

WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY AFTER THE COUP D'ÉTAT ATTEMPT (15TH OF JULY 2016)

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ABSTRACT

There is a profound importance with regard to Turkey's relationship and the Western Balkan states and their societies. This paper first analyses the Western Balkans from an historical developmental point of view and see its relationship ground towards the modern Turkish state having in mind their historical, cultural, religious, political, military and economical ties. Secondly it will be analysed the Turkish state policies towards the Western Balkans region and their states and societies. In the third part of the paper it will be focusing towards the Turkish coup d'états history and the civil-military issues that rise in the Turkish political history from the very beginning of its state formation and last until today. In the fourth part I will be structuring my paper while analysing the coup d'état attempt on the 15th of July and the Gulen movement as one the most important factor for the coup launch. In the last part actually the fifth I will be focusing on the coup d'état attempt of the 15th of July and its reflection in the Western Balkans as a political and universal event that dismantled the citizen sovereignty and legitimacy in general. Moreover, Turkish political relations with the Western Balkan states will be observed and future perspectives will be discussed.

Keywords: Turkey, Western Balkans, Coup d'état, relationship, legacy, history

15 TEMMUZ DARBE GİRİŞİMİNDEN SONRA TÜRKİYE VE BATI BALKANLAR

ÖZ

Türkiye ile Batı Balkan devletleri ve toplumları arasındaki ilişkiler büyük önem taşımaktadır. Bu yazı öncelikle tarihsel gelişimi esas alarak Batı Balkanların tarihi, kültürel, dini, siyasi, askeri ve ekonomik bağları göz önünde bulundurarak modern Türk devletiyle ilişkilerini inceliyor. İkinci olarak, Türk devletinin Batı Balkanlar bölgesine, devletlerine ve toplumlarına yönelik politikalarını analiz edilecektir. Makalenin üçüncü bölümünde, Türk siyasal geçmişinde ve bugünkü durumundan başlayarak devlet oluşumuna kadar yükselen sivil-askeri meselelere ve Türk askeri darbelerinin tarihi üzerine odaklanılacaktır. Dördüncü bölümde, 15 Temmuz'daki darbe girişimini ve Gülen hareketini darbe girişiminin en önemli faktörü olarak analiz edeceğim. Esasen beşinci bölümde, 15 Temmuz darbe girişimi ve Batı Balkanlar'daki yansımaları, vatandaş egemenliğini ve meşruiyetini genel olarak ortadan kaldıran politik ve evrensel bir olay olarak ele alacağım. Ayrıca Türkiye'nin Batı Balkan ülkeleriyle siyasi ilişkileri gözlemlenecek ve gelecek perspektifler tartışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye, Batı Balkanlar, Darbe, ilişki, miras, tarih

The relationship of the Western Balkans and the Turkish state was always an important issue which created grounds for many writings and analyses. The region of the Western Balkans itself is a very complex, important and attractive for the Turkish state. The historical, cultural, political and economical relationship starts from the Ottoman Empire and continues to be developed even after the creation of the modern Turkish state. This relationship was changeable in different political periods and created ground to use different types of means to continue this natural and political relationship.

The internal political and economical power of Turkey that emerges after the 1980s and rises towards its pick after the 2002 under the leadership of AK party drastically changes the ground of Turkish impact in the region from a political and economical point of view.

The Western Balkan states entered into a process of democratization and this opened the momentum for the Turkish foreign soft and hard policy to be intensively present in the region. The Turkish political history is covered with coups d'états and attempts for coups d'états, for which differs from the Western Balkan states as they never faced that challenge after they transacted towards democracy meaning after the 1990s. The last coup d'état attempt on the 15th of July 2016 in Turkey, challenged not only the Turkish civil government but the world itself with regard to its democratic values and citizens legitimacy vs. military authority based on old constitutional provisions. The last coup attempt was of a different nature since its reference point was connected to the Gulen movement as an active religious community in Turkey and in the Western Balkans. The civil vs. military relationship holds an important respond to what happened in Turkey for the fifth time and holds a respond for the universal values of citizens sovereignty and authority against the military structures within states.

Western Balkans and its relations with Turkey

The Balkan Peninsula and the Western Balkans are established geographical and political concepts. In the political perception the Western Balkans are politically and strategically still non-integrated and raw, the various issues with each other created a picture of a contradictory area, which includes: Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo. We have to stress the fact that the term Western Balkans do not refer to the geographical scope of the Balkans in general, most importantly

it refers to the political (non)integration of certain states towards EU. The Western Balkans or the Balkans in general are the buffer zone that interconnects the East and the West of course with the help of the geographical positioning of Turkey. A long legacy of the Balkan Peninsula being part of the Ottoman Empire played a crucial role in sharing common moments in culture, religion and state affairs.

