* (original: *Muhacirler kaybedilmiş ülkelerimizin milli hatıralarıdır*): <http://www.bosnasancakderneği.org/> (June 2014).

19 Faist, Thomas/Fausser, Margit/Reisenauer, Eveline (2014): *Das Transnationale in der Migration. Eine Einführung [The Transnational in Migration. An Introduction]*. Bad Langensalza: Beltz Juventa: 60-67.

20 Cf. Sigalas, Nikos and Alexandre Toumarkine (2008). “Ingénierie démographique, génocide, nettoyage ethnique. Les paradigmes dominants pour l'étude de la violence sur les populations minoritaires en Turquie et dans les Balkans” [Demographic engineering, genocide, ethnic cleansing. Dominant paradigms for studying violence against minorities in Turkey and in the Balkans], *European Journal of Turkish Studies* [Online], No. 7, § 34, <http://ejts.revues.org/index2933.html>.

21 Kaya, Ayhan and Ayşe Tecmen (2011).

22 Foucault, Michel (1979). “Governmentality”, *Ideology and Consciousness* 6: 5-21, quoted from Kaya, Ayhan and Ayşe Tecmen (2011), p. 7.

gest power. Not many countries have this power. We should appreciate its worth”.²³ Neo-Ottomanism, with its emphasis on a shared common past and cultural heritage can be considered a highly successful soft power.²⁴ Cultural diplomats don’t only stress the Ottoman heritage of all citizens of Turkey, but also reach out to Bosniaks (and others) as Ottoman heirs (*Osmanlı torunları*). As heirs, they are given their share of the cultural heritage, and hence, they can participate in the Ottoman-vested form of Turkishness — under the guidance of Turkey. But what are the propositions of Neo-Ottomanism with regard to the Balkans, from where did it emerge, and how is it interrelated with Bosniak migration to Turkey? Why can we speak of a Turkish-Bosniak figuration in the third space?

The references of the current longings for the Ottoman past and the lost lands in the Balkans tie in with a much longer and ongoing chain of relationships between old Rumelia and Turkey. For instance, Salonica (*Selanik*) and Bitola (*Manastır*) are remembered as the birth and training places of the Young Turk Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk] by the Turkish public. Memories of the Macedonian capital Skopje (*Üsküp*) have substantially informed the poetry of Yahya Kemal Beyatlı, a widely-known, eminent early Republican poet.²⁵ Even the Turkish national anthem’s author, Mehmet Âkif Ersoy, traces his family roots back to Peć (*İpek/Kosovo*), as Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan reminded all in a controversial speech in Kosovo.²⁶ Ottoman-Turkish toponyms from present-day Albania, Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina are indirectly or directly inscribed in proper names and toponyms, such as the surname of the noble family Köprülü (e.g., *Veles/Köprülü* in Macedonia), İstanbul’s Belgrade forest (*Belgrad ormanı*) and city quarters like *Yeni Bosna* (New Bosnia) and *Arnavutköy* (Albanian Village). The list of viziers, writers, statesmen, and architects with roots and connections to the Balkans is inexhaustible and can’t be listed here in detail. Most importantly, Neo-Ottomanists are well aware of those mutually understandable references, and address them on their visits to the Balkans. Altogether, those references as translations of the Ottoman past can be synthesized as the shared cultural heritage, which is at the very base of Turkish cultural diplomacy as the “civil pillar of foreign policy”.²⁷

When Turkish politicians address the shared cultural heritage, they may create confusion, or even infuriation, on the part of their non-Muslim Balkan counterpart by overemphasizing the Islamic element in the shared cultural heritage and their abstraction of social and political realities.²⁸ On the contrary, many Muslim politicians and parties from the Balkans are enchanted by the populist Turkish speeches, which are informed by Ottoman and Islamic notions — a Sarajevo-based Turkish freelance academic coined it a veritable “love relationship”.²⁹ A Bosnian political commentator appreciates Turkey’s commitment in Bosnia and Herzegovina, highlighting Ankara’s merits in the cultural sphere, like the renovation of the Old Bridge in Mostar:

²³ Kaya, Ayhan and Ayşe Tecmen (2011), p. 11.

²⁴ Cf. Nye, Joseph S. Jr. (1990). “Soft Power”, *Foreign Policy*, No. 80: 153-171.

²⁵ Ertan, Erol (2013). “Yahya Kemal Beyatlı’nın Eserlerinde Balkanlar” [The Balkans in the Works of Yahya Kemal Beyatlı], *Türkiyat Araştırma Dergisi*, No. 33: 77-88.

²⁶ “Başbakan Erdoğan Kosova’da...”, *Akşam*, 23.10.2013.

²⁷ Kaya, Ayhan and Ayşe Tecmen (2011), p. 11.

²⁸ “Türkiye Kosova’dır, Kosova Türkiye’dir” [Turkey is Kosovo, Kosovo is Turkey], *Milliyet*, 14.1.2014

²⁹ Özkan, Özgür Dirim (2014). “Siyasi bir aşk hikayesi: Türkiye ve Bosna-Hersek İlişkileri” [A political love story: The Relationship between Turkey and Bosnia-Herzegovina], *İleri Haber*, 4.10.2014.

