

**DIASPORA AS AN ELEMENT OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: STATE POLICIES OF
ALBANIA AND KOSOVO**

Dr.Ramadan ÇIPURI

Department of Journalism and Communication
University of Tirana, Albania

Rigon Harxhi

Research Assistant
Polis University

Abstract

The diaspora is an important actor in the political, economic, social, and cultural development of a country. Governments of different countries have understood cooperation with the diaspora as an important part of state policies. The case of the Albanian diaspora is one of the rarest in the world, as it is supported by two different countries with the same nationality, Albania and Kosovo. This study analyzes the commitment, policies, and influence that these two countries have had in communication and relations with the Albanian diaspora, with the aim of developing their state policies within the dimensions of public diplomacy.

The study makes a comparative analysis between the results and the institutional work of special institutions for the diaspora in Albania and Kosovo. The analysis was conducted on the data collected from a survey conducted with 249 Albanian citizens living in 13 different countries of the world, 8 interviews with researchers, leaders, and activists of Albanian associations in the diaspora, as well as the evaluation of activities conducted by institutions in these two countries.

Some of the results achieved in this study are that although not at sufficient levels, Kosovo has pursued more effective policies than Albania regarding the diaspora. The diaspora appears to us as the most self-organized within it, and the contribution of both countries remains mostly at the propaganda level and without any major influence on public diplomacy.

Keywords: Albanian diaspora, public diplomacy, soft-power, propaganda, Albania, Kosovo

Özet

Diaspora bir ülkenin siyasi, ekonomik, sosyal ve kültürel gelişimi için önemli bir aktördür. Bir çok ülke diaspora ile işbirliğinin devlet politikasının önemli bir parçası olduğunu anlamıştır. Aynı milliyete sahip iki farklı ülke olan Arnavutluk ve Kosova tarafından desteklenen Arnavut diasporası dünyadaki en nadir diasporalardan birisidir. Bu çalışma bu iki ülkenin kamu diplomasisi boyutunda Arnavut diasporası ile gerçekleştirmeye çalıştıkları devlet politikalarının iletişim ve ilişkilerin diaspora üzerinde ki bağlılık, politikalar ve etkisini incelemektedir.

Bu çalışma Arnavutluk ve Kosova'daki diaspora için çalışan özel kurumların çalışmaları ile sonuçlarını karşılaştırmaktadır. Bu analizin gerçekleştirilmesi için verilerin elde edilmesinde iki ulkedeki diaspora ile ilgili kurumların çalışmalarının incelenmesinin yanı sıra

13 farklı ülkede yaşayan 249 Arnavut vatandaşı ile anket ve içerisinde araştırmacıların, Arnavut derneklerine kayıtlı aktivistler ve liderlerin olduğu sekiz adet mülakat yapılmıştır.

Yapılan analizler sonucu elde edilen bulgulara göre çok belirgin bir seviyede fark olmasa da Kosova'nın Arnavutluğa göre diasporaya yönelik daha etkili politikalar takip ettiği anlaşılmıştır. Diasporanın kendi kendine mükemmel seviyede organize olduğu ve her iki ülkenin katkısının da büyük ölçüde propaganda seviyesinde kaldığı ve kamu diplomasi açısından önemli bir etkisinin bulunmadığı görülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Arnavut diasporası, kamu diplomasisi, yumuşak-güç, propaganda, Arnavutluk, Kosova

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Dynamics of Albanian diaspora development

In recent years, for many countries of the world the diaspora is an important actor for the political, economic, social, and cultural development of the country. Countries such as Israel, Canada, India, Turkey, etc. consider their diaspora as valuable for the functioning and development of the state. The diaspora is presented as a non-state actor in a triangle: the diaspora, the country of origin, and the host countries.

Seen in a historical context, the Albanian diaspora has been active in protecting the interests of their country in the international arena, protecting their rights, preserving the language and national identity as well as in the political, economic and social development of Albania and Kosovo. The case of the Albanian diaspora in Italy, Greece, and other countries is a testament to the establishment of bilateral and strategic relations between these countries and Albania.

One of the important features that affects the activity and organization of the Albanian diaspora around the world is the fact that it represents two countries with the same nation, Albania and Kosovo. Consequently, it is also supported by the policies of both countries. With the many population movements after the 1990s, Albania and Kosovo continue to be represented by members of the Albanian diaspora from different professions, such as: politicians, doctors, economists, entrepreneurs, artists, athletes, researchers, scientists, etc. The Albanian communities in the US, Europe, Canada, Australia, etc., have created associations, cultural centers, forums, and schools. These self-initiated organizations have served as an instrument to distribute information, organize cultural activities, and create bridges of cooperation between members of the other communities living in these countries.

Despite the fact that we have policies of two countries that support the Albanian diaspora all around the world, it turns out that these policies of Albania and Kosovo have not sufficiently supported the organization of Albanian communities around the world, both in terms of public diplomacy and in trying to promote and develop activities that help to preserve elements of national identity.

This study aims to throw light on how the Albanian diaspora in different countries assess the policies pursued by Tirana and Pristina governments. The study is one of the first to make a comparative analysis between the impact of policies pursued by Albania and Kosovo on these issues.