After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the beginning of the Balkan wars 1913 and the First World War 1914, the Balkan Peninsula tremendously changed with regard to state authority and geographical scale as well. Different countries were created and many issues were opened or reopened. National identification became the system of finding state solutions and Turkey as well entered into its period of national state identification from 1920 after the Sevres Agreement.

In the period before the Second World War the Western Balkans in general were combined in two state structures such as: Albania that created its state independency from 1912 and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians in 1918 and renamed itself into Yugoslavia in 1929 (Bideleux: 237).

Of course the state of Bulgaria and Greece was established from before. After the Second World War the Balkan Peninsula enters in to the world of bi polar system as well as Turkey but both examples took different road actually. The Balkans in general excluding Greece was part of the Communist ideology and regime, while Turkey and Greece took the path of democracy and capitalism.

From 1944 the Yugoslavian state of Tito was created under its asymmetric federation and the socialist ideology. In this region states like: Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Croatia and Slovenia were granted with state status, while Kosovo and Vojvodina were given a status of autonomous regions. The case of Albania was separate and they entered as well in communism under the Enver Hoxhas political understandings (Bideleux: 32). The Western Balkans relationship with Turkey continues but not in dynamic forms because of ideological reasons and the foreign policy of Turkey that was based on a more defensive methodology. In this period we can say the Treaty of friendship was first signed with Albania in 1923 and then with Yugoslavia in 1925. The treaties of neutrality and conciliation and arranging the population exchange with Greece and Bulgaria in 1929 and 1930.

From 1930 four Balkan Conferences were organized and the development of regional cooperation reached its highest point with the creation of the Balkan Entente in 1934 (Mitrovic: 28). Military alliance between Greece, Romania, Turkey and Yugoslavia aimed to guarantee the security of several Balkan frontiers against any aggression. After 1952 when Turkey together with Greece entered NATO for security and political reasons we can say that the Western Balkan relationship under Yugoslavia and communist Albania was about to stop, since Turkey was focused more towards the case of Cyprus (Sonmezoglu: 92). Albania of course entered into a zone of self-isolation and had a very negative impact towards the relationship of Albanians and Turks in the aftermath.

Western Balkans for Turkey became important once the dissolution process started and the Americans became interested and recognize the Slovenian and Croatian independencies 1991. During the Bosnian War, Turkey was more involved and then it understood its importance as a factor of stabilizer in the region of Western Balkans. The cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina 1992-95 and the case of Kosovo 1999 tremendously changed and shifted the Turkish foreign policy towards the Balkans and Western Balkans especially (Oktem: 212).

According to Davutoğlu, there are two basic axes that define the geopolitics of the Balkans. On one hand the area around Drava and Sava rivers, which divides Bosniaks, Croatian and Serbian geopolitical and geocultural area and on the other hand is the line that follows Morava-Vardar Rivers and which divides Albanian, Macedonian and Serbian geopolitical and geo-cultural zones (Dautoglu:2008-213). For this reason he sees a very systematic foreign policy towards the Balkans on behalf of the Turkish state. Bosniaks and Albanians are two ethnical communities that have preserved the most of the Ottoman heritage within their contemporary cultural and religious patterns. Turkey can secure its interests in the region by contributing to the secure position of these communities. In that sense for Turkey it is important that Sandzak, Kosovo and Bosnia, areas in the Balkans with large Muslim population, stay connected.

Turkey through NATO and EU projects took part in the entire Western Balkan region in supporting the idea of security and helping the region in a positive sense. So, on military bases Turkey helped a lot while conducting military peace mission in IFOR and SFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina,

KFOR in Kosovo, AMBER FOX in Macedonia, EULEX Kosovo, EUPM Bosnia and Herzegovina and other peace missions (Mitorovic:50-51).

Directly support on military bases in Albania, it supported Montenegro with regard to its integration in NATO, helping Serbia while reconstructing the military airport in Morava and many other similar projects. On economic basis Turkey has been very much involved and there was a good relationship with Western Balkan states by signing free trade agreements firstly with Albania and lastly with Serbia in 2009. Turkey has with all Western Balkan states good economic and trade statistics as well a very good Foreign Direct investment portfolio in the Western Balkan states (Oktem:223-226).