Many Turkish shops, travel agencies, and others operate in Sarajevo and other Bosnian-Herzegovinian towns. We shall not forget the contribution of Turkey, who has co-financed the renovation of the Old Bridge in Mostar, of the Curved Bridge (*Kriva Čuprija*) in Konjic, the dervish lodge on river Buna, and other significant cultural-historical, religious and educational objects. Perhaps Turkey sees BiH as a big boost in her try to refresh its influence in this region, or, respectively, in the development of economic, cultural and sports cooperation with countries which were part of the mighty Ottoman Empire, but without real pretensions to revitalize that Empire, that former power on three continents”.³⁰



A combination of the Old Bridge in Mostar and the Fatih Sultan Mehmet Bridge in İstanbul. Advertisement of the travel agency Fidan Tours in Sarajevo. (Picture by T.S., November 2014)

3. Turkish cultural diplomacy and the Bosnian war

But how did Turkish cultural diplomacy under neo-Ottoman auspices escalate to its unprecedented climax of visibility and proactive presence in the Balkans? For the unfolding of Neo-Ottomanism, three important historical developments in the past four decades were decisive: first, the “liberal” economic reforms in the illiberal 1980s, secondly, the global political change with the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia’s disintegration, and finally, the era of the AKP government with its important stimulus for Turkey’s new Balkans-oriented cultural diplomacy.

The economic liberalization of the Turkish economy under Turgut Özal in the 1980s and the collapse of the Soviet Union paved the way to a real turning point, offering Turkey brand new perspectives on the regional and global level.³¹ As a rising geopolitical power at a pivotal geographic location with an apparently growing economy, Turkey initiated a transformation,

³⁰ Erdogan opet u Sarajevu [Erdogan again in Sarajevo], *Deutsche Welle*, 20.5.2015.

³¹ Kalaycıoğlu, Ersin (2012). “Yeni Dünya Düzeni ve Türk Dış Politikası” [New World Order and Turkish Foreign Policy], in: Faruk Sönmezoğlu, Nurcan Özgür Baklacioğlu and Özlem Terzi (Eds.)(2012): *XXI. Yüzyılda Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi [Analysis of the 21st Century’s Turkish Foreign Policy]*. İstanbul: Der Yayınları: 101-134.

opening its formerly self-centered foreign policy strategy towards an extended outreach to Central Asia, the Middle East, and the Balkans. Coincidentally with the outbreak of war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Turkey's president Turgut Özal (1989-1993) argued for a reevaluation of the claimed commonalities between Turks in Turkey and the populations of Central Asia and the Balkans.³² According to a political analyst in the 1990s, “*new geopolitical developments mobilized mutual awareness and sympathy among the Turks of Turkey, their ethnic and linguistic kin in the Caucasus and Central Asia, and the Balkan peoples of Muslim heritage who look to Turkey as a source of moral and material support in the formidable task of transition to post-communist societies*”.³³ Despite President Özal's insistence that the arms embargo on Bosnia must be lifted immediately, and that Turkey might intervene militarily in the Bosnian conflict and help the Muslims, his words were not succeeded by deeds. Neo-Ottomanism, at this stage, hadn't gained enough momentum to leave the long shadow of the authoritative Kemalist discourse behind. As a *New York Times* article from 1992 reflects, Turkey's willingness to intervene in Yugoslavia on behalf of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina was nominal, despite the pressure from Bosnian lobbies outside and inside Turkey:

“We are under enormous pressure”, said a senior Turkish official who spoke on condition of anonymity. “The people, the press are saying, ‘Why don't you do something positive?’ But it's not as easy as that”. (...) With the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the decline of power of its former Eastern European allies, Turkey has been seen by the United States and other Western nations as a potential regional anchor. Yet Ankara is reluctant to undertake risky initiatives alone. The very fact that its people are Muslim leaves policy makers uneasy that any action might be interpreted as religiously motivated—anathema in a land that, since 1923, has resisted all shows of religious fervor or fundamentalism in the name of the secularism implanted by the founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. “We shall never be the protectors of all the world's Muslims”, said one top official. “We are not and will not. Obviously there are affinities. But the basic principles with which the republic was established are secular. We share a common background with the Bosnians. Bosnians feel at home in Turkey. Our names sound similar. Religion is in it. But it's not only religious”. As the fighting has spread in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey has urged to its rambunctious newspapers and a powerful lobby of Bosnian-Turks to undertake both quiet diplomacy and broader efforts with other Muslim countries to persuade the Serbs to negotiate. Initially, Ankara opposed the breakup of Yugoslavia, arguing—correctly as it turned out—that the disintegration of federal power would unleash murderous ethnic wars.³⁴

Nevertheless, the 1990s with the Bosnian War were an important cornerstone in the development of Neo-Ottomanism, as Kerem Öktem retraces: the *Milli Görüş*-inspired Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*) around Necmettin Erbakan mobilized the Turkish public for the Bosnian cause, and the many ‘Alija Izzetbegović’ squares and ‘Bosna-Hersek’ boulevards in Turkey go back to this time.³⁵ In fact, the meaningfulness of the war in Bosnia, which was perceived as a war against Muslims and serves as a reminder of *Muhacirlik*, can't be underestimated.

A decade later, Turkey's present Prime Minister, the academic Ahmet Davutoğlu, stressed the meaning of the Balkans for Turkish foreign politics in his seminal book *Strategic Depth: Tur-*

³² Özal, Turgut (1991). *Turkey in Europe and Europe in Turkey*. Nicosia/Lefkoşa: K. Rustem & Brother.

³³ Bazoğlu Sezer, Duygun (1996). “Turkey in the New Security Environment in the Balkan and Black Sea Region”, in: Vojtech M. Mastny and R. Craig Nation (Eds.) *Turkey Between West and East*, Boulder: Westview Press, p. 73.

³⁴ Turkey Faces Moral Crisis Over Bosnia, *The New York Times*, 11.7.1992.