1.2. Methodology

The study is one of the first which brings primary quantitative data with members of the Albanian diaspora in different countries. The study is among the first to bring primary quantitative data with members of the Albanian diaspora in different countries. As part of this research, a questionnaire was given to 249 people from 13 different countries, in Austria, Belgium, Great Britain, France, Greece, Germany, Canada, Italy, Norway, Sweden, the United States of America, Turkey and Switzerland. This questionnaire was shared online during September, October and November 2020 with members of Albanian diaspora organizations in countries mentioned above.

In support of quantitative data, we have conducted 8 interviews with researchers, leaders, and activists of Albanian diaspora organizations in these communities. Two of the interviewees were also awarded the "Ambassador of the Nation" in the respective countries, specifically in the US and Great Britain.

The literature is based on the studies of Albanian and foreign authors who have analyzed the issue of emigration and the Albanian diaspora, as well as public diplomacy.

1.3. Hypothesis

Based on the fact that the Albanian diaspora is one of the few in the world that has the support of two different countries, and in a preliminary evaluation of the literature was raised the following hypothesis: *How much and how have the policies of Albania and Kosovo influenced the organization of the Albanian diaspora in the field of public diplomacy and the preservation and development of elements of national identity?*

To answer this, we posit the following research questions:

1. *Which of the two countries, Albania and Kosovo, has been more active in the issue of diaspora?*
2. *In which of the dimensions of public diplomacy are Albania and Kosovo involved?*
3. *What has been the result of the engagement of Albanian and Kosovo state institutions in the inclusion of the diaspora in public diplomacy and the preservation and development of elements of national identity?*
4. *What does the Albanian diaspora think of the communication channels of the Albanian and Kosovo state institutions towards it?*

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1. Albanian diaspora as an element of public diplomacy of Albania and Kosovo

The origin of the Albanian Diaspora starts with the Arbëresh of Italy and the Arvanites of Greece. Furthermore, it was developed through different periods of history, with movements of individuals from Albania and Kosovo because of the socio-political and economic conditions in these countries, and has become an important national asset around the world. The creation of these communities was driven by the movements of citizens from Albania, as well as those from Kosovo, in the current host countries.

In the case of Albania, the creation of Albanian communities around the world can be described in three key phases of emigration. "An early outflow of emigrants before 1944, a

more recent diaspora of those who left 1945-1990, and a significant outflow following the 1990 breakdown of the communist leadership that had been in place since 1944” (Kosta, 2004)

Meanwhile, according to data from the Central Bank of Kosovo, also included in the "Strategy for Diaspora, 2013-2018", emigration of Kosovo citizens can also be described in three phases. "The first phase of emigration belongs to the '60s to the '80s, the second phase is during the '90s, and the third phase is during and after the Kosovo war, where about 27% of Kosovo citizens left their country. (Diaspora, 2013)

Analyzing these waves of emigration of the Albanian and Kosovo citizens, the Albanian diaspora is generally seen as divided into two groups: the early (old) diaspora and the new diaspora. Part of the old diaspora are the Albanian communities that emigrated before 1944, including the Arbëresh and previous groups, while the new one consists of those who left during the communist period in Albania and the period of the former Yugoslavia, as well as after the fall of this political system.

According to researcher Robin Cohen, the term diaspora includes four stages of development: “prototypical diaspora”, “the expanded concept of diaspora”, “social constructionist critiques”, “consolidation phase”. (Cohen, 2018) The old Albanian diaspora is included in what Cohen calls the classical diaspora while the new diaspora may be included in the consolidation phase.

During communism in Albania, emigration was prohibited by law. According to INSTAT, after the fall of the communist regime, during the years 1991-1992 in Albania, about 300,000 Albanians left their homeland, a period that corresponds to the mass exodus of Albanians around the world. In a 2020 report, INSTAT reports that the number of Albanian citizens living abroad is 1,684,135. Compared to 2019, there has been an increase of 2.6 percent in the diaspora.¹ This number consists mainly of Albanian citizens who have emigrated after 1990. Meanwhile, according to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, it turns out that only in 2019, 34,911 citizens left their country or 1.96 percent of the resident population. (INSTAT, 2020)

Kosovo is considered a country with a large diaspora in relation to the total number of local citizens. Although there are no accurate data reported by Kosovo institutions, the total number of members of the diaspora is thought to be between 800,000 and 1,000,000. “According to census data, over 40% of immigrants are settled in Germany and Switzerland. It is estimated that over 300,000 are eligible to vote.” (Krasniqi, 2018)

According to the member of the Diaspora Coordinating Council in Albania, Brikena Muharremi, “the Albanian diaspora is not divided into citizens of Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, or Serbia”. (Muharremi, 2020) Scholar from Kosovo who has analyzed public diplomacy and soft-power of this country, Hasan Saliu, admit that Albanian diaspora is unified, because abroad they organize cultural and social life as Albanians, not depending on the nationality of the country where come from. (Saliu, 2015, p. 207)

The Albanian Diaspora, whether old or new, at different stages of history, has shown the ability to self-organize. “The level of organization is different from country to country and is closely related to its history and the fact how old the Albanian diaspora is in a certain country”