From the very beginning of the AK Party leadership Turkey was changing dramatically its foreign policy and the relationship with the Western Balkans became so important and focused with project and different actions. Soft power was used along the hard power in foreign policy and one the most important strategies were under the auspicious of TIKA (www.tika.gov.tr) while supporting many infrastructural, educational and religious investment. The DIYANET (www.diyonet.gov.tr) is another soft power asset that the Turkish foreign policy impacts the Western Balkans on religious denomination. The Yurt Disi Turkler ve Akraba Topluluklari (www.ytb.gov.tr) is a very important asset that impacts through educational and cultural projects in the Western Balkans alongside with Yunus Emre institutes (www.yee.org.tr) that are directly engaged in the region to promote the Turkish language and its culture. In general we can state that these soft power assets of the Turkish foreign policy had a very positive impact that improved the Turkish image in the region substantially.

Turkey and the Western Balkans are in a very important political period in which both sides should approach with positivism and high support through state levels. Western Balkans needs importantly the Turkish state on many grounds, starting from

- Economical and financial experiences and foreign direct investments
- Political and military experiences
- Management and decision making system to provide real constructive field results
- Energy and gas links through NABUKO and Turkish Stream

- Geographical, historical, cultural, religious and language relations
- Local governmental experiences
- Educational and research fields and others

These days, the Western Balkans states are going through a legal, political and economical purification. There is a tremendous political challenge that these small states need to overcome. The legacy of socialism left a substantial negative undertaking of the state assets, and manipulating completely with the state and bureaucratic institutions. Albania and Macedonia, both of these countries go through this process of corruptive and political crises but on political scale new political actors are being involved and this can be seen as a possible way out towards a more dynamic and prosperous attachment.

The state of Serbia has been seen as a central Balkan state that interconnects the majority of proposed oil and gas pipe lines and as well has been perceived as one the most important key states with regard to the case of Kosovo and the case of Republika Srpska as a separate entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Sandzak region in Serbia and the issue of the Bosniak minority is still opened along side with the Albanian minority leaving in the parts of Preshevo, Bujanovc and Medevgje.

The case of Kosovo is another challenge for the world politics and the Security Council of the United Nations with regard to its official and de jure recognition. The internal political and financial issue are tremendously negative. As a new de facto state, in these years it underestimated totally the meritocracy in the state institutions and therefore as a result of political and economical instability there was a huge migration wave in 2012. The issue of the Serbian minority is still opened and needs to be solved.

In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina the situation is very complex with regard to the political system that resulted from the Dayton peace Accord in 1995. The two entities that are the bases of the BiH, create separate policies and have different views with regard to NATO and EU integration. The Bosniaks are left to share power with Croats in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina as the first entity along side with Republika Srpska as the second one. The case of Montenegro is much pure and relaxed compared to the other countries, since its smaller and it had no military conflict as an ex Yugoslavian state or in the aftermath while shaping a different policy from Serbia. Its complete independency has been accomplished in 2006 and these

days Montenegro is a de facto member state of NATO Alliance. The process of EU integration is problem of all Western Balkan states that opened negotiations and are pending while completing its obligations, depending in which stage they are. From this perspective we can see that Turkey's foreign policy should be intensified in the Western Balkan region with its experience, knowledge and understanding. According to me the Western Balkans and Turkish relationship works on this motto: *The Western Balkans needs Turkey and this suits the Turkish state.*

Understanding Turkey and its policies

The *Turkish model of state building* was initially designed by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk 1923-1938. The Republic was founded with its basic philosophy to dissolve the old system of the Sultanate and Empire and to establish new political institutions, social structures, values and norms, backed up with many substantial social and educational changes in the aftermath. The state concept was established on a secular basis and the principle of secularism was established into the 1924 constitution of modern Turkey.

It is true that Atatürk's reforms made significant changes in the political system, with this Turkey turned to the West and this became one of the substantial characteristics of the Turkish state Model (Kamrava: 52-54). This vision was not only to regulate the internal political and social institutions according to the Western spirit but it was a structure base for its foreign policy as well. Even though after the Lausanne Treaty 1923, Turkey shifted from an offensive foreign policy towards a more defensive and a status quo position was taken (peace at home, peace in the world), Turkey was involved in many regional political and military activities. Its perception was to create more allies rather enemies and therefore as examples you can see its perspective towards the Balkan states while becoming part of the Balkan Entente 1934 (Öksüz 2007: 135). This was a military alliance between Greece, Romania, Turkey and Yugoslavia responding to guarantee the security of several Balkan states against any other foreign aggression.