³⁵ Alija Izzetbegović was the first president of independent Bosnia-Herzegovina and enjoys cult status amongst Turkey's Bosniaks. Cf. Öktem, Kerem (2012). “Global Diyanet and Multiple Networks: Turkey's New Presence in the Balkans”, *Journal of Muslims in Europe*, Vol 1, Issue 1: 34.

key's *International Position*, where he calls for proactive Turkish economic, cultural and political activity in the Balkans.³⁶ According to foreign policy analyst Erhan Türbedar, Turkish citizens of Balkan origin are highly relevant for the implementation of Davutoğlu's policies. They are the reason why the Balkans are targeted by Turkish soft power:

A second reason that draws Turkey into the Balkans is the human factor. According to the official statistics, more than one million Turkish minorities live within the Balkan states. In addition, other Muslim communities in the region are important to Turkey. After centuries of migrations, unbreakable ties have been established between Turkish society and Muslim communities living in the Balkans. Those Turkish citizens with Balkan origins now form a natural lobby within Turkey, which is integrated into the state system. This lobby is made up of associations, foundations, journalists, academics, parliamentarians, ministers, diplomats, and military personnel, etc. This is one of the core reasons why the government of Turkey cannot be indifferent to the conditions and future of the Muslim communities in the Balkan countries.³⁷

In other words, political circles, intermingled with post-migrant lobbies from the Balkans and aware of their potential agency on behalf of the nation, have an interest in the situation of their fellow citizens of Balkan origin. Knowing the iconic status that Bosnia's Muslim war president Alija Izetbegović enjoys amongst nationalist Bosniaks in BiH and in the diaspora, Turkish politicians often stress their intense connections to the Izetbegović family and Turkey's leadership role. For instance, the invocation of Alija Izetbegović can be placed like a symbolical weight into the balance of political legitimacy – by either side: as Bosniak party leader Bakir Izetbegović (Alija Izetbegović's son) and Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan repeatedly emphasize, Alija Izetbegović, on his deathbed, 'entrusted' Bosnia and Bosniaks to Erdoğan (*emanet etti*).³⁸ The historical experience of *Muhacirlik* and the resulting Turkish-Bosniak citizenry is one aspect of the AKP government's integrative governmentality formula, remobilizing feelings of loyalty between Turkey as the safe haven and threatened Muslims outside the blurred imperial and national borders.

4. Bosniaks in Bayrampaşa

Since Turkish politicians address the issue of Bosniaks as *Muhacirs* and the protectionist role of Turkey directly and indirectly in their foreign policy, they form a figuration with Bosniak *Muhacirs* and Bosniaks in general. The notion of the figuration as used here is derived from Norbert Elias' sociology of figurations, as offering a suitable theoretical framework for tackling the entanglement of the rediscovery of the Balkans by Turkish cultural diplomacy and the nexus of *Muhacirlik*. Similar to Bourdieu's logic of *field* and *habitus*, Elias views society as a theatre stage, where every in-

³⁶ Davutoğlu, Ahmet (2014). *Stratejik Derinlik. Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu* [Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position]. İstanbul: Küre Yayınları.

³⁷ Türbedar, Erhan (2011). "Turkey's New Activism in the Western Balkans: Ambitions and Obstacles", *Insight Turkey*, Vol 13, No.3: 141; in 2003 the same author had already edited a book on Turks in the Balkans and Turkish cultural heritage in the Balkans, for the Eurasian Strategic Research Center: Erhan Türbedar (Ed.) (2003). *Balkan Türkleri. Balkanlar'da Türk Varlığı* [Balkan Turks. Turks' Presence in the Balkans]. Ankara: Avrasya Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi Yayınları.

³⁸ In this dossier, Bakir Izetbegović also stresses that his grandfather's mother was a Turk from Üsküdar, with more ancient roots in Kütahya (western Anatolia). Otherwise, the Izetbegović family is known for being a Muhacir family from Belgrade. Moreover, the dossier offers a broad overview of Bosniak-Turkish clichés: Babam Bosna'yı Erdoğan'a emanet etti [My father has entrusted Bosnia to Erdoğan], *Elektrovitrin*, 30.6.2014. Online available: <http://www.ekovitrin.com/dergi2014/temmuz/bekir.pdf>.

teraction can be positioned within the logic of social capitals that the given society values.³⁹ Moreover, contrary to static perceptions of society as ‘still photographs’, Elias and Scotson emphasize the socio-genesis of any human figuration that has to be taken into consideration.⁴⁰

This processual approach meets the requirement to address the historic depth and the evolution of the Bosniak-Turkish figuration in a post-Ottoman context, without drifting into overly simplistic, cultural or ethnic pre-assumptions. It helps to overarch the traditional gap between the Balkans and Turkey produced in scholarship over time, while the spatial and discursive breadth of the figuration is still a challenge for the research. As some of the examples of the cultural diplomats’ stages have shown, the spatial dimension of this research stretches over a vast geography between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Turkey. Therefore, the conceptualization of the research field in this study is borrowed from Homi Bhabha’s *third space*, with a spatial and symbolic dimension that combines the physical space (the “stages”) of *Muhacirlik* and cultural diplomats with its symbolic abstractions.⁴¹ In that sense, the *third space* is conceived as an abstract “location of culture”, where hybrid translations of all members of the figuration encounter, without giving up the inherent geographic vastness.⁴²

Before the synthetic icon of the bridge will be highlighted as the most prominent signifier of the *third space*, a sequence of the Turkish-Bosniak figuration and its symbols between a Bosniak village in the Yugoslav Sandžak and a predominantly Bosniak neighborhood in İstanbul Bayrampaşa will be outlined. The frame of the sequence is the autobiographic coming-of-age novel *From Biševo in Sandžak to the emigration to Turkey*,⁴³ written by Bećir Redžović Bajraktar [*Bekir Bayraktar*], who emigrated from then-Yugoslavia in 1968. After some basic information on İstanbul-Bayrampaşa, where the author lives today, the course of migrations and settlement will be described in the words of the literary character Hajdo, and additional autobiographic information on the author will complete the story of integration in the Turkish megalopolis. Turkish urban sociology and ethnographic observations in the third space will show how Bosniaks in Hajdo’s city district of Bayrampaşa translate notions of the new and the old homeland to a hybrid culture — located in the *third space*.

