

The Post-Second World War Immigration of the Yugoslav Muslims to Turkey (1953-1968)

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Abstract

In this thesis I study the conjunction of causal factors and motivations informing the emigration of the Muslim communities from the Federal Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia to Turkey in the period from 1953 to 1968. The Muslims who left for Turkey in this period were allowed to leave the Federal Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia according to the agreement on migration signed between Turkey and the Federal Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia in 1953. The migrants were legally categorized as *serbest göçmen* (free migrants) which meant they were leaving for Turkey on a voluntary basis and this legal status allowed them to settle wherever they want in Turkey receiving no benefits other than citizenship and tax break.

My ethnographic research was conducted in Istanbul in 2011, and it is based on ten interviews I gathered from the first generation immigrants who came to Istanbul during the 1950s and 1960s. These oral accounts offer an interesting glimpse into the complexities of reasons and motives for migration and peculiarities of socio-historical context within which migration took place. Whereas the scholarship on this migration largely opts for ideologically-driven explanations and finds the factors for leaving were of a political and religious nature, the interviewee's significantly challenge and nuance arguments posited in mainstream historiography.

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Introduction

My topic addresses the insufficiently explained phenomenon of migration from the Federal Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia to Turkey in the period between 1953 and 1968. In the context of Southeast Europe, migrations have been a widespread social phenomenon since the early eighteenth century when the Ottoman Empire began its protracted withdrawal from its former European possessions. Episodes of flight and ethnic cleansing recurred throughout the nineteenth century, with the wars for independence of Greece in the 1830s and of the Bulgarian principality in 1878 featuring as important moments of rupture. These dynamics extended throughout the Balkan Wars of 1912-14, the Greco- Turkish War and the consequent Lausanne Exchange of Populations in the 1920s. Every emerging predominately Christian state in the Balkans eventually coerced at least part of its Muslim population to flee the country. These nineteenth- and twentieth-century wars and population exchanges resulted in around one and a half million Muslims being evicted or forced to flee, almost exclusively to Turkey.¹ Nevertheless, it must also be emphasized that the rise of competing nationalisms resulted not only in a long-term exodus of Muslim communities from the Balkans to Anatolia but also in even larger Christian communities fleeing in the opposite direction, from Anatolia to Greece, for example.

¹ In his book *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims 1821-1922* American historian Justin McCarthy studies Muslim communities from the Balkans, the northern Caucasus and Russian Armenia who were forced to flee to what is today Turkey. McCarthy argues that between 1821 and 1922 more than five million Muslims were driven from their lands, whereas, five and one half million of Muslims, most of them Turks, were killed in wars or perished as refugees from starvation and disease, see Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile : The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims 1821-1922* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1995),1-23.

A deliberate migration policy rather than ethnic cleansing as a means for achieving a homogenous state of the Southern Slavs was peculiar to the interwar Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-1941), also known as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in the first eleven years of its existence) when the government put pressure on the Muslims living in Kosovo and Macedonia to leave the country.² The Convention of 1938 with Turkey about the resettlement of two hundred thousand “Turks” seemed to be one step forward for Yugoslavia in solving its “minority problems.”³ In fact, “it covered the Yugoslav rural Muslim population speaking Turkish and belonging to Turkish culture only, but not Gypsies and ‘nomadic people.’ Both sides’ delegates confined the emigration area solely to Macedonia, Kosovo, Metohija, and the eastern parts of Montenegro while Bosnia and Sanjak of Novi Pazar were left out of this area. Turkey endeavoured to receive 40,000 Muslim families within the next six years. The underlying purpose of the Convention was to remove the Albanians without any compensation for their properties.”⁴ After World War II, in 1945, Yugoslavia was re-established as a socialist state: The Federal Peoples’ Republic of Yugoslavia (hereafter, Yugoslavia) was the official name used until 1963 when it was changed into Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia initially pursued different emigration policies than the pre-1941

² The number of the Muslims who migrated from Yugoslavia between 1923-1945 is estimated to be 115,427. Among them are Turks, Bosnians and Albanians. See Kemal Kirişçi, “Post Second World-War Immigration from Balkan Countries to Turkey,” *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Spring 12 (1995): 63.

³ Ulf Brunnbauer, “Late Labour Migration from the Yugoslav Region from the Late Nineteenth Century until the End of Socialism: Continuities and Changes,” in *Transnational Societies, Transterritorial Politics: Migration in the Post-Yugoslav Region, 19th -21st Century*, ed. Ulf Brunnbauer (München: R.Oldenbourg Verlag GmbH, 2009), 43. See also Edvin Pezo, “‘Re-Conquering Space’: Yugoslav Migration Policies and Emigration of Non-Slavic Muslims to Turkey (1918-1941),” in *Transnational Societies, Transterritorial Politics: Migration in the Post-Yugoslav Region, 19th -21st Century*, ed. Ulf Brunnbauer (München:R.Oldenbourg Verlag GmbH, 2009), 73.

⁴ Vladan Jovanović, “In Search for Homeland from Yugoslavia to Turkey 1918-1941,” *Tokovi istorije* 1-2 (2008): 63.

governments.⁵ Until the early 1960s voluntary emigration was prohibited with the exception of ethnic Turks from Macedonia who were allowed to leave the country after the agreement on partnership and friendship with Turkey had been signed in 1953. The migration that was a part of this agreement was legally categorized as *serbest göç* (voluntary migration), which means that those who migrate are leaving Yugoslavia on a voluntary basis and are allowed to settle wherever they want, but their status of ‘free’ implied that Turkey would bestow on them no privilege other than citizenship and tax break.⁶ In order to become eligible to leave Yugoslavia for Turkey, a person had to obtain *vesika* (guarantee letter) prepared and sent from one’s relatives in Turkey.⁷ A successful applicant also had to demonstrate to both Yugoslav authorities and Turkish representatives one’s belonging to Turkish culture and consciousness (*Türk kültürü ve bilinci*).⁸

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Turkey estimates that the number of migrants arriving from Yugoslavia to Turkey between 1953 and 1968 is approximately 170,000.⁹ However, the statistical data fluctuates greatly depending on whether one uses Turkish or Yugoslav sources. Consequently, modern historiography on the subject, to the extent that it exists at all, features many different figures but few convincing explanations of the reasons for the migration. Those scholarly studies that engage in explanation almost without exception foreground the religiosity of the Muslim communities subjected to the pressure under the Yugoslav ideology of Communism and its atheist policies. According to these accounts that

⁵ Brunnbauer, “Late Labour Migration,” 43.

⁶ Burçu Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies: Memory and Identity Among Urban Muslims in Macedonia* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs: New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 50.

⁷ Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 52.

⁸ Halim Çavuşoğlu, “Yugoslavya – Makedonya Topraklarından Türkiye’ye Göç ve Nedenleri,” *Bilig*, Spring 41 (2007):148.

⁹ Çavuşoğlu, “Yugoslavya – Makedonya,” 136.

predominately belong to the Turkish scholarship, Muslim communities started to perceive their micro-milieu imperilled by the new social and political circumstances which at the end entailed migration to Turkey.¹⁰ One example of such approach to the subject is the American-Turkish scholar, Burçu Akan Ellis, who draws from oral narratives of the Muslim communities in Macedonia and argues that the political change brought by Communism forced the identity transformation of those communities. She also argues that communities who identified themselves as urban Muslims prior to the era of Communism had to accept the newly crafted identity categories such as ‘Albanian’ or ‘Turk’ in order to survive. Akan Ellis’s field work is particularly interesting since it looks at the phenomenon of migrations to Turkey from the point of those communities who did not choose to migrate. I will compare some insights from her study with the oral accounts on motives and decision to migrate from my own field work.

On the other hand, some Turkish scholars like Halim Çavuşoğlu and Abdülmecid Nüredin argue that the reasons and factors for migration were almost the same and common throughout the period of almost hundred years by emphasizing the continuity of atrocities such as wars, massacres, pillages, rapes, repressions, deportations and forced assimilation. As I will argue based on my research, these explanations stand in a curious contrast to other factors that were at stake for migrants, e.g., kinship and family ties in Turkey, that are typically ignored in the works of authors who deal with this migration movement.

The only source from Yugoslavia that deals with this migration movement is a confidential report from Skopje written in 1957 by the Central Committee of the Federal Republic of Macedonia and sent to the Commission for National Minorities of Central Committee of Yugoslavia in Belgrade (hereafter CCFRM report).

¹⁰Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 54-55. See also Sabahattin Zaim, “A Report on the Last Yugoslavian Immigrants” (paper presented at *Uluslararası Göç Sempozyumu*, Zeytinburnu, Istanbul, 2006).

It represents in some detail an analysis of the social and economic consequences of the emigration from Macedonia to Turkey and sees its reasons as deeply rooted in a historical, religious and social life of the Muslim minority (especially those who declared themselves as Turks by nationality). The CCFRM report perceives migration “as a process that follows a normal course since it is based on the free choice of minority members who want to move to another country.” Thus, according to the CCFRM report, “the migration movement itself represents no political, national or legal problem for the state or the minorities. Yet, it reveals a number of other issues which became apparent in different areas of social life and need to be solved.”¹¹ The CCFRM report refuses the argument that the reasons for migration lie on a ground of “ancient atavism.”¹² However, it supposes that the reasons stem from “the measures undertaken for building socialism, such as law prohibiting wearing headscarves, penalizing trafficking of women, measures against Quranic schools (*sibyân mektebi*), building cooperatives, unauthorized medical treatments (e.g., circumcision), etc. which encounter resistance among the most backward population.”¹³

Having in mind ‘the silence’ as well as the ambiguous accounts on the migration in the aforementioned secondary sources, I propose to examine the CCFRM report, which is the only Yugoslav source I found on this topic, in light of the oral accounts of the first-generation migrants I compiled from recent interviews I conducted with these subjects. I believe that a study based on case studies from new primary sources I have provided here for the first time, based on ten interviews with real historical actors, will be a fruitful exercise that will shed

¹¹ Archives of Yugoslavia (hereafter: AJ), Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, 1.

¹² AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine, 8.

¹³ *Ibid.*

more light on these events that have fallen through the cracks of recent historiography on the Balkans that focuses mostly on the events of the 1990s. Hence, my main research question is to study the conjunction of causal factors and motivations informing the emigration of the Muslim communities from Yugoslavia to Turkey in the period from 1953 to 1968. On the one hand, I want to understand the concerns of the Yugoslav state regarding the Muslim communities. Who are the émigrés whose departure the state wanted? Was there a process of deportation? To what extent were official policies predicated on nationalist programs? For instance, to what extent were Muslims understood as groups who could threaten Yugoslav state that prided itself on diversity? Was the agreement on migration signed in 1953 between Yugoslavia and Turkey informed by the practices on emigration of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes' government? If it was, to what extent did the two policies, the old one and new one, coincide? What was used as the ideological justification for the policy of emigration? That is, how did Yugoslav political and cultural elites construct Muslim “difference”? Similarly, how did Turkish political elites construct “difference” in their immigration and settlement policies and what criteria did they use in order to distinguish among disparate Muslim groups who came to Turkey?

On the other hand, I want to see how state policies, practices and regulations regarding migration influenced people's decisions to leave. What were their common motives for leaving Yugoslavia? What were the cultural dynamics that might have played a role in one's decision to leave? Were there any familiar or neighbourly ties with ‘ethnic kin’ networks in Turkey that influenced the decision to leave? What are the common themes, motifs and cultural repertoires the interviewees use in their accounts to convey their emigration experience and life in Turkey?

I want to focus particularly on the contextualization of factors prevailing in individuals' and groups' decision to leave. I believe it is important to understand how social status, class, gender, and religion as opposed to mere ethno-national affiliations and origins influenced exchanges and became important factors in negotiating the relationship between the migrants and their former as well as future states and societies. Furthermore, my discussion will be sensitive to the social settings in which my interviews were conducted—space as well as the number and profile of present interlocutors that may have influenced the interview.

Considering the scarcity of the sources on this migration, I find it necessary to first look at scholarly works on previous waves of migration in order to provide historical and political setting of the migration movement in the period between 1953 and 1968. After the exposition of my methodological and theoretical framework in the first chapter, in the second chapter I will outline the historical background of the migration from the former Yugoslav states to Turkey, from the late Ottoman era to period of the Federal Peoples' Republic of Yugoslavia. I will particularly focus on migration from the regions of Macedonia, Kosovo and Bosnia to Turkey in the late nineteenth century. I will draw more attention to the period of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-41), whereas, the largest part of this chapter will be devoted to the emigration from post-war Yugoslavia to Turkey. The third chapter will deal with the question of 'nations and nationalities' in Yugoslavia (focusing also on Macedonia) and its impact on the Muslim communities. The fourth chapter will examine the body of literature which deals with the settlement and the immigration policies in Turkey in the early republican period (1923-1934) in relation to the same policies carried out by the Committee of Union and Progress. These policies are important to contextualize historically Turkey's official stance on immigration from the Balkans.

The fifth and sixth chapters will be devoted to the interpretation of the interviewees' accounts. I will argue that the interviewees' accounts need to be analysed according to different social settings of the interview and the interviewees' different social background. In the fifth chapter I will engage in the theoretical discussion on voluntary and involuntary migration. I will analyse how this distinction functions within the interviewees' accounts and their experiences of migration. This chapter will address how the official policy of voluntary migration is addressed and interpreted by the interviewees since this is the first time that Muslim communities immigrated to Turkey according to immigration policy that was not state-sponsored. Alongside with this level of analysis, I will also discuss the emotions, tropes and cultural repertoires that are inevitably present in the interviewees' accounts of voluntary and involuntary migration. Finally, the second level of analysis will be introduced in the sixth chapter. This chapter will return to my main research question and aim to show how oral history approach when used in migration studies may challenge and nuance a broad array of complex individual and group motives and decisions for migration. This chapter will juxtapose the oral accounts on motives and decisions informing the Muslim communities' choices to leave with scholarly works on migration. The CCFRM report on the migration does not mention any official policies of Yugoslavia which targeted particular Muslim groups. The lacuna of the Yugoslav side is a complete 'silence' in the official records that poses many questions rather than providing answers. Thus, it may appear that in this thesis I engage with the Turkish historiography on the subject of migrations in the 1950s and 1960s as a straw man. I would like to emphasize that the Yugoslav as well as Western scholarly literature on the subject is extremely scarce. However, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter VI, the CCFRM confidential report that served as a major

source for this thesis points to an existing debate, both on the ground in Macedonia and Kosovo and within the party ranks, on the issue of emigration of the “Turks.”

In the conclusion part I will argue that spectra of oral accounts show that live social actors refer to a past in a way which is different from what is recorded in the written, secondary sources. When juxtaposed with written sources, these oral accounts can shed light and confer new understanding on this process of migration and become a new reference to the existing body of literature on the same topic.

Chapter I: Oral History and Migration: Theoretical and Methodological Framework of the Thesis

In the last few decades oral history has made an important contribution to migration studies. When observing Britain in the late 1970s, Paul Thompson noticed that the history of immigrant groups was mainly documented from the outside and viewed as a social problem, whereas, he advocated that an approach from the “inside” would be crucial to nuance debates about migration in Britain.¹⁴ Historians interested in oral account on migration sought to study the “undocumented history of marginalised and oppressed groups.”¹⁵ This statement is similar to what American oral historian Michael Frisch calls ‘more history,’ that is, an approach broadly applied in the field of oral history that aims to elucidate undocumented and unrecorded aspects of the past.¹⁶

¹⁴ Alistair Thomson, “Moving Stories: Oral History and Migration Studies,” *Oral History* 27, no.1 (Spring 1999): 26.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Joanna Bornat and Arzu Öztürkmen, “Oral History,” in *Encyclopaedia of Women’s Folklore and Folk life*, ed. Liz Locke, Theresa A. Vaughan, and Pauline Greenhill (Abingdon,OX: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2009), 454.

Alistair Thomson, however, calls attention to some of the risks of dealing with the oral history of migration. He notes that the physical passage of migrants from one place to another is only one event within the migratory experience which spans old and new worlds and continues throughout the life of migrant. Thomson notes that migration has usually been studied through life of migrant or ethnic communities. The experience of a migrant or community in host societies forms one of the essential parts of studies of migration; however, there is a risk of perceiving those communities only in terms of their migrant origins. Likewise, the notion of ethnicity may seem inappropriate for the migrants who do not have to necessarily identify through the place of origin or ethnicity.¹⁷ What becomes more appropriate to ask is what are the experiences groups have with their new host society and how these experiences reveal a complex relationship between the newcomers and their kin-state.

In relation to migration, the personal testimony of migrants may offer “unique glimpses into the interior of migration process [...] and reveals a complex wave of factors and influences which contribute to migration and the processes of information exchange and negotiations within families and social networks.”¹⁸ In the conception of a life story, Daniel Bertaux elaborates an ethno-sociological approach in which particular importance lies in a “micro-milieux of intersubjective relationships constituted by families, group of friends and social networks which are affective, moral and generative of meaning.”¹⁹ In other words, when one lives in a group, that life is inextricably related to a group’s expectations, emotional and moral commitments, duties and responsibilities that is a moral economy which is constructed and negotiated in

¹⁷Thomson, “Moving Stories,” 25.

¹⁸Thomson, “Moving Stories,” 26-28.

¹⁹Daniel Bertaux, *Life Stories: An Ethnosociological Perspective*, trans. Tom Wengaf (Paris: Editions Nathan, 1997), 27.

relation with time and place.²⁰ Life stories are invaluable sources of knowledge because they provide information on sociometry, the climate and the moral economy of groups that are not to be found in written sources other than letters, for they emerge from the social scientist's reconstruction of interpersonal relations.²¹

More specifically, families and kinship networks are perceived to be one of the most important domains of existence. Developing a notion of family well beyond the juridical, Bertoux argues that families constructed spheres that make the social milieu different. These differences are to be seen in "material and cultural resources, external constraints, and residential context."²² They make an impact on the children who grew up in them by "constituting different potential matrices for their adult behaviour, their field of possibilities, their life chances which depend in large measure on the social situation of their family of origin and its cultural orientations."²³ Many other oral history projects involved with migration show that family and familial relationships form a background within which the migration process arises.²⁴

Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame similarly notices that in the interwar period, migration from French provinces to Paris, of which she studied oral accounts, predominately referred to social networks as central to interviewees' experience of migration.²⁵ Bertaux-Wiame argues that migrants are always located in some networks of social relations that are not merely socially supportive but function as a domain within which the migrants would seek out better jobs, better

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Alistair Thomson argues this on the basis of case studies done by Bertaux-Wiame and Mary Chamberlain. Aee Thomson, "Moving Stories," 28.

²⁵ Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame, "The Life History Approach to the Study of Internal Migration," in *Biography and History*, ed. Daniel Bertoux (SAGE Studies in International Sociology 23, 1981), 250.

places to live, or even spouses.²⁶ In my studies I found that, apart from being important for the decision-making process in migration, kinship continued to play an important role in newcomers' adaptation to a new environment. The final towns and cities of destination, the neighbourhoods, ways of finding jobs, the networks of support and friendship, the joining of various associations designed to aid migrants, and even to some extent the nature of marital relationships of migrants I interviewed largely depended on kinship. Related, the history of family members back in Yugoslavia was also constitutive of important criteria for Turkey's state agents used to distinguish between 'proper Turkish citizens' and 'potential Communists.' In this regard I will employ the notion of biography, developed by Gilles De Rapper's study of Enver Hoxha's Albania (1944-1991). He argues that biography, that is, one's family or linear background, was largely responsible for the authorities' attitude towards the individuals in their new host or post-communist society.²⁷

Building on these insights from studies in oral history of migration, I constructed an analytical framework within which to approach my data. In the following section I will describe my data, explain the method by which I obtained them and the challenges I encountered in the process of research.

²⁶ Bertaux-Wiame, "The Life History," 253.

²⁷ Benoit Fliche, "Social Practices and Mobilisation of Kinship: An Introduction," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 4 (2006), accessed May 15, 2012, <http://ejts.revues.org/index629.html>

Notes on fieldwork

I conducted my ethnographic research in Istanbul from September 2011 until January 2012. My study draws on oral testimonies of the migration of Muslim communities from the Federal Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia (Yugoslavia hereafter) living in present-day Istanbul. I will shortly underline and explain what is understood by the term ‘Muslim communities’ and why I consider it to be an appropriate choice in this regard. I deliberately named these migrant communities ‘Muslims’ since this category presents a cultural peculiarity they all seem to have in common. The purpose of searching for the appropriate term is not to label or argue for the homogeneity of the group or of clear-cut social and cultural identities of these communities. Rather, it is a reluctant yet required attempt to elucidate and avoid possible misunderstandings evolving around issues of who these people are. During my fieldwork I was struck by the very rich ethno-linguistic backgrounds of my interviewees from there region. Among ten of them there were people who declared themselves as Turkish, Torbesh²⁸, Crimean Tatar and Muslim of Serbian ethnicity. Some of them are fluent both in Turkish as well as Albanian, Macedonian or Serbo-Croatian. When taking into consideration that this pool/group of interviewees cuts across the aforementioned linguistic, ethnic and geographic lines, I opted for ‘Muslim’ as an umbrella term which is broad enough to encompass their rich cultural peculiarities.

²⁸ One interviewee who claimed Torbesh decent was born in Prizren, Kosovo and declared himself as a member of the Serbian-speaking Torbesh (op.a.) community. On the other hand, Akan Ellis points out that the Torbesh community in Macedonia are to be understood as “Macedonian-speaking community although they recently became a source of tension between Macedonians, Albanians and Turks in Macedonia, each of whom would like to claim them as one of their own.” See Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 8.

Interviews

As Joanna Bornat and Arzu Öztürkmen argue, oral history is both a historiographical approach and a methodology.²⁹ An in-depth interview structured by open-ended questions allows an interviewee “to construct her own account in a reflexive mode of communication between the researcher and her subject.”³⁰ For my field work I used an ethnographic in-depth interview with open-ended questions. I conducted ten interviews, all of them with the first generation immigrants who came to Turkey from the Yugoslavia in the period from 1953 to the end of the 1960s. My aim was to avoid getting answers that are clear-cut and definite. Therefore, I made a start-up list of questions which was, I believe, open-ended enough to allow the interviewees to tell their stories in long answers, as well as to reveal topics that I initially may not have addressed in the questionnaire.

My questionnaire starts with basic biographical questions and those related to the socio-economic, cultural and regional background of the interviewee and, possibly, of his or her closest family members. I also asked questions related to their memories of life in Yugoslavia, relationships in the neighbourhood and at work. Of course, most of the questions were related to motives and reasons for migration and the context within which they developed. Finally, I asked questions related to their settlement in Turkey, neighbourhood relationships, leisure time, etc., in their new homes with the hope that they would compare their former Yugoslav with their “new, Turkish” lives. Initially, I supposed I would be able to pose the same questions to all of my interviewees, but it occurred occasionally that it was not possible to do so. I strove to formulate the questions in as simple and straight-forward way as possible while trying to be cautious not to

²⁹Bornat and Öztürkmen, “Oral History,” 453.

³⁰*Ibid.*

interrupt the narration and to impose *a priori* categorization.

In order to locate my interviewees I opted for snowball sampling, a technique where existing subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. Following this method, I came across subjects who are members of a several migrants associations as well as those who do not have any connections with them. Each place and time for the interview was set according to the interviewee's wish. The questionnaire was prepared in Turkish, but the interviews were conducted depending on the interviewee's language knowledge and preferences. Thus, interviews were conducted and transcribed in Serbo-Croatian, Macedonian and Turkish.

Finding the migrant communities

As I mentioned, I used snowball sampling to find the members of the first generation of migrants. I acknowledge indebtedness to Tulay Tahir from the Macedonian Civic Education Centre who connected me with Mustafa Bereketli from *Rümelî Türkleri Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği* (Association for Cultural and Mutual Assistance of Rumeli Turks). Before my arrival to Istanbul I had not known that Mustafa would become an inseparable part of my fieldwork. He was not only the first migrant I met in Istanbul but also frequently provided me with lots of information regarding the history of migration from the Balkans to Turkey. He was also kind enough to take me to the associations of the migrants and help me meet with them. With the exception of only two meetings I had with migrants, Mustafa accompanied me in every visit to associations in which he participated in the interviews.

My fieldwork started soon after my arrival to Istanbul when I met Mustafa who brought me to *Küçükçekmece*, a large and crowded industrial suburb on the European side of Istanbul which counts approximately 711,112 inhabitants,³¹ mainly from poor and working-class families – a significant portion of which came from or descended from migrants and refugees from the Balkans. I was welcomed by the president of the *Çağdaş Köprülü ve Yöresi Dayanışma Kültür Derneği* (Associations for Cultural Assistance of Veles People and Region), an organization which brings together migrants from Macedonia, particularly the Veles region where Mustafa himself was born. I had the opportunity to meet many migrants and enjoy pleasant and flowing conversations (*muhabbet*). For this occasion I was not prepared to conduct an interview and record it, but the conversation was recorded by video at the insistence of the president of this association. In each later occasion I would take my questionnaire, video recorder and note book since I understood that even unbound chatting may yield interesting information. Two more associations that I visited were the *Kosova Priştineliler Kültür ve Dayanışma Merkezi* (The Centre of Kosova Pristineli for Cultural Aid and Mutual Assistance), which gathers people mainly from Pristina, and the aforementioned *Rumeli Türkleri Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği* (Association for Cultural Aid and Mutual Assistance of Rumeli Turks), the oldest association of migrants of that kind. All three visits helped me to map the geography of migrant communities and offered a glimpse into some interesting details.