Immediately after the Second World War, Turkey started to stabilize and strengthen the relationship with international organizations and with states like US and for pro-democratic values. Turkey joined NATO 1952, the Turkish membership of Western institutions such as the Council of Europe, the OECD, and its associate membership of the EC, strengthening Turkey's

closeness to the West and promoting the western political and military position during the Cold War period. Being in a time of bi polar system the countries such as Turkey had only two choices respectively. On one hand you have the choice to be part of the Soviet Union (a very rigid political and economical system), and on the other hand to strengthen its partnership with NATO, actually USA. This western political philosophy according to me it was not only a matter of the bi polar system that existed after the Second World War but it was initiated as most of the political players in the modern Turkish state were educated in Western schools during 19th and 20th century, which the Ottoman system already allowed and was supporting this idea.

The *Turkish foreign policy* at the very beginning of its modern state foundation according to Mustafa Aydin (Aydin, 1999: 155) and his his analysis of the factors that shape Turkish foreign policy suggests that there are certain structural variables (geographical position, historical experiences, cultural background together with the national stereotypes and images of other nations, economic necessities as the major structural variables) and conjunctural variables (are dynamic and subject to change under interrelated developments in domestic politics and international relations). Dominant factors towards the structural variables are as follows: Ottoman experience and its long-lasting legacy, the geopolitical realities of Turkey and the ideological foundations defined under the leadership of Atatürk.

Turkey was perceived as being at the crossroads of major air, land and sea routes of modern times, connecting the industrially advanced lands of Europe with the petroleum rich lands of the Middle East and by that deeply determined by its geostrategic position (Aydin 1999: 24).

According to Karaosmanoglu he sees three important elements for the Turkish foreign policy heritage and they are: relatively consistent security culture of *realpolitik* (evolved from an offensive to dominant defensive one), Western orientation that introduced liberal and internationalist elements into foreign policy and the role of the military in the making of foreign and security policy (Karaosmanoğlu 2000: 200). Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu sees these elements that shaped the Turkish foreign policy: its Western orientation or the Kemalists ideology of Westernization as the dominant identity that influenced Turkey's foreign policy from the founding of the Republic until the end of the Cold War (Bozdağlıoğlu 2003).

Dautoglus theoretical vision known as ‘Strategic depth doctrine’ became the most important state foreign policy understanding. In his book *Strategic Depth* he believes that there are particular determinants in the structure of the international system as global geopolitical parameters (Dautoglu:2008). After the end of the Cold War, the world politics shifted from bipolar strategic stability to a multi-polar balance of power. According to this a geopolitical and geo-economic vacuum emerged in these strategic zones and turned these areas into the zones of clashes and power struggle Davutoğlu believes that this could also be seen as an opportunity for Turkey as well.

If we look at *Turkeys economic policies*, we have to admit and stress that a major economic attention was given only after 1980’s decisions that brought a complete liberalization and a deregulation of the market. With this, the state intervention was reduced instead a free market mechanism was placed. In the aftermath we can say that Turkey started to change impressively the old economic picture and from being a closed, agricultural and non-competitive economy changed dramatically towards a market oriented, liberal and intensively industrialized.

This drastic shift on its economy made tremendous changes within the grounds of its civil society and an entrepreneurship spirit exploded amongst the Turkish citizens. This *geographical position* actually helped them to introduce their products and services all around the three continents and this geo-economic position or strategy will be used even in today’s perspectives, and according to me it is the most precious and important natural assets that Turkey has and this helps further to exercise a huge political power in the regions of the Caucasus, Balkans and the Middle East. In this respect I say, if Saudi Arabia is blessed with its oil reserves, Turkey is blessed with its geography. The establishment of the Custom Union with EU 1995 helped importantly Turkey to export towards Western European markets and this was a great relaxation and an opportunity for the Turkish entrepreneurs to export on one hand and to produce qualitative products according to EU regulations on the other hand. The most important projects of oil and gas links (pipe lines) towards Western European industry states are being planned and projected to go through Turkey as the only alternative for the old routes (pipe line) that go from Russia towards Eastern Europe. Turkey undoubtedly knows this fact and continues to have a comprehensive policy with regard to new changes in the world of energy recourses. As much as I have studied the energy recourses, they are not only an economic input

as energy recourses alone, they give to states an international position and value. Turkey doesn't have its natural energy recourses but instead it has its geographical positioning that helps the supply chain management to be accomplished and this is a crucial moment.