In 2013, the city district (*ilçe*) of Bayrampaşa had a population of 269,677, and including Yıldırım, one of the three ‘*Boşnak mahalles*’, it comprised 11 neighborhoods (*mahalle*).⁴⁴ Bayrampaşa is located on the European side of İstanbul, bordered by Eyüp to the east, Esenler to the west, Zeytinburnu to the south, and Gaziosmanpaşa to the northeast. Prior to 1990, when it was given the status of a district, it belonged to Eyüp. Not unusual for toponyms in Turkey,

39 Cf. Elias, Norbert (1987). “Über die Begriffe der Figuration und der sozialen Prozesse”, Einführende Bemerkungen zu einem Colloquium über den historischen Charakter der Gesellschaft und die soziologische Theorie am 12. Mai 1987 in der Technischen Universität Berlin, veranstaltet vom Institut für Soziologie [Introductory notes for a colloquium on the historical character of society and social theory on May 12, 1987 at Technical University Berlin, by the Institute for Sociology]. Diskussionsbeiträge IS/TUB 6, 1987; Kirk, Patricia (2012). “Norbert Elias and Figurations which Appear in Immigration. Social Problems that Move”, *Cambio*, Vol 2, Issue 3: 117 – 122.

40 Elias, Norbert and John L. Scotson (2013). *Etablierte und Außenseiter [The Established and the Outsiders]*. Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag: 76.

41 Cf. Rutherford, Jonathan (1990). “The Third Space. Interview with Homi Bhabha”, in: Jonathan Rutherford (Ed.) *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence & Wishard: 207-221.

42 Cf. Bhabha, Homi K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge.

43 Bajraktar, Bećir Redžović (N.D.). *Od Biševa u Sandžaku do seobe u Tursku [From Biševo in Sandžak to the emigration to Turkey]*. İstanbul: Author’s Edition.

44 Official Homepage of the Turkish Statistical Institute: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu – İlçelere göre il/ilçe merkezi ve belde/köy nüfusu – 2013. URL: http://rapor.tuik.gov.tr/reports/rwservlet?adnksdb2&ENVID=adnksdb2Env&report=wa_turkiye_ilce_koy_sehir.RDF&p_il1=34&p_kod=1&p_yil=2013&p_dil=1&desformat=html.



The Bosna Sancak Kültür ve Yardımlaşma Derneği in Bayrampaşa, with the plainly visible Old Bridge symbol in the building's façade. (Photograph taken by T.S., May 2015)

Bayrampaşa obtained its current name quite recently, in 1978, and was previously called *Sağmalcılar*. Situated just *extra muros* the historical districts, and, from the present-day viewpoint, in the central realms of the rapidly growing megalopolis, Bayrampaşa's history is a history of migration to İstanbul — notably from the Balkans. According to the governorate (*Valilik*) of İstanbul, the first immigrants from the Balkans came from Plovdiv (Bulgaria) in 1927, and used the land for agriculture. In the 1950s, new settlers came from Macedonia, followed by a new wave of immigrants in the 1960s from Yugoslavia's Sandžak region. The role of those immigrants in shaping the character of today's Bayrampaşa is praised on the governorate's official homepage:

The diligence of the immigrants from the Balkans, and their valuing of family networks, have contributed to the development of Bayrampaşa as one of İstanbul's most beautiful districts.⁴⁵ The abundant growth of the former village of Sağmalcılar was not only determined by migration from the Balkans, but also due to the resettlement of İstanbul city-dwellers whose houses were demolished for the construction of İstanbul's nearby major traffic arteries, *Vatan Caddesi* and *Millet Caddesi*.⁴⁶ As a result of Turkey's state-directed industrialization, Sağmalcılar increasingly attracted migrants from rural Anatolia. From the 1970s, the character of Sağmalcılar changed dramatically, from a once agriculturally structured, semi-rural neighborhood on the fringes of the city to an industrial and commercial area, mainly known for replacement parts, car repair, template production, small scale electronics and all kinds of smallware business. The social price of the rapid and uncontrolled growth (*gecekondulaşma*) was the outbreak of cholera with many dead in 1970, caused by the irregular use of archaic water pipes, which date back to Ottoman star architect Sinan. Subsequently, Sağmalcılar became synonymous with cholera among the

⁴⁵ Official Homepage of the İstanbul Governorate: <http://harika.istanbul.gov.tr/Default.aspx?pid=219>.

⁴⁶ *Zaman*, 1.7.2007 URL: http://www.zaman.com.tr/sehir_bayrampasa_556030.html.

Turkish public, which ultimately led to the renaming of Sağmalcılar into Bayrampaşa.⁴⁷ Today, Bayrampaşa is considered one of the well-integrated city quarters, which has overcome its untidy reputation, being connected to İstanbul's main traffic arteries, hosting Southeast Europe's biggest terrestrial traffic hub, the central bus terminal (*İstanbul Büyük Otogarı*), with daily connections to Novi Pazar, Skopje, Tirana and other destinations in the Balkans, amongst others.⁴⁸ One of the immigrants from the Yugoslav Sandžak was Hajdo, the fictionalized alias of Bekir Bayraktar.