Apart from *Küçükçekmece*, which has become increasingly industrialized since the 1950s, there were other similar migrant's settlement places. One of them is *Bayramapaşa*, a working class suburb positioned on the European side of Istanbul, the majority of which are Bosniaks. Also worth mentioning is *Fatih*, a historical district which is nowadays a

³¹ Data collected from the official web page of Küçükçekmece Municipality, accessed April 19, 2012, <http://www.kucukcekmece.bel.tr/kucukcekmece/detay.aspx?SectionID=PMO1LxuU1hr6IoJQtL511g%3d%3d&ContentID=WEKZNfXITb8WB0BT0ALrFw%3d%3d>

predominately working-class and conservative neighbourhood. Fatih encompassed the neighbourhoods of *Aksaray* and *Fındıkzade* where the two aforementioned associations are located. Almost all of my interviewees reside in these districts, including those who are not associated with the migrants' associations. Only one interviewee resides in a neighbourhood that stands out of the working-class, industrial cityscape. It is *Gümüşsuyu*, an affluent residential area. The associations are thus located in the neighbourhoods and districts where the migrants first settled when they arrived in Istanbul.

Another interesting point related to these associations is that they are not mere places where migrants gather to spend their leisure time. As Jeanne Hersant and Alexandre Toumarkine point out, migrants' associations in Turkey largely contribute to the Turkish social and political landscape.³² The authors argue that the migratory influxes, especially since the 1960s, of immigration from "the Turkish world" influenced the emergence of hometown associations.³³ The branches of such associations are usually situated in the residential areas of the group they represent. Such associations usually offer interesting insight into the 'origin' of the group they represent. For instance, rather than representing a country of origin, these associations refer to the notion of *hemşerlik* (somebody who is from the same town), i.e., immigrants who share their roots of origin in the same region, country or village which represented the 'Turkish world'.³⁴

The authors associate the term *hemşerlik* with the authoritarian and nationalistic character of the Turkish state which has been emphasizing the role of regional and local identities of the 'Turkish world' to strengthen Turkish nationalism. At the level of internal

³² Jeanne Hersant and Alexandre Toumarkine, "Hometown Organizations in Turkey: An Overview," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 2 (2005), accessed April 20, 2012.

<http://ejts.revues.org/index397.html>.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

structure, associations represent a form of the hometown organization constructed on a noticeable scale which corresponds to village, district, city, country and region.³⁵ Activities of the village or district associations are limited to social activities such as picnics, cafes, *gece* (cultural events and family dancing evenings) and to mutual aid/assistance for members of the community. On the other hand, the regional associations gather small businessmen, politicians and people of high social standing.

In other words, the district type would correspond to the associations of the Veles people and those of Pristina, whereas, Rumeli would fit in the category of the regional associations. However, as the authors note, in reality the associations recruit both among ‘notables’ and ‘ordinary citizens’ despite the fact these social classes are not likely to meet each other in other circumstances.³⁶ What makes a difference between the associations, they argue, is that their ability to act or not on several territories and that refers to a grade of investment of a current location and place of origin.³⁷ In this regard, Esra Bulut closely examines the inter-state relationship between Turkey and the Balkans, focusing particularly on actors who are perceived to have ethno-religious kin in the Balkans.³⁸ She associates the term ‘kin’ with communities of more than 1.6 million people from the Balkans who migrated during 1923-1995.³⁹ Bulut highlights the various terms used in Turkey for such groups. The terms *mühacir* (refugee), *göçmen* (migrant), *Balkan kökenli* (of Balkan origin), *Rumelili* (a person of Rumeli), and *mübadil* (those who came as a result of the population exchange between Turkey and Greece in 1923) are only a few commonly used terms related to the migrants. Some of these terms are also

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Esra Bulut, “Friends, Balkans, Statesmen Lend Us Your Ears: The Trans-state and State in Links between Turkey and the Balkans,” in *Transnationalism in the Balkans*, ed. Denisa Kostovicova and Vesna Bojicic-Dzelilovic (New York, 2008), 95.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

associated by many with ethnic groups such as *Arnavut* (Albanian) or regions of origin such as *Üsküplü* (of Skopje) and *Rumeli Türkleri* (Turks of Rumeli). According to Bulut, the striking point here is that some attributes ascribed to those migrants blur distinction between immigrant and non-immigrant. A clear example is Rumeli that is historically part of the Ottoman Empire, whereas, in Turkish nation-state narratives it is strongly related to the birth of Turkish nationalism. The migrant's associations, she argues, institutionalize the aforementioned terminology.

Bulut is concerned with the question of whether the Turks of Bulgaria are a diaspora in Turkey or Bulgaria. Similarly, if Rumeli Turks are envisaged as having in fact 'returned' to Anatolia after diasporic existence in the Balkans, what is it that they share in common with Bosnians and Albanians in Istanbul who also seem to constitute a diaspora in Turkey.⁴⁰ Therefore, Bulut reminds, the concept of diaspora and homeland should be taken with full awareness of their ambiguity. In contrast, Hersant and Toumarkine argue that hometown associations are constructions of what ought to be a collective identity-group memory. It is about transposing elements of local folklore into the urban context and borrowing references from the common regional memory to create a set of references and values which will ensure the reproduction of the group.⁴¹ The activities of association also concern familial relations. Among them are classes in folklore, sport activities for young people, picnics, *gece* (cultural events and family dancing evenings) or sponsorship of poor families or students.⁴²

I was taking notes while visiting each association. In each branch I would encounter an overwhelming presence of Turkish national and political symbols juxtaposed with the

⁴⁰ Esra Bulut, "Friends, Balkans, Statesmen," 97.

⁴¹ Hersant and Toumarkine, "Hometown Organizations in Turkey: An Overview,"

⁴² *Ibid.*

representational symbolic and cultural landscape of the region or town of origin. There was a striking presence of national cultural figures such as the famous poet and politician *Yahya Kemal Beyatlı* who was from Skopje and *Mehmet Akif Ersoy*, the novelist and writer of the Turkish national anthem who was of Albanian origin from Kosovo. Beyatlı's prose and poetry is frequently performed and occupies a significant place in the cultural repertoire of the *Rumeli* association. In a similar vein, highly positioned members of the associations emphasized to me that the founder of the Turkish republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, was the most notable of *Rumeli* men.

Interestingly, when it comes to the politicization of the migrants' associations, Bulut gives an example of the Rumeli Turks' Culture and Solidarity Association as one that is closely involved in activities between Turkey and Macedonia. It led a series of events to celebrate the 650th anniversary of entry into the Balkans, presenting itself as spokesman of all Rumeli people who are natural heirs of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.⁴³ Likewise, I found that many migrants who are the members of some associations refer to the heritage of the Rumeli region as Turkish; however, that neither confronts nor overshadows their clear identification with the term *serbest göçmen* (free migrant). For most of the members of the associations I spoke to, their membership did not necessarily reflect political connotations. Their accounts are much more complex. When they refer to the relationship between their associations and their place of origin they usually stress the need for economic investment, support in the matters of restoration of the Ottoman heritage in the Balkans and scholarships for students. However, complexities between the associations as a 'community of experience' and their involvement in the state relationship with the place or origin are something which I will examine more in detail in subsequent chapters of my thesis. Furthermore, I will deal with the migrant associations as the spaces which provide a

⁴³Bulut, "Friends, Balkans, Statesmen," 97.

specific social context for sharing a story that differs from other spaces where I conducted my interviews.

Settings of the interview

I was initially interested in conducting interviews on a one-on-one basis. However, circumstances often did not allow me to proceed in such a fashion. This was particularly the case when visiting the associations. For instance, on one of such occasions Mustafa brought me to the Association of Kosovo Pristinalis. The saloon was full of people, and I was invited into the small office of the president of the association with two randomly chosen males who agreed to have an interview with me. The circumstances were not perfect for the interview because the association had a cultural evening (*gece*), and each room echoed with the ‘Rumeli songs’ performed by a live band. Mustafa Bereketli also participated in the interview. The overall nature of the interview was marked primarily by a debate among these three males who spryly argued over who could craft the most ‘trustworthy’ version of events related to their migrations and pasts, as well as the most accurate prognosis of the current situation in the Balkans. After a while I could not but welcome this outcome and found it even more than desirable, even though as the debate progressed I had less and less control over what was being said.

As Burcu Akan Ellis notices, group interviews provide an excellent setting for obtaining different interpretations of an event.⁴⁴ The interviews I conducted in the associations were mainly group interviews, and they differ significantly from those I conducted in different social settings such as cafes and the private homes of interviewees. The difference is to be found in the

⁴⁴ Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 11.

matters of what Alessandro Portelli notes as the “classification of speech act.”⁴⁵ There is a shifting balance between a subject-oriented life story and theme-oriented testimony.⁴⁶ For instance, the group interviews in a public space such as an association building shifted more towards political aspects of the experience of migration, settlement in Turkey and Turkey’s recent relationship to Macedonia and Kosovo. On the other hand, the interviews conducted one-on-one in cafes or private homes tended more to biographical details and personal experiences of migration. I would also like to say that the presence of more than one person in the interview does not necessarily imply discussion or disagreements. I witnessed how the participation of more people in the room who are close to the interviewee may also help and stimulate some memories.

My role as researcher

Burcu Akan Ellis notes that perceptions such as trust and suspicion are inherent to oral history projects.⁴⁷ I consider myself lucky for I have gained plenty of trust of all my interviewees, because when I went to the associations, I was accompanied in most cases by Mustafa. I believe my presence as a researcher was partly influenced by the social status Mustafa enjoys within communities that gather in the associations. I noticed that Mustafa is a highly respected persona within the community of the migrants. He was warmly welcomed while his stories of travelling to various places in the Balkans and holding conferences on migration were listened to with curiosity. The associations that I visited resembled *kahvehanes*, traditional and cultural places in Turkey where men gather, drink tea or coffee and play *tavla* (backgammon).

⁴⁵ Alessandro Portelli, “Oral History as Genre,” *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1997), 5.

⁴⁶ Portelli, “Oral History as Genre,” 6.

⁴⁷ Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 16.

However, I would be wrong to say I felt uncomfortable in the presence of mainly elderly men who greeted me with *selam aleykum* (let peace be with you), that is, a traditional greeting practiced among devout Muslims. The presence of a young female from Croatia who speaks Turkish and wants to study the migrants from the Balkans was indeed warmly welcomed. They found that my research praiseworthy since “one girl from Croatia is more interested in their past than the Turkish youth”.

What would particularly elicit enthusiasm in such gatherings was when I announced that my mother is from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Almost with no exception, I was invited to sit and share a cup of tea with the elderly men in the lobby. Usually, they were very eager to find out where I came from and how I learned the Turkish language. They were positively surprised to find out that one may study Turkish language and literature in Zagreb. Many of them would initially start the conversation in the language of their region of origin and eventually develop an exuberant – but dizzying – mix of the languages. Their most common references were to Tito, days in Tito’s army, resentment because of the fall of Yugoslavia and their last visit to Macedonia. Some of them proudly stressed that they had visited Croatia, usually during days in the army, whereas, some were puzzled and slightly disappointed that I was reluctant to express my ethnicity. Nevertheless, my visits would end up with their invitations to meet their families and join the upcoming *geces* in associations.

What is more is that I have to acknowledge that in the Rumeli Association I encountered cordial librarians who allowed me to use the books and the library for conducting interviews. Visiting the houses of my interviewees was an equally pleasant experience. I have to say I never left any of their homes without plentifully enjoying the Turkish tea and *meze* (snacks) and receiving a small gift. In the privacy of their homes, female interviewees

particularly would show me photographs of their families and loved ones. I believe the trust and hospitality shown by my interviewees helped to smooth the anxiety and strengthen my self-confidence as a young female researcher who conducted fieldwork in predominately Turkish-speaking area with elderly men.

Finally, I would like to reflect shortly on the major challenges inherently embedded in any oral history project. The question that bothers is to what extent these ten interviewees I gathered may be considered as a representative sample of the immigrant group's past experience? These interviews may hardly be representative in sociological sense since they represent only a small number of the urban immigrant population residing in Istanbul, whereas, there are many other immigrant groups residing in rural areas or in the other metropolises such as Bursa and Izmir. However, I believe that the historical argument on one group's common past experience may be constructed and evaluated when the oral accounts are cross-examined with the other type of historical evidence such as archival material, novels, short stories and other documentary historical sources.

Chapter II: History of the Migration Movements to Turkey from the Former Yugoslav states

2.1. Migrations in the Late Ottoman Era (1878-1923)

As indicated in the introduction, migration and population movements from the Balkans to Turkey and vice versa have been a widespread social and political phenomenon. Nevertheless, in this study regions belonging to the Former Yugoslavia will be closely examined with reference to the larger socio-political context of migration movements to Turkey from Southeast Europe. It is beyond dispute that the former European possessions of the Ottoman Empire were marked with various types of migration patterns. Xavier Bougarel emphasizes that already in the Ottoman period “men from mountainous areas left their villages each year for several months (*gurbet*) in order to find work in the lowlands and the cities.”⁴⁸ The demographic and cultural landscape of southern European regions was particularly significantly modified due to population exchanges and ethnic violence that marked the late nineteenth century as Ottoman imperial rule retracted from the Balkans. Some estimate that the number of Muslims who had been forced to leave their ancestral homes in the Balkan Peninsula between the late 1870s and early 1920s is as high as 1 445 000.⁴⁹ Political uprisings, guerrilla activity, and Ottoman Muslim reprisals in the Balkans leading up to the Ottoman defeat in the Turkish-Russian War (1877-1878) contributed to the deterioration of the political and social category of the *millet* system.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Xavier Bougarel, “Balkan Muslim Diasporas and the Idea of a 'European Islam,’” in *Balkan Currents. Essays in Honour of Kjell Magnusson* eds. Tomislav Dulić et alii (Uppsala: Uppsala Multiethnic Papers 49, 2005), 147.

⁴⁹ Kirişçi, “Post-Second World War Immigration from Balkan Countries to Turkey,” 61.

⁵⁰ Fikret Adanır and Hilmar Kaiser define the millet system as an institution of the non-Muslim communities who had a recognised legal status and cultural autonomy, in Fikret Adanır and Hilmar Kaiser, “Migration, Deportation

Hundreds of thousands of Muslim refugees who fled from the Russian army and were expelled by the newly formed states in the Balkans sought refuge in the remaining parts of Ottoman Europe, Istanbul, or Anatolia/the Middle East. It should be noted that not only mere ethnic Turks had been migrating east but also other Muslim communities such as Bosniaks, Pomaks, Caucasians and Albanians.⁵¹

Ensuing agreements reached at the Congress in Berlin in 1878 also had detrimental consequences for many of the Muslim communities in the regions of former Yugoslavia, particularly those settled in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The implementation of the Austro-Hungarian administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1878) and its subsequent annexation (1908) had a strong impact on many Muslims who opted for migration to Turkey since their socio-economic interests were endangered by the new policies of the Habsburgs. In a form of indirect political and economic protest rather than ethnic or religious expulsion the number of the Muslims who left Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Ottoman Empire between 1887 and 1918 is estimated to be around 150 000.⁵² Some authors claim that both the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian imperial governments contributed to such a number by spreading respective campaigns of agitation. For instance, the Austro-Hungarian administration was interested in the Muslim landowner's properties which would have been given to the 'loyal' population from the Monarchy, whereas, Istanbul is said to have needed such influx of 'loyal' people to colonize its

and Nation-Building: The Case of the Ottoman Empire," in *Migrations and Migrants in Historical Perspective. Permanencies and Innovations* ed. René Leboutte (Florence: P.I.E-Peter Lang S.A., Brussels, 2000), 274. Christine Philiou recognizes that the concept of millet system has recently become a subject of dispute. The recent scholarship emphasizes the fluidity of the millet system arguing that the millet system had not been fully institutionalized before the Tanzimat reforms in mid nineteenth century. See Christine Philiou, *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in the Age of Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 6-7.

⁵¹ Adanır and Kaiser, "Migration, Deportation and Nation-Building: The Case of the Ottoman Empire," 279.

⁵² Fikret Adanır, "Formation of a 'Muslim' Nation in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Historiographical Discussion," in *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion on Historiography* eds. Fikret Adanır and Suraiya Faroqi (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2002), 273.

borderland garrisons and largely Christian-populated plateaus of Thrace and Anatolia.⁵³ In the aftermath of the Balkan Wars in 1912-1913, the regions of Kosovo, the western part of Macedonia (Vardarska Makedonija) and Sanjak of Novi Pazar, which were up to that point still under Ottoman administration, were incorporated in the Kingdom of Serbia. Shortly afterwards, these regions were integrated into the province of Southern Serbia, which became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (the Kingdom of SCS hereafter) that emerged as a much larger state in the Balkans after World War I in 1918.

The new shifting of the political constellations in the Balkans launched another wave of emigration in which more than 130 000 Muslim groups left Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece for the realms of the Ottoman Empire prior to the First World War.⁵⁴ Jovanovic argues that prevailing reasons for migration from the Southern Serbia respectively were “fear of retaliation for the crimes Muslims committed against Christians between 1912 and 1918, rumours about welfare in Turkey, and the political repression of the Kingdom of SCS.”⁵⁵ An analysis of shops and ateliers in various markets of South Serbia shows that the Serbian administration impoverished sixty percent of the Muslim landowners who became artisans and merchants.⁵⁶ The region of Southern Serbia was closely linked to the Serbian sphere of political influence bound to Serbian nationalism whose goal was to achieve a more homogenous nation-state comprised of loyal

⁵³ Sulejman Smlatic, “Iseljavanje jugoslavenskih Muslimana u Tursku i njihovo prilagođavanje novoj sredini,” in *Iseljništvo naroda i narodnosti Jugoslavije i njegove uzajamne veze s domovinom* (Zagreb, 1978), 251.

⁵⁴ These are the numbers presented in the work of Serbian historian Vladan Jovanovic, (see Jovanovic, “In Search of Homeland,” 57). However, German sources claim that in The Balkan War of 1912/13, in which the Ottoman Empire was faced with a joint alliance of Montenegro, Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece, some 800,000 Muslims were forced to leave from their settlements in the Balkans towards Anatolia. See Zentrum für Türkeistudien in *Türkei Jahrbuch des Zentrums für Türkeistudien* (Münster 1999/2000), accessed May 29, 2012.

<http://focus-migration.hwwi.de/index.php?id=1234&L=1>. It is worth keeping in mind that the numbers of the Muslim immigration in period of wars and politically contentious events are often subject to the ideological views and goals of authors who cite them, op.a.

⁵⁵ Jovanovic, “In Search of Homeland,” 57.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

citizens.⁵⁷ Moreover, such economic and political constraints imposed on Muslim groups⁵⁸ in the region were accompanied by a set of related migration policies envisaged by the state. Among them were legal regulations on emigration and repatriation, internal instructions regarding the migrations of Muslims returning from Turkey and reclaiming their properties, the Emigration Law of 1922, the Citizenship Law of 1928, bilateral agreements between Yugoslavia and Turkey regarding the resettlement of “Turks” in Turkey, repressive political measures stimulating the emigration of Muslims, as well as agricultural and colonization policies (confiscation of the Muslim properties) directed by the state against certain “classes” in addition to ethno-religious groups.⁵⁹

Pezo argues that the official migration policies were twofold. On the one hand, presumed co-nationals (i.e., Slavic Christians) from neighbouring countries were encouraged to settle in the region, whereas, those who were considered as members of ethnic minorities were encouraged and forced to leave.⁶⁰ In the case of the Southern Serbia the main target for emigration were mainly non-Slavic speaking Muslims (Turks and Albanians), while their Bosnian coreligionists (i.e., Slavic-speaking Muslims) were considered to be an integral part of the Kingdom of SCS as purported by the official ideology of *Yugoslavism*. Pezo notes that apart from the state migration policy, emigration to Turkey also took the form of labour and seasonal movements which often led to permanent settlement.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Pezo, “‘Re-Conquering Space’,” 74.

⁵⁸ According to Pezo the notion of Muslim in the Kingdom of SCS should be understood within the category of all ethnic groups who emigrated in the interwar period from Yugoslavia to Turkey or Albania. Among them were Albanians, Turks, Slavic-speaking Muslims such as Bosniaks, Gorani, Pomaks, Torbeš and Muslim Roma. The Yugoslav documents vaguely refer to the Muslim groups. The biases are also present especially in the references that are pejorative, see Pezo, “‘Re-Conquering Space,’” 57.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Pezo, “‘Re-Conquering Space,’” 74.

⁶¹ Pezo, “‘Re-Conquering Space,’” 76.

Before I turn to emigration movements to Turkey in the interwar period, it is worth re-emphasizing once again the wider landscape of the migration movements in that time. Casting a wider net on this topic, one notices that the end of the World War I made an enormous impact on southeast European population movements and resettlement. The contraction of the frontiers of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of the Balkan nation-states alongside the Turkish Republic after the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1923) reveal a common pattern of population displacement. The population exchange between Turkey and Greece agreed upon in Lausanne (1923) is considered the first compulsory one in modern history. It resulted in more than 1 200 000 Greek Orthodox and 350 000 Muslims being exchanged between Turkey and Greece, with the exemption of the Greek Orthodox of Istanbul and the Muslim population of Greek Thrace.⁶² This data is certainly tied to the migration and population movement surrounding the end of the Ottoman era, but as the case of Yugoslavia (and others) shows, migrations of Muslims to Turkey would continue throughout the rest of the century and are constitutive of one large legacy of the Ottoman period.

2.2 Migration in the period between 1923 and 1945

In this section I will continue to draw on the historiography of migration focusing mostly on the rest of the interwar period in the Kingdom of SCS up until the state's final demise at the end of World War II. As in the previous section, the population exchange between Turkey and Greece undoubtedly stands as the most salient episode – and precedent – of forced population exchanges at that time. The population exchange imposed on their populations by these newly

⁶² Penelope Papailias, “Genres of Recollection: History, Testimony and Archive in Contemporary Greece” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2001).

established nation-states was conceived as a means of achieving more homogenous societies that both states understood as desirable and more loyal given the devastation of the previous decades. However, there are a few important distinctions to be made in this regard.

The forced expulsion of populations as per negotiations between two nation-states requires significant state financial and social expenditures to accommodate these large groups; therefore, one may assume that such a policy is practiced predominately in periods of crises, wars and rebellions.⁶³ Akan Ellis argues that it was easier in these turbulent times for the representatives of one nation-state to relocate a part of its population considered to pose a security threat rather than expand their national borders. Burçu Akan Ellis argues that especially in the first quarter of the twentieth century “the dislocation of people into their nationalities-oriented borders was often considered as a more peaceful act than territorial expansion.”⁶⁴ In many cases the population rather than the borders would have become negotiable. The case of southern Serbia in the interwar period seems to present no exception. In the period of the parliamentary system in the Kingdom of SCS (1919-1941) public debates regarding the integration of the Muslims into South Serbia either viewed the issue with great scepticism or fierce opposition. In fact, the emigration of non-Slavic groups was largely supported given that they were not seen as groups that could be fully assimilated.⁶⁵ Indeed, such an emigration policy was considered to be a large step in breaking free from what they understood as yet another undesirable Ottoman legacy, thus allowing the new nation-state to accelerate “de-Ottomanisation and re-Occidentalisation.”⁶⁶

⁶³Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 43.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*

⁶⁵Pezo, “Re-Conquering Space,” 84.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

These so-called “liberating actions”⁶⁷ that were also bound to understandings of economic and cultural progress were some of the discursive tools for carrying out the colonization of southern Serbia. The main role in the “scientific buttressing of territorial claims by Serbia”⁶⁸ was led by ethnographers and geographers who “surveyed and mapped”⁶⁹ the southern regions before and after the First World War. The agrarian and colonization policy was furthermore enforced with laws introduced by the dictatorship of King Alexander in 1929. Their implementation led to the increase of the number of emigrants from Southern Serbia to Turkey and Albania. From a legal perspective, the citizens of the Kingdom of SCS were officially distinguished as those who were “wanted” versus those who were “unwanted.”⁷⁰ Putting it bluntly, this meant that the return of the migrants back to the Kingdom of SCS was not desired although there was an insignificant number among them who did come back. The Citizenship Law encouraged and regulated the permanent emigration of the migrants.⁷¹ Only non-Slavic citizens who had been holders of Ottoman passports up to 1913 had the right to opt for release from Yugoslav citizenship for a five-year period, and in 1933, this right was extended. The underlying motivation was to exclude non-Slavic inhabitants from integration and power, although many Slavic speaking Muslims also made use of this policy.⁷²

However, agrarian reforms and colonisation alongside the Citizenship Law of 1926 did not alter the ethnic composition in favour of ‘Slavic element’ to the degree that the government hoped.⁷³ The government of Milan Stojadinovic (1935-1939) therefore issued a proposal of

⁶⁷Jovanovic, “In Search of Homeland,” 62.