(Muharremi, 2020). Only in the network of organizations identified by Germin, a non-governmental organization based in Pristina and recently operating in Tirana, “there are about 250 organizations of Albanian communities around the world, whose data have been collected through meetings with Albanian citizens in diaspora.” (Bejtullahu, 2020) “The Diaspora Publications Center has identified 63 schools / courses of Albanian language only in different regions in Italy”. (QBD, 2020) According to the digital map, in the Albanian Diaspora there are over 300 schools/courses remedial classes that offer instruction in Albanian. (DPC, 2020) “Meanwhile, in 2019, the number of students attending additional classes was about 25,000 and the number of engaged teachers is about 600 teachers.” (MDSI, 2019, p. 4)

Education in the Albanian language has helped communities in diaspora to preserve and develop elements of national identity, including national culture, considered as a necessity for the development of soft power in countries.

2.2. Soft Power of states through diaspora

Scholars consider public diplomacy to be one of the main instruments of “soft power”. One of the well-known researchers in this field, Joseph Nye, estimates that soft power is the ability to get what you want through attraction and not through coercion or payment. “The soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority”. (Nye, 2004, p. 11)

“Various factors feed soft power: Culture, education, arts, print and visual media, film, poetry, literature, architecture, higher education (universities, research centers, etc.), non-governmental organizations, science and technology, the capacity for innovation, tourism, platforms for economic cooperation and diplomacy”. (Kalin, 2011, p. 9)

The development of communication channels and the change of political systems, from authoritarian to democratic, in many countries of the world has influenced the establishment of relations between different countries. Today, information has become a power and more and more people have access to it and are more suspicious of propaganda. Therefore, Nye explains that politics is a battle for credibility and governments fight not only with each other but also with the media, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and the scientific community.

The independence of several states in the years 1948-1964 created a new international environment by increasing the influence of states on the foreign publics. This change and the need to share the country's politics, values and culture in foreign societies brought about the development of public diplomacy.

Paul Sharp describes public diplomacy as “the process by which direct relations are pursued with a country’s people to advance the interests and extend the values of those being represented, appears to be an idea whose time has come”. (Sharp, 2005, p. 106) Hans N. Tuch defines public diplomacy “as a government's process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation's ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and current policies”. (Tuch, 1990, p. 3) According to him, public diplomacy is considered as a direct communication process oriented towards communication with the foreign public.

A group of critics thinks that public diplomacy is just a new version of white propaganda, or an extension of propaganda. According to Melissen “public diplomacy is similar to propaganda in that it tries to persuade people what to think, but it is fundamentally different from it in the sense that public diplomacy also listens to what people have to say”. (Melissen, 2005, p. 18) Therefore, based on Melissen's argument, there is a division between propaganda and public diplomacy, because public diplomacy is a two-way process that involves dialogue in order to increase cooperation with the public of foreign countries. While propaganda aims to persuade the public by using the media as the main communication channel, public diplomacy also uses other communication channels to reach foreign audiences.

Public diplomacy is different from traditional diplomacy because it involves interaction not only with governments, but especially with individuals and non-governmental organizations. Saliu estimates that “public diplomacy is an instrument used by governments to mobilize these resources to communicate and attract the public of other countries and not just their own governments.” (Saliu, 2015, p. 100) Therefore, researchers see public diplomacy as an instrument, and soft power as the value. If the political values and culture of the country are not attractive, they cannot give the effect of soft power. The development of public diplomacy has encouraged non-state actors to participate in the policy of the governments of different countries. According to Mark Leonard the three most effective actors in public diplomacy are NGOs, the diaspora and political parties. He adds that “governments, therefore, should not just pay attention to improving the image of their countries but also to the image of resident diaspora communities.” (Leonard, 2009)

Citizens of a country beyond national borders have become important actors of communication in their host countries. Many researchers agree that the diaspora serves as a bridge between the country of origin and host countries. “The two largest groups that have historically been used for interpersonal communication in public diplomacy are refugees and the diaspora.” (Saliu, 2015, p. 203) According to Saliu, members of the diaspora serve as a bridge of dialogue, communication, and cultural neighborhood because they “carry” from the sending country to the host country values, symbols, customs, behaviors, views, and cultural and ethnic stereotypes, which coexist with the host culture.

Jennifer Brinkerhoff explains that diaspora contributions include economic remittances, homeland economic investment, skills transfer, advocacy, diaspora philanthropy, and political influence. (Brinkerhoff, 2012, p. 77) Diaspora communities lobby, campaign, and raise funds and their NGOs act as environments for spreading the culture of the country of origin in the host societies.

From this argument, Albania and Kosovo seem to have appreciated the need to support the diaspora and cooperate with it by undertaking several important policies in order to promote cooperation with these communities in various fields.

Over the years, Albania and Kosovo had a gap in terms of drafting state policies for the diaspora. For the first time in 2004, with the support of international partners, Albania adopted the “National Migration Strategy 2005–2010”, a document that tried to include the interests of Albanians abroad. In 2009, former Prime Minister Sali Berisha in the presentation of the government program 2009-2011 mentioned the creation of a legal basis for citizens abroad. However, until 2017 there was no concrete plan regarding these policies. In 2017, in the

structure of the Albanian government, under the Prime Minister, was created Minister of State for the Diaspora. A year later, in 2018, the Assembly of the Republic of Albania approved Law 16/2018, "For Diaspora", which is the basis of all other acts that are approved by completing the legal framework in the field of the diaspora in Albania.