5. Bekir's story: security under the crescent

In Bayrampaşa, I meet Bekir Bayraktar, who gives me his novelized autobiography *From Biševo in Sandžak to the emigration to Turkey*. Together, we go to the newly constructed, impressively huge building of the hometown association in the Yıldırım neighborhood, right across from the Bayrampaşa city park on Tunca Sokak. The oldest Bosniak association in Turkey just moved from its former location in the Kartaltepe neighborhood. The building includes three floors, two guest apartments, two big seminar rooms, a restaurant, a library, and the huge director's office. On both sides of the building, the emblematic motif of Mostar's Old Bridge (*Stari Most*) is visible. The Old Bridge is also part of the association's logo, and appears in a huge painting on an interior wall. In the director's office, I have the opportunity to talk to Zahit Büyükbayrak, the association's president, to Bekir Bayraktar, and to two other members of the hometown association. The conversation mainly revolves around Bekir Bayraktar's memoirs, the subject of his book *From Biševo in Sandžak to the emigration to Turkey*, written in the author's mother tongue. Bećir Redžović Bajraktar was born on 25.9.1946 in the village of Biševo, which belonged to the municipality of Rožaje in the Montenegrin Sandžak. There, he grew up with his five sisters and brothers, his father Rašit, and his mother Džana. In his novelized, autobiographical book, Bećir appears under the pseudonym Hajdo, while all other characters appear identical to his family members, as clarified at the end of the book. When Hajdo attends the second grade of school, his father Rašit dies, and Džana becomes a single mother and head of the family. As described in his book, the abiding themes in Hajdo's (Bećir's) memories are education, early friendships, and social imbalances experienced in Yugoslavia. Hajdo seems to be particularly impressed by his male and female teachers, all of whom have Christian names, and he meticulously describes his encounters with them, which are never unanimously negative or positive. After the first eight years of school in Biševo, he moves to Nikšić, Montenegro's second largest city outside Sandžak, where he enrolls at the Pedagogical School, from where he moves again to Novi Pazar, the capital of the Serbian part of Sandžak, to graduate after two years from the Teachers School. It is a time when the topic of migration to Turkey aroused major public interest amongst Muslims from Sandžak:

Small conferences are held, and the discussions revolve around the *vasikas* (=immigration permit), and everybody tries to figure out what living in Turkey would look like. In that summer, Bajram Kardović comes from Turkey to his village. They prepare him a warm welcome. Bajram told his acquaintances, amongst others, that it was easy to get jobs in İstanbul, especially if they had a profession or if they had

⁴⁷ Insightful newspaper articles from 1970, which also shed light on the general living conditions in Sağmalcılar: *For not respecting the curfew order, 12 persons in Sağmalcılar were arrested by the police. Three of them said they weren't aware of the census [being conducted]. In the course of the census, the social condition of the shanty towns also saw the light of the day. At first sight, it came out that the families of the 12 persons, who are living in one or two rooms, primarily speak Balkan idioms.* In: *Milliyet*, 26.10.1970, p. 13.

⁴⁸ *Zaman*, 1.7.2007: URL: http://www.zaman.com.tr/sehir_bayrampasa_556030.html.

graduated from school. Moreover, there were also jobs for simple workers, and even for under-aged children, there were apprenticeship positions (*čirak*), and they would immediately get a worker status. There were also rumors about unpleasanties: that girls from the factories would marry Anatolians, who would bring them there, to Anatolian villages, where they would hardly get along with their parents-in-law, and their traditions were very difficult for women to bear, and so forth. Some earlier migrants to Turkey would speak up and rail against Turkey, and some others would exaggerate in praising it. That way, the burning topic of that summer in Sandžak was the migration to Turkey. These were the days when in former Yugoslavia, a massive education campaign started, and when there were educated people who would start looking for employment in so-called state jobs.⁴⁹

In 1968, the head of the family, mother Džana, decides to emigrate to Turkey, where Hajdo, now in his early twenties, accompanies his family. In his unpublished, eight-page autobiographic essay *Muhadžer (Muhacir)*, he describes the moment of the family's arrival in Turkey and reveals his mother's motive for emigration:

I remember it, as if it was yesterday, it was after a long and exhausting travel, when my late mother Džana burst out:

- Kids, kids, look! You can see the Turkish flag!

We ran to the window, curious to see the Turkish flag, and at the same time, we saw how our mother silently whispered prayers, begging to Allah to safeguard her children and to offer them a livelihood (*nafaka*) in that unknown country. We were at the same time happy, because we had approached our destination, but in our souls, we were still haunted by the sadness of detachment. That (was the) first encounter with Turkey, with her red flag, with its enormous crescent, promising us security, but also with its rigorous customs guards and its very unpleasant border police officers.⁵⁰

From a first-person perspective at the end of his book, Bećir —now named Bekir Bajraktar⁵¹— relates in more detail how he developed his livelihood upon arrival in Turkey, where he had little time to master the language and get settled:

(...) In Turkey, like every immigrant, I have been working in a TV factory for six months. Then I got my ID, applied for a passport, and went to work in Germany, where I was working for two years. Upon return from Germany, I served the army as a conscript. In 1974, I get a job in the tax authorities in İstanbul as a taxation clerk, where I was working for two and a half years.