⁶⁸Pezo, “Re-Conquering Space,” 85.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Pezo, “Re-Conquering Space,” 87.

⁷¹ Jovanovic, “In Search of Homeland,” 61.

⁷² Pezo, “Re-Conquering Space,” 88.

⁷³ Pezo, “Re-Conquering Space,” 90.

resettling Albanians and Turks in the Inter-Ministerial Conference in 1935. As a result, the pressures against the Albanians who were perceived as the main security threat in southern Serbia increased. These communities were forced to resettle in Turkey by “propaganda as well as by taking extraordinary measures.”⁷⁴ Some of the extraordinary measures that induced targeted groups to leave included forced labour, the prohibition of tobacco planting, as well as a renaming policy in which targeted Muslims were “Christened” with Slavic names.⁷⁵ The propaganda machine mobilized against these minorities might have been additionally spurred on by the memorandum entitled *Iseljavanje Albanaca* [The Emigration of the Albanians] written by the scholar Vaso Cubrilovic. Apparently, this memorandum was never implemented, yet for the purposes of the office of Stojadinovic, Cubrilovic offered a way of solving the Albanian problem. His proposal of mass expulsion of Albanians as the only effective solution was substantiated by the examples of the German expulsion of Jews and the Russian resettlement of millions of people that were taking place in those states concomitantly.⁷⁶

In 1938, the Yugoslav-Turkish Convention was initiated in order to regulate the resettlement of 40 000 ‘Turkish’ families to Turkey, i.e., 200 000 persons. Officially, the Turkish interest was to “[f]ind preferably a Muslim population capable of farming land in Anatolia,” whereas, Yugoslav representatives argued that “[t]hey need arable lands to settle landless peasants.”⁷⁷ It was also suggested that this document may have been guided by the experience of the immigration agreement between Turkey and Romania signed in 1937, which envisaged the immigration of predominately 400 000 people from Dobruja in Romania to

⁷⁴ Pezo, “Re-Conquering Space,” 92.

⁷⁵ Jovanovic, “In Search of Homeland,” 62.

⁷⁶ Pezo, “Re-Conquering Space,” 93.

⁷⁷ АВДИЈА АВДИЋ, “ЈУГОСЛОВЕНСКО-ТУРСКИ ПРЕГОВОРИ О ИСЕЉАВАЊУ МУСЛИМАНСКОГ СТАНОВНИШТВА У ПЕРИОДУ ИЗМЕЂУ ДВА РАТА,” *NovopazarSKI zbornik* 15 (1991): 115.

Turkey.⁷⁸ Eventually, the Convention of 1938 was not entirely implemented mostly due to the financial expenditures such as 20 million liras suggested by the Turkish representatives for transporting, purchasing lands and settling the migrants.⁷⁹ In the end, the migration policy in southern Serbia undertaken by the Kingdom of SCS consisted of complex and multi-layered fields of interests. Political repression, inciting tensions between the Albanian and Turkish communities during the period of Stojadinovic's government, the impact of the migrants' networks and the agitation from Turkey are deeply interwoven in the migration movements in the interwar period. However, it has to be underlined that resettlement policies were an indispensable part of the Kingdom of SCS' official policies, and as demonstrated above, these policies were inspired by similar policies of regimes well beyond the confines of southern Europe, such as those of Germany and Russia. Likewise, the migration movements from the Kingdom of SCS to Turkey in the interwar period unfolded side by side with the migrations of Muslims and ethnic Turks from Bulgaria and Romania.⁸⁰

2.3. Migration in the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (1953-1968)

The migration movements from Southeast Europe to Turkey continued after the World War II. The Kingdom of SCS fell apart after the Nazi occupation in 1941. The Monarchy received a final death blow in 1945 when Yugoslavia was re-established, now as a socialist, federal state of peoples spurred by the victory of the Yugoslav partisan anti-fascist movement. National and ethnic egalitarianism and social justice manifested in the notion of 'brotherhood and unity' were the so-called pillars of the social Yugoslavia that was officially proclaimed in

⁷⁸ Pezo, "Re-Conquering Space," 14.

⁷⁹ Jovanovic, "In Search of Homeland," 63.

⁸⁰ In this regard, Kemal Kirişçi notes that the number people who migrated from Bulgaria to Turkey (1923-1945) is roughly 214 432, whereas in the case of Romania is 121 296 and Yugoslavia is 118 000, in Kirişçi, "Post-Second World War Immigration," 63.

November 1945 as the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia.⁸¹ It seems that the FPRY would pursue radically different emigration policies compared to the pre-1941 governments given its self-proclaimed egalitarianism and break from the oppression of the previous regimes. The Kingdom of SCS pursued active colonisation policies, especially in the regions inhabited by the non-Slavic speaking population, whereas, the socialist Yugoslavia was characterised by intense domestic emigration bound to the creation of the new industries and jobs in the service sector during the 1950s and 1960s.⁸² Until the early 1960s voluntary emigration was prohibited, with exception of ethnic Turks who were allowed to migrate to Turkey from the 1950s onwards after another agreement with Turkey had been signed.⁸³ The emigration wave to Turkey had significantly decreased by the end of the 1960s when it was replaced by temporary labour emigration to the Federal Republic of Germany. Since migration to Turkey significantly decreased after 1968, I will constrain my observation to the period between 1953 and 1968.

In respect to migration movements in the post-World War II period from Southeast Europe to Turkey, Yugoslavia takes second place after Bulgaria.⁸⁴ The migration from the Yugoslavia to Turkey was concluded in Split in 1953 by the so-called "gentlemen's agreement" between the Yugoslav president Josip Broz Tito and the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Mehmet Fuat Köprüllü.⁸⁵ This agreement seemed to present a further step in strengthening the relationship between Turkey and Yugoslavia. After the Cominform resolution in 1948 (split between Tito and Stalin), the diplomatic channels between Turkey and Yugoslavia had been significantly improved. Moreover, the Balkan Pact that was signed in Ankara on 28 February

⁸¹ Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia was the official name used by 1963. For the purpose of this thesis I will use the abbreviation FPRY, op.a.

⁸² Brunnbauer, "Late Labour Migration," 30-31.

⁸³ Brunnbauer, "Late Labour Migration," 43-44.

⁸⁴ Kirişçi, "Post-Second World War Immigration," 69.

⁸⁵ Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 50.

1953 envisaged economic, cultural and trade cooperation between Turkey, Greece and Yugoslavia. The main incentive for the founding of the Balkan Pact was the construction of an Eastern bloc that would be protected and isolated from the sphere of the Soviet influence.⁸⁶ According to the diplomatic archives of the Foreign Affairs of France, Turkey took a stand in favour of the formation of an autonomous Macedonia within Yugoslavia, whereas, it opposed Tito's initiative to include Bulgaria as another federal state within Yugoslavia. The main reasons for such attitude are to be found in Turkey's fear that Soviet Communism would spread across the entire Peninsula and eventually 'contaminate' Turkey itself, since it officially equated bolshevism with Russian expansionism.⁸⁷

The agreement on migration between Tito and Köprüllü was signed soon after the Balkan Pact. It proposed voluntary or free migration, which meant that the communities who wanted to migrate to Turkey could benefit from such an agreement. However, the agreement implied that the migrants were taking full responsibility for migration and settlement in Turkey, since the migration was forced upon these groups neither by Yugoslavia nor Turkey.⁸⁸ The only benefit Turkey was obliged to give immigrants was citizenship and a tax break for the first five years after getting work permits.⁸⁹ Likewise, the migration movement did not have a time limit. In terms of eligibility, the right to migrate was open for any person who could obtain a guarantee letter from their relatives in Turkey. Another contentious requirement that both governments insisted upon was that every applicant had to demonstrate to both Yugoslav authorities and Turkish representatives in Skopje his or her belonging to the "Turkish culture and

⁸⁶Lazar Lazarov, "Büyük Güçler ve Türkiye'nin Makedonya Devletinin Kurulması ve Birleşmesi ile İlgili Olan Girişimleri (1944-1960)," *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi* 12 (1998): 161.

⁸⁷Lazar Lazarov, "Büyük Güçler," 160.

⁸⁸Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 42; Şule Kut, "Turks of Kosovo: What to Expect?" (the article partly based on author's paper 'Between Ethnic and Civic Identity: Turks of Macedonia and Kosovo', presented at the 5th Annual Convention of the Association for the Study of Nationalities (ASN), New York, April 14, 2000).

⁸⁹ Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 50-52.

consciousness” (*Türk kültürü ve bilinci*) in order to request a withdrawal from the Yugoslav citizenship.⁹⁰ The migration permit could be obtained after the approval of guarantee letters from relatives in Turkey, a declaration of ‘Turkishness’ and a payment of 12 000 Yugoslav dinars.⁹¹

Most of the Turkish population in the newly formed socialist Yugoslavia was concentrated mainly in Macedonia and Kosovo, regions that previously belonged to southern Serbia. However, migrants could have requested and fulfilled all the necessary applications only in Skopje. As the border with Bulgaria was closed and the one with Greece open due to the Balkan Pact agreement, the only way to leave for Turkey was by the train taking off from Skopje to Istanbul via Athens. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Turkey estimates that the number of migrants arriving from Yugoslavia to Turkey from 1953 to 1968 is approximately 170,000.⁹² Regarding such figures, one has to bear in mind that it is not only difficult to establish a certain number of emigrants coming from Yugoslavia to Turkey in that time, but that such data also presents a slippery slope since it involves many irregularities associated predominately with the political and ideological motivations of historians. The questions of what was at stake for both Yugoslavia and Turkey to sign such agreement, who were communities and what were condition that made them decide to migrate to Turkey as well as historiographical issues related to this migration wave will be discussed in detail in the chapters related to the migrants’ account of the migration. In the following chapter I will take a more elaborate look at the national policy undertaken by Yugoslavia in its early formative period. Considering that most of the population migrated from Macedonia, I will give a short overview of implementation of national policies in Yugoslavia related to the socio-political context of the People’s Republic of Macedonia.

⁹⁰Çavuşoğlu, “Yugoslavya – Makedonya Topraklarından,” 148.

⁹¹Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 52.

⁹²Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 136.

Chapter III: Question of Nations and Nationalities in the Federal Peoples' Republic of Yugoslavia

3.1 The Policy of Nations and Nationalities in the FPRY

After World War II, the Yugoslav partisan movement politically consolidated and represented itself through the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. The foundations for the federal system were previously laid in Jajce in 1943 by the decision of AVNOJ (Anti-fascist Council for the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia), the wartime deliberative body of the Yugoslav People's resistance against the Axis occupation. The actual federal institutions were adopted by the Constitution in 1946, and the procedure was shortly after carried out on the federal level by constituent assemblies in the newly formed republics.⁹³ Six federal republics were formed (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia) alongside two autonomous regions (Vojvodina and Kosovo-Metohija). The Constitution of 1946 recognized five nations residing in Yugoslavia; Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians and Montenegrins. It was the first time in history that Macedonians and Montenegrins were given the status of nation. National differentiation was not restricted to the federal republics in which one nation predominates. One could have declared his or her belonging to a nation even if s/he lived in a state where this nation did not represent majority of population. Precisely, Serbs living in Croatia were referred to as part of the Serbian nation. The case of Bosnia and Herzegovina was

⁹³ Paul Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1968), 114.

slightly different. For instance, Serbs who lived in Bosnia and Herzegovina were regarded as nation with two homelands, one in Serbia and the other in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁹⁴

The federal republics were considered to be the rough equivalent of “nation-states” whose status revolved around the make-up of the dominant “ethnic” group within its boundaries. On the other hand, the minorities had a special status. In Yugoslav legal discourse minorities were recognized as ‘nationalities of Yugoslavia or the communities whose ‘homeland’ is outside Yugoslav borders.’⁹⁵ The ten communities who were recognized as nationalities were granted extensive language and cultural rights. Among them the largest community were Albanians in Kosovo and Hungarians in Vojvodina, whereas, other communities were represented by Bulgarians, Czechs, Roma, Italians, Romanians, Ruthenians, Slovaks and Turks.⁹⁶ One more clarification has to be made in relation to the terminology of nationalities. The term “other nationalities and ethnic groups” also existed and it referred to the less numerous groups such as Austrians, Greeks, Jews, Germans, Poles, Russians, Ukrainians, Vlachs and Yugoslavs.⁹⁷ Also noteworthy is the fact that the German minority was considered highly suspicious especially at the end of the World War II, since they were considered collaborators. The small number of those who were not resettled or deported after the World War II had been “absolved from the collective responsibility for collaboration with the Nazis and recognized within the status of “other nationalities and ethnic groups.”⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Shoup, *Communism*, 115; Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 69.

⁹⁵ Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 69.

⁹⁶ Hugh Poulton, *Balkan: Minorities and States in Conflict* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1993), 5.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Shoup, *Communism*, 102-103.

When it comes to the issue of autonomous regions, one has to point out that they were perceived as the geographies of mixed nationalities rather than homelands to the communities which represented nations.⁹⁹ It seems that the legal status of autonomies had been a bone of contention among some of the members of the Commission for National Questions (Commission: hereafter). At one meeting of the Commission, Fadil Hoxha, the founder of the partisan movement in Kosovo, expressed his uncertainty in regard of Kosovo where the Albanians formed the majority of 65% but were recognized as a mere nationality instead of nation (*narod*). Hoxha considered that Albanians should have had a different status within the federation as a larger unit as well as within Kosovo as autonomy.¹⁰⁰

The Constitution of 1946 also highlighted the voluntary nature of the cooperation between the federal states as well as right for secession. Furthermore, people of all nations and nationalities could have travelled free across the federal borders and had the equal right to speak their own language in education, juridical and cultural affairs.¹⁰¹ Within the Constitution all the main legislative bodies followed the principle of equal representation of all federal republics. Hence it follows that Yugoslavia was founded on national equality where each republic practices a policy of national quotas.¹⁰² Each republic and autonomous province had its own governmental apparatus and judiciary.¹⁰³ Rather than delving into a discussion of these contentious and highly-debated principles of the Yugoslavian state, I would like to add simply that this freedom to govern itself was expected to “reflect the importance of the multinational character”¹⁰⁴ of

⁹⁹ Shoup, *Communism*, 115.

¹⁰⁰ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine, 82.

¹⁰¹ Sude Bahar Beltan, “Citizenship and Identity in Turkey: The Case of the Post-1980 Turkish Muslim Immigrants From Macedonia,” (MA thesis, Boğaziçi University 2006), 17.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Poulton, *Balkan*, 10.

¹⁰⁴ Shoup, *Communism*, 116.

Yugoslavia and not be interpreted in “such a way as to impinge on the powers of the Party.”¹⁰⁵ This implies that nationalism and advocacy of separatist rights were considered alien and antithetical to national policy.

The national questions and policies had been considered one of the major challenges to unifying the region and even discussed during World War II. In December 1942 Tito published his article on the “National Question in Yugoslavia in light of the People’s Liberation Struggle.” Here he argues that the partisan movement fought against not only the Axis powers but also the reactionary government of the King whose leadership resulted in the oppression of the nations and their social exploitation.¹⁰⁶ He states that the national policy of the Kingdom of SCS was the policy of dividing the spheres of interests, corruption and instigation of the national parties who turned one nation to fight against the other. In this regard, Tito finds the People’s Liberation Struggle and the national question of Yugoslavia inextricably related to each other.¹⁰⁷ Even after the establishment of Yugoslavia, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (hereafter the CPY) considered it crucial to grapple with national concerns which continued to occupy a significant place in the socialists’ building of a multinational society.

One of the important steps in this regard was employing national cadres. This policy followed several trajectories among which the most important one was applying the practice of staffing government and political posts with indigenous personnel representative of the national composition of the region in question.¹⁰⁸ Other efforts had been made in the fields of culture, media and education system where national feelings were encouraged. Of course, one has to

¹⁰⁵ Shoup, *Communism*, 116.

¹⁰⁶ Josip Broz Tito, “Nacionalno pitanje u Jugoslaviji u svjetlu narodnooslobodilačke borbe,” in *Nacionalno pitanje i revolucija*, ed. Kasim Suljević (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1977), 63.

¹⁰⁷ Tito, “Nacionalno pitanje u Jugoslaviji,” 69.

¹⁰⁸ Shoup, *Communism*, 120.

highlight that the freedom of cultural expression was expected to develop within the space coordinated by socialist ideology where some national figures were praised, whereas, others were condemned.¹⁰⁹ However, belonging to one nation or nationality was expressed freely.

The status one declared was associated with one's individual membership in a nation or nationality. Expressing one's nation or nationality was encouraged by the CPY since this was the way in which the system of the national rights could have been objectified and applied in the employment sector, representation in councils and education system in the form of quotas.¹¹⁰ Regardless of one's participation in a particular nation or nationality the rights to employment, equal pay for equal work, adequate health care, housing, insurance, retirement, vacation and education were accessible to everybody through national categories.

This chapter aims to present how the national policy was significant for the CPY especially in its early formative days. Apart from the fact that this policy was an important tool for legitimizing the new socio-political order, it also promised equal national and cultural treatment to the communities which had been maltreated in the Kingdom of SCS and during the World War II. Another benefit from the nationalist policy encouraged and developed in the early years of the CPY was to represent to the international political arena that the status of nationalities in Yugoslavia was more improved than the status of those who were residing in their 'homeland.' Such stance manifested itself especially after the Cominform resolution in 1948 when Enver Hohxa's Stalinist Albania launched a propaganda campaign among the Albanians living in Kosovo and Macedonia.¹¹¹ However, what were the local dynamics in Kosovo after the Cominform Resolution in 1948 and how the nationalities such as Albanians

¹⁰⁹ Shoup, *Communism*, 123.

¹¹⁰ Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 70.

¹¹¹ Shoup, *Communism*, 136; Stephen E. Palmer, Robert R. King, *Yugoslav Communism and Macedonian Question* (Gazele Book Services Ltd., 1971), 177.

were treated by the Communists in the early years of the socialism remains deeply unclear. Rozita Dimova in her recent study on the relationship between migration policies of the FRPY (1943-1991) and interethnic tensions in Macedonia after its independence in 1991 argues that the FRPY identified the Albanian population as a threat to the unity of Slav nations.¹¹² Dimova states that while Aleksandar Rankovic was a Minister of Internal Affairs in the FRPY (1951-1965) many Albanians were either forced or migrate to Turkey or did so voluntarily.¹¹³ The ethnic Albanians whom she studies, said that the emigration to Turkey was a deliberate strategy instigated by Aleksandar Rankovic who was “accused of promoting an anti-Albanian campaign to ‘cleanse’ the Orthodox population of Kosovo and Macedonia of as many Albanians as possible.”¹¹⁴ I will return back to the role of Rankovic in the Chapter V where I will discuss how the interviewees perceive the relationship between Rankovic and the emigration movement.

3.2 The Policy of Nations and Nationalities in Macedonia

National policies and issues had been shaped in a particularly sharp and complex way in Macedonia. The background for such a socio-political setting must be set in Macedonian historical and political development after 1912. The *millet* system which governed Macedonian lands up to then was thwarted by aspirations of Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian nationalists. In the aftermaths of the two Balkan Wars, Macedonia was divided into the Vardar region bound to Serbia, whereas, the Aegean part was bound to Greece and the Pirin region to Bulgaria. In World

¹¹² Rozita Dimova, “From Past Necessity to Contemporary Friction: Migration, Class and Ethnicity in Macedonia,” *Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology*, Working Paper no. 4, Halle/Salle (2007): 3.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

War II, Macedonia was occupied by the Axis powers Bulgaria and Albania. After the establishment of the People's Republic of Macedonia, one of the CPY's major tasks was to recognize the existence of a Macedonian nationality. As mentioned above, reaching a solution on national issues was intertwined with the revolutionary partisan movements in the World War II. The Communists led by Tito glorified the insurrection in 1941 as the Macedonian revolutionary subject for liberation from the Axis powers that brought together not only Macedonians, but Albanians and Turks from the region as well.¹¹⁵ The importance of declaring Macedonian nationhood which was not recognized as such earlier lay in pursuit of geopolitical strategy, incorporating it into the Yugoslav federation, and most importantly, assuaging Bulgarian claims and differentiating the Macedonians' ostensible ties from the Bulgarian language and culture. In this regard, the CPY even decided to proclaim the Macedonian Orthodox Church.¹¹⁶

The Albanian communities who constituted the largest minority group and Turks who were the second largest minority were granted the status of nationality. The system of nationalities privileged those communities in the educational, cultural and political spheres. One of the major achievements was the introduction of bilingual education in elementary schools. The CPY built secular schools for these minorities who by that time could have attended only traditional Islamic schools (*medrese*).¹¹⁷ In the first academic year of 1944/45 there were 60 primary schools introducing Turkish as the major language. Apparently, the number of schools dropped to 27 in 1958/59 due to migration to Turkey.¹¹⁸ In the cultural sphere the Albanians had cultural artistic association *Emin Duraku*, national library and radio, whereas, the Turkish

¹¹⁵ Josip Broz Tito, "Dosljedno rješenje nacionalnog pitanja je sastavni dio borbe radničke klase za revolucionaran preobražaj društva," *Nacionalno pitanje i revolucija*, ed. Kasim Suljević (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1977), 347.

¹¹⁶ Palmer and King, *Yugoslav Communism and Macedonian Question*, 199-202.

¹¹⁷ Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 81.

¹¹⁸ Bahar Beltan, "Citizenship and Identity in Turkey," 22.

minority had recourse to an association for culture and art named *Yeni Yal* [New Circle], a youth organization *Yeni Dünya* [New World], as well as a newspaper *Birlik* [Unity].¹¹⁹

However, despite the large-scale initiatives in educational and cultural matters, the process of building nations and nationalities had rough alongside smooth periods. It would be an exaggeration to claim that Albanian and Turkish minorities had been mistreated like the German minority had been in the first years of the CPY's ruling. Apparently, some authors who show an inclination for perceiving historical events through the lens of political or ethnic history agree that the Cominform resolution in 1948 played a huge role in deciding what would be the treatment of minorities in Macedonia. Such a perspective implies that the Albanian community was regarded with suspicion after Tito's break with Stalin, whereas, the same event was an initial step towards better diplomatic relationship with Turkey and the Turkish minorities within FPRY.

According to these authors the new political shifts brought by the Cominform resolution in 1948 may explain the significant discrepancy between the censuses of 1948 and 1953. Interestingly, in 1948 there were 197 389 'Albanians' registered in Macedonia. In the census of 1953 there were only 162 524 of them registered. Furthermore, in the 1948 census there were 95 940 'Turks' whereas their number significantly increased to 203 938 in the 1953 census. If one takes into consideration that the emigration to Albania was not allowed, it seems that explication for this 'pouring' of population needs to be found somewhere else. The Commission for National Questions drafted a document in 1957 and sent it to the Central Committee of

¹¹⁹ AJ (CK SKJ XVII), file K-3, unit 16-36, 6-7.

Yugoslavia in Belgrade clarifying the aforementioned ‘pouring.’ The document argues that some of the Muslim nationalities such as Turks, Albanians and Pomaks did not have a clear idea of national differentiation. Thus, many of them registered as ‘Albanians’ in the 1948 census since the relationship between the FPRY and Albania was friendly, whereas, this was not the case with the census of 1953 where many of them declared as ‘Turks’ knowing that the relationship with Albania deteriorated but Turkey became an ally of the FPRY.¹²⁰ Furthermore, the document points out that the agreement for voluntary migration was signed at that time with Turkey at the same time as the privilege of freely declaring one’s nationality, leading many to declare as ‘Turks’ as a way to migrate.¹²¹

On the other hand, many authors emphasize that the persecution and trial in Skopje in 1947 of the seventeen Turkish members of the organization *Yücel* [Noble] who were accused of counter-revolutionary activities was additionally used by the CPY for intimidating the Turkish minority.¹²² Many authors who wrote on the issue of migration of 1953 argue that the anti-Communist feelings among the Macedonian minorities additionally arose after the political trial of *Yücel* and banning of headscarves. Precisely, Turkish historiography claims that the national and political circumstances were the main impetus for migration in the period of 1953-1968.¹²³ However, what lied behind one’s decision to leave as well as the ‘battle’ over articulation of the migrants’ identities represented in the historiography will be examined in detail in Chapter VI, which will juxtapose the oral accounts with the Turkish historiography and the documents from

¹²⁰ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine, 1.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Shoup, *Communism*, 181.

¹²³ see Shoup, *Communism* ; Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*; Çavuşoğlu, “Yugoslavya – Makedonya Topraklarından”; Kut, “Turks of Kosovo”.

the archives of Yugoslavia related to the migration from the FRPY to Turkey that started in the 1950s.