Turkish coup d'états history (the civil-military issue)

From the political aspect the Turkish Model was also several times interrupted from *the state army (coup d'etat 1960, 1971, and 1980)* and since 1983 Turkey was governed from civil rulers (Celik, 1999: 11). We have to stress as well the state interruption of the 1997 which was another civil governmental interruption and brought a new discourse to the state-military relationship. The last coup attempt in Turkey was on the night of the 15th of July 2016. *Suma sumarum* we can say that Turkey from its state formation it had around five coups. In a way it shows to us that its political culture and constitutional culture and spirit is framed to absorb and accept coups in a very unique way. Turkey has a deep and great experience with regard to military interventions and because of this historical fact, we can state that Turkey established a sui generis political culture for its political institutions but as well its citizens created specific values towards the state and state institutions. I can divide the Turkish coups in two different periods and that the first one is from 1960-80 and the second period starts essentially from 1997-to the present.

Military society vs. civil society was not openly and properly debated (for possible changes) prior to the coup attempt of the 15th of July 2016. This old dogma that the Turkish military will be the defender of the Turkish democracy and state positioning was completely wrong, manipulative and defective. Normally the history of the modern Turkish state was established after the Sevres agreement 1920 and after the Turkish War of independency and the signing of the Lausanne Treaty 1923, undoubtedly shows to us why military society was established, and instead of having a strong civil government that will push forward necessary changes, it was checked and punished by the sovereignty of the military in specific political periods.

According to me, the paradox of the military coups in general lays in the very essence of its legitimacy. The political power that military exercises (exercising coup d'états) towards a democratically elected government relies under the constitutional auspices (provisions) that haven't been changed according to the internal and external political dynamism.

According to a group of (politicians and scholars unfortunately), constitutions as very holy, conservative and historical, on a long term scale make societies to face new challenges that have very negative and complex consequences. Instead, we have to see the constitutions and laws as very dynamic, changeable, not so restrictive, debatable and politically understandable in order to have a more prosperous societies on political and economical scale.

In this regard, let us compare a civil government vs. the military structures with regard to its legitimacy. On one hand you have a government that becomes elected (it is a democratic process where political parties and individuals compete their programs and ideologies) by the vote of the citizens (the individuals) and this becomes a reference point of its authority for a certain period of time. Political parties compete and become authorized by the majority of the citizens. Of course we can discuss separately on the elective systems, thresholds and other issues but the most important and substantial fact is that the legitimacy of the civil governments comes from the people. On the other hand the military structures are specific institutions that have a certain authority during War time (wars on independency) with its initial obligation to protect the country and its people from foreign invaders. The military institution becomes involved in the political discourse the moment while state establishes its constitutional basics. If you see the case of Turkey, actually the War for its independency 1920-23 is the very moment when the military becomes a separate authority in the state, furthermore, having the authority and obligation to invigilate the governmental policies and its internal and foreign perspectives. In this analyzes we shouldn't forget the ideological program that the military uses within their military schools. An analogical understand tells us that if the military grows above the civil structures than the only process that shapes the invigilators momentum to decide when to interrupt the civil government is the doctrine that they perceive in their educational curricula's. In other words we should know that the military structures are being led by humans and their doctrines. This example can be seen in many other states and societies as for example: Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Pakistan and etc.

The very institution created to protect the polity is given sufficient power to become a threat to the polity (Feaver, 1999:214). Understanding the civil-military issues it's a very complex mission, because both of them play a crucial role in the society and the state affairs. Logically we create bureaucratic and military institutions or the state it's self to provide us (the citizens)

with services, security, stability and progress. On one hand administrative institutions deliver us specific services that we can't manage or we can't have as family unions or individuals. So their establishment derives from the very need of the citizens. On the other the military institutions are established to protect the citizens and the state it's self as a philosophical and institutional matter from the possible invaders. So, the military should play the role of a protector of its people that indirectly create the legitimacy for its state and institutional formation, having in mind the military itself.

Military structures need power, finances and infrastructure to protect the citizens and the state its self but, this should not prevail above the civil authority or legitimacy. In most of the military societies we have detected this issue, the enormous power and infrastructure given in their hands according to the constitutional provision, make the military to easily shift from its foundations (providing protection). In democratic societies for which Turkey holds a big flag from the 1923 as a parliamentary democracy, the hierarchy of authority should favour civilians over the military, Regardless of how strong the military is, civilians are supposed to remain as one of the most important author and owners of the state.

Actually their taxation creates budget for the military needs and infrastructures, let me put this simply, the whole functionality of the military system is based on the citizens payments, therefore it is unimaginable for democratic societies such as Turkey is, to have a coup d'état.