On the other hand, Kosovo, two years after the declaration of independence, approved the legal basis for citizens abroad. In 2010, the Assembly of Kosovo approved Law no. 03 / 1-171 "On the Kosovo Diaspora" and in 2011, the Kosovo government established for the first time the Ministry of Diaspora. Meanwhile, in 2012, Law no. 04 / L - 095 "On Diaspora and Diaspora", which repealed the previous law.

In 2016, the Albanian government organized the first Diaspora Summit in Tirana, where the former Minister of Foreign Affairs in Albania, Ditmir Bushati, said that the time has come to build a partnership that will be based on the training of state structures to respond to the needs of the 21st-century diaspora, to turn it into a dignified actor representing the country across borders, as well as its involvement in the sustainable development of the economy.

A similar summit was organized again in 2019, which gathered over 1400 participants from 25 different countries of the world. "The Second Diaspora Summit received special attention from the main actors of policy-making in Albania, Kosovo, in the Albanian territories in Northern Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia." (NAD, 2019, p. 23). Representatives of these countries expressed readiness for a close cooperation between them, placing the issue of the diaspora as priorities on common agendas.

Meanwhile, Albania and Kosovo have drafted and adopted special strategies related to the diaspora. Albania has drafted two strategies, the first for the years 2018-2024, which was revised and replaced by the National Diaspora Strategy 2021-2025.

On the other hand, Kosovo has approved the National Migration Strategy 2013-2018. In 2019, were presented the draft strategy for the Diaspora 2019-2023 and the Action Plan 2019-2021. "Albania's national strategy 2018-2024 envisages close cooperation with the institutions of the state of Kosovo for a reassessment of the relationship with the common diaspora." (Strategjia Kombëtare e Diasporës dhe Migracionit 2018 - 2024, 2018, p. 21) Based on these strategies, Tirana and Pristina aimed to increase cooperation and interaction with individuals and constituent actors of the Albanian diaspora in different countries.

During these years, Albania and Kosovo have taken several steps to harmonize common policies regarding the national diaspora. Meanwhile, by 2020 only three cultural centers were opened in Turkey, Switzerland, and Sweden. Another effort was in the second agreement of November 2018, where the two governments agreed on the establishment of the "Diaspora Cooperation Council" and the "Chamber of Commerce in Tirana and Pristina". Meanwhile, the Chamber of Commerce seems to have been a failed initiative, as the Albanian government within a year set up the "Albanian Diaspora Business Chamber" without the support of the Kosovo government.

3. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

3.1. Involvement of the national diaspora in the policies of Albania and Kosovo

From a formal point of view, both Albania and Kosovo have made considerable efforts to establish links with the diaspora. In addition to the strategies they have drafted, both

countries have tried to set up special institutions for cooperation and rapprochement of the diaspora with their home countries. Currently, the state structure in Albania consists of: Subcommittee “On Diaspora and Migration”, State Committee on Diaspora, as well as the Minister of State for Diaspora, under which, after 2018, four institutions have been established: National Agency of Diaspora (NAD), The Albanian Development Fund for Diaspora (ADFD), the Diaspora Publishing Center (DPC) and the Center for Studies and Publications for the Arbëresh (CSPA). Meanwhile, Albania has established the “Diaspora Coordination Council” with 15 representatives of Albanian territories in the diaspora.

“While Albania has set up several special institutions committed to cooperation with the diaspora, Kosovo shows instability in this regard.” (Bejtullahu, 2020) In Kosovo, the Ministry of Diaspora changed its name to the Ministry of Diaspora and Strategic Investments. In 2020, Kosovo transferred the duties of this ministry to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora. Currently, in Kosovo, there is only the Commission for Foreign Affairs and Diaspora.

In Kosovo, the Ministry of Diaspora changed the name to the Ministry of Diaspora and Strategic Investments. In 2020, the Kosovo government transferred the duties of this ministry to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora. Currently, part of the Kosovo state and institutions is only the Commission for Foreign Affairs and Diaspora.

For the “Ambassador of the Nation” in Great Britain, at the same time a member of the Diaspora Coordination Council, Brikena Muharremi, the merger of the Ministry of Diaspora in Kosovo within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has created a step backward in terms of Kosovo’s institutional engagement in diaspora issues. (Muharremi, 2020) While Sihana Bejtullahu, Co-Executive Director of Non-Governmental Organization Germin, thinks that the diaspora is a national asset and that Kosovo should establish at all costs a special ministry for it. “If the models of foreign ministries are analyzed, the missions are more diplomatic and their priorities differ from those of a ministry specifically engaged with the diaspora.” (Bejtullahu, 2020)