Chapter IV: The Settlement and Immigration Policies in a New Turkey: The Early Republican Period (1923-1934)

This chapter aims to examine the settlement and immigration policies officially proposed and adopted by the Turkish Republican People's Party from the early 1920s to the 1940s. These policies are important in order to contextualize historically Turkey's official stance on immigration from the Balkans that according to estimates amounted to 800,000 people in the period from 1923 to 1939.¹²⁴ It is necessary to underline briefly the policies of the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress Party (hereafter CUP) which was, after the Empire's defeat in the Great War, ultimately replaced by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's Republican People's Party after the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923. The period of transition from the empire to the republic led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's party represents a continuation in the settlement policies imposed by the CUP's government.

This chapter will devote most attention to the Republican People's Party (hereafter RPP) and the notion of 'Turkishness,' *i.e.*, Turkish culture and consciousness that was one of the prerequisites for migration to Turkey in the 1950s and 1960s. I will also analyse two official documents, the Settlement Laws of 1926 and 1934. The latter has governed immigration policies

¹²⁴ Erol Ülker, "Assimilation of the Muslim communities in the first decade of the Turkish Republic (1923-1934)," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* (2008), accessed May 4, 2012, <http://ejts.revues.org/index822.html>.

in Turkey as late as 2006,¹²⁵ and the policies of social engineering that are woven into the social and political modernist project of the Republican Peoples Party are also reflected in the type of immigrants that this law deemed as suitable to become a “Turk.”

The official discourse of Turkish national identity was constructed in the early years of the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. The notion of ‘Turkishness’ altered the ideological pillars of the multi-denominational and multi-cultural society of the Ottoman Empire. However, this notion has been consistently contested and modified to a certain extent over time. The first point of reference to it was given in the 1920s when the Turkish parliament, after debating on the notion of ‘Turk,’ agreed upon and adopted the following definition: “The people of Turkey regardless of their religion and race, in terms of citizenship, are to be Turkish and as such will enjoy equal rights.”¹²⁶ As can be seen, the debate initially argued for a civic definition of nationhood. However, the discrepancy over determining who fits in the category of ‘Turk’ appeared soon after this civic definition was officially adopted. Preferences to a more racist-ethnic definition subsequently challenged and often replaced the more inclusive civic understanding of what it meant to be a Turk.¹²⁷ It is important to stress that the shift towards more ethnic or racially-laden notions of ‘Turkishness’ is inextricably related to a very long history of population exchanges, exiles and other manipulations of majority/minority ethnic groups who found themselves amidst the collapse of the Ottoman Empire followed by the Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922). As pointed out in the previous chapters, Turkey had been

¹²⁵ Kemal Kirişçi, “Migration and Turkey: the Dynamics of State, Society and politics,” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey: Vol. 4 Turkey in the Modern World*, ed. Reşat Kasaba (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 198.

¹²⁶ Kemal Kirişçi, “Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship and Immigration Practices,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, 3 (2000): 1.

¹²⁷ Kirişçi, “Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship,” 2; Soner Çağaptay, “Race, Assimilation and Kemalism: Turkish Nationalism and the Minorities in the 1930s,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, 3 (2004): 86.

receiving an influx of immigrants well before 1923, especially from the Balkans, which included Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.¹²⁸ The influx of the people from the Balkans was highly welcomed by the founders of Turkish nationalism since regions like Anatolia were significantly depopulated due to over a decade of continuous warfare prior to the establishment of the Republic. Thus, nationalist elites led by the RPP considered the flow of the migrants as a desirable method in solving the inauspicious demographic landscape of Turkey. More specifically, the migrants coming from various regions of the Balkans tended to be perceived as a loyal population that would mould and consolidate a desirable homogenous nation. In this regard, a significant place is occupied by the Treaty of Lausanne, a peace treaty Turkey signed in 1923 with the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Romania and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The Treaty of Lausanne also ratified population exchange between Turkey and Greece. The Turkish speaking Muslims from Greece were considered to present “the strongest element of Turkish race.”¹²⁹ It was crucial for the RPP government that ‘Turkish elements’ from Greece alongside those from the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Bulgaria, Romania and Crimea come and settle in a new Turkey. The RPP decided to insist on the particular, desirable elements of the population which drifted away from the proposed civic definition of ‘Turkishness’ to more ethnic and racist definition which also included the Sunnî/Hanefî background. These preferences had been presented as an ideological backbone of further immigration and settlement policies.¹³⁰ However, the ideology of radical secularism and anti-Islamism constructed by the RPP government seemed to be in contradiction

¹²⁸ One needs to draw attention to the fact that in the period of 1923-1933 there were migration movements from the Caucasus, Cyprus and Syria. Apparently, about 50 000 immigrants left the Soviet Union for Turkey as per stipulations agreed upon in the Moscow and Kars Treaty (1921). See Ülker, “Assimilation of the Muslim communities,” 14.

¹²⁹ Ülker, “Assimilation of the Muslim communities,” 16-17.

¹³⁰ Kirişçi, “Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship,” 4.

with these policies since it acknowledged that different ethnic groups, as long as they were Muslim, may be the exponents of ‘the Turkish element.’

Before I turn to the settlement policies in detail, it is important to mention that before the Turco-Greek war (1919-1922), one out of every five persons living in present-day Turkey was non-Muslim, whereas, after the war only one out of forty was non-Muslim.¹³¹ It is clear that in such a short period of time the composition of population of the Republic came to substantially differ from that of the Empire it replaced. Nevertheless, Turkey at that time still had a heterogeneous population that included Jews, Christians and non-Turkish speaking Muslims such as Kurds, Arabs, Laz, Muslim Georgians, Greek-speaking Muslims, Albanians, Macedonian Muslims, Pomaks (Bulgarian-speaking Muslims), Torbeş (Macedonian-speaking Muslims), Bosnians, Tartars, Circassians, Chechens, Abkhazes and Daghestanis among others.¹³²

The RPP initially aimed to assimilate all of these groups into Turkish culture, yet some important distinctions were made in this regard. The large-scale educational and cultural policies which were conceived of as tools of mass ‘Turkification’ exempted non-Muslim groups such as Jews, Greek, Armenians and Assyrians who were considered largely ‘unturkifiable.’¹³³ What made matters more complicated was that immigration policies did not just perceive non-Muslim groups as disloyal and potential fifth columns in a new Turkish society. Certain Muslim groups were also perceived as untrustworthy.

¹³¹ Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development* (London and New York: Verso, 1987), 79.

¹³² Çağaptay, “Race, Assimilation and Kemalism,” 86-87.

¹³³ Ümit Uğur Üngör, “Geographies of Nationalism and Violence: Rethinking Young Turk ‘Social-Engineering,’” *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 7 (2008), accessed May 5, 2012, <http://ejts.revues.org/index2583.html>.

However, it would be misleading to assume that the notion of loyalty was merely constrained to a particular ethnic or religious group. The boundaries between loyalty and treason had been contested even in the period of the CUP in which class and political affiliation rather than ethnicity and denomination were closely related and equated to loyalty. It has been widely recognized that the Christian Armenian government employees were not subjugated to CUP genocide policies in the 1915.¹³⁴ Similarly, the CUP's government targeted Kurdish groups for deportation from their ancestral homelands in the Turkish eastern provinces. The Kurds were considered an unreliable element whom the previous governments failed to sedentarize completely, and the Turkish representatives claimed they were bound as such to a semi-nomadic, tribal way of living and the preservation of "backward" traditions.¹³⁵

How the social status and class of the members of the various ethnic and religious groups wove in and out of the CUP's policies is poignantly shown in recent studies that depart from Turkish nationalist historiography on the era. For instance, Ryan Gingeras analyses CUP policies during the Great War and the groups who were subjected to displacement and persecution. He argues that late Ottoman state representatives perceived very mobile groups like Albanian and Circassian immigrants and refugees from the Balkans and Caucasus as populations that posed both political and security threats to the state, equal to that of separatist Greek or Armenian organizations.¹³⁶ He discerns the presence of a particular 'culture of

¹³⁴ Üngör, "Geographies of Nationalism and Violence," 14.

¹³⁵ Üngör, "Geographies of Nationalism and Violence," 27.

¹³⁶ Ryan Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1912-1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1-256.

paramilitarism¹³⁷ that played an important role informing the decision which communities the government targeted for immigration and re-settlement since many of them were involved in paramilitary and bandit networks. Prior to the Armenian genocide (1915) and on the eve of the Turco-Greek war (1919-1922), the CUP's government pursued a dual policy of both co-opting and fighting the aforementioned Muslim communities involved in paramilitary activities. In particular, the Albanian communities were distinguished as a large threat to the Ottoman state and society during the Great War. Gingeras points out that displaced refugees coming from the Balkans who sought their sustenance by participating in paramilitary and bandit bands were singled out as one of the biggest threats to order and targeted as bandits. Even the loyalty of Albanians such as merchants, tradesmen, landowners and state officials who were better integrated into society were also questioned. 'Albanianness' was a crucial concept constructed by state officials and reserved for those who still had not abandoned their Balkan roots. The urban, Albanian-speaking elite would reject any identification with 'Albanianess' and call themselves 'Turks.' Hence, this concept of 'Albanianess' "mattered most when an individual did not own land or stole in order to survive."¹³⁸

The RPP who afterwards came to power continued these social engineering, immigration and settlement policies previously practiced by the CUP government vis-a-vis these same groups.¹³⁹ Likewise, in order to understand the CUP's policies towards and perception of immigrant communities, one has to view them in the context of the massive deportation and exodus of Muslims to Anatolia before and especially during the Balkan Wars in combination

¹³⁷ Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores*, 6.

¹³⁸ Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores*, 151.

¹³⁹ Especially Ryan Gingeras and Uğur Ümit Üngör argue for the strong relationship between the CUP and the RPP, op.a.

with similar influxes of Muslims coming to Anatolia from the Russian Empire. These migrations and the attendant ruptures that followed in their wake made a huge impact on the Western Anatolia, a region that became home for the “highest-ranking officials and most insidious bandits and rebels.”¹⁴⁰ Alongside this, Western Anatolia became one of the first sites of the late-Ottoman state’s social engineering experiments.

Reference to the CUP’s government policies is also important in order to understand that the Albanian communities in Atatürk’s government were still considered a deeply unreliable state element. This is reflected in debates surrounding the Lausanne Treaty in 1923 when it was decided that the Albanians from Greece who spoke Turkish were not eligible for the population exchange, whereas, other non-Turkish groups were welcomed as immigrants to Turkey.¹⁴¹ Among those migration movements were those from Balkan countries already mentioned in the previous chapters. The first Law on Settlement was adopted on May 1926, and it proposed who would be granted permission to settle in Turkey.¹⁴² According to this Law, the people who do not possess the Turkish culture, who are infected with syphilis and leprosy, who are imprisoned for committing murder except for political and military reasons, anarchists, spies, Gypsies, and those in exile will not be granted the right to immigrate.¹⁴³ However, this law still did not clarify specifically which groups were eligible for settlement.

In “A Memorandum on Settlement,” a document issued a few months later, the Turkish government specifically declared that Pomaks, Bosnians, and Tatars are ‘bound to Turkish culture’ whereas, when it came to Albanians, only those (and their family members) who had

¹⁴⁰ Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores*, 2.

¹⁴¹ Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores*, 136-171.

¹⁴² Ülker, “Assimilation of the Muslim communities,” 19.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

come to Anatolia before and were registered would be allowed entry in Turkey.”¹⁴⁴ Here it is obvious that the ‘Turkishness’ debated in the Turkish parliament now entered a legal discourse and introduced preferences of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds of immigrants. It is still questionable to which degree this memorandum was enforceable or whether it was implemented at all, but what is clear is that the further immigration of the Albanians was undesired and systematically curtailed.¹⁴⁵ Üngör notices that social engineering started to be implemented under the curtain of acceptable vocabulary and neutralizing concepts such as migration (*tehcir*), settlement (*iskân*) and relocation.¹⁴⁶ The Turkish government discerned the importance of mixing non-Turkish speaking Muslims with the “original, Turkish inhabitants” inhabitants of Anatolia.¹⁴⁷

Furthermore, the Turkish government went through specific pains to ensure that new immigrants would be settled in specific areas according to national security or economic concerns, and these regions were naturally along the new state’s borderlands with its neighbours in Thrace and Eastern Anatolia. For instance, the immigrants from the Balkans and Caucasians had often been settled in the Eastern provinces (Eastern Anatolia) in order to fill the economic void and inhabit the abandoned properties left by the decimated Armenian population.¹⁴⁸ Also noteworthy is that these regions were heavily populated by Kurdish populations, so the new Turkish government hoped that settling these spaces with Muslim immigrants who looked to the new state as its saviour and benefactor would counterbalance recalcitrant tendencies in the region. Nevertheless, the implementation of these settlement policies failed to conform to its

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Ülker argues that the fact that Albania was established as a national state by rising against the Ottoman Empire might be insightful to understand why the Turkish government was suspicious about their immigration. See Ülker, “Assimilation of the Muslim communities,” 21.

¹⁴⁶ Üngör, “Geographies of Nationalism and Violence,” 35.

¹⁴⁷ Ülker, “Assimilation of the Muslim communities,” 28.

¹⁴⁸ Ülker, “Assimilation of the Muslim communities,” 30-32.

policy of language assimilation when it settled non-Turkish speaking immigrants in their new communities.¹⁴⁹ Among the interesting interpellations to the Ministry of Exchange, Reconstruction and Settlement was that of the deputy of *Karesi*. He observed the situation in *Zeytinler*, a village along the Aegean coast [Western Anatolia] inhabited by indigenous people (*ahal-î kadime*) and recently settled Bulgarian-speaking Pomaks, Bosnian and Albanian speaking communities in the following words:

“Among the people that inhabited the coast, the dominant dance is the Polka instead of our national dance; the dominant musical instruments are mandolin and bagpipe instead of our national instruments; the dominant languages are Albanian and Bosnian instead of our national language. Is this, too, a question of appropriations?”¹⁵⁰

The 1930s continued to be characterized by immense state concerns over the population landscape which had been further crafted in favour of the Muslim-Turkish population. Apparently, there were still many communities who after ten years since the establishment of the Republic did not speak Turkish.¹⁵¹ The interesting information in this regard is that according to the demographic censuses passed between 1927 and 1935, the people whose native or secondary language was Albanian increased from 21,774 to 40,647. The influx of the migrants coming from the Balkans might have influenced this change.¹⁵² Alongside the failure of language assimilation policies, the Turkish government expressed concern that “one million nomads are still wandering the eastern provinces.”¹⁵³ Thus, the Settlement Law of 1934 emphasized more

¹⁴⁹ Ülker, “Assimilation of the Muslim communities,” 38.

¹⁵⁰ Ülker, “Assimilation of the Muslim communities,” 40.

¹⁵¹ Kirişçi, “Migration and Turkey,” 180.

¹⁵² Ülker, “Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization in Interwar Turkey: The Settlement Law of 1934,” *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 7 (2008), accessed May 7, 2012, <http://ejts.revues.org/index2123.html>.

¹⁵³ Ülker, “Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization,” 18.

assimilative design and brought “up the need for measures to promote the use of Turkish by those who remained removed from ‘Turkish culture.’¹⁵⁴ The Minister of the Internal Affairs, Şükrü Kaya, summed up the aim and scope of the new law by saying that “this law will create a country speaking with one language, thinking in the same way and sharing the same sentiment.”¹⁵⁵

The language assimilation policies and discursive tools revolving around ‘Turkish culture and race’ also marked socio-economic relationships between Turkish state representatives and non-Turkish minorities. Namely, a primary feature of the government’s social engineering projects was the ostensible connection between Turkish modernist projects¹⁵⁶ and the concrete policies aimed at depriving non-Turkish communities of their wealth and status.

I will shortly outline two representative cases, one related to Kurdish tribes in Eastern Anatolia and the other to Jewish communities in Thrace [the eastern Balkans]. Kurdish communities were forcibly moved earlier, and again in 1935 many wealthy and influential Kurdish families were deported from their ancestral homeland in Eastern Anatolia to the Aegean region while some were even expelled to Syria. But this time, their properties and businesses were in turn confiscated by the Turkish state and sold or transferred to Turkish owners. Moreover, the official discourse of the government represented in its official newspaper *Cumhuriyet* (The Republic) prior to the deportation instigated a provocative campaign against the Kurds comparing their mental capacities to “native American Indians, endlessly bloodthirsty and cruel, [...] Under Russian rule they were prohibited to descend from the mountains, where

¹⁵⁴ Ülker, “Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization,” 4.

¹⁵⁵ Ülker, “Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization,” 8.

¹⁵⁶ Üngör argues that the social engineering policies undertaken by the CUP and RPP tended to impose the belief that the Turkish language is the language of civilization, administrative rationalism and cultural Enlightenment. This premise implies the carriers of this mission are the culturally superior Turks, whereas, the non-Turkish people operate at a lower cultural register. Üngör compares these social engineering policies and attitudes to European colonial ones, see Üngör, “Geographies of Nationalism and Violence,” 46.

they did not lead human and civilized lives [...] the dark spirit, crude mental state, and ruthless manners of this Kurdish rabble is impossible to break.”¹⁵⁷

On the other side of the country, similar attitudes informed the government’s policies in Thrace. The so-called Thracian Incident of 1934 revolves around the expulsion of Jews just two weeks after the Settlement Law was adopted. This series of events started with Muslims attacking Jews and their properties in several Thracian towns. The government immediately condemned the event; however, investigations would ultimately reveal that the discourses, boycotts, and provocations leading up to the event were conceived of and incited by the state with the intention of cleansing the region of its Jewish inhabitants.¹⁵⁸ The British Ambassador and the records of the U.S. State Department note that it cannot be ascertained how many thousands of Jews left Thrace after this event. Interestingly, these sources reveal that the evacuation of the Jews “has not been reached in spirit of anti-Semitism.”¹⁵⁹ Rather, these foreign onlookers understood that since other small trade communities had already been moved out, it was now the turn of the Jews.¹⁶⁰ It seems that non-Turkish speaking communities were subjected to ‘Turkification’ policies which included not only language assimilation but also re-settlement policies followed by the economic and social deprivation. As Rifat Bali states, the Turkish government wanted Muslim Turks to be the dominant group in the banking, trading and manufacturing sectors.¹⁶¹ In this regard the eastern provinces and Thrace were no exception since they had been inhabited by communities which were not perceived as loyal or even capable of being ‘Turkified.’ As these examples on both frontiers of the new state suggest, the

¹⁵⁷ Üngör, “Geographies of Nationalism and Violence,” 45.

¹⁵⁸ Ülker, “Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization,” 34-36.

¹⁵⁹ Ülker, “Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization,” 37.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ Rifat N. Bali, “Politics of Turkification During the Single Party Period,” accessed May 7, 2012, <http://www.rifatbali.com/images/stories/dokumanlar/basel.pdf>.

Settlement Law of 1934 was conceived to homogenize the linguistic, ethnic, and economic prevalence of Turkish communities throughout its new realm by.

A deeper look into the stipulation of the Settlement Law of 1934 reveals such intentions. Namely, the law categorized communities according to their ‘possession of Turkish culture and consciousness’ (*Türk kültürü ve bilinci*) and proposed corresponding settlement zones deemed necessary for assimilating the newcomers to “Turkish civilization.” Thus, the first community was described as that which spoke Turkish and was comprised of ethnic Turks. These groups resided in the first settlement zone, which could receive immigrants of the Turkish culture and ethnicity.¹⁶² The second community consisted of people who did not speak Turkish but were considered to possess Turkish culture. This community included past immigrants from the Caucasus and the Balkans among which were Bosnians, Circassians, Albanians, Pomaks, Roma or Tatars. According to the law, these groups should inhabit settlement zone number two designed for settlement of the people whose ‘Turkishness’ needed to be improved.¹⁶³ The third community tellingly mixed suspicious Muslims with non-Muslims and was comprised of Greeks, Jews, Armenians, Kurds and Arabs. The third settlement zone consisted of geographies where settlement and immigration was restricted and allowed to people of only ‘Turkish culture and consciousness.’¹⁶⁴ It also consisted of areas which were scrutinized due to political, military and security reasons.¹⁶⁵ These areas were primarily in the eastern provinces inhabited by Kurds. Some authors also emphasize that Thrace was also understood as a region under threat, hence the

¹⁶²Kirişçi, “Migration and Turkey,” 181.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ Ülker, “Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization,” 21.

aforementioned Thrace Incident.¹⁶⁶ The drafters of this law argued its implementation would help the Turkish state not to suspect “the Turkishness of any Turk.”¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, what complicates early Republican discourse even more is that the principle of being bound to the Turkish culture and consciousness excluded the Christian Gagauz Turks from Moldova as well as Shi’a Azeri Turks from the Caucasus.¹⁶⁸ Kirişçi makes the point that the Sunnî/ Hanefî background of immigrants was favoured, and thus, it was another important factor informing how the state accepted and assimilated groups from the Balkans and Caucasus.

There are few explanations why the Balkan countries in particular were favoured most in terms of settlement and immigration policies. Kirişçi notes that in the early days of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk understood that the importance of building on an optimum level of population in order to be able to sustain economic development.¹⁶⁹ The communities who were bound to ‘Turkish ethnicity and culture’ living outside the borders of newly formed Turkish Republic were asked to migrate to Turkey. Kirişçi further states that Atatürk particularly asked for the immigration of all “Turks” from Macedonia, Western Thrace and Russia.¹⁷⁰ In order to answer the question why particularly the communities from the Balkans and not the rest of the former Ottoman Empire were favoured to settle in Turkey, Kirişçi argues that a significant proportion of the bureaucratic, military and legislative elites in the Republic – as in Empire - were of the Balkan origin.¹⁷¹ Atatürk himself was born in Thessalonica. Moreover, most of the important cadres of the CUP spent their youth training in and defending Macedonia from Balkan

¹⁶⁶ This argument is proposed by Ülker, see: Ülker, “Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization,” 34.

¹⁶⁷ Kirişçi, “Migration and Turkey,” 181.

¹⁶⁸ Kirişçi, “Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship,” 6.

¹⁶⁹ Kirişçi, “Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship,” 15.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ Kirişçi, “Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship,” 16.

rebel bands, and the 1908 Young Turk Revolution itself was staged in Macedonia and worked its way to the rest of the Empire from there.¹⁷²

According to Yaşar Nabi Nayır, immigration from the Balkans was perceived as a “vaccine of fresh blood primarily because Rumelia’s villagers with the respect of the degree of modernization were seen as superior to eastern Anatolian villagers.”¹⁷³ Whatever the Turkish political elite’s underlying reasons and motives might have been, there is no mistake that immigrants from the Balkans in particular were preferred to settle in Thrace at the very time when Jews and Armenians were expelled from the region. Likewise, it seems that many immigrants from the Balkans had been used in settlement policies to counterweight the mistrusted communities other than Armenians and Jews.¹⁷⁴

Kirişçi cites Maria Todorova who points out that all the Balkan countries had serious minority problems, and the nationalist elite of these countries saw them as a potential threat. Thus, the Turkish policy that encouraged immigration to Turkey would have been considered as sort of relief. The examples which purport such claims may be found in the population exchange agreement between Greece and Turkey, as well as threads of bilateral agreements Turkey signed with Bulgaria, Romania, and Yugoslavia.¹⁷⁵

One may consider such argument a bit far-fetched since it lacks a proper historical contextualisation of the status of minorities in particular countries, the commonalities and differences between them. Furthermore, it does not propose what was at stake in relation to a particular minority for a particular state in given historical and political circumstances. If one scratches under the surface, one will find interesting details on how the class, social background

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ Cited in Beltan, “Citizenship and Identity in Turkey,” 32.

¹⁷⁴ Kirişçi, “Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship,” 16.

¹⁷⁵ Kirişçi, “Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship,” 17.

and political affiliation of the particular members of one ethnic community played a more significant role in the state's understanding of loyalty. I argued in chapter II that the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia had pursued different national policies towards the Muslim communities. In further chapters, I will analyse the document entitled "Commission for National Minorities" and show how it comments on the members of the minorities who are migrating to Turkey.

If one looks at the case of the Republic, the state's relationship towards Turkish and non-Turkish speaking communities was a heavily contested and negotiated enterprise. This chapter aimed to show the settlement and immigration policies officially proposed and adopted in the period from 1923 to 1934 in Turkey significantly followed those implemented in the time of the CUP. The lacuna of this chapter is that it neglects the local dynamics and aberrations from the official settlement and immigration policies proposed by the Laws on Settlement in 1924 and 1934. However, the meticulous analyses completed by the authors such as Ryan Gingeras provide a deeper glance in the CUP's relation and differentiation not only towards Christian but also Muslim communities. Likewise, I show how the notion of "Turkish culture and consciousness" is used in legal and state discourse as an ideological tool for the RPP's social engineering processes. The juridical and discursively privileged status of "Balkan Turks" have been juxtaposed and examined alongside with communities who were officially deprived of such labels. Still, there are many inconsistencies and questions one may pose in relation to the implementation of the Settlement Law and immigration policies. Thus, I mostly focused on the construction and implementation of the notion of "Turkish culture and consciousness" that was officially the prerequisite for the migration of the Yugoslav Muslim from the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia to Turkey in 1950s and 1960s.