Civilian competence in the general sense extends even beyond their competence in a particular sense; that is, civilians are morally and politically competent to make the decisions even if they do not possess the relevant technical competence in the form of expertise (Dahl, 1985). The whole military assets of one state should be systematically under control of the government in a sense of providing the means for its existence, controlling their activities and the given order should be balanced between the civil and the military agents (ex: ministry of defence and the generals).

Looking at the possibility to use protection by the military for any invasion from outside and securing the momentum to protect the citizens from the military, it's the most important challenge that remains for certain states and societies. One of the best examples of this combination is the case of USA, where the check and balance system is an imperative.

The coup d'état attempt on the 15th of July and the Gulen movement

Looking at the last attempt of coup d'état on the 15th of July 2016 in Turkey as one of the most important events in the region and the World, creates a momentum of analogical understanding of what we discussed above. Turkey after 2002 elections made a change and a huge shift with regard to its economic instability from before and paved attention to many internal political solutions with regard to corruption, nepotism and equity. The external or the foreign policy was extraordinarily changed and the Dutoğlus approaches were being marked with positive background. The change in the external or foreign policy doctrine from a defensive to a more active approach, in the best way can be seen through the Turkish foreign policies in the Balkans and most importantly in the Western Balkan. Of course this approach showed a good positioning with regard to other regions as well, in the Caucasus and the Middle East.

In order to understand the Turkish political and ideological pluralism and the Turkish political culture we should of course understand the religious communities that helped the civil society to be effectively organized on educational, cultural, religious and political matters. The Turkish model on civil societies coming from the religious affiliations is (religious communities) tremendously organized, well structured, ideologically supportive and a good system to deliver results. Of course, we can't reduce the whole political spectrum in this frame, there are different political ideologies in Turkey that don't affiliate with religious perspectives, but we will not concentrate to those cases in this paper.

If we interconnect the Turkish political culture with the Ottoman legacy which is an inevitable link, we will see that during the Ottoman Empire period the state structures couldn't reach at all society levels to observe, control and bring new policies according to society and market needs. In this respect the Ahi (from Ahi Evran a 13th century leather worker) community becomes an important asset in the Ottoman society and with this it creates grounds of a very complex and important social community or an NGO of today. The guild in Ottoman times (www.tesk.org.tr) can be defined as an association of craftsmen and tradesmen who dealt with the same products and who banded together for their mutual benefit. This system of organization at the very beginning created a substantial ground for co-existence and afterwards to challenge the needs of their times. They didn't stop to function only within their premises but they have enlarged their activism towards

religious affiliation (building mosques and masjids), educational (building medresa and other places to be studied) and other important social activities that made them to be a certain balancer of the state structures and an important factor in the society. We have to say that, this activity was not done only by this organization or community but this was the most important one. In this respect many other communities for founded under the auspicious of the needs of the society.

I do this analogy, in order to argument the today's existence of many different communities in the Turkish society and to open the ground to discus about their impact in Turkish politics. This legacy is an important social capital for Turkey and I hope this process will continue because it is the most important cultural, political, religious and human capital.

In this regard a movement was introduced according to their leaders name Gulen (www.fguken.com), known as Gulenist movement, supposedly using the teachings of Said Nursi, a very well known religious figure in the Ottoman and afterwards in the modern Turkish state history. This community was well organized in approaching all social needs through different religious and educational programs and affiliations (www.hizmetnews.com). It was perceived from the very beginning as one the most important social community capital that works on highly respective and important educational and religious cases. The majority of Muslims in the Turkish society knew that they work under the name of Allah and they will never manipulate with Gods words or with their policies coming from this religious reference.

A huge religious and social authority was granted for this movement in Turkey, this easily paved ground to develop its programs outside of Turkey as well. Therefore, you will find this movement to be established in many states and countries around the globe, using the financial assets from individuals, entrepreneurs, educational assets, businesses and state protection. From a scratch it became an organizational empire that could pull many activities in many countries in one period. This, accumulated a huge financial and human power within their scope and undoubtedly the links with the state affairs, gave them a new political psychological understanding. A crucial moment for the Turkish state is, when they imposed the idea that students that come from their educational denomination will be the best asset for the state administration. It was a very simple manipulation of the

Ottoman legacy with regard to selection of the best bureaucrats when they needed.