Despite the better official organization that Albania exhibits compared to Kosovo, leaders of associations in the diaspora and community members have different approaches to how these institutions have functioned. The Chairman of the Coordination Council of Albanian Associations in Austria, Abdullah Abdullahu, says that the support of the two countries has been more formal. “The Government of Pristina has made efforts and supported the activities of various diaspora associations, but this remains insufficient, as the diaspora needs factoring.” (Abdullahu, 2020) According to him, Kosovo is more engaged with financial support, while the activity of Albanian institutions stand more on propaganda and formal level, such as Diaspora Summits organized in 2016 and 2019. The same position is shared by the President of the League of Albanian teachers in Italy, Arjana Kosova, who states that “The Government of Kosovo has shown a greater willingness to financially support activities in the diaspora and the teaching of the Albanian language and culture.” (Kosova, 2020) According to her, the Albanian government has been satisfied only with the invitations it sends to the representatives of the diaspora for rare activities that are organized in Tirana, while Kosovo has provided financial support for the development of some activities in different countries where the Albanian diaspora lives. The President of the Albanian Foundation and School “Alba Life” in USA, awarded as the “Ambassador of the Nation”, Qemal Zylo, says that “the government of

Kosovo is interested in education issues through the engagement of consular representations and direct connections, while that of Albania has not shown special interest in the problems of education in the diaspora. (Zylo, 2020)

Although there have been a number of efforts by Albania and Kosovo in this regard, the success turns out not to be at the intended levels. This approach of the leaders of Albanian associations in the diaspora is also supported by the data collected with the respondents within this study.

Table 1 Which of the origin countries has done the most for the Albanian diaspora?

Which of the origin countries has done the most for the Albanian diaspora?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Albania	91	36.5	36.5	36.5
	Kosovo	158	63.5	63.5	100.0
	Total	249	100.0	100.0	

Despite the better institutional organization of Albania, as noted in the Table 1, most members of the diaspora appreciate Kosovo's commitment to Albanian communities around the world. About 64 percent of respondents think that Kosovo has been more active towards the Albanian diaspora.

When they were asked "Are you aware of the policies and institutions created in Albania and Kosovo for the diaspora?", about 64 percent said they were aware of the institutions set up in Albania and Kosovo, while 36 percent was not aware of state institutions in these two countries. Collected data make us better understand the opinion of the leaders of Albanian diaspora associations that Albania's engagement has been more in the propaganda and formal plane, compared to Kosovo's engagement.

3.2. Dimensions of public diplomacy of Albania and Kosovo through the diaspora

Effective public diplomacy is a dual process that requires listening and communication. In order to exert their influence on foreign audiences, state and non-state actors need to understand the needs, the culture of the people of other countries and then create space to create common causes and build short-term and long-term relationships.

Communities and individuals in the diaspora have become important actors of communication between the home and the host country. In the case of the Albanian diaspora, groups and their representatives have been active in establishing links between the country of origin and the host country, lobbying for national interests. "Such a commitment, the Albanian diaspora has had in the struggle for independence, first of Albania and then of Kosovo". (Strategjia Kombëtare e Diasporës dhe Migracionit 2018 - 2024, 2018, p. 19) In this regard, various individuals and groups in the Albanian diaspora have been important factors in the strategic processes followed by the home countries and the promotion of national cultural values across borders. The commitment of the national diaspora joins the efforts of Kosovo and Albania to turn it into an important tool for the development of public diplomacy.

To complete the objectives of public diplomacy, Mark Leonard, like many other scholars, states that regardless of the political, military, economic, social, or cultural sphere, there are three main dimensions that characterize the activity of this type of diplomacy:

The first dimension includes *daily communication* (news management) and reacting to current developments. This dimension is related to day-to-day communication activities on certain topics. News management takes place within hours and days, while the impact on the image through the news for the country can have its impact after a few weeks or months after the message has penetrated the agenda of the media and international debates.

The second dimension relates to *strategic communication* which includes a set of activities similar to political campaigns for creating some strategic messages and planning a series of activities during a year or more to reinforce them. “The campaign plans symbolic events and communications over the course of a year to brand the central themes, or to advance a particular government policy.” (Nye, 2004, p. 108)

The third dimension is the development of *long-term relationships* with the populations of the host countries to influence the recognition of the values of the home country. This includes relationships not only with country governments, but also with groups and individuals through exchanges, training, seminars, conferences, building real and virtual connections, and providing access to participate in media channels. Meanwhile, other scholars include cultural diplomacy as one of the most important elements for establishing long-term relations in host countries.

Among the most comprehensive definitions of cultural diplomacy is that of scholar Milton Cummings, who states that “the concept of “cultural diplomacy,” refers to the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding.” (Cummings, 2009) The activities of cultural diplomacy appear to be closer to the new trends of the diplomatic process than to the previous activities of traditional diplomacy, where the message was one-way.

Compared to the theoretical definitions followed by various scholars in this field, such as Mark Leonard, Joseph Nye, etc., Albania and Kosovo seem to have an effort to include all three dimensions in national policies regarding the diaspora. The data and observations of the work of these ministries turn out to have been more successful in the third dimension, that of cultural diplomacy.

Regarding the first dimension defined by Leonard, that of *daily communication*, despite some efforts made by Albanian institutions in Albania and Kosovo, they have remained mainly in the value of routine posts on social networking sites, without finding space in the world media.