Chapter V: Voluntary vs. Compulsory Migration

In her study of the role of ethnicity in migration, the economist Milica Zarkovic Bookman distinguishes between voluntary and involuntary types of migration. The nature of the dilemmas regarding whether or not to migrate is what qualitatively differentiates voluntary from involuntary migrations, although most migration movements fall into the vague area between voluntary and involuntary types which blur the distinction between them.¹⁷⁶ In her questioning whether solely forced departures at gunpoint may be classified as involuntary migration she comes to the conclusion that more subtle ways of coercion such as denying property rights and revoking licenses may be also considered as bases for involuntary migration.¹⁷⁷ She thus proposes to look at migration movement as a “continuum with purely voluntary and purely involuntary migration as two ends of the spectrum.”¹⁷⁸ Thus, most voluntary migrations are “motivated by expected economic benefits, namely a better job including higher wages, improved working conditions, greater status [...] yet, sometimes it may be induced by non-pecuniary considerations such as family bonds, political inclination and so forth.”¹⁷⁹ Regardless of the motivation for migration, Bookman argues that the migrant exercises free choice in the migration decision.¹⁸⁰ On the other hand, in cases of involuntary or forced migration the decision to migrate is imposed. That was the case, Bookman states, with population exchanges between Turkey and Greece ratified by Lausanne Treaty in 1923.

¹⁷⁶ Milica Zarkovic Bookman, *Ethnic Groups in Motion: Economic Competition and Migration in Multiethnic States* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), 112.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

However, I am interested to demonstrate how imprecise and problematic clear cut distinctions between the voluntary and involuntary migration operates based on my interviewees' accounts and experiences. The argument '*we came as free migrants*' had been emphasized to such extent in the interviewees' accounts that it deserves more attention. I will examine where approximately the interviewees in their accounts are positioning themselves on what Bookman calls migration continuum which has two extreme ends, the voluntary and involuntary. The accounts on voluntary vs. involuntary migrations inevitably evoke some value-laden notions and morality frameworks which will be introduced and examined later in the chapter.

5.1. "We came as free migrants!"

As stated in Chapters II and III, the impetus for migration from Yugoslavia to Turkey was agreement concluded in Split, Croatia in 1953 between the Yugoslav president Josip Broz Tito and the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Mehmet Fuat Köprüllü.¹⁸¹ Kemal Kirişçi and Ulf Brunnbauer state that no migration movement was permitted by Yugoslav authorities before the 1950s and that the signing of this agreement specifically marked any migration as voluntary by these statesmen.¹⁸² Akan Ellis argues that the migration agreement from 1953 between Yugoslavia and Turkey was different from the migration wave from socialist Bulgaria initiated in the same period when the Turkish population was forced to leave Bulgaria for Turkey.¹⁸³ Ellis claims that Turkey's stance towards migration waves from Yugoslavia and Bulgaria in the 1950s was therefore different from a legal perspective.

¹⁸¹ Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 50.

¹⁸² For the 'voluntary' basis of migration see Brunnbauer, "Late Labour Migration," 43-44; Kirişçi, "Post-Second World War Immigration," 70; Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 50.

¹⁸³ Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 51.

Namely, the Bulgarian Turks were recognized by the Turkish state as migrants who were forced to leave Bulgaria and were therefore granted the status of *iskânlı göçmen* “settled immigrants,” whereas, the migrants from Yugoslavia were recognized as *serbest göçmen* or “free immigrants.”¹⁸⁴ The differentiation between settled and free migrants originates from the Settlement Law in 1936 which was examined in detail in Chapter IV. For the purposes of this chapter, it must be noted that the difference between (settled immigrants) and (free immigrants) played an important role in Turkey’s legal recognition of the migration wave from Yugoslavia and socialist Bulgaria to Turkey in the 1950s. The concepts of *iskânlı göçmen* and *serbest göçmen* were also closely tied to the responsibilities of the Turkish state towards the migrants. Kemal Kirişçi states that the immigrants who fell into category of *iskânlı göçmen* were state-sponsored which meant that Turkey provided them compensation for land and incomes they left in Bulgaria.¹⁸⁵ However, the immigrants from Bulgaria did not have a free choice to settle wherever they wanted but rather had to settle in areas designated by the Turkish state.¹⁸⁶ Kirişçi does not mention what kind of areas were designed for Bulgarian Muslims, but some information about state-sponsored areas for settlement may be found in Chapter IV. On the other hand, the immigrants who fell into category of *serbest göçmen* were not sponsored by the state but by their families and relatives who signed guarantee for them. These immigrants had a free choice to settle wherever they wanted, yet their legal status of *serbest göçmen* clearly meant that they would not be granted any privilege from the state except citizenship and a small tax break for the first five years after getting work permits.¹⁸⁷ As it was also noticed in the previous chapters, not only the members of the Turkish nationality applied for emigration permit but other

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 50- 52.

Muslim communities such as Albanians, Roma, Bosnians and Torbeş who tried to *prove* their “Turkishness” both to Yugoslav as well as Turkish authorities.

I found out that all interviewees perceived their status within the legal category of ‘free migrants.’ The notion of ‘free’ which emerges from their accounts is not solely related to their perception of having a free choice in decision for emigration, but it conforms with the state legal discourse describing them. This perception also involves comparison with their Bulgarian peers and their family members who migrated in previous decades from the Kingdom of SCS to Turkey. Furthermore, when conveying their status of ‘free migrant’ interviewees also express the feeling of resentment when coming to Turkey that did not provide any benefits for them. For instance, in describing their applying for emigration permit, almost all of the interviewees confirm they had a family member who vouched for them by writing an official letter of guarantee (*vesika*) for them:

“[S]o in order to emigrate you need to be invited by one member of your family residing in Turkey. For instance, your relative had to write: ‘*Nina is my relative, and I invite her to come to Turkey. Upon her arrival I will cover all expenses, rent a house, find a job... in case I do not manage to do that, I will host her in my own home.*’” (Mustafa, 71)

Only two interviewees mentioned that they did not obtain a guarantee. For instance, one stated he did not know Turkish before he arrived. Rather, he admitted, ‘money’ mediated his arrival to Turkey. The other interviewee mentioned that he “found his way to Turkey.” As emigration was possible only from Skopje, many other Muslims from Kosovo, the Sanjak and Bosnia came to Macedonia to fulfil the requirement of six months of residence in Macedonia so

that they would be granted the right to migrate.¹⁸⁸ All of the interviewees said they came with the Paris-Istanbul train via Skopje, known then as the *Orient Express*.

As expected, there are many stories associated with travelling and leaving Yugoslavia. For instance, Mustafa claimed that it was “forbidden to transfer the money to Turkey” so the people “would hide the money and gold in cookies, shoes or wherever they could.” On the other hand, a majority of the interviewees stated that they could bring more basic types of personal belongings such as wardrobes, domestic appliances, TV, refrigerators. According to their accounts, TVs were a sensation in Turkey, since not many people of equivalent lower classes possessed them. When asked what happened with their properties prior to arrival to Turkey, however, many interviewees said they sold their houses and workshops to the Yugoslav state or individuals for ‘loose change,’ since they had to cover the tax expenses and expenditures of withdrawal from Yugoslav citizenship. There were also some migrants who state that they rather left their properties to family members who remained in Macedonia.

When asked whether there was any encouragement to leave for Turkey, all interviewees stated that they were not encouraged or persuaded to emigrate. Interestingly, those who stated that there had been political pressure and persecutions in Yugoslavia (Mustafa, ‘Azem’ and Celal respectively), also stated that there was no encouragement for emigrating. At first glance this seems paradoxical. How is it possible that particularly those interviewees who perceived the Communist Party and socialist system as oppressive, at the same time claim that there was no pressure on them to leave for Turkey? One would perhaps expect that the interviewees’ would perceive political oppression as a form of encouragement to leave for Turkey. On the one hand, one may assume that these interviewees simply did not discern that political oppression in

¹⁸⁸ Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 52.

Yugoslavia had something in common with the encouragement to leave for Turkey. On the other hand, given that migrants who were recognized by the Turkish state as *zorunlu göçmen* were encouraged or pushed to migrate by the government policies, it seems unlikely that those who came as *serbest göçmen* would claim they were similarly encouraged. The accounts which argue that there was no encouragement or pressure to leave seem to fit the interviewees' compliance with the legal category of *serbest göçmen*, i.e., the one who migrates voluntary and does not expect any benefits from the state. I will now examine how the argument "we came as free migrants" operates within the interviewees' accounts and what common tropes emerge from their accounts.

When mentioning their status of free or voluntary migrant, the interviewees implicitly juxtapose their migration with that of Bulgarian Muslims, a predominately Turkish-speaking population that was forced to leave Bulgaria for Turkey in the same period.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ When studying post- World War II immigration of Bulgarian Muslims to Turkey, Kemal Kirişçi refers to mass exodus of 1950-1951 and later in 1989 that is considered to be the largest immigrant movement from one Balkan country to Turkey after the World War II. As important factors which influenced the immigration waves from 1945-1990s from Bulgaria to Turkey was related to the policies of the Bulgarian government, which included "banning schools in Turkish, closing mosques, forcing Turks to migrate within the country, and compelling them to take up Slavic names alongside with centralization of agricultural production which most affected Turkish community." Kirişçi notes that "in August 1950 the Bulgarian government demanded that the Turkish government accept a total of 250,000 ethnic Turks. 154,393 of them emigrated between 1950-1951 and most of them were settled according to state-sponsored policy, thus benefiting from financial and other government support." See Kirişçi, "Post-Second World War Immigration," 63-66.

Similarly, Omer Turan, a historian from the Middle East Technical University, claims that after the consolidation of the Communist rule in Bulgaria in the 1940s all rights granted to Turks had been abolished. Turan sees these reforms related with the influence of the Soviet sphere on Bulgaria. According to Turan, The Soviet Union objected to Turkey's attempt to join the NATO and its close relationship with the USA and therefore attempted to exert pressure on Turkey by using its satellite Bulgaria. The migration movement started in the 1950s but Turkey closed the border in 1951 arguing that "Bulgaria was inserting the Gypsies among the Turkish immigrants." The rejection of Gypsies responds to the Settlement Law in Turkey from 1936 which was against the Gypsy immigrating to Turkey, op.a. Eventually, Turan claims, Turkey reopened its border in 1953 but this time Bulgaria did not permit migration of Turks. There was almost no migration to Turkey from Bulgaria until 1968, Turan states. Interestingly, Turan refers to survey conducted among 154 000 Turks who immigrated to Turkey from 1950-1951, 11% stated they came voluntary, whereas, 85% claimed they came since it was impossible. The last 3% noted they were forced to leave., see Omer Turan, "Turkish Migrations from Bulgaria," *Forced Ethnic Migration on the Balkans: Consequences and Rebuilding of Society* (Conference held 22-23 February 2005 in Sofia, Bulgaria), accessed May 27, 2012,

“[T]urkey gave us nothing, everybody fought on his own, and that is why we succeeded. We came as free migrants, and the state did not provide any benefits for us while the state granted houses to those who fled Bulgaria. Bulgarian Muslims fled, they came with nothing. We came with refrigerators, washing machines, etc.” (‘Azra’, 75)

“[T]urkey did not provide us any benefits. The only benefit was the exemption from tax for five years under the condition of employment. This is how the state helped us. But those who came earlier, in the 1920s and 1930s, they had been provided with homes. It was the same case with the Bulgarian Turks. But, we are different. Bulgarians abandoned their properties in Bulgaria, whereas, we sold ours. We did not feel pressure, on the contrary. There was encouragement to stay. We came as free migrants. The refugees (*muhacir*)¹⁹⁰ had different positions. They were forced to leave their properties to the state, and when they migrated to another state, the new state provided them with everything they had left. For instance, you have ten sheep, five cows and you leave all of this to the state, and after you emigrate the new state provides you with these things [...] They call them *muhacir*. They were not allowed to settle in towns, only in rural areas to work on the land. We are free migrants. It is up to you to migrate or not. And the state will not help you. (‘Ibrahim’, 69)

“[I]f you work in a state company you are exempted from tax for five years. That’s all. On the other hand, Bulgarians [*i.e.*, Bulgarian Turks] have a right to state aid. Bulgarians exiled them. We came voluntarily.” (Mustafa, 71)

The common points of reference regarding the interviewees’ coming as voluntary immigrants are often glossed with the feeling of resentment. When comparing their own status with those of Bulgarian Muslims, interviewees often mention how benefits which the Turkish state provided to Bulgarian immigrants were tantamount to facilitating that group’s adaptation to a new country. I will now turn to these feelings of resentment and stories of success which are woven into interviewees’ accounts.

http://www.imir-bg.org/imir/books/Forced_Ethnic_Migrations.pdf.

¹⁹⁰ Esra Bulut discerns the term *muhacir* and *göçmen*. *Mühacir* refers to refugee while *göçmen* refers to immigrant. Both are commonly used terms for the communities who have been migrating from the Balkans to Turkey, see Esra Bulut, “Friends, Balkans, Statesmen,”

5.2. Resentment and Stories of Success

As Bertoux-Wiame notices that the way people share and structure their life story depends a lot on their socio-economic status.¹⁹¹ There is apparent discrepancy between interviewees who stress stories of success, the most common value-laden theme in the accounts, and those who do not refer to the stories of success in their accounts. The stories of success significantly pervade the accounts of those privileged migrants who came to Turkey with significant wealth as well as sound educations and professional backgrounds. This is the case with ‘Azra’ and Celal whose family members were in a position to secure their livelihood immediately after they arrived in Turkey with resources from their previous life in the FPRY. Similarly, stories of success also pervade the accounts of the immigrants who came from poor family backgrounds, but the difference between these interviewees and ‘Azra’ and Celal is that they voice disillusionment and resentment with their new host society since the Turkish state did not provide them benefits as was the case with immigrants who came from socialist Bulgaria and the Kingdom of SCS. The occupations of the interviewees who are the members of the immigrant associations range from merchants, engineers, shopkeepers and publicists. The range of occupation of my interviewees who are also the members of associations indicate that also these associations may be considered as social arenas which predominately gather the group of migrants who succeed by starting from little to nothing and made it big. However, one has to be careful not to overstate that the migrant’s associations are places where only such group of migrants gather. In this regard, Toumarkine and Hersant who study immigrant associations in Turkey recognize these associations in reality recruit both among ‘notables’ and ‘ordinary citizens’ despite the fact the people of such differences in the socio-economical statuses are

¹⁹¹ Bertoux-Wiame, “The Life History Approach ,” 257.

likely not to meet each other in other circumstances.¹⁹² Some interviewees, that is the immigrants who came with the poor educational and economic background, mainly refer to the difficulties they encountered in making the transition to their new lives in Turkey. Many of them worked menial, transient jobs in factories; thus, they do not subscribe to the linear success tropes that other members of the associations emphasized. Surely, such is the case with ‘Ibrahim’ and Şahsine (although ‘Ibrahim’ is not a member of any associations). As Bertoux-Wiame reminds us, the purpose is not to “describe the past as it was, or even as it was experienced, but confer to the past experience a certain meaning [...] to tell one’s life story is not only to talk or to remember; it is an act, an encounter with reality.”¹⁹³ As this can not be the same for all social groups, it is not surprising that the interviewees who are emphasizing the stories of success seem to perceive their present social position in Turkish society satisfying. In contrast, interviewees who do not mention stories of success in their new settings rather devote much more space in their accounts to the memories of a simpler life in a society of ‘brotherhood and unity,’ thus at the same time perhaps unconsciously romanticizing the official class-based ideology of the FRPY. The feeling of resentment is common to all interviewees (except ‘Azra’). Still, there is a difference between the interviewees from the associations who refer both to resentment and the stories of success, and the other interviewees who mention resentment but stories of success are not present in their accounts. In further discussion, I will observe more closely these repertoires such as stories of success and resentment.

In the interviewees’ accounts resentment can be discerned on two levels. On the first level, some interviewees stress their disappointment and disillusion with Turkey as a promised land of opportunity and justice, whereas, other interviewees rather stress their regret with leaving

¹⁹² Hersant and Toumarkine, “Hometown Organizations in Turkey: An Overview,”

¹⁹³ Bertoux-Wiame, “The Life History Approach,” 258.

behind what they perceived to be a better life behind back in Yugoslavia. The first group of interviewees who stress their disillusion with Turkey usually compensate it with vignettes and stories of success, whereas, such references to success in Turkey are missing in the accounts of those interviewees who are more inclined to show remorse for a better life they feel they left behind in Yugoslavia and exude a nostalgia for what they perceive as equality in a socialist society.

The first group of interviewees usually consider their status of free migrant deprived of receiving any help from the state and imply that their way of adapting to their new country was a much harder process than that of the immigrants who had been granted help from the state. One such example was given by Süleyman, who migrated from Bitola (Macedonia) to Istanbul when he was only seven years old:

“[L]isten Nikolina, this wave of migration [1950s and 1960s] was different from the previous ones. Even in its most penurious times, Turkey provided land, houses and jobs to immigrants. We had the freedom to decide whether to migrate or not. So we decided to emigrate from Macedonia. We could have migrated to Europe or the United States, but we chose Turkey. When we came to Turkey, the state did not provide any help. Those who came in subsequent waves after us did not encounter obstacles like we did. The migrants who came from Macedonia with no economic resources experienced hard times. But what happened afterwards? Turkey is a good country; we are hard-working people. We found jobs soon, and ten years after you could not find a single person renting a flat.” (Süleyman, 59)

Resentment may also be noticed in the accounts of some of the interviewees upon whom the Turkish state looked with great mistrust, sometimes even perceiving them as ‘potential Communists’ or ‘Communist spies.’ Three interviewees mention that in such situations they had even been deprived of their citizenship, which was alongside the tax breaks the only state aid they had a right to:

“[A]t that time we were perceived by the state as ‘potential communists’ because we were coming from Yugoslavia, that is a Communist country. There were undercover police officers monitoring the immigrant neighbourhoods.” (Mustafa, 71)

Likewise, Süleyman gives a similar account stressing that in spite of the fact that he had no family members who were in the Communist Party, his father became ‘suspicious’ when he arrived in Turkey:

“[O]ne of the migrants who came to Turkey before us told the police that my father Zekman was a Communist. He was imprisoned and we were waiting for five years to get the citizenship. This was outrageous.” (Süleyman, 59)

Süleyman narrates his resentment during our interview that was conducted in the *Rumeli Association* in Istanbul to which Mustafa joined as well. After I asked why Turkish authorities felt endangered by the Muslim population coming from Yugoslavia, Mustafa answered that Turkey was a capitalist state. Süleyman disagreed with that line of reasoning, and rather cast the blame on an ‘informer’ who accused his father of being a Communist. Not convinced, Mustafa was eager to prove that “all of the immigrants had been monitored regardless of their background.” At the end, Süleyman stated that “the monitoring” was not something problematic; however, but granting of no citizenship was outrageous and unjust.”

In contrast, Şahsine, whose father was a police officer and a member of the Communist Party in the FPRY, suggests that the Turkish authorities knew well one’s biography¹⁹⁴ prior to one’s arrival in Turkey:

¹⁹⁴ Şahsine refers to one’s political activities in Yugoslavia, op.a. It would be interesting to see whether and to what extent *biography* of an immigrant coming from Yugoslavia was important for the Turkish authorities. In this regard, the work of Gilles de Rapper who studies Communist Albania (1945-1991) might be interesting for the case of

“[W]hen we arrived in *Eyüp Sultan* [a neighbourhood in Istanbul], there was one police officer coming every day to our neighbourhood. He would derisively ask and comment to us: *Who are you? Are you spies? You are not Turks, you are Macedonians etc.* My father could not find a job for more than a year. I was the only one who was working in the family since my two older brothers went to serve in the army.” (Şahsine, 69)

Şahsine looks back on these hard-times with smile now and even playfully adds that when she was angry with her father, she would “blackmail” him by threatening that that she would “reveal to everybody that he was a Communist.”

While this account may be understood as an individual anecdote from one’s family life, it remains hard to gauge the extent to which the immigrants coming from Yugoslavia to Turkey in the 1950s and 1960s were regarded as suspicious groups by the Turkish authorities. Apart from the individual accounts of these three interviewees I encountered no other sources, either Yugoslav or Turkish, which would reflect an official Turkish stance toward immigrants from Yugoslavia in relation to their alleged connection with Communism. Likewise, other interviewees did not mention the cases of the Turkish state mistrusting and considering them a political threat.

However, some indications that the Turkish government had a negative stance towards Communism may be found in Turkey’s following the ‘Truman Doctrine’ after World War II, which proposed to “support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed

Turkey in relation to the influx of immigrants from Yugoslavia. De Rapper understands the concept of biography as a political evaluation of individual activities and attitudes towards Hohxa’s regime in Albania. *Biography* was used as a synonym of kinship ties and it differentiated between one’s “good and bad biography.” See Gilles de Rapper, “La biographie’: parenté incontrôlable et souillure politique dans l’Albanie communiste et post-communiste,” *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, Thematic issues 4, The Social Practices of kinship. A Comparative Perspective, accessed May 27, 2012. <http://www.ejts.org/document565.html>.

minorities or by outside pressures.”¹⁹⁵ Alongside Greece, Turkey was considered by the US administration as “essential for the preservation of order in the Middle East.”¹⁹⁶ The first and foremost concern for the US was to control the spreading of Communist ideas. Nevertheless, one would still need more references in order to place properly the interviewees’ accounts on ‘Turkish fear of immigrants from Yugoslavia’ within a broader contextual framework.

The feeling of resentment is also prevalent in the accounts of interviewees who were disillusioned with Turkish society because it did not bring them the wealth and prosperity that they believed was possible in capitalist societies as a reward for hard work. In this regard Mustafa comments:

“[W]ealth and abundance awaits us there [in Turkey]...shopping malls, apartments, all of it! Such stupidity! This was a Turkish fairytale [...] You know, one who had migrated to Turkey prior to us had the possibility to sell his land in Yugoslavia, so after arriving to Turkey, he could buy a house in *Aksaray* [immigrant neighbourhood in Istanbul], take a pen and write a letter to his relatives: *I have opened a shop here!* We thought we would encounter the same experience here, but alas, we did not.” (Mustafa, 71)

Mustafa mentions the alleged success of the immigrants from the Kingdom of SHS who came to Turkey. It seems that the stories of success from the previous generation of immigrants played a role in the construction and dissemination of the *cultural imaginaries* about Turkey as a “promised land” among the immigrants who arrived in the 1950s and 1960s.

Gazi Bez Ezer who studies the Ethiopian Jews’ migration to Israel argues that the Ethiopian Jews prior their arrival to Israel were “motivated and sustained by an oral tradition

¹⁹⁵ Nicole and Hugh Pope, *Turkey Unveiled: Atatürk and After* (London: John Murray, 1997), 82.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

which upheld their Jewish identity and a myth of return.”¹⁹⁷ Similarly, Mary Chamberlain in her research on the Barbadian emigrants to Britain claims they were attracted to Britain by “the idealized image of a mother country which had been a part of their cultural upbringing.”¹⁹⁸ Similarly, in the case of the immigrants from Yugoslavia, the cultural imaginaries about Turkey and knowledge about Turkey in general were mainly related to the stories of success transmitted by the relatives and family members who came in the previous decades. It is significant that when Mustafa refers to the stories of success from the previous generation of migrants he calls it *turska prikazna* [the Turkish fairytale in Macedonian], which, according to him, accounts for the disappointing experience of the immigrants who came in the 1950s and 1960s expecting opportunities and wealth.