The final projection or vision of this group was to establish a system that will be activated through their students and members that were already religiously indoctrinated for the benefits of the organization. In the World history we can see many organizations that manipulate (d) under the auspices of Islam or religion in general, therefore, this was only one of them with a huge impact of course on politics and religion respectively.

This group amongst others, they have infiltrated people from their organization in the state affairs and institutions to be misused for certain political gains and strategies. In order not to lose time with analyzes of the Gulenist movement I will like to move a bit and see the relationship between the movement and the military structure of Turkey being involved in the last coup d'état attempt on the night of the 15th of July 2016, marking the fifth coups in the Turkish political history.

A huge clash resulted between the Turkish government under Ahmet Dasutoglus and Binali Yildirims political terms and Recep Taip Erdogan being a president of Turkey vs. the Gulenist movement in general being backed up by their leader in the USA, Fetullah Gulen. Different types of crises were launched within the political stage, but they were in most of the times recognized and stopped. What we have to stress is that the Turkish society was starting to change its positivistic attitude and opinion towards this movement after these crises and a huge number of people were cancelling their relationship with them. The Turkish state was trying to implement a strategy to cut all their state support not just in Turkey but even outside and this resulted with a coup d'état attempt in the 15th of July 2016.

The last actually the fifth coup d'état attempt in the 15th of July 2016 in Turkey was marked with a very strange attitude:

- Firstly showing that it is orchestrated by a different centre of power and it is not coming from the very ground of militaries authorities and ideological reasons (possible kemalism) that were used during the previous coups in the Turkish history
- Secondly not the whole military structures were given orders to have a coup in Turkey

- Thirdly inside the military there were soldiers of different ranks that were not involved or rejected such kind of activity
- Fourthly a huge manipulation was created under false flag order towards youngsters in the military
- Fifthly there was no political or economical or any other insecurity or problem in Turkey, that the military will be in a position to order the coup (see the example of 1971 and 1980 coup d'états)

The order of the president Recep Tayyip Erdogan towards its people on that night made a radical shift on the coup attempt and after a huge clash between the people and a group of the military, the coup was successfully dismantled. Of course, there were death cases, many citizens were injured, but after all the Turkish people showed a very interesting and positive attitude towards the civil government. They understood that above everything it's the government since its legitimacy comes through election. The concept of John Locke was that night shown into practice and the military was underestimated and systematically put into a control.

This last coup attempt in Turkey showed that the military structures without good civil control from the government side can be a problem with regard to citizen's protection, and the protection of its own country from possible outside power while the coup was happening. Turkey was lucky to suppress that activity but it is a great lecture with regard to the military rights that the constitutions gives them and the possibility to be manipulated by a certain organization or ideology. The military should protect its citizens and not suppress them for political calculations. If there is no constitutional change that balances and checks the military affiliation in Turkey, it will be very difficult to ensure that the military will be willing to do what civilians ask. And therefore, solving the coup attempt doesn't necessarily mean that the military power might be later on controlled.

The coup d'état attempt of the 15th of July and its reflection in the Western Balkans

We are leaving in a period in which time and space are being compressed, meaning we are leaving in a globalized world, in a time in which information and knowledge transacts faster than the human civilization ever thought. This process of globalization opened that path towards communi-

cation, business, education and free flow of capital and financial assets. The Western Balkans and Turkey used these opportunities and therefore a huge amount of financial and economical capital floats from Turkey toward the World and the Western Balkans are included as well. With globalization the Western Balkans became more democratized and this helped the Turkish state to be more involved with its soft power in the region, having in mind respectively the period after 2002.

Having this in mind we have to add and stress the very fact that the Gulen movement from the 90s started to have its own affiliations in the Western Balkans region, specifically dealing with educational issues. Opening primary and secondary schools, Yahya Kemal Colleges in Macedonia within the following cities: Skopje, Tetovo, Gostivar, Struga. In Albania they entered much deeply because of the dissolution of communism and a very pure and large space was given to launch their activities. Furthermore they have opened Universities through which they engage their political affiliations. They have deepened their impact on religious affairs so that there is a huge religious impact in the Muslim Community in Albania. These days we have witnessed that even high rank politician were involved in their organizations and were financially supported through many moments, especially educating their children throughout all educational canthers in their facilities. In Bosnia and Herzegovina they have been as well introduced and created important facilities in the educational system including the International Burch University in Sarajevo. In Kosovo they have been involved as well through many NGOs and this complex network created grounds to influence certain political and media figures that will enable their free action and systematic approach in the states of the Western Balkan region.