After the creation of the Minister of State for Diaspora (MSD) in 2017, the minister himself started a daily communication through his official website on two social networks, Facebook and Twitter. The website of MSD had about 12 thousand followers until April 3, 2020, a low number in relation to the followers of the websites of other ministers of the Albanian government. This site was characterized by an average of 3-4 daily posts. From two-week monitoring conducted between 3-16 February 2020, it results that the posts on the MSD website can be divided into three main categories: about 57 percent publications on the achievements successes of individuals and activities developed in diaspora from various associations, about 19 percent reports on the activities of the minister responsible for the diaspora, about 24 percent reports on the progress of the work of the institution and policies adopted by the government and planned activities. In the communication developed through

this site, it is noticed that there was no interactivity with the audience. The same messages were posted on the social network Twitter, where the same lack of interactivity and interest of followers is noticed through likes or shares. These accounts were created on October 25, 2017, and have been active until April 3, 2020.

The same way of communication has been followed and continues to be followed by the institutions under this ministry, such as the National Diaspora Agency, the Albanian Fund for Diaspora Development, etc., posting messages related to the nature of their work and the achievements of the Albanian communities in the diaspora. Recently, an online platform for informing the diaspora and everything that happens there has been opened, called “Gazeta Diaspora Shqiptare - diasporashqiptare.al.”.

Despite all efforts to meet the goals of this dimension, the impact has been only on achieving internal communication, with Albanian citizens within the country and those in the diaspora, without managing to attract the attention of the media and various international institutions in almost any case.

On the other hand, there have been many cases when representatives of the diaspora, such as Ermonela Jaho, Inva Mula, Sajmir Pirgu, Ismail Kadare, Ylfete Fanaj, Alba Kokalari, Luan Krasniqi, Kosovare Asllani, etc., have managed to penetrate the media important to the world for the success they have achieved in their fields. Subsequently, the news was reflected on the websites of Albanian institutions.

On the other hand, depending on monitoring conducted in the same period with that of the Minister of State for Diaspora in Albania, the Ministry of Kosovo has focused its work in this regard mainly on disseminating announcements related to diaspora projects and promoting work, mostly institutional and ministerial meetings. In its digital communication, there is no news received from the associations or activities of certain individuals in the diaspora. Unlike MSD, it has been less active in the frequency of posting information and has created its own content such as reports on the development of activities and meetings with the Albanian community in the diaspora, information on planned projects, etc. The last post that was made on the Facebook page of this ministry until mid-January 2021 is on July 6, 2020, while the site itself is active and has about 21 thousand followers.

The second dimension that Leonard values, *strategic communication*, does not seem to have been on the agenda of diaspora institutions in both governments. In this regard, the only campaign that can be evaluated is that of the Ministry of Kosovo, entitled “Learn Albanian”. This campaign has served to inform compatriots about the importance of supplementary education and Albanian schools in the diaspora. The campaign lasted about two weeks in November 2019. At the end of this campaign, it was not possible to influence the policies of any country where the Albanian diaspora lives, to provide formal ways of education in the Albanian language.

In relation to such strategic campaigns, it seems that the representatives of the diaspora themselves have greater opportunities than the home countries to influence the policies of the host countries. The President of the League of Albanian Teachers in Italy, Arjana Kosova, says that what Albania and Kosovo cannot do because they are not members of the European Union can be done by members of the diaspora who have European citizenship. As citizens of these

countries, they can turn to governments to improve policies towards incoming communities. (Kosova, 2020)

Albania and Kosovo have oriented their work regarding the diaspora mainly through two main channels. The first is the connection with members of the well-integrated diaspora in the host communities and the second is the support and organization of activities of individuals, groups and associations / organizations of cultural, educational, socio-economic character, etc. These forms are provided in the strategic documents of both Albania and Kosovo.

Specifically, during the Second Diaspora Summit in 2019, Albania 151 representatives of different professions who are integrated in the socio-cultural and political life of the host countries, with the award “Ambassadors of the Nation”. But support for them is not enough. The Albanian school Alba Life, in the USA, led by Qemal Zylo, turns out to have had a lack of support in its activity. “It was only the Kosovo government that donated some textbooks for learning the Albanian language over the years, while the Albanian government has responded to this need only during the last two years, with a limited number of textbooks.” (Zylo, 2020)

This approach of the two countries is also reflected in the opinion of the representatives of the diaspora, who appear aware of the importance that the policies of Albania and Kosovo attach to them. When respondents were asked, “Give your opinion: Albanian institutions consider members of the diaspora important” about 65 percent said “Agree strongly” and “Agree”, and only about 27 percent said “Disagree” and “Slightly Disagree”.

Despite official strategic documents, leaders of Albanian diaspora organizations are skeptical about their implementation. In this context, most of the initiatives are aimed at improving the image of the country of origin. (Bejtullahu, 2020) Even the representatives of the diaspora consider their commitment important for the realization of the foreign policies and public diplomacy of Albania and Kosovo.

Table 2 How much do you agree that the members of the diaspora have a role in the realization of the foreign policy and public diplomacy of the countries of origin?