Nevertheless, it seems that Mustafa’s idea of *turska prikazna* is not common to the immigrant’s group experience. The reasons why it is not shared by all interviewees may be found in their different *domains of existence*—the concept developed by Daniel Bertoux. He argues that family and kinship networks are perceived as one of the most important domains of existence by constructing spheres that make the social milieu different. One’s material and cultural resources, external constraints and residential context makes impact of the family members who grow up in them by constituting different potential matrices and field of possibilities.¹⁹⁹ Interviewees like Mustafa and Celal or ‘Azra’ had different life chances largely depending on the social situation of their families. Celal and Azra came from such family background that allowed them to even harness Yugoslav connections to reinvent her socio-economic status in Turkey. They both narrate how they came with economic resources which

¹⁹⁷ Cited in Thompson, “Moving Stories,” 28.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ Bertoux, “Life Stories,” 27.

facilitated the beginning of life in Turkey. In this regard Celal mentions that his family did not encounter difficulties upon arrival to Turkey:

„[W]e had the money, my father and my uncles, and we could transfer it to Turkey. So when we arrived we bought a three-storey house in *Aksaray*. We could afford it. We got the *vesika* [guarantee letter] from our family, so we were the last to arrive.” (Celal, 69)

Similarly to Celal, ‘Azra’ explains:

“[W]e came and bought an apartment. My father immediately opened a furniture atelier and employed fifteen workers. Turkey, relatively underdeveloped at the time, did not manufacture such furniture, so my father was able to start his own business after working for five years. We then started to trade with Bosnia, Serbia and Croatian state companies [...] Tito’s son even visited us. We have been working with him and some companies such as *Jugoagent* [Yugoslav Maritime Agency] and *Energoinvest* [Yugoslav engineering company]. We have also been exporting hazelnuts to Yugoslavia.” (‘Azra’, 75)

Some of the interviewees refer to Turkey as a destination which failed to fulfil immigrant group expectations, but in contrast, others describe it as a destination in which they did not encounter problems, and in fact, made very successful lives for themselves. The stories of success are conveyed in a positive light, mainly stressing a predictable trope of linear progress in a capitalist society where everybody can succeed if there are diligent and hardworking. Selim, an artisan and the member of the administrative council of the Rumeli Associations notes:

“[I] finished high school, that’s it. These were hard times in earning a living. We were a big family, we needed money. We lived in one house. It was so cold. We did not even have a lamp. At that time all of us immigrants had to work hard for a living. Few of them could afford the luxury of further schooling. Nowadays everybody goes to the university. There are many landlords and very few subtenants. All folks from the Balkans succeeded. All youth is studying today. I have a son who is twenty five years old, he is about to finish his studies in engineering...” (Selim, 62)

Celal also tackled the issue of success when talking about his leisure time in Turkey:

“[M]y friends brought me here [The Rumeli Association] soon after I arrived to Turkey. I was playing football in a football team [in Yugoslavia]; its name was *Vardar*. Now, I am a member of the Administrative Board of the *Rumeli Association*. There is one coffee shop I often visit in *Pendik* [a neighbourhood in Istanbul, predominately inhabited by immigrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina]. There are many Bosnian settlers there from Sanjak. They also settled in *Bayrampaşa* [a working class suburb of Istanbul mainly inhabited by Bosniaks] and *Beşyüzevler* [an impoverished working class neighbourhood in Istanbul]. They are now rich since they have been working really hard.” (Celal, 69)

Likewise, after commenting on how he was motivated to come to Turkey to get rich, ‘Recep’ comments on success more cautiously than his peers from the migrant associations. ‘Recep’ differentiates between those who succeed and those who did not:

“[I]t depends. Some of them got richer, some of them got poorer. We have been diligent both here and there. We do not mind politics just our own business. We have been warmly welcomed here [Turkey].” (‘Recep’, 81)

Süleyman gave a very interesting account regarding group stories of success and even placed it within the context of the struggle for survival of the community who arrived as free migrants (*serbest göçmen*). He gave this account during our interview in the *Rumeli Association* whilst two more immigrants were present who strongly agreed with Süleyman’s point of view. According to Süleyman’s account, their communal struggle had been righteously ‘awarded’ after some time. He points out how regardless of the fact that the Turkish state did not provide them with same benefits as it did the *zorunlu göçmen*, the *serbest göçmen* still are considered as a group who largely contributed to the Turkey’s economic development:

“[T]hose who came from Macedonia with no financial resources experienced hard times. But what happened afterwards? Turkey is a

good country, we are hard-working people, we found jobs soon and ten years after you could not find a single person renting a flat [...] everybody found a job and educated their children.” (Süleyman, 59)

“[T]he migrants were not a liability to Turkish society. On the contrary, they directly contributed to the Turkish economy’s growth as an industrious labour force.” [librarian]

“[I]f Atatürk had not made the *mübadil* [i.e., the population exchange between Turkey and Greece] which was his brilliant idea, Turkey would have lagged behind for a hundred years. Let me explain this. They did not know how to sow tomatoes and peppers. Those who knew how to do it they left, the Greeks and Armenians, they all left. No matter how much Turkey is grateful to us, it is still not enough [...] The state did not settle us. The only chance we had is that we could migrate to Istanbul and Bursa, the places which started to be industrialized. We are hardworking, entire families worked, after ten years everybody could buy a house. We got rich.” (Süleyman, 59)

The accounts of success are shared in particular by members of immigrant associations. The narrative of the immigrants who succeeded in Turkey on their own is conveyed in similar ways in the journal *Birlik* [Unity], the journal of the Turkish minorities in Skopje. One special issue was published in 2003 that celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the migration movement from Yugoslavia. It contains a compilation of correspondence as well as short stories and essays related to the migration which started in 1953. The compiler of this issue, Hüdai Ülker, reveals some of the social and cultural norms that he believes the immigrants shared as a community. He refers to immigrants who came after 1953 from Macedonia to Turkey as the *Acılı kuşak* [Sorrowful Generation] who were happy for joining their Turkish homeland on the one hand, and sad for leaving their belongings, friends, ways of life back in Macedonia on the other hand.²⁰⁰ Hüdai Ülker refers to the place the migrants left as an ancient homeland in which they

²⁰⁰ Hüdai Ülker, trans., *Makedonya Göçlerinin 50. Yılında Birlik Yazıları* (Bornova, Izmir: Meta Basım, 2003), 7.

had been living for six hundred years and in which their ancestors built bridges, mosques and *hamams*.²⁰¹

What is striking is the presence of the stories of success which are very similar to those shared by the interviewees from the associations. *Birlik* mentions how this *Acılı Kuşak* after all yielded many successful people such as doctors, engineers, businessmen, politicians, poets and etc.²⁰² It seems that these associations function as spaces and mediums for construction and dissemination of a certain discourse on the nature of experiences of immigrants and their life in Turkey. These immigrant associations that Hersant and Toumarkine call “hometown associations” (examined in the Introduction) are directly related to the influx of migrants who came from rural areas of Turkey to towns and from the ‘Turkish world.’ Although officially representing themselves as ‘civil society organizations,’ which implies their independence from the state, these associations are actually involved to great extent in the political life in Turkey. Hersant and Toumarkine emphasize that after the coup d’état in 1980 the Turkish state imposed control and restrictions on civil society organizations especially with respect to developing their national character and encouraging loyalty to the Turkish nation.²⁰³ When it came to the immigrants from the ‘Turkish world,’ this implied encouragement of references to Rumeli as a significant part of the Turkish heritage and culture that has a special place in Turkey’s political discourse. Thus, it is not surprising that some interviewees see their individual success as part of a larger group success crucial to the national cause: as indicated, their coming to Turkey was tantamount to the nation’s building of a stronger and more economically developed Turkey. It could be said that the associations of immigrants who came from the ‘Turkish world’ are spaces

²⁰¹ *Public baths*, op.a.

²⁰² Ülker,trans., *Makedonya Göçlerinin 50. Yılında*, 1.

²⁰³ Hersant and Toumarkine, “Hometown Organizations in Turkey: An Overview,”

which produce and reproduce a group memory by setting references to group success of immigrants who came with nothing but achieved a lot.

However, not all interviewees referred to the notion of group success. When it comes to the interviewees who express their disillusionment with Turkey and nostalgia for everything they left back in Yugoslavia, their stress is usually placed on aspects of equality and social mobility in Yugoslavia. Whereas all members of immigrant association are likely to emphasize tropes of linear progress, equal chances for all in capitalist societies like Turkey, and group success stories, interviewees whose accounts are predominately based on life stories from Yugoslavia tend to share the cultural repertoire of ‘brotherhood and unity’ in which the society ought not to be based on differences between ethnicities and religions. It is particularly interesting in this regard how ‘Ibrahim’ who is a religious person juxtaposes “the laws of the Yugoslav state with Allah’s.” The common traits between socialism and Islam that ‘Ibrahim’ outlines in his account could be perhaps found in some teachings of Islamic religion that suggest the distribution of social and economical resources.

“[T]ito governed with discipline, but he did not discriminate among the people. The law was strong. The laws of Allah’s are the same. Look, my grandfather used to say: *You are going to Turkey. Those who will stay here shall see Yugoslavia rising.* Yugoslavia after the 1950s became a great country. We made a mistake by coming here [Turkey]. We regret this. (Ibrahim, 69)

The cultural repertoire that ‘Ibrahim’ uses in conveying his resentment with coming to Turkey abounds with anecdotes, hyperbolas, rumours and short stories. When commenting on a ‘society of justice and law’ in Yugoslavia, ‘Ibrahim’ usually alludes to his grandfather whose stories apparently inform ‘Ibrahim’s knowledge of Yugoslavia.

“[T]hey all came to Turkey, but my grandfather refused to come. *The people are rascals and vicious* – he used to say. He liked Tito so much. Who cared whether you are Croat, Serb, Macedonian, Albanian or Turkish; we all lived in Yugoslavia. This is why my grandfather liked Tito so much. In 1965, Tito came to Zagreb to visit one factory; I was in the army at that time. But I remember it was summer of 1965. Tito came to the factory and wished to shake hands with a worker. But the worker withdrew his hand because it was filthy and greasy. Tito said to him: ‘*Let’s shake hands!*’ And he proceeded to grab the worker’s hand and shook it. Everyone around them started to applaud. One of the workers even fetched a cloth to clean Tito’s dirty hand. But Tito said: “*Do not be ashamed of your filthy hand, you are a worker.*” Such a man was Tito.” (‘Ibrahim’, 69)

Likewise, Şahsine narrates her resentment when referring to ‘state of law’ and opportunities she had in Yugoslavia but apparently could not find in Turkey.

“[M]acedonia was a nice place for living because it had good laws. We lived in Skopje and rented a three-storey house whose landlord was a Serbian chauvinist. He said: *I do not want Turks to live in my house; all Turks should be killed.* My father complained, and our Serbian landlord ended up in jail for three years. This would have not been possible in Turkey. Tito did not distinguish between people. People were of mixed origin; I do not see a need to claim whether you are Turk or Serb. I lived in a mixed neighbourhood in Skopje, both Albanians and Gypsies lived there; they were friendly and hospitable more than the Turks in Turkey... If I had stayed in Macedonia, I would have continued with my studies. When I came here there was no possibility to study; I had to work. Oh, I cried so much. I wanted to become a police officer. Turkey did not provide any help for the migrants from Yugoslavia. On the other hand, it provided houses and everything for those who came from Bulgaria.” (Şahsine, 69)

The stories of success related to life in Turkey are not present in the accounts of ‘Ibrahim’ and Şahsine. It may be argued that ‘Ibrahim’ and Şahsine found their past life in Yugoslavia to offer more opportunities and social protection for working class people like themselves. In their accounts of their life in Yugoslavia they also refer to the trope of ‘brotherhood and unity,’ with an inevitable connection to Tito’s personality. The cult of Tito had been constructed during the socialist period, but it is still present in forms of all possible

commodities in the market in the post-socialist Yugoslavia. His cult of personality also involves references to his straightforward relationship with ordinary people. In this regard, Rastko Mocnik, a Slovenian sociologist observes:

“[T]ito’s period was indeed contradictory. He was wearing a marshal’s uniform with golden epaulettes. He would have played the piano and shot a bear at the same time. He was deeply immersed in kitsch yet never in cheapness. He wore glasses whose frames were made of ivory. He was closed to ordinary people, and he had the personality of which the rich and powerful ones could have only dreamed of. Finally, he spoke idioms - all languages were foreign to him but familiar at the same time. He had his own language. He spoke a very strange, mixing idiom of Zagorje [region in northwest Croatia] with the language used by some pre-war grotesque Russian communist.”²⁰⁴

Resentment and reference to Tito and the state of law present in the accounts of ‘Ibrahim’ and Şahsine may be also related to the present perspectives which tend embrace nostalgic points of view towards the past and a society in which ‘brotherhood and unity’ was brutally destroyed in the civil war of the 1990s.

Conclusion

In this chapter I examined how the distinctions between voluntary and involuntary migration figure in the interviewee’s accounts and how the interviewees position themselves within the category of *serbest göçmen* [free migrant]. When they refer to the category of *serbest göçmen*, the interviewees usually stress their free choice in the decision to migrate to Turkey, which is typically substantiated by an argument that their Bulgarian peers were forced to leave and were for this reason granted benefits by the Turkish state to which migrants from Yugoslavia were not entitled as free migrants. The interviewees also mention how their family members and relatives who came prior to the 1950s were settled according to the state-

²⁰⁴ Cited in Nada Kovacevic, “Pastir s dvora,” *Politika*, May 26, 2005.

sponsored settlement policy, whereas, this was not the case in their experiences. I also outlined the most common perceptions related to their arrival to Turkey as *serbest göçmen*. I examined how resentment and stories of success vary according to the interviewee's own perception of their present position in the Turkish society. Another important distinction I made in this regard is the cultural repertoire of the interviewees from associations and those who are not the members of it. Whereas the stories of success of life in Turkey more strongly structure the accounts of the interviewees who are the members of associations, such stories are missing in the accounts of the interviewees who are not the members of the associations and who were more likely to pine for what they have left in Yugoslavia.

Chapter VI: Reasons and Motives for Migration: Migrant Accounts vs. Historiography on Migration from the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia to Turkey (1953-1968)

Introduction notes

In this chapter I will I will discuss the reasons and motivations for the migration of the Muslim communities from Yugoslavia to Turkey in the period from 1953 to 1968. I am primarily interested in the conjunction of causal factors and motivations informing the emigration of Muslim communities in this period. The ten oral accounts I gathered during my fieldwork reveal complex motivations for migration that nuance the historiography on the subject. It is thus important to juxtapose the oral accounts with scholarly works on this particular migration.

An approach “from below” based on real historical actors sheds light not only on mere events, but it also provides a glimpse into complex personal histories and experiences that challenge mono-causal, linear and reductionist material explanations on migration.²⁰⁵ Hence, in the ensuing discussion I will try to answer my research question by giving an overview of the historiography that is mainly informed by and written from the perspective of Turkish and American scholars. Additionally, I will focus on archival the material issued in 1957 related to the migration from Yugoslavia. As I already mentioned, Yugoslav sources on this migration wave are scarce and provide only a partial glimpse from the perspective of the state that was at best very ambivalent about the welfare of the historical actors at the centre of my inquiry. I will examine a confidential report written by the Central Committee of the Federal Republic of Macedonia in 1957 to the Commission for National Minorities of the Central Committee of

²⁰⁵ Thomson, “Moving Stories,” 28.

Yugoslavia—the only document I found in the Archives of Yugoslavia in Belgrade on this topic—together with the rest of the scholarly works on migration from Yugoslavia, predominately written by Turkish scholars. I will demonstrate that the oral accounts of the migrants challenge the tenor or mainstream Turkish scholarship on migration from the Balkans which constructs Turkish victimhood by perceiving communism and atheism as ideologies that undermined Muslim social and religious values. The oral accounts also go against the grain of historiography by emphasising that the expropriation of properties implemented in the Five Year-Plan (1947-1951) affected ‘the Turks’ as much as other communities regardless of their ethnic, religious or class background. Finally, the historiography does not refer to family ties and kinship as possible reason for leaving, whereas, this is the most cited primary reason in the interviewees’ accounts.

6.1. National and Political Reasons

“The task of the *Yücel* organization is to prevent the Turks in Yugoslavia from becoming Communists and keep alive their national consciousness.”²⁰⁶

Yücel is cited in mainstream Turkish historiography as an organization that acted as one of the main push factors that influenced hundreds of thousands of Muslims to leave Yugoslavia for Turkey between 1950 and 1960. Initially, the organization was conceived as a movement of Turkish intellectuals in 1941 who expressed sympathy towards Nazi Germany, though they opposed the Bulgarian occupation of Macedonia.²⁰⁷ In 1945, after the Yugoslav partisan victory, the movement became organized under the name *Yücel* [Noble], emphasizing the symbols of the Turkish flag, Quran and slogan: “[I]f needed, I will shed my blood and give my

²⁰⁶ The General Secretary of the *Yücel* organization cited in Nürcan Özgür Baklacioğlu, *Dış Politika ve Göç (Yugoslavya'dan Türkiye'ye Göçlerde Arnavutlar (1920-1990))* (Istanbul: Derin Yayınlar, 2010), 244-245.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

soul for Turkishness and the Republic.”²⁰⁸ The leader of the organization Şuayib Aziz was a Turkish intellectual who attended Islamic religious schools and universities in Skopje, Al-Azhar in Egypt and Turkey. The ideological pillars of the organization consisted predominately of novelists and cultural founders of the Turkish nationalism such as Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Ziya Gökalp, Mehmet Emin Yurdakul, Yahya Kemal Beyatli, who were all of *Rumeli* origin.

Since the membership of the organization predominately consisted of intellectuals and teachers, they focused on spreading the Turkish language and culture in schools and media. Some of the authors highlighted that *Yücel* was fighting against the Albanization of the Turks in Macedonia after the World War II.²⁰⁹ It should not come as a surprise that the Communist Party representatives denounced *Yücel* in 1947 as a clandestine organization in service of the Turkish imperialism, given the organizations ties with the Germans in the past and self-professed ties to Turkish nationalism. After the trial in 1948, according to some sources, seventeen members of *Yücel* were sentenced to prison.²¹⁰ All Turkish scholars seem unanimous in their agreement that the *Yücel* event was one of the main push factors in the decision of most Muslims to migrate. The most zealous nationalist authors cite fantastic figures as high as 500 000 people who were “intimidated and feared for their lives and families,” and thus, fled for Turkey as soon as the borders opened.²¹¹

Burçu Akan Ellis, an American-Turkish scholar in a recent study also refers to the *Yücel* trial as a watershed event that influenced the marked increase in the number of the applications

²⁰⁸ Baklacioğlu, *Dış Politika ve Göç*, 245.

²⁰⁹ Çavuşoğlu, “Yugoslavya – Makedonya Topraklarından,” 137.

²¹⁰ These numbers are provided by Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 55. Other authors like Bilgiseven claim that there were up to fifty members who committed suicide, three who were sentenced to death, and many more who served out long terms in prison. Cited in: Çavuşoğlu, “Yugoslavya – Makedonya Topraklarından,” 137. Akif provides no names but claims “majority of the members” were sentenced to prison whereas the four were condemned to a death sentence and up to the present day nobody knows where they bodies were displaced, in: M. Akif, “Yücel Olayı,” *Türk Dünyası* 52 (Istanbul: Türk Göçmen ve Mülteci Dernekleri Federasyonu, 1979): 23.

²¹¹ Çavuşoğlu, “Yugoslavya – Makedonya Topraklarından,” 137.

for migration permits.²¹² Mehmet Akif in a short essay published in the journal *Türk Dünyası* (Turkish World) takes it a step further to claim that the Turkish community which ruled for more than six hundred years in a tolerant and just manner, giving an equal treatment to different races and religions, had been subsequently condemned by those whom the Turkish communities in the Balkans had once privileged.²¹³ The *Yücel* trial is thusly treated in the Turkish historiography as a watershed moment of rupture.²¹⁴ Similar causes for migrations are cited in the work of Sabahatin Zaim, who mentions numerous local organizations whose Turkish members were allegedly executed and sentenced to life or twenty years in prison; however, the author fails to provide specific names of either the organizations or the names of the individuals who were allegedly martyred for their causes.²¹⁵

Abdülmecit Nüredin wrote the most recent study in Turkey regarding the reasons and consequences of migration waves from the Balkans to Turkey between 1911 and 1960. Although he draws from the documents from the Archives of Yugoslavia, as well as Macedonian and Albanian sources, Nüredin's study represents another biased scholarly account. One of the examples how the historical material may be uncritically used is when the author in discussing the policies and agrarian reforms of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes substantiates the text with the photocopy of a completely different document from the period of Yugoslavia. The author also uses images without providing any dates and context. One such photo represents the group of people who ought to be the immigrants landing on and "kissing the Turkish ground," but the reader is not introduced to the identity of these people nor to the date and place where the photography was taken. It seems that Nüredin in reconstruction of events related to migration

²¹² Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies*, 50.

²¹³ Akif, "Yücel Olayı," 23.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ Sabahattin Zaim, "A Report on the Last Yugoslavian Immigrants,"

opts to decontextualise visual images and archival material in order to trigger a certain emotional reaction of the audience rather than encourage critical thinking. Like the previous works cited above, Nüredin claims that Yugoslavia caved to the pressure of Stalin by deciding to remove all nationalist organizations among which was the *Yücel*.²¹⁶ According to the narrative, the campaign against the members of *Yücel* created a state of fear among Muslim Turks in Skopje. Nüredin claims that four members were condemned to death. These executions, according to the author, created a feeling of indignation which, alongside with the economic uneasiness, triggered a large migration wave that began in 1951.²¹⁷ Likewise, Şule Kut, a Turkish professor of International Relations at Bilgi University in Turkey, asserts that the Turks who did not migrate in the interwar period had been subjected to political persecutions under the socialist regime. She also finds the *Yücel* trial as one of the most salient manifestations of these persecutions, pointing out that “the members of *Yücel* were tried as Turkish spies while the members of the Turkish nationality in general were treated as the Turkish fifth column.”²¹⁸ Similarly, like other Turkish scholars, she maintains that socialist Yugoslavia nourished anti-Turkish feelings since Turks remaining in Yugoslavia represented a symbol of the Ottoman past.²¹⁹

When it comes to the oral accounts taken from my interviews, the alleged Yugoslav government’s political pressures emphasized by Turkish scholars as fundamental triggers that incited Turkish migration are significantly underrepresented as reasons for these actual historical actors’ migration. Political pressure in general, and the *Yücel* incident in particular, is the least-cited reason for migration, which is particularly surprising given that vignettes revolving around the organization and its trial abound in Turkish historiography. In fact, the only interviewee who

²¹⁶ Abdülmecit Nüredin, *Balkanlar’dan Türkiye’ye Göç ve Etikklere*, 255-256.

²¹⁷ Abdülmecit Nüredin, *Balkanlar’dan Türkiye’ye Göç ve Etikklere*, 255-256.

²¹⁸ Şule Kut, “Turks of Kosovo: What to Expect,”

²¹⁹ Şule Kut, “Turks of Kosovo: What to Expect,”

mentioned the *Yücel* organization, Süleyman , can hardly be considered a reliable source of information because in narrating how he came to Turkey with his family in 1959, after his father was released from prison, he claims that his father was imprisoned for three years in a process which was “a continuation of the *Yücel* persecutions” and sent in 1954 to Rijeka, Croatia. Given the discrepancies in dates, this is most likely unreliable information since all available historical material on the *Yücel* organization points to its disbanding in 1948 after the trial in Skopje. The fact that Turkish historiography hangs on the peg of a narrative of collective victimhood that is not really reflected in the experiences of those who actually made this migration suggests that Turkish scholars have agendas that have more to do with the history of its government’s own relationship with minorities than the experiences of Muslims who left Yugoslavia. Turkish historiography is informed by a nationalist framework of inquiry of research that insisted on the perception that Turks, especially during the wars led in the first two decades of the twentieth century, were the victims of an international conspiracy and native traitors who eventually lost in this struggle. The role of the biggest traitor is given by the Turkish scholars to Armenians. The fact that the most of my interviewees do not refer to the trope of oppression points to how selective historiography can be.