I quit my job there, and together with my older brother Avdulj Bajraktar, we open a jewelry shop in the well known Grand Bazaar, called *International*. Our two younger brothers Jonuz and Hajdin would join us, too. In 1979, we move to Austria's capital Vienna. There, we open an import-export company, and for some time, our business works well, but in the end, we are in trouble with the financial authorities and bankrupt. Again, I go to work in Iraq, as a translator for the German company *Lux*, and there I work for two years, and I still keep wonderful memories from Iraq then. Again, in 1986 in İstanbul, the four of us open a textile company in Laleli, named *Texas*, from where I retire. (...) ⁵²

As Alija Džogović, writer and linguist from Sandžak, assesses at the end of Bekir's novel, the book transcends different literary genres. On the one hand, the main character in the book,

⁴⁹ Bajraktar, Bećir Redžović (N.D.). *Od Biševa u Sandžaku*: 217-218.

⁵⁰ Bajraktar, Bekir: *Muhadžer (sic!) [Muhacir]*, p. 3 (=Unpublished document, sent to me by the author Bekir Bajraktar via e-mail).

⁵¹ Like every Muhacir, Bećir Redžović Bajraktar had to change his name into a Turkish sounding name upon immigration to Turkey.

⁵² Bajraktar, Bećir Redžović (N.D.). *Od Biševa u Sandžaku*: 281-282.

Hajdo, is a literary character, and name-wise not identical with Bekir/Bećir. Yet, all other characters and toponyms appear identical with the biographical information given by the author and the epilogues of his brother Jonuz, Alija Džogović, and Zaim Azemović. Therefore, Džogović classifies the book a “novelized biography”. As such, it tells us much about the atmosphere in the Sandžak of the 1960s, one of the poorest regions of former Yugoslavia, and prevailing considerations of its inhabitants with regard to the question whether to stay or not, whether to migrate to Turkey, or to try to benefit from the limited economic and social prospects of socialist Yugoslavia, approaching its economic heyday.⁵³ The book also shows how the mobility of Bosniaks, whose migration didn’t terminate in Turkey, played an important role in the economic development of the immigrants. Like many others of the interviewed Bosniaks, Bekir could profit from his family network, which spanned Germany, Austria, Yugoslavia, Turkey, and the Middle East to North Africa.

6. The hometown association and the quarter

The “Bosnia Sandžak Culture and Solidarity Association” (*Bosna Sancak Kültür ve Yardımlaşma Derneği*) in Bayrampaşa has existed since 1989, and obtained its current name and status of a public benefit society (*kamu yararına çalışan dernek*) in 1995, the final year of the war in Bosnia (1992-1995). With most Bosniak hometown associations in Turkey, it shares the twin-name *Bosna Sancak*. One reason for this name-twinning is the war in Bosnia, which was widely perceived in Turkey as a war against Muslims, and affected many Turkish Bosniaks directly or indirectly. Even though the proper homeland of Bayrampaşa’s Bosniak community, the Serbian and Montenegrin Sandžak, was spared the most bloody war events in neighboring Bosnia, many Bosniaks from Sandžak (*Sandžaklije*) have relatives in Bosnia. However, the war resulted in a wave of solidarity amongst Turkey’s Bosniaks — thus the name *Bosnia Sandžak Culture and Solidarity Association*.

Apart from this idiosyncrasy, Bosniak associations do not stand alone in Turkey’s social fabric. Together with a myriad of similar associations under Circassian (Caucasian), Kosovar, Albanian, Bulgarian, Black Sea, and many other vernacular auspices, they belong to the group of *hometown associations* in Turkey.⁵⁴ The term *hometown associations* is a loan translation from the Turkish term *hemşehri örgütlenmeleri*, as defined by Ayça Kurtoğlu, who has produced exhaustive sociological work on the role of *hemşehri* associations in Turkish society and politics. The social phenomenon of *hemşehrilik* as a pattern of settlement and the feeling of belonging together (*aidiyet*) on the basis of shared roots and shared culture is the background of a considerable share of the civil society organizations in Turkey: in 2003, one third of all such organizations in the capital Ankara were hometown associations.⁵⁵

The associations are the organizational expression of *hemşehrilik*. The main propositions of *hemşehrilik* suggest that people from the same (*hem*) city (*şehir*) or geographic area, upon migration to a city like İstanbul or Ankara, settle conjunctly in the same neighborhood. Kurtoğlu identifies the feeling of belonging together — due to the bond of a shared place of origin and shared culture — the primary reason for the emergence and perseverance of *hemşehri* associations.

The idea of having a *place of origin* is referred to as *memleket* (homeland) in Turkish. For instance, when getting to know each other, it is one of the most common questions in Turkey to

⁵³ Ibid.