		How much do you agree that the members of the diaspora have a role in the realization of the foreign policy and public diplomacy of the countries of origin?			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree Strongly	122	49.0	49.0	76.3
	Agree Moderately	68	27.3	27.3	27.3
	Disagree Slightly	21	8.4	8.4	84.7
	Disagree Strongly	5	2.0	2.0	86.7
	Undecided	33	13.3	13.3	100.0
Total		249	100.0	100.0	

The data in Table 2 show that 49 percent of respondents assess the diaspora as an important component of the policies of their home countries, namely Albania and Kosovo. The data are also supported by the researcher Hasan Saliu, who estimates that the diaspora plays the main role as an actor of public diplomacy, especially for countries like Albania and Kosovo, which have limited other resources. “For example, compared to other countries, these two countries do not have strong international media, they do not even have any audio-visual medium that broadcasts in English, as many other countries in the world have.” (Saliu, 2020).

The targeted model of Albania and Kosovo to support diaspora activities turns out not to be at the desired levels. “Rare are those organizations that have found support from the governments of Tirana and Pristina, especially when it comes to funding.” (Osmani, 2020) According to Osman Osmani, the president of the ProIntegra Association in Switzerland, unlike what the two states, Albanian and Kosovo, have done, Italy has supported its diaspora with multi-dimensional policies, turning it into one of the most active and successful communities in Switzerland. Under such conditions, activities on a voluntary basis may remain insufficient for the goals that the two Albanian states may have in involving the diaspora in promoting national identity and the country’s policies.

To the question “How much do you think the strategies followed by Albania and Kosovo for public diplomacy have been effective?”, about 74 percent of respondents, or 185 out of 249 people, said “Disagree Slightly” and “Disagree Strongly”. Only 6 percent of them, 14 out of 249, evaluate this strategy “Agree Moderately”, and others were “Undecided”. The data are also consistent with the position of the leaders of the Albanian diaspora organizations, mentioned above.

Although at low levels, even in this case Kosovo seems to have been more effective in providing direct support and oftentimes as a co-organizer of various activities organized by individuals, groups, or diaspora organizations. To the question “How much has the government institutions of Kosovo supported you in organizing your activities?”, 34 out of 249, or 13 percent of respondents, said “Somewhat”, 27 out of 249 or 11 percent of them said “A little”, 118 out of 249, or about 48% rated “Not at all” and others said “Undecided”. For the same question, Albania receives an even lower rating compared to Kosovo. Only 9 respondents or 4 percent of them rated Albania’s support as “Somewhat”, 30 out of 249, or about 12 percent say “A little”, 152 out of 249, or about 61% say “Not at all”, while others were undecided.

Within this dimension, the institutions of the governments of Albania and Kosovo have been somewhat active in terms of organizing activities and supporting diaspora associations and organizations, as for the most part, they remain activities with the participation of experts and state representatives.

The data collected from the above question, where they assess the support of Albania as lower than that of Kosovo, do not match the number of reported activities that have been carried out by Albanian institutions compared to those of Kosovo.

After the creation of state institutions for the diaspora in Albania, there have been efforts to organize activities for the Albanian community in the diaspora. According to the 2018, 2019 and 2020 annual reports of the National Diaspora Agency (NDA) in Albania, it is noticed that this institution with the support of MSD and thanks to cooperation agreements with several important educational and cultural institutions in Albania has organized several activities with the Albanian community and mainly with those of the old diaspora in Ukraine, Croatia, and Italy. These activities include those with the participation of state representatives and official meetings, as well as some exchanges of teachers, artists, and students. Meanwhile, similar activities have taken place from other institutions such as ADFD and DPC. One of the difficulties that affect the involvement of the diaspora in the activities of Albanian institutions in Albania is the fact that most of them are organized in Tirana. This way affects the low

participation of diaspora representatives, who generally participate at the level of leaders of organizations, excluding interested citizens and activists.

On the other hand, although Kosovo seems to have organized fewer activities within this period, which are not documented in the annual reports, it has paid more attention to cooperation with diaspora groups and associations, becoming part of the activities of common, mainly in host countries. From the interviews conducted with the leaders of the diaspora associations, it results that Kosovo supports more activities with a direct impact on the members of the diaspora, such as language courses, development of knowledge tests on the Albanian language and culture, cultural and artistic activities with participation. Wide, etc. For several years, Kosovo has organized “Days of the Diaspora” and “Days of the Arbëresh”, which bring emigrants closer to their country of origin. Almost all leaders of Albanian diaspora associations interviewed in the framework of this study appreciate Albania’s commitment more on a formal level than tangible by members, groups, and organizations of the diaspora.

Table 3 Have you been informed about the activities organized by state institutions for the diaspora?

		Have you been informed about the activities organized by state institutions for the diaspora?			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	101	40.6	40.6	40.6
	Yes	148	59.4	59.4	100.0
	Total	249	100.0	100.0	

When they were asked, “Were you informed about the activities organized by state institutions for the diaspora?”, however, (Table 3) about 41 percent of respondents said they were not aware. This shows that Albanian institutions have not managed to be successful in communicating with members of the diaspora and leaders of organizations or associations, which could be used as bridges of communication with their members.