Indeed, Süleyman was eager to state that the 1950s were times of persecutions of Muslims in Yugoslavia while Mustafa tried to correct him saying that in the 1950s there was no persecutions of Muslims and that the major political event had been revolving around Milovan Djilas, a prominent Yugoslav communist who was expelled from the Central Committee of the party in 1954. When other interviewees did refer to the political pressures, they usually placed emphasis on the official pressure for Muslims to enter the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. They

stressed that the people who did not enter the CPY could not have enjoyed the privileges other citizens enjoyed:

“[I]n Tito’s time all the properties were nationalized. Either you agree to give it to cooperatives or you will not get a job. For instance, because my father did not join the Communist Party by 1952, he could not find a job anywhere, you know?” (Mustafa, 71)

“[I]t was the pressure from the Party, the Communist Party. If you were not a member of the Party, you would remain hungry. And, the Communists did not want to take the Muslims in Party because of the prejudices towards the Muslims. They would accept you only if you were an atheist.” (Mustafa, 71)

In a similar manner, few of the interviewees mention that particularly coercive measures had been imposed on the Turks by Aleksandar Rankovic, the leader of the OZNA (The Department for the National Security) and the Secretary of the Interior Affairs purged from the CPY in 1966. Three interviewees portrayed Rankovic as a ‘radical Serbian’ politician whose vision was to cleanse the areas inhabited by ‘the Turks.’ According to Mustafa, Yugoslavia had political motives to remove the rest of the Turks who stayed. It is often mentioned in the Turkish historiography on migration that the migration of 1953 was simply a continuation of the agreement between the KSCS and Turkey from 1938. However, Mustafa does not refer to the predominately Albanian population that had been pushed to migrate due to both the agreement Turkey made with the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes as well as the latter’s agrarian reforms and re-settlement policies. Rather, he refers mainly to the Turkish population and explains these two interrelated migration waves as a result of “Christian mentality,” which, he explains, is inherently intolerant to the Turks. His account is likely to sum up the aforementioned agenda on Turkish victimhood in the Balkans as a justification for what happened in Anatolia in 1915:

“Although it signed the Balkan Pact...the back-door plan in the Kingdom of the

Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (after: Kingdom) was to prevent the Turks from living in the Kingdom. So what did they do? King Alexander I Karadjordjevič took the richest land, for example, the north, Tikvesh, Ovče Pole[...] almost free of charge[...] in order to carry out agrarian reform. Later on, in the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, Aleksandar Ranković, you know him, no? A Serbian fundamentalist [...] In 1912 there were still Turks living in Nis, Kragujevac, and Belgrad. This was Turkey, *bayam* [my emphasis] Nina. But, in 1945 no Turks were left. With this agreement, it was a matter of how to remove us. That's it. And this is how we ended up here." (Mustafa, 71)

"[T]here is relationship between them [*agreement 1938 and 1953*] for sure! Even today... It is in the spirit of the Christian mentality when Sarkozy claims Turks carried out genocide of Armenians [...] with such prejudices Aleksandar Ranković expelled the Turks from Macedonia." (Mustafa, 71)

The role of Ranković in the migration movement in the 1950s and 1960s is indeed ambiguous. "Ranković and his nationalism" is mentioned occasionally in the oral accounts. However, the report from the archives of Yugoslavia related to nationality policies and immigration does not tie Ranković to any sort of role in instigating various Muslim communities to leave Yugoslavia. The question regarding how to interpret such 'silences' in the archives will remain unanswered in this thesis. Nevertheless, one author describes Ranković as the third most powerful man in Yugoslavia who ruled with "an iron fist," and as a result, mostly Albanians in Kosovo suffered.²²⁰ Exactly the same metaphor, "the iron fist," was used by one of my interviewees from Pristina, Kosovo²²¹ when explaining his reasons for migrations:

"Some pressures, you know...I am neither a chauvinist nor nationalist, but communists opposed me being in the Party [...] I was the president of the youth commission when the first Turkish school was opened in Pristina, and yet I did not enter the Party [...] I ended up in jail few times. I did nothing but participate in the celebration of *Bayram*²²² we made in the classroom. *Marica*²²³ came and took us. Thankfully, Nazmi Kursar Barli [*Azem's Albanian friend and Communist*] ensured that we did not stay in the prison too long." ('Azem', 71)

²²⁰ Slobodan Stanković, "Aleksandar Ranković-Political Profile of Yugoslav Stalinist," RAD Background Report/205, 86-3-147, 1983-1-9 Yugoslavia, Open Society Archives (Budapest, Hungary), <http://www.osaarchivum.org/files/holdings/300/8/3/text/86-3-147.shtml> (last accessed May 13, 2012).

²²¹ I failed to write down the interviewee's name, therefore I will name him 'Azem', op.a.

²²² Islamic religious holiday, op.a.

²²³ *Slang.*, blue gendarmerie van, op.a.

Later on, ‘Azem’ refers to socialism using the same trope revolving around Rankovic’s role in Albania at that time. As the most important reason for leaving for Turkey, ‘Azem’ states:

“[T]he factors... Look. One of the most important factor was especially putting the pressure on Albanians [...] We did not get used to such severe regime. It was the regime ruling by the *iron hand*.” (‘Azem’,71)

One would certainly need more detailed information in order to pinpoint Rankovic’s alleged role in the immigration movement. However, it is quite clear that the situation in Kosovo after the liberation of Albanian Axis powers was everything but simple. Whereas the Albanians as a national minority had a right to converse and receive an education in their own language, the Cominform Resolution in 1948 was enacted in order to deteriorate the relationship between Yugoslavia and Albania.²²⁴ During this period any display or expression of Albanian national symbols was to be considered as nationalist propaganda.²²⁵ Nevertheless, the wider references to Rankovic and the migration movement are missing, so it is more appropriate to leave this issue aside and move towards other reasons and motives for migration represented in historiography.

6.2. Economic reasons

²²⁴ Burçu Akan Ellis notes there were 157 schools in Albanian opened between 1945-1950, in Burçu Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies: Memory and Identity Among Urban Muslims in Macedonia*, 110.

²²⁵ Burçu Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies: Memory and Identity Among Urban Muslims in Macedonia*, 110-111.

In the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, agriculture represented the main locus of capital accumulation. After World War II and the subsequent political establishment of the Communist Party, the socialist transformation of economic production had been introduced. The term socialist transformation in post-war Yugoslavia implies rapid industrialization with land reform and compulsory delivery of agricultural products.²²⁶ The compulsory aspect is explained by post-war conditions in 1945 and the need to feed the cities, but the extreme measure naturally induced quite a reaction among the peasant producers. The first five years of the socialist transformation of the economics (1947-1951) is also known as the first Five Year Plan project. At that time the largest contribution to the land fund was made by the expropriation of properties from Germans as well as properties from groups in Macedonia and Kosovo.²²⁷ Allcock says that the land reforms might have had an impact on the properties of Italians from Istria and “Turks” from the south.²²⁸ In the socialist transformation of land, the new owners of the properties were often seen in “terms of implantation of politically reliable, former partisans, who would carry into the countryside the correct proletarian consciousness.”²²⁹

The Central Committee of the Federal Republic of Macedonia (CCFRM hereafter) in 1957 prepared a report on the social and economic consequences of the migration from Macedonia to Turkey and sent it to the Commission for National Minorities of the Central Committee of Yugoslavia. This report sees the migration movement “as a process that follows a normal course since it is based on the free choice of minority members who want to move to another country.”²³⁰ According to the report, the movement represents no political, national or

²²⁶ John B. Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia* (London: Hurst&Company), 100, 126.

²²⁷ John B. Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia* (London: Hurst&Company), 127.

²²⁸ John B. Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia* (London: Hurst&Company), 163.

²²⁹ John B. Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia* (London: Hurst&Company), 163.

²³⁰ Archives of Yugoslavia (AJ), Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 1.

legal problem for the state or the minorities, but it considers that the massive scale of the movement left some negative economic and social consequences that need to be solved, especially in Skopje.²³¹ The report refers to decreased livestock, certain Yugoslav commitments to Turkey, substantial state tax losses, as well as the issue of the new owners of former Turkish properties. In particular, the report warns that the unpaid money for the land purchased from the members of the Turkish minority may come up as a matter of dispute between Turkey and Yugoslavia.²³² While offering insight into the socio-economic status of the immigrants, the report argues the immigration had been initiated by those who were formerly wealthy and constitutive of a social strata associated with the marketplace (*çarşı*), among which were village landlords and others, like *hocas*, who commanded a large influence on Muslims.²³³ According to the report, the reasons why these social strata opted for migration are quite reasonable and are to be found in the fact they had lost economic positions within the expropriation and nationalization processes.²³⁴ The report states that they also lost the political influence and role they had played among the Muslim peasants in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and during the Axis occupation.²³⁵ The urban elements, mainly private artisans, skilled and semi-skilled workers and handicraftsmen have joined them in

²³¹ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 1; Abdülmecit Nüredin, *Balkanlar'dan Türkiye'ye Göç ve Etiklileri*, 258-259.

²³² However, the wider explanation on what sort of land and properties and by which price the state bought from the Turks is missing, op.a., in AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 1.

²³² AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 1.

²³² AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 14.

²³³ *Çarşı* (tur., bazaar, market place), the *çarşı* strata consists of merchants and artisans, op.a.

²³⁴ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 8.

²³⁵ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 9.

migration since they all shared a common belief that Turkey – because of its economic backwardness, flaws and undeveloped crafts – offers prospects for getting rich fast.²³⁶

In contrast, those most eager to leave Yugoslavia were peasants who lived in the rural areas. The writers of the report claim that this was the case especially with semi-nomadic peasants like the *Yörük* from the *Valandova* region who were not land manufacturers but rather supported their livelihood by raising goats.²³⁷ Constrained by such traditional, economically underdeveloped conditions and possessing no other skills than goat-farming, these peasants realized that it was futile to seek another job in an ultra-modern society that frowned upon a semi-nomadic way of life. Their resignation in this regard had been additionally boosted by a conservative way of living which opposes the adaptation to the new ways of working and living.²³⁸ The report highlights that even when all these aspects are taken into consideration this migration still cannot be understood in economic, mechanistic way and cannot solely be reduced to any clear-cut category since the statistics related to the socio-economic status of the migrants provide a much more complex landscape, including family reasons among the rest.²³⁹

Turkish historiography on migration finds economic circumstances as one of the most important reasons informing the decision to migrate. In this light Akan Ellis argues that while some of the Turks identified with the partisan movement and the socialism as a political order,

²³⁶ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 9.

²³⁷ *Yörük* (also known as Turcoman, konar-göçer, göçer evli or göçebe) is the term describing the most significant nomadic group who constituted an important part of the population of the Ottoman Empire from its beginnings, but it was also a group out of which the Ottoman state arose, see Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Masters, *Encyclopedia of The Ottoman Empire* (Facts on File, Inc. New York, 2009), 436. Also see Sadik Idrizi Aljabak, Aroumunsko-vlaški tragovi u Gori, *Internet Archive*

http://www.archive.org/stream/AromunskoVlaskiTragoviUGori/Aromunsko-Vlaski-Tragovi-u-Gori_djvu.txt, last accessed May 14, 2012).

²³⁸ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 9.

²³⁹ Until the end of the 1952 the number of the migrants from the FRPY to Turkey was 86 380. Out of that 7 493 were classified as industrial workers, 15 886 farmers, 5 cooperative peasants, 2 785 artisans, 287 students and pupils, 682 civil servants, 55 844 of others (religious leaders, children, women), in: AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 9.

many others found the establishment of socialist Yugoslavia as a constriction of their *hayat alanı* (life space).²⁴⁰ The latter had been linked mostly to losses in the sphere of economy where particularly during the Five Year-Plan (1947-1951) many lower-class Muslims were deprived of their properties, and this apparently placed them on the margins of the public sphere and without recourse to social protection.²⁴¹ For instance, Sabahattin Zaim claims that in the Yugoslav government's battle against its wealthy citizens, the Turkish communities had been treated differently from the rest.²⁴² According to the author, the underlying purpose of the socialist transformation in the field of agriculture was the expulsion of Turks from their villages to the cities where they "were abused until the migration."²⁴³ Zaim believes that those forcibly settled in cities had been "assimilated into the Communist system and the Communist Party."²⁴⁴ He also claims that the Turkish workers were treated unequally in comparison with the workers of other ethnicities, especially in the matters of taxes, which was "the most effective way of pressure and abuse in all Communist countries."²⁴⁵ Similarly, Nüredin regards that the economic reforms, particularly those in the period between 1947 and 1951, were tailored to an agenda that infringed on the Turks' cultural and religious rights and triggered their migrating away from the country.²⁴⁶

Interestingly, the Five Year Plan (1947-1951) is a period which coincides with the policies of the Turkish government which aimed to impose on the remaining non-Muslims a

²⁴⁰ Burçu Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies: Memory and Identity Among Urban Muslims in Macedonia*, 53.

²⁴¹ Burçu Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies: Memory and Identity Among Urban Muslims in Macedonia*, 53.

²⁴² Sabahattin Zaim, "A Report on the Last Yugoslavian Immigrants,"

²⁴³ Sabahattin Zaim, "A Report on the Last Yugoslavian Immigrants,"

²⁴⁴ Sabahattin Zaim, "A Report on the Last Yugoslavian Immigrants,"

²⁴⁵ Sabahattin Zaim, "A Report on the Last Yugoslavian Immigrants,"

²⁴⁶ Abdülmecit Nüredin, *Balkanlar'dan Türkiye'ye Göç ve Etiklileri*, 258-259.

wealth levy supposed to tax wartime profits.²⁴⁷ As a result of such government policies, a large number of Jewish and Greek businessmen left Turkey immediately after the World War II. Apart from a wealth levy, Keyder asserts, there was a government-instigated riot destroying Greek properties in 1955 and demonstrations in 1964 against Istanbul Greeks with legislations requiring those with Greek citizenship to leave the city. Keyder notes that even more important event was the appearance of a new group of wealthy provincials who arrived to Istanbul seeking gentility.²⁴⁸ Neither Turkish historiography nor interviewees' accounts refer to these events. However, what might indicate that there was relationship between these events and the immigration from Yugoslavia to predominately urban areas such as Istanbul is the fact that Istanbul in the 1950s was largely industrializing and urbanizing. In this regard, Keyder notes that under "developmentalist policies, Istanbul became the privileged location of a new generation of large-scale, private manufacturing enterprises."²⁴⁹ In later discussion I will introduce some of the interviewees' accounts which mention how Istanbul offered them economic opportunities which they could not find in Yugoslavia. Before that, I will examine the relationship between the economic circumstances in Yugoslavia and the interviewees' motives to leave for Turkey.

The Yugoslav early expropriation of land and nationalization of industry and crafts constitutes a prominent part of the interviewees' explanations regarding why they chose to leave Yugoslavia. Professed motivations influenced by ruptures in economic production brought on by the ascendancy of socialist Yugoslavia are the second most frequently cited reason for migration in the oral accounts. While Turkish scholars stress ethnic persecution and inequality as well as the nationalist agendas of Christians in Yugoslavia which were a product of these

²⁴⁷ Çağlar Keyder, "The Setting" in *Istanbul: Between the Global and the Local*, ed. Çağlar Keyder (Rowman&Littlefield Publishers, Inc.:Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford, 1999), 11-12.

²⁴⁸ Çağlar Keyder, "The Setting," 12.

²⁴⁹ Çağlar Keyder, "The Setting," 12.

economic reforms, the interviewees, regardless of their class and social status, emphasize that they had been, alongside with their Albanian and Macedonian neighbours and independently of their social and economic background, affected equally by such reforms:

“There was neither pressure nor encouragement for migration; the people just started to leave. They confiscated everything not only from wealthy Turks, but also from wealthy Orthodox and Catholic Christians as well [...] Because they had taken everything from us we became “Proletarians of all countries united!”(‘Azra’, 79)

In response to my question regarding whether Yugoslavia put any kind of pressure on Muslim communities not to attend the mosque or carry out their other cultural rituals, my interviewee from the *Valandova* region in Macedonia also cited first and foremost economic reasons for leaving:

Nooo [...] there was no pressure. Look, in Bulgaria the Turks were under much more pressure; the best place for the Turks to live in Europe was Yugoslavia [...] In Bulgaria they were tortured. We did not experience that. The only bad thing was that Tito took away the goats, but he did not take only my goats, but your father’s goats as well. Whether you were Turk, Catholic, or Macedonian, it did not matter. He took from everybody.” (Ibrahim, 68)

Oh, I remember well! When Tito came to power in 1945 he definitely took our goats. In our village the people were peasants; they were raising animals, sheep and goats. They were sad when they took them away. Without giving them a dinar, Tito took the properties and sent them to Russia; this was a tax! People found that very difficult.” (Ibrahim, 68)

I also find it interesting how one of my interviewees echoed the tenor of some of the official Yugoslav documents in stating that the wealthy Muslim classes were the first to blaze the trail in emigrating:

“My father’s colleagues and partners started to leave, I mean, the rich ones. So my father decided that we would leave as well. Enver [‘Azra’s uncle, the highest commander in the Yugoslav Air Force] begged him not to go, but my father said: ‘*No, I am going where my people are.*’ So, this is how we left. They liked my father a lot, but they were zealous communists. My aunt was in the partisan movement as well; she was killed in [Ustasha’s] concentration camps.” (‘Azra’, 79)

Whereas the interviewee, whom I call ‘Ibrahim,’ comes from the *Valandova* region in Macedonia which is conveyed as a passive mountainous area with “conservative peasantry,” my other interviewee ‘Azra’ seems to be his pure contradiction. She comes from a rich family of the Ottoman diplomats of Bosnian origin from Herzegovina. Both her father and mother descended from a wealthy, highly educated class. If one collates ‘Ibrahim’ and ‘Azra’s accounts regarding the impact of the economic policies in the early years of the FPRY, one may see that they share a common thread in the way that they were affected by the state’s expropriation of properties despite the sharp differences of their socio-economic statuses and property holdings.

In parallel with ‘Azra,’ my interviewee Celal Aydın, whose family belonged to a wealthy merchant and artisan class in Skopje similarly reflected on the impact of the expropriation of his family’s properties:

“[W]e were very rich before Communism [...] We had almost six shops in the *çarşı* and three homes. When the communists came to power they took everything from us. That is why we came here.” (Celal, 69)

Some of the migrants also reflect on what is perceived in the report of the CCFRM to be ‘pulling factors’ in Turkey’s free market economy and crafts in the 1950s. The migrant who came from a certain *Dragash* village in the *Shar* Mountains, the areas inhabited by nomads and *pečalbar*²⁵⁰ between Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania, had owned a pastry shop before his arrival to Turkey.

He states:

“[H]ow shall I put this? Those who had some income, runners of shops etc., you know, they came here [Turkey]. Turkey at that time had a free market economy. You come and sell for a bit higher price. You could not have done that in Yugoslavia. It

²⁵⁰ Temporary or seasonal economic migration in an area which is outside one’s residence place, op.a. See also the notion of *gurbet* that has the same meaning, in Xavier Bougarel, “Balkan Muslim Diasporas and the Idea of a ‘European Islam,’”147.

was a bit illicit.” (Recep, 81)

The interviewee ‘Azem’ who touched upon Rankovic’s policy also briefly states:

“[T]hat is why we came. To get rich.” (‘Azem’, 71)

It is also important to mention that only one interviewee reflects the theme of victimhood and persecution conveyed in mainstream Turkish scholarship on migration from the Balkans. According to the scholar Baklacioğlu, a majority of immigrants to Turkey consisted of conservative, right-wing proponents of the private enterprise, artisans and rural and agricultural workers. Minority of immigrants consisted of people who did not reconcile with their status of minority, and notable Turkish nationalists associated with *Yücel*. On this account, my interviewee Mustafa notes:

“[T]he main reason lies in the political and economic system of Yugoslavia (socialism) and its underlying motivation to bring to an end the Ottoman domination in the Balkans. Becoming a minority was also unacceptable.” (Mustafa, 71)

It is quite clear that in regard of the economic aspects of migration the oral accounts largely nuance and challenge arguments put forth by mainstream, Turkish historiography. That particularly manifests itself in the aspect of what Akan Ellis calls the contraction of the *hayat alanı* (life space). This seems to be particularly true in case of those migrants who stated that they had been affected by Yugoslavia’s early expropriation policies. However, the contraction of the life space was not solely linked to the wealthy, merchant and artisan Muslim class which were apparently among the first migrants who left the for Turkey. According to the interviewees’ accounts, the economic reforms implemented through the First Five-Year Plan

(1947-1951) impacted the lives of many people living in Yugoslavia in that period regardless of their class, ethnic or religious background. It is interesting to note that Macedonia between 1947 and 1956 had the lowest rate of economic growth among the three underdeveloped countries (Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro), whereas, in journal *Borba* one Yugoslav writer in 1954 accuses the Turks for leaving in “haste and ill- will while the getting was good.”²⁵¹ In order to reconsider this broader palette informing the motivations and reasons for migrations, I will now turn to my last topic related to the cultural and social concerns underlining the Muslim communities’ decisions to leave Yugoslavia.

6.3. The social and cultural reasons

In this part I will discuss the social and cultural aspects of the migration movement represented in the Turkish historiography and the report from CCFRM. Many authors cite Communism and atheism as the main impetus for the migration wave to Turkey in the 1950s and 1960s. They refer to Communism as an ideology inextricably related with atheism that undermined Muslim religious values and cultural rites. I will examine how the interviewees’ accounts point to the common sentiment that the Muslim communities wedged in Communist society started to perceive their milieu imperilled by the new cultural and social values. It was on account of these new values that many Muslims felt that their place in this new society was in jeopardy; thus, they collectively decided to migrate to Turkey.

²⁵¹ Paul Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1968), 179.

Some authors emphasize the psychological peculiarities of the Muslims which are allegedly incompatible with Communism and atheism. According to Yaşar Nabi, the main encouragement for migration was the alleged wish to free oneself from being consistently ridiculed as a “barbarian Turk” who lacked any sort of civility or sophistication.²⁵² Yugoslavia’s initiatives and reforms such as sending female children to schools, the ban of headscarves and disarmament were perceived as Communist efforts to endanger ‘Turkishness’ and belief.²⁵³ Along the same lines, Akan Ellis writes that many Muslims did not find Communism attractive since it threatened their religiosity with initiatives such as closing the religious schools, persecuting religious leaders who opposed the government, attacking Muslim villages, and imposing strict dress codes aimed at disbanding Muslim religious accoutrements.²⁵⁴ Similarly, Şule Kut goes so far as to claim that the Yugoslav authorities took an open anti-Turkish stance due to Turkey’s alliance to the Western Powers. That also affected, she continues, the Turkish community within which both urban intellectuals and local Turkish peasants were disposed against Communism.²⁵⁵ Akan Ellis points out that many Muslims “remained suspicious of socialism, or became anti-Communists, especially after the banning of wearing headscarves and many believed that by counting Turks and Albanians separately, the government sought to decrease their density to facilitate their assimilation.”²⁵⁶ According to Ellis, official Yugoslav industrialization processes even included the destruction of ancient mosques and bazaars that were central to Muslim social life and thus prompted many Muslims to leave for Turkey.²⁵⁷ Along these lines, Zaim posits that

²⁵² Cited in Baklacioğlu, *Dış Politika ve Göç (Yugoslavya’dan Türkiye’ye Göçlerde Arnavutlar (1920-1990))*, 504.

²⁵³ Baklacioğlu, *Dış Politika ve Göç (Yugoslavya’dan Türkiye’ye Göçlerde Arnavutlar (1920-1990))*, 505.

²⁵⁴ Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies: Memory and Identity Among Urban Muslims in Macedonia*, 54.

²⁵⁵ Şule Kut, “Turks of Kosovo: What to Expect,”

²⁵⁶ It is completely unknown what is understood by the term assimilation, op.a., see in Burçu Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies: Memory and Identity Among Urban Muslims in Macedonia*, 76.

²⁵⁷ Burçu Akan Ellis, *Shadow Genealogies: Memory and Identity Among Urban Muslims in Macedonia*, 55.

Communism aimed to sever the social ties between the Turks who placed particular importance on their traditional way of living and carrying out of religious duties.²⁵⁸

Among the aforementioned concerns, such as prohibition of wearing headscarves and sending their children to schools, Zaim also argues without providing any documentation that Turkish males and females were sometimes forced by Communists to marry Slavic-speaking individuals, whereas, Communist representatives systematically strove to “turn into Communists” young Turks throughout the different layers of the state school systems. Zaim considers the government’s meddling into the Turkish communities’ education of their children as one of the most important reasons for most Turkish communities’ leaving.²⁵⁹

Similarly, Nüredin maintains that the Communists were particularly vigilant in obstructing the Turkish youth from learning their mother tongue. He refers to one event from 3 July 1944 in Bitola, Macedonia, where the revolutionary front issued a circular note saying that “in the region of Debar and Reka education in the Macedonian language will continue for those who consider themselves Turks and Albanians.”²⁶⁰ However, the plausibility of such an account is seriously questionable. First, there are no sources purporting the claim that the Macedonian language was introduced in schools as early as 1944. Actually, in August 1944, the Macedonian Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation (ASNOM) was convened for the first time proclaiming Macedonian the official language of the region and supporting the idea of unification of all the Macedonians.²⁶¹ The fact is the Macedonian language, together with its alphabet and orthography, came into existence only in 1945, after the establishment of Yugoslavia. Second, the area surrounding Debar was occupied by Albanian Fascists in the

²⁵⁸ Sabahattin Zaim, “A Report on the Last Yugoslavian Immigrants,”

²⁵⁹ Sabahattin Zaim, “A Report on the Last Yugoslavian Immigrants,”

²⁶⁰ Abdülmecit Nüredin, *Balkanlar’dan Türkiye’ye Göç ve Etiklileri*, 259.

²⁶¹ Paul Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1968), 1-308.

World War II until October 1943 when the Yugoslav and Albanian partisans entered the city.²⁶²

It is unlikely that the Macedonian language had been introduced and used in the schools during the Albanian Axis occupation of that part of Macedonia.

If one turns to Yugoslav sources, the report of the CCFRM comments on the law prohibiting wearing of headscarves. According to the document this law represents, among all other things, measures which were undertaken “for building socialism.” “These strategies included measures such as penalizing trafficking of women, measures against Quranic schools (*sibyân mektebi*), educating all children (*i.e.*, especially females), laws on marriage, building cooperatives, unauthorized medical treatments (*e.g.*, circumcision), etc. which encountered resistance among the most backward population.”²⁶³ Nevertheless, when providing the analysis of the underlying reasons why so many people emigrated from Macedonia to Turkey, the report stresses historical, social and cultural reasons rooted in the life of the Turkish minorities and others who declared themselves Turks in the census of 1953. The report rejects the argument that the reasons for migration are embedded in ‘the ancient atavism’ claiming: “This frenzied movement has grave historical, religious and social roots and cannot be explained with minorities being unsatisfied with their legal position in social community like ours.”²⁶⁴

What this report rather stresses is that the ‘migratory path’ to Turkey, *i.e.* the history of emigration of Turkish communities from Macedonia to Turkey that had been developing since the Balkans Wars onwards. Furthermore, it states that Macedonia is not an exception but rather stands alongside with Greece and Bulgaria, with the difference that after the World War II, these countries’ official policies “forced such processes with particular political measures and

²⁶² Operacije narodnooslobodilačke vojske za oslobođenje Srbije, Makedonije, Crne Gore i Dalmacije, http://www.znaci.net/00001/228_2.pdf (last accessed June 2, 2012).