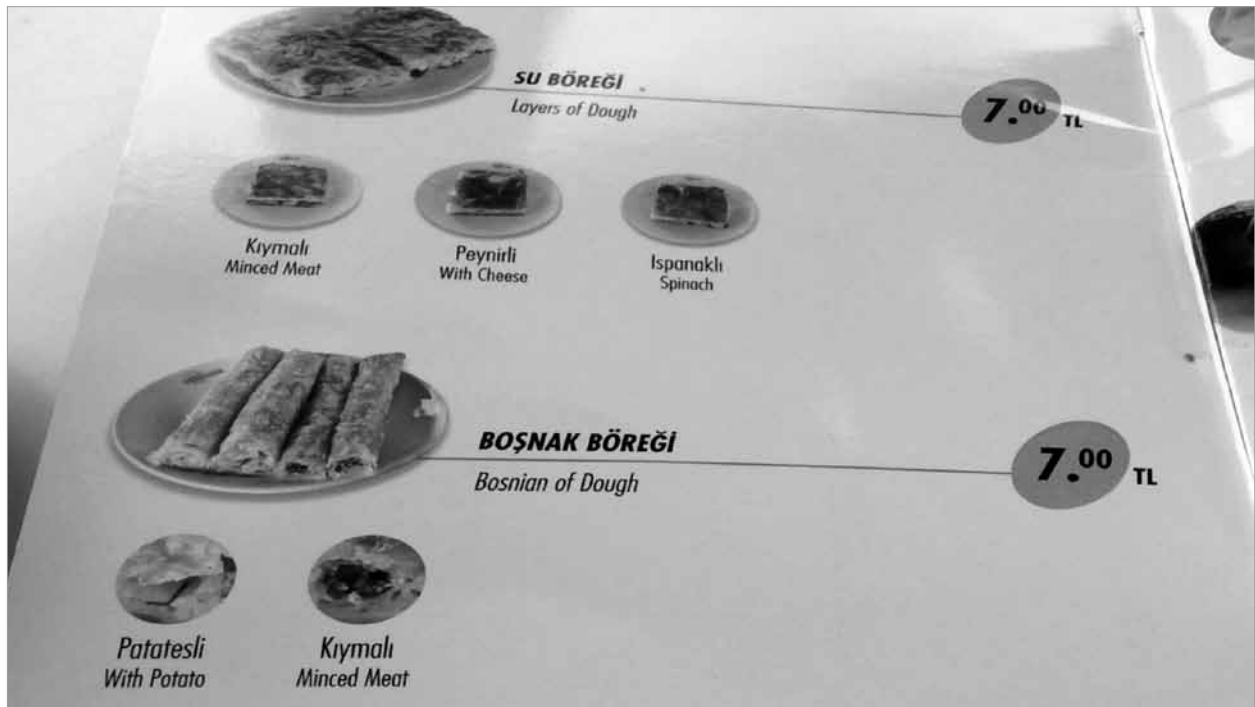
⁵⁴ Cf. Toumarkine, Alexandre and Hersant, Jeanne (2005). “Hometown organisations in Turkey: an overview”, in: *European Journal of Turkish Studies* [online] No 2, <http://ejts.revues.org/397>.

⁵⁵ Kurtoğlu, Ayça (2004). *Hemşehrilik ve Şehirde Siyaset. Keçiören Örneği [Hemşehrilik and Politics in the City. The example of Keçiören]*. İstanbul: İletişim.

ask “Memleketin neresi?” (*Where is your homeland?*). Everybody has a *memleket*, and is expected to have one, be it inside or outside the *anavatan* (motherland), which is Turkey. *Memleket* has two meanings: it can be the land of the nation (*ulusun toprağı*), or the land of the family (*ailenin toprağı*) – or, more precisely, the land of the family’s roots. Following this logic, it is not uncommon for a second-generation İstanbul-born city dweller to answer the question with “I am from Samsun”, if his grandparents come from there. *Hemşehrilik* refers to the second meaning of *memleket*, which is masculine, and means, in the patriarchal social order, the land of the (fore) fathers (*babanın/atanın toprağı*), as opposed to *anavatan*, which is the motherland. *Memleket* and *anavatan* are not commutable — they exist alongside each other.⁵⁶ The *hemşehrilik* pattern can be seen as a zipper, which interlocks and integrates sameness, shared roots and shared culture with the shared-culture claim of neo-Ottomanist soft power in vernacular speech.

Conclusion: a bridge of cooperation in the third space

With Bhabha’s cultural theory, the adoption of the logic of *hemşehrilik* by Bosniaks in İstanbul can be characterized as a translation of both the vernacular social order and the importance of the (imaginary) homeland. To the extent that *hemşehrilik* can be read as a translation of the host country’s references, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Sandžak as the eponyms for the hometown association are the references for the translation of symbols and emblematic topics under



Bosnian Burek/Pita (Boşnak Böreği) in the menu of the (non-Bosniak) restaurant chain Aslı Börek in İstanbul Üsküdar (Picture by TS)

56 Kurtoğlu, Ayça (2005). “Mekansal Bir Olgu Olarak Hemşehrilik ve Bir Hemşehrilik Mekanı Olarak Dernekler” [“Spatial Local Solidarity as a Case and Associations of Local Solidarity as a Venue”, translated by EJTS], in: *European Journal of Turkish Studies* [online] No. 2, <http://ejts.revues.org/375>, §2.

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ASGROUP ORSA KLAS VISPAK

Poster of a Bosniak festival attended in İstanbul Kartal, organized by the Bosniak hometown association from Pendik, displaying the Old Bridge and the symbol of Kartal municipality (a pavilion), meshing together symbols of the vernacular and the imaginary homeland to a graphic third space.

Another bridge is displayed in the association's logo (left corner) (Source: Internet)

the label of *Bosniakness*: the payment of tributes to Bosnia's first president Alija Izetbegović,⁵⁷ the use of the medieval symbol of the Bosnian lily (*ljiljan*) in heraldics,⁵⁸ the commemoration of the victims of the massacre of Srebrenica in 1995 as a reminder of *Muhacirlik*,⁵⁹ together with other conjoint topics and differentiators which are equally related to the Sandžak and BiH's Muslims — such as the refusal of cousin marriage, the celebration of the traditional open air get-together *Teferič*, the ostentatious preparation of *Pita/Burek* (*Bošnjak Böreği*), the performance of the round-dance *Kolo*, and many more. Exemplary of the Bosniaks' symbolic iconography, the symbol of the bridge shall be deciphered here as a hybrid translation in the third space.