The President of the Alba Life Foundation in the USA, Qemal Zylo says that the communication of Albanian institutions is enough by sending several emails or invitations made for online meetings, which show more the achievements and work of institutions than the voice and experience of members and associations of Albanian communities in the diaspora. (Zylo, 2020) While Arjana Kosova evaluates the communication of Kosovo institutions as simpler and more effective, compared to that of Albanian institutions. (Kosova, 2020)

Based on the data collected above, it results that the inclusion of the two states in the third dimension has not given the intended effects on public diplomacy.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data treated in this study, we can say that the increase in international emigration has increased the need for state actors to see the diaspora as a strategic partner to develop their country's soft policies and influence in foreign public opinion.

Compared to the practices of other countries, Albania and Kosovo have been late in developing policies to support and cooperate with their diaspora populations. In the case of

Kosovo, this can be justified by the fact that it is a young state, only a few years old. Albania, meanwhile, could have developed these strategies much earlier.

According to the data collected through surveys with members of the diaspora and qualitative interviews conducted with leaders of Albanian associations in different countries, it appears that Kosovo's policies, although more disorganized from the formal aspect, where the non-establishment of institutions for the diaspora stands out, have been more successful than those of the Albanian government, which now appears to be more formally consolidated. The data show that Kosovo is more engaged with financial support, while the activity of Albanian institutions is more on propaganda and formal level.

National cultural elements have been the most important point for building relations with the diaspora and developing diplomacy and policies for both countries. After analysis and monitoring of the institutional activities of Albania and Kosovo, it turns out that they have paid more attention to the dimension of building long-term relations or cultural diplomacy by developing activities of this nature. To be appreciated remains the fact that despite the greater number of activities organized by Albanian institutions, the work of Kosovo institutions is evaluated more, more comprehensive and more concrete by members of the diaspora and leaders of Albanian organizations in these countries. Even at this point, the activity of Albanian institutions turns out to be more in the propaganda field, not giving the right effect to the diaspora. This approach of the Albanian institutions contradicts the theories of some scholars about public diplomacy, who make its clear separation from propaganda.

Despite efforts to develop continuous communication with members of the diaspora, the institutions of Albania and Kosovo have not achieved satisfactory levels of communication. The data show that the communication channels of both countries have been insufficient to send messages to the Albanian communities, which shows a lack of coordination between the two home countries and these communities.

Based on the evaluation of common policies and their implementation, it is noticed that there is a lack of coordination and cooperation between Albania and Kosovo on issues related to the diaspora. Although there are some cooperation agreements between the two governments, most of them have not been implemented.

The above analysis leads us to the conclusion that the diaspora is an important component for the development of public diplomacy of countries. In the case of the two countries, public diplomacy is developed more by the Albanian individuals and organizations themselves, who through various means not only try to preserve the elements of national identity but also engage in promoting the image of the mother countries. The Albanian Diaspora, since its past, has shown a high degree of self-organization, which beyond the level of success of the official policies of Albania and Kosovo, with its voluntary work has managed to integrate within the communities of the host countries, being organized at both individual and community level.

Suggestions

First, Albania and Kosovo need to develop a more effective plan for communication, cooperation, and inclusion of the diaspora in its activities.

Second, both countries need to build effective public diplomacy strategies that deliver soft power effects in the international arena as well, using the diaspora as actors.

Third, Albania and Kosovo need to include in their agenda and give more space to the experience of members of the diaspora.

Fourth, Albania and Kosovo should increase the level of cooperation between them as it is one of the rare cases in the world when we have a diaspora that has the support of two different countries with the same nationality.

Fifth, in their policies, Albania and Kosovo should evaluate the dialogue with the diaspora as a more effective way than simply providing information, which remains mainly in the propaganda, formal and one-way plane, without having the opportunity to be recognized with the reaction of the other party and the building of relations with it, in this case with the diaspora.

Bibliography

- Abdullahu, A. (2020, November 13). Albanian Diaspora. (R. Harxhi, Interviewer)
- ASK. (2019). *Vlerësim, Popullsia e Kosovës 2019*. Prishtina: Kosovo Agency of Statistics.
- Bejtullahu, S. (2020, December 16). Diaspora Shqiptare. (R. Harxhi, Interviewer)
- Brinkerhoff, J. M. (2012). Creating an Enabling Environment for Diasporas' Participation in Homeland Development. *International Migration*, 75-95.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2009.00542.x>
- Cohen, R. (2018). *Global diasporas; an introduction*. New York: Routledge.
- Cummings, M. C. (2009, June 26). Cultural Diplomacy and the United States Government. *Cultural Diplomacy Research Series*.
- Diaspora, M. o. (2013). *Strategjia për diasporën dhe Mërgatën 2013-2018*. Pristina.
- DPC. (2020, January 10). *Diaspora Publication Center*. Retrieved Janua 15, 2020, from <http://qbd.gov.al/%e2%80%8bharta-e-digjitalizuar-e-shkollave-shqipe-ne-diaspore/>
- INSTAT. (2020). *Diaspora në shifra 2020*. Tirana: INSTAT.
- Kalin, I. (2011). Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Turkey. *Perceptions, Journal of International Affairs*, 5-23. Retrieved from http://www.sam.gov.tr/pdf/perceptions/Volume-