²⁶³ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 8.

²⁶⁴ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 7-8.

economic pressures within the circumstances of bad relationships with Turkey.”²⁶⁵ On the other hand, the report states that emigration from Yugoslavia started just recently as a result of national equalities awarded to minorities and a friendly diplomatic relationships with Turkey that were just established.²⁶⁶ The report does not allow for claims that political or economic reasons are responsible for the migration.

According to the report, the only matter where the party representatives in Macedonia intervened were in their attempts to keep the migration confined to the members of the Turkish minority. Yet, such efforts are limited in scope, argues the report, since people were free to declare their nationality as they saw fit, and ”non-Turkish” Muslim communities could claim a Turkish nationality under the clause “correction of nationality in the register books.”²⁶⁷ As a consequence, a significant number of Albanians and Pomaks migrated to Turkey. As for the reasons why the government did not intervene and prevent communities other than the Turks from migrating, the report stressed: “The consultation with official Belgrade yielded more soft criteria [...] We should act humane and let these people unite with their families which are in Turkey. The other thing is that many Albanians and Pomaks wrote petitions for emigration, so we neither bypassed nor ignored them.”²⁶⁸ Furthermore, the report states that those who are immigrating to Macedonia from Kosovo and Metohija, the Sanjak, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina are using Skopje as a temporary station because their underlying motivation for coming is not to settle in Macedonia but to find a way to migrate to Turkey.

²⁶⁵ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 7.

²⁶⁶ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 8.

²⁶⁷ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 4.

²⁶⁸ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 4.

The report particularly pays attention to the members of the Communist Party who wanted to migrate to Turkey. Usually, those who wanted to migrate had to return their membership card since it was not allowed to migrate as the member of Communist Party.²⁶⁹ On the other hand, the document states that a “certain revival of chauvinism on the Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish side”²⁷⁰ arose as a result of the social and political consequences of the migration movement. The document pinpoints that chauvinism was particularly inherent to the former Macedonian *çarşı* social strata. To a less extent, it argues, chauvinism is also present in the environment of “mixed nationalities which had been in an immediate clash in recent history.”²⁷¹ Thus, it is stated in the report, one may observe that sentiments such as “it is good that Turks are leaving” and “it would be better the number Albanians diminishes in Macedonia” were becoming commonplace on the ground.²⁷² The report explains that these sentiments assumed that some Macedonians express their fear of strengthening the Muslim elements in society which would subsequently change the ethnic landscape.

However, the report distances itself from such statements and attitudes towards those who are migrating expressing that the majority of Macedonians and Communists found chauvinism categorically unacceptable.²⁷³ The report also reprimands colleagues from the Communist Party who were indifferent to the fact that the Turks are leaving Macedonia. Instead of a sustained education of the masses which would construct productive relationships among other nationalities “in the spirit of Communism,” the report stresses that party members

²⁶⁹ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 10.

²⁷⁰ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 11.

²⁷¹ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 11.

²⁷² AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 11.

²⁷³ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, p. 11.

should not react with chauvinism and passively accept the disillusionment of the Turks in the CPY. The report sees some of the members of the CP ignoring the Turkish members since they are expecting these members would migrate as well. In this vein, the report discerns such a stance to be a discriminatory act towards the Communist Turks whose needs should be acknowledged regardless of whether or not they contemplated migrating. Moreover, the report argues that it is necessary “to preserve their Communist belief since it matters how they will behave in Turkey.”²⁷⁴ The report goes on to argue that: “Their [the Turks’] wish for emigration to Turkey, especially the Communist Turk’s desire to leave, is motivated by familial and other reasons and may not be, in any case, construed as a betrayal of our Party and socialism.”²⁷⁵

Likewise, this apparent discontent in the report is extended to the Albanian Muslim clergy and intellectuals who were trying to mobilize the population which would obstruct the migration to Turkey. Their fear is that all “the Muslims will leave; hence, there will not be a sufficient number of people left to decide in future referendums whether to stay in Yugoslavia or join Albania.”²⁷⁶ The report states that the Albanian Muslim clergy is gathering in and using mosques for propaganda against emigration to Turkey and against other Muslims declaring Turkish nationality.²⁷⁷ When mentioning Turkish chauvinism, the report states that there have been some disorders, especially before leaving.²⁷⁸ Disorders such as “heavy drinking, fighting, sexual harassments” are used by some as a political justifications for leaving. They would like to be detained so they can use their prison records in Turkey in order to legitimate themselves as the enemies of the Communist regime.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁴ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, pp. 13.

²⁷⁵ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, pp. 13.

²⁷⁶ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, pp. 11.

²⁷⁷ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, pp. 11.

²⁷⁸ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, pp. 12.

²⁷⁹ AJ, Collection: Komisija za nacionalne manjine CKSKJ 1956-1960 (507), XVIII-K4/7, folio 38, pp. 12.

It may be argued that the CCFRM report sent to the Commission for National Minorities targets specific groups which are either opposing or encouraging the emigration to Turkey. However, it is interesting that in the report groups who are targeted as not contributing to the support of ‘building a socialist community based on equal conditions for life of all the nationalities’ are to be found among Macedonian Communists and non-Communists as well as among the Albanian clergy and the Turks who are reviving chauvinism. Here it seems interesting to emphasize that the writers of the report apparently worried that the ignorance of some Communists towards their Turkish comrades would eventually result in the bad reputation of Yugoslavia once they migrate to Turkey. Between the lines, one may read how the writers of the report consider kinship and family ties as one of the primary reasons (alongside economic reasons overviewed in the aforementioned paragraphs) for migration to Turkey. Having examined the Turkish historiography on migration and the CCFRM report related to it, I will now turn to the oral accounts to glean the social and cultural issues that the actual migrants claimed to have informed their decisions and motives for their coming to Turkey.

With regard to cultural and social concerns of the migrants, I found that most of the interviewees refer to kinship and the concentration of family members in Turkey as one of the most important factors that influenced their decisions to leave the FPRY for Turkey. Most striking was the fact that the interviewees rarely cited religion as a primary factor for leaving Yugoslavia. In fact, when the interviewees mentioned religion in the context of their lives in Yugoslavia, most noted religious liberties and freedom of religious practices they actually

enjoyed in their former lives. Mustafa, who was more educated than most of the interviewees and tended to highlight adverse political conditions of Muslims in the FPRY as a primary factor for the migrations, refers to the question of religion in a way that opposed the mainstream line of argumentation presented in the Turkish historiography:

“[T]he Turks did not leave because of religious pressure. The mosques were open and the people could freely perform all of the religious duties. My grandfather was a *hoca*.²⁸⁰ I don’t recall any persecution on account of our faith. (Mustafa, 70)

The accounts of other interviewees also run against the grain of the Turkish historiography in relation to this matter. Mainstream Turkish scholarship places into the foreground, almost without exception, the religiosity of the Muslim communities and their strong family ties that had been culturally endangered and subjected to the pressure under the Yugoslav ideology of Communism and atheism. When asked whether they could have performed their religious duties in Yugoslavia, ‘Ibrahim’ and his spouse noted:

“We were free to attend prayers in mosques. Whoever wanted to attend, he could.”

Similarly, Şahsine from city of *Kumanovo* who was attending high school prior to her arrival to Turkey reflects on some of the cultural and social aspects of life in Macedonia. When it comes to the headscarves issue, she notes:

“[N]either my mom wanted to wear a headscarf, nor did my father want her to wear one. Some people in Turkey claim that some things in Yugoslavia were forbidden or that the Turkish population in Macedonia was threatened. We could fast and go to mosques, no problem - *she continues narration by mocking and imitating one of her relatives* – “Ah, there was a huge tax imposed upon us. They were stealing everything from directly out of our hands! – So why would you want the same thing here, to pay the same taxes [we paid there]!? Did she come voluntarily? We came voluntarily, nobody forced us. People in Turkey like to say they were forced to come, they benefit from such lies for they want to show themselves as proper Turks.” (Şahsine, 69)

²⁸⁰ Religious teacher, op.a.

In contrast to Turkish scholarship that often refers to the banning of headscarves as proof of the oppression of Muslims, it is interesting to note that Şahsine points out that headscarves were not really a concern of her family. She also states that her grandfather and father were in the partisan movement and that her father later became a police officer in Macedonia. It is possible to interpret her stance towards headscarves pointing at family members who, perhaps, in the spirit of socialism did not find headscarves as an appropriate dress code. On the other hand, it is quite different with ‘Ibrahim’ who comes from a Macedonian village named *Kızıldoğan* in the *Valandova* province. The *Valandova* province, a poor mountainous region populated mostly by scattered peasant villages, seems to be the place where religion was quite an important aspect of everyday life. In this regard ‘Ibrahim’ states:

“[S]econdly, there was a law issued in 1952. The law prohibited wearing headscarves. The people did not like it. Take for example Istanbul today. They walk just like you [*i.e.*, without a headscarf]. It is normal. But at that time people found it hard to accept [...] When the roads opened people said ‘Let’s go!’ Oh, how many of them came here! Those who came regretted it afterwards, however. You know, Tito’s laws were fine. The law of brotherhood and unity!” (Ibrahim, 68)

As the primary reason for people leaving for Turkey, ‘Ibrahim’s spouse emphasizes the importance of kinship relationships:

“[A]hh. The reasons why the people came to Turkey [...] After the Balkan wars [*i.e.*, 1912-13], the peoples (*millet*) separated. Some of them stayed there; some of them came here. So the families who stayed decided to migrate as well. Because of the family you go as well. For example, you went with your husband’s family to Turkey but your mother and sister stayed in Macedonia with sorrow. They say: “My daughter is there, I also want to come, too. When the families split, people yearn, they want to unite.” (‘Ibrahim’s spouse)

“[F]amilies became fragmented. That’s it! There was no persecution, we came voluntarily. Our Macedonian neighbours were telling us: ‘*Don’t go! You won’t find such life in Turkey; it is a capitalist country. Here is socialism.*’ But we had no idea what is capitalism and what is socialism at that time. But you can’t stop it; families were there. (Ibrahim, 68)

‘Ibrahim’s account highlights an interesting point: a number of these migrants really had no understanding of differences between the two socio-political orders in place Yugoslavia and Turkey at the time. Mainstream Turkish, anti-Communist scholarship on migration emphasizes that the Muslim communities were very conscious of the threats that the Communist regime imposed on their identities and practices as Turks and Muslims. While charging that headscarves in particular had been a bone of contention in the Yugoslavia, Turkish scholarship fails to mention the prohibition of wearing headscarves in Turkey, the country in which these migrants are supposed to find religious freedom. A few decades before Yugoslavia officially prohibited wearing, headscarves Mustafa Kemal Atatürk pioneered such bans within the framework of reforms in 1920s and 1930s the guiding principle of which was secularization.²⁸¹ Accordingly, religiosity and the issue of prohibition of headscarves fits in the cultural range of motivation in only one of my accounts, ‘Ibrahim’s’.

According to most of the interviewees, family and kinship was the biggest consideration in reaching the decision to migration to Turkey. Mustafa, who is very close to the narratives produced by the Turkish scholarship, notes among the rests:

“[I]n different waves of migrations families separated. Since members of families could not have come back after migrating to Turkey, the new migration was the only way to bring them together.” (Mustafa, 71)

Similarly, Selim Şahinler, born in Skopje in a family of blacksmiths and Metin Ileri from Skopje reflect on the ‘migration path’ from Macedonia to Turkey stating:

“[W]e were a big family. We had neither a house nor money. You gather all family members and migrate. Our ancestors had been doing so [for years].” (Selim Şahinler, 62)

“[Y]ou see, he is leaving, they are leaving [...] I don’t know the reasons: the people were leaving, so we decided to leave as well.” (Metin Ileri, 81)

²⁸¹ Some of the reforms ‘in spirit of progress and modernity’ included banning of fez, closing of religious schools, caliphate and religious courts, introducing Latin alphabet, women rights to vote etc. see Kader Konuk, *East West Mimesis: Auerbach in Turkey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 8.

Another question that I posed trying to assess its importance as a possible impetus for migration was whether the Turks were forced to enter the Communist Party. On this subject Mustafa said:

“[T]he pressure from the Party. If you are not the member of the Party, you will stay hungry. And, the first reason is that the communists did not want to take Muslims into the Party because of the prejudices towards the Muslims. They can accept you only if you are an atheist.” (Mustafa, 69)

After being asked how it is possible that many other Muslims were members of the Party, Mustafa did not answer. His account may be interpreted by looking at his family background. Mustafa comes from family of Islamic scholars and teachers who certainly did not find appealing becoming members of the Communist Party, although he states that his uncle, also a teacher, was closely associated with the Party in his youth. My interviewee Şahsine also had a father who was in the Communist Party. ‘Azra’ s immediate family members were among the highest representatives of the Communist Party on the federal level. Metin Ileri also states that he was the member of SKOJ (the Young Communist League of Yugoslavia) until 1948 when SKOJ was officially closed.

Conclusion Remarks

This chapter attempts to offer answers to the main research question which was to study the conjunction of causal factors and motivations informing the emigration of the Muslim communities from Yugoslavia to Turkey from 1953 to 1968. What it demonstrated is that the oral accounts of the migrants nuance and to certain extent challenge the tenor of the mainstream Turkish scholarship on migration from the Balkans. Whereas Turkish scholarship claims that the nationalist and political agenda of Yugoslavia embodied in the ideology of Communism and

atheism directly resulted in the migration wave from 1953 to 1968, the oral accounts mainly refer to more complex cultural dynamics, e.g., kinship and familiar ties, as the main motives to leave. Furthermore, the economic program of Yugoslavia implemented in the First Five Year Plan (1947-1951) left an impact on some of the interviewees' life and entailed their emigration to Turkey. According to the interviewees who find the economic reasons as the most important in their decision to migrate, communities other than 'Turks' and regardless of their ethnic, religious or class status were affected by the same policies. When it comes to religion, most of the interviewees maintain that Yugoslavia had not imposed restrictions in relation to religious liberties. Only one interviewee considers that the banning of wearing headscarves influenced his family' and other people's decision to leave. Likewise, in order to answer to what extent were Muslim communities understood as groups who could threaten the Yugoslav state that prided itself on diversity, one may argue that one's class and social position rather than religious identity was important in this period.

This thesis aimed to show that spectra of oral accounts when juxtaposed and cross-examined with the written records and secondary sources on migration attribute to a new understanding of the process of migration and thus becomes a new reference to existing body of literature on the same topic.

Conclusion

In this thesis I studied the conjunction of causal factors and motivations informing the emigration of the Muslim communities from Yugoslavia to Turkey in the period from 1953 to 1968. From the early eighteenth century when the Ottoman Empire began its protracted withdrawal from its former European possessions to the recent dissolution of socialism in the Balkan Peninsula, migrations and population exchanges from the Balkans to Turkey and vice versa have been a widespread and well researched social phenomenon. In my thesis I addressed an insufficiently explained migration movement from the Federal Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia to Turkey in period from 1953 to 1968. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Turkey estimates that 170,000 people migrated during this period from the Federal Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia (FPRY) to Turkey. In my research I found that statistical data on the number of the immigrants as well as the historiography concerning the reasons and motives for this migration oscillates depending on the political agendas of Turkish or Yugoslav sources. Both Turkish and Yugoslav sources have different takes on the subject of this migration, but the main body of literature on this topic is predominately written by the Turkish scholars. They almost unanimously argue that the reasons and motives for the migration of the Muslim communities from the FPRY revolves around the religiosity of the Muslim communities who were subjected to the political, economic and socio-cultural pressure of the Yugoslav ideology of Communism and its atheist policies. According to this overarching narrative in Turkish scholarship, Muslim communities started to perceive their micro-milieu imperilled by the new social and political circumstances, and therefore, left for Turkey *en masse*. Many Turkish scholars go so far as to state that the underlying motivation of the Federal Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia in its early formative period was to ‘cleanse’ the regions of Kosovo and

Macedonia of the Muslim population which the state considered as undesirable remnants of the Ottoman Empire.

Alongside this line of argument, Turkish scholars tend to highlight a continuity of migration waves to Turkey which were triggered by older atrocities such as wars, massacres, pillages, rapes, repressions, deportations and forced assimilations that followed the emergence of Balkan nation-states at the end of the nineteenth century. Whereas Turkish historiography constitutes the largest corpus of literature on this topic, Yugoslav sources on this topic are scarce and interestingly 'silent.'. The only official Yugoslav record I found is a confidential report from 1957 by the Central Committee of the Federal Republic of Macedonia (hereafter the CCFRM report) which does not mention any official policies of Yugoslavia which targeted particular Muslim groups. It also does not mention what would be at stake for the state to get rid of the Muslim population, predominately the Turks and Albanians. Nevertheless, one has to be careful not to claim that the CCFRM report reveals any complete truth about the reasons and motives for migration. There are many things which are blurred and unexplained, especially the local dynamics between the Communist Party and the communities in question.

In attempt to find out what were the reasons and motives for migration from the FPRY to Turkey in period from 1953 to 1968, I decided to rely rather on an oral history approach which I hoped it would allow the real historical actors and subjects of these events to shed more light on this under-researched topic. When I cross-examined ten oral accounts of first generation, Muslimmigrants in Turkey with the CCFRM report and Turkish scholarship, I was struck to find out that the explanation for migration is much more complex than official Yugoslav sources and Turkish scholarship and offers very different factors that were at stake for the migrants (*e.g.*,

kinship and family ties in Turkey) that are typically ignored in the works of authors who deal with this migration movement.

The scarcity of written sources on my topic also encouraged me to look at a broader historical and political context of the past migration movements from the former Yugoslav state to Turkey. In Chapter II, I outlined the historical background of the migration from the late Ottoman era to period of the FPRY. I draw particular attention to migration in the period of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-41) and that from the FPRY to Turkey. It seems that the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the FPRY pursued a different emigration policy. The Convention of 1938 which the Kingdom of SCS signed with Turkey about the resettlement of two hundred thousand “Turks” seems to be a means for achieving a homogenous state of the Southern Slavs. The emigration policy was considered to be a large step in breaking free from what they understood as yet another undesirable Ottoman legacy, thus allowing the new nation-state to accelerate “de-Ottomanisation and re-Occidentalisation.” The FRPY, on the other hand, seemed to pursue initially different emigration policies than the KSCS government.

The only emigration until the early 1960s was the voluntary emigration of ‘ethnic Turks’ from Macedonia who were allowed to leave the country after an agreement that forging a partnership and friendship with Turkey had been signed in 1953. The migration that was a part of this agreement was legally categorized as *serbest göç* (voluntary migration), which means that those who migrated were leaving Yugoslavia on a voluntary basis. In Chapter III, I addressed the official policy of ‘nations and nationalities’ in the FPRY and Macedonia in relation to the Muslim communities. The Albanian and Turkish communities were granted the

status of nationality which offered them certain privileges in the educational, cultural and political spheres. However, the process of building an egalitarian, socialist society was fraught with many contradictions. For instance, the Cominform resolution in 1948 played a significant role in deciding what would be the maltreatment of the Albanian population, whereas, the same event was also constitutive of an initial step towards a better diplomatic relationship with Turkey and the Turkish minorities within FPRY. According to the CCFRM report, this political reshuffling was reflected in the censuses of 1948 and 1953. Those who registered as ‘Albanians’ in the 1948 census did so since the relationship between the FPRY and Albania was friendly, whereas, this was not the case with the census of 1953 where many Albanians declared themselves as ‘Turks’ knowing that the relationship with Albania deteriorated but that Turkey had become an ally of the FPRY. This also facilitated the emigration to Turkey for those who were not ethnically Turks. Ethnicity of interviewees seem to be contested ground and this was particularly evident during some group interviews when some interviewees ascribed ‘Turkishness’ to the ones who stated they do not know whether their origin was Turkish or not.

In the fourth chapter I turned to Turkey and the settlement and immigration policies in the early republican period (1923-1934) for contextualizing Turkey’s official policy regarding immigration from the Balkans. I show in this chapter how the settlement and immigration policies officially proposed and adopted in the period from 1923 to 1934 in Turkey significantly followed those implemented in the time of the Young Turk government, one of the last Ottoman parties to administer the Empire. I argued how the notion of “Turkish culture and consciousness” that was a prerequisite for migration from the FRPY to Turkey in 1950s and 1960s was used in legal and state discourse as an ideological tool for Turkish Republican Peoples’ Party’s (RPP) social engineering strategies. The RPP was particularly attached to Rumeli and “Balkan Turks”

whose privileged citizenship status is visible especially when juxtaposed and examined alongside with communities who were officially deprived of such labels such as Anatolian Christians and Kurds. In Chapter VI, I brought into play the oral accounts of first generation migrants from the FPRY to argue how they need to be analysed according to different social settings of the interviewees' different social background. I also engaged in theoretical discussion on voluntary and involuntary migration trying to answer how the official policy of voluntary migration is addressed and interpreted by the interviewees since this is the first time that Muslim communities came to Turkey according to a policy which was not state-sponsored. I found out that all of my interviewees are compliant with the legal category of *serbest göçmen*, i.e., migrants who came voluntarily and did not expect any benefits from the state. When referring to this category, the interviewees usually emphasise their free choice in their decision to migrate to Turkey and further substantiate their arguments by comparing their migrations with their Bulgarian peers who were forced to leave and were for this reason state-sponsored, i.e. granted benefits by the Turkish state to which my interviewees as free migrants were not entitled. I also found that the interviewees in their accounts inevitably evoke some of the value-laden notions among which the most salient were resentment and stories of success which fluctuate depending on their socio-economical status and their own perception of their present position in the Turkish society.

In the final chapter I engaged with my main research question related to the reasons and motivations for the migration of the Muslim communities from Yugoslavia to Turkey in the period from 1953 to 1968. I cross examined the oral accounts with the Turkish historiography and the CCFRM report on migration. I demonstrated how a bottom-up approach to migration nuances and challenge the tenor of the mainstream Turkish scholarship on migration from the

Balkans which opts for a continuity of Muslim victimhood in the Balkans going back to retraction of Ottoman rule in the Balkans and cleansing policies of the early Balkan nation states. Whereas Turkish scholarship caricaturizes the nationalist and political agenda of Yugoslavia embodied in the ideology of communism and atheism as part and parcel of earlier Balkan cleansing programs that informed the migration wave from 1953 to 1968, the oral accounts as on bottom-up approach from the actual migrants' testimonies demonstrates how wrongly charged scholarship describes this period. The interviewees offer stories that point to more complex cultural dynamics (*e.g.*, kinship and familiar ties, promises of wealth and prosperity in a capitalist society, etc.) that informed their decisions to leave their ancestral homes in the Balkans for Turkey. Likewise, many of the interviewees cite the FPRY's economic reforms implemented by the First Five-Year Plan (1947-1951) as the most important factor informing their decision to migrate to Turkey since these reforms targeted wealthy landowners and professionals, among which were many Muslims who still owned lots of property left over from the Ottoman period. However, those who cite being targeted by Yugoslav authorities because of their class status also acknowledge that other communities were targeted by the Five-Year plan regardless of their ethnic or religious affiliations. Interestingly, when they mentioned religion, most of the interviewees even argue that they had religious liberties, thus showing that different conditions may have marked the early formative period of the FRPY. Out of ten interviewees, only one considers that the prohibition of wearing headscarves affected his family' and other people's decision to leave. Likewise, in order to answer to what extent were Muslim communities understood as groups who could threaten the Yugoslav state that prided itself on diversity, one may argue that one's class and social position rather than religious identity was important in this period.

Appendices: Questionnaire

- 1) Where and whom you lived with in Yugoslavia?
- 2) How would you describe your life in village/town? (Tell me about your house, the people whom you lived with. Tell me something about your neighbourhood. How would you describe your relationship with your neighbours at that time? How did you spend your leisure time?
- 3) How were the people from your surroundings treated by the local authorities?
- 4) Were you encouraged to leave Yugoslavia for Turkey? (If yes, who encouraged you and how?)
- 5) Was there anyone from your family who was a member of the Communist Party?
- 6) How did you make your decision to migrate?
- 7) Did you have any knowlegde of Turkey before your arrival? If yes, what did you know about Turkey?
- 8) What were factors that influenced your decision to migrate?
- 9) What happened with your property in Yugoslavia before your arrival to Turkey?
- 10) Can you tell me how the process of migration started? Were there any challenges you came across to in migration process?
- 11) When did you arrive to Turkey? With whom you arrived and how?
- 12) Where did you settle upon your arrival?
- 13) What was your occupation in Turkey? When did you start to work?
- 14) Did Turkey provide you any benefits? If did, what were they?
- 15) What was reaction to your arrival? With whom you were spending most of your time?
- 16) I would like to know something about your family. Do you have children? Did they go to school?
- 17) If the interviewee is a member of migrant association: When did you become a member? What it means to you to be a member of this association?

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