The embodiment of the war against Muslims and *Muhacirlik* in the twinned name *Bosna Sancak* can be read as a hybrid translation, regardless of how “originary” the appropriation of Bosnia and symbols from Bosnia and Herzegovina as references may appear. For instance, a Herzegovinian Bosniak might be bewildered by the pervasive use of the symbol of the Old Bridge of Mostar (the capital of Herzegovina) by people from Sandžak (*Sandžaklije*).⁶⁰ One may argue that Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) was not a hot spot for emigration to Turkey after the Second World War, and that most of the Bosniaks in Bayrampaşa didn't actually come from BiH. However, according to Bhabha's notion of cultural translation, cultures are never “in themselves” or “for themselves”, because they are always subject to intrinsic forms of translation, which is also a way of imitating, “*but in a mischievous (sic!), displacing sense — imitating an original in such a way that the priority of the original is not reinforced but by the very fact that it can be simulated, copied, transferred, transformed, made into a simulacrum and so on: the 'original' is never finished or complete in itself. The 'originary' is always open to translation so that it can never be said to have a totaled prior moment of being or meaning — an essence*”.⁶¹

Thus, the symbol of the *bridge* can be interpreted as a condensed hybrid translation, as a meeting point in the third space, where the historical experience of *Muhacirlik* and Turkey's rediscovery of the Balkans encounter. Whether it be the renovation of the “real” Old Bridge in Mostar by the Turkish company Er-Bu İnşaat in cooperation with the Turkish Development

57 Aliya İzetbegović'i Anma Töreni [Commemoration ceremony for Alija Izetbegovic], *Haber Bošnjak* (online), 15.10.2011. Online available: http://www.haberbosnak.com/yerel/15/10/2011/aliya-izzetbegovici-anma-toreni/#.Vgz_KQ2VUM.

58 The symbol is omnipresent, like on the print issue and homepage of *Balkanaktüel*, a local magazine produced by Selim Öztürk, a second generation Bosniak met in Bayrampaşa. Homepage of *Balkanaktüel*: <http://balkanaktuel.com/egazete.html>.

59 Srebrenitsa için Bosna anıtı [A Bosnia monument for Srebrenica], *Anayurt*, 3.8.2015, <http://www.anayurtgazetesi.com/haber/Srebrenitsa-icin-Bosna-aniti/554834>.

60 In BiH, Montenegro and Serbia, there is an ongoing disagreement over the prerogative of interpretation about who may belong to the category of Bosniak. Two examples from Montenegro shall suffice here: on behalf of the *Matica Muslimanska* of Montenegro, the authors advocate a *Muslim Nation of Montenegro* and warn from *Bosniakness* (*Bošnjastvo*). Not only are they following the pathway of Socialist Yugoslavia's nationality policies, which used to be the world's only country comprising a *Muslim Nation*, called *Muslimani*, with the notion of *Matica* (literally: “queen bee”), they also refer to the Slavic *Matices* movement and foundational institutions of the Serbian, Czech, Croat, Slovak, Slovenian, and Montenegrin nations as the metaphoric parent body of a Muslim-Montenegrin nation. Cf. Kurpejović, Avdul (1998). *Program nacionalne afirmacije Muslimana u Crnoj Gori*. [Programme for the national affirmation of Muslims in Montenegro], Podgorica: Matica Muslimanska Crne Gore. Čoković, Salko and Kurpejović, Avdul (2012): *Ustavno-pravni i politički status i položaj Muslimana Crne Gore* [Constitutional-legal and political status and situation of Muslims from Montenegro], Podgorica: Matica Muslimanska Crne Gore.

61 Rutherford, Jonathan (1990), p. 210,

Agency TIKa (1997-2004),⁶² the retrieving of the bridge symbol in the hometown association's architecture and logo, or the novelized memoirs of Bekir Bayraktar in this study, the symbol of the bridge stands for cooperation, migration from a dangerous to a safe place, and connectivity. The writings of the local poet Zaim Azemović from the Montenegrin Sandžak's municipality of Rožaje (to which Bekir Bayraktar's home village Biševo belongs) are a literary bridge: being one of the contributors at the end of Bayraktar's book, he describes the relationship between Rožaje and İstanbul as a bridge: "*Bosniaks from Montenegro in İstanbul — a bridge of cooperation with the homeland*". He evaluates the bridge as following:

We would like to express that the association of Bosniaks from Montenegro and other parts of Sandžak in İstanbul, "Sandžak-Bosna" in Bayrampaşa, in the municipality of İstanbul, is already for a longer period of time known for its cooperation with some municipalities in Montenegro, where interest for such activities is common, in culture and other fields, like in the case of the municipality of Rožaje. The [association's] president Zahit Martinović's [Büyükbayrak's] ancestors were Muhacirs from Montenegro, too.⁶³

As one of the guests from Montenegro, he reports from Bayraktar's book release in İstanbul in a contribution to the local Montenegrin magazine *Collection of Rožaje (Rožajski Zbornik)*. Thus, these and similar writings are a bridge between new and old homelands, being only one sequence of manifold connections in a third space across time – inhabited, channeled and bridged by memories and commemoration sites, neighborhoods, translocal families and kinship networks, shared cultural practices, transnational political initiatives and enterprises, literature production and media, and, increasingly, tele-media, home pages, social network profiles and groups.

⁶² The homepage of *Er-Bu İnşaat* presents all renovated Ottoman monuments (and notably bridges) in the Balkans and Turkey: <http://www.erbuinsaat.com/ek/12/Kurumsal-Dokumanlar>.

⁶³ Azemović, Zaim (2011). "Bošnjaci iz Crne Gore u İstanbulu — most saradnje sa zavičajem predaka" [Bosniaks from Montenegro in İstanbul — bridge of cooperation with the homeland], *Rožajski Zbornik*, Vol. 15: 349-350.

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