Once the coup d'état attempt happened on the night of the 15th of July 2016 a huge informative impact was shown in the region and most importantly there was a political shock for the happenings in Turkey. There was a huge clash between political elites in all the Western Balkan states separately while supporting or condemning the coup attempt. In my consideration a good number of media denominations in the Western Balkans and that surprisingly from Albania and Kosovo were in a way showing the coup as an important element of the Turkish political culture and therefore the military had right. A good number of political analysts in Albania and Kosovo were informing that supposedly the authoritative and conservative regime launched by Recep Taip Erdogan had to be stopped by the military. While

another group of media, political figures and NGO supporters openly in Macedonia, Skopje, protested and condemned the coup attempt in Turkey.

In Serbia, the vast majority of the public opinion makers and political analysts were accepting the coup attempt as a normal and natural way of solving domestic issues in one state with parliamentary democracy. For me the biggest shock was coming from the states such as Kosovo, Albania and part of the Macedonian society represented by the Macedonians (I exclude the Albanians since they were condemning the act quite publicly, but as well we observed even supporters in a small range).

The supporters of the coup attempt in the Western Balkans in each country were completely underestimating and scientifically blind for the democratic values and the citizen legitimacy. They denied the very fact that military should protect its citizens and not to shoot and attack them. Instead of talking for military restrain they were promoting military interventions without hesitation. These facts, allowed me to understand, that these public opinion makers have an agenda to accept the coup in Turkey and never to discuss for the core problem. A huge negative energy was developed against the AK Party leadership being portrait as Islamic, conservative and very authoritative in its policies.

I would like to stress, that the majority of the Muslim societies in the Western Balkans and a part of the non Muslim societies do protect the values of the Turkish state (Balkan Monitor: Turkey friendly/hostile-Public opinion survey, 2010) and the values of democratic standards and do have a negative opinion for the coup attempt on the 15th of July 2016.

This is a trend that started to be developed from the 90s and mostly after the 2002. Of course, on one hand this is a good ground for the Turkish foreign policy and its soft power to conduct more intensive approach and to develop different programs for the Western Balkan states and on the other hand turkey should seriously reschedule and reshape its hard diplomacy with regard to the political elites in the region. Of course, as I mentioned before, new political players are emerging in the region in all states and this will be a good moment for the Turkish diplomacy to recognize and start having relationship with them.

After the coup attempt failed the Turkish state started to develop a very harsh policy towards the Gulen movement in and outside Turkey, con-

demning their organizations as terroristic. It was a very important moment when the President of Turkey launched this process and requested from the political leadership of the Western Balkans to close immediately their educational and all assets in which this organization conducts its programs.

Analyzing the public debates in the mainstream media and how state leaderships were reacting for the coup attempt (it was a very selective and very late approach), showed that this request will be very hard processed and in many states will be portrait as internal interference of state affairs. The Turkish state undoubtedly needs to re-schedule its soft and hard foreign policy in the region, normally with new actors and players. This negative respond should not de-motivate the Turkish state to pursue with its policies, since the region of the Balkans, lately become a battlefield for another important actor Russia, this can be seen in the best way in Macedonia. The Muslim community needs turkey and Turkey stands for its security and stability and by that Turkey secures its impact in one the most important regions in the European continent. In a place where religions and ideas meet Turkey needs its presence.

Conclusion

Turkey and the Western Balkans will be a meeting point for common policies and projects and this is a very important fact for the Western Balkan societies. The coup attempt on the 15th of July in Turkey was a good moment to evaluate and see the level of relationship amongst the Turkish state and the region as whole.

It's a momentum for the Turkish state to reschedule and shift its policies from an emotional prospect towards a more pragmatic and rational activism. The historical and cultural legacies undoubtedly make the ground for positive relationship and active diplomacy.

The economical, financial and educational investments should continue and perceive positive strategies for the future, because societies of the Western Balkans will create new generations of politicians and leaders that understand democracy and moments of crises will be overcome much easier.

Even though the Turkish state sees no respond from the closing of the Gulen movement facilities and program in the Western Balkans, this should be

a starting point of shifting radically the foreign policy or closing the doors of being present in the region.

Positive and dynamic foreign, economic and educational policies should continue, this is for the benefit of all societies including Turkey as well. Approaches of disappointment and reluctance should not be part of the Turkish foreign policy at all. Intensive approach and rational choices will overcome these negative moments between the Western Balkans and the Turkish state. The Balkans represent a buffer zone and a geo strategic point for the World, and therefore Turkey as the nearest and as a regional power should continue to conduct systematically its policies and become a much stronger player in the region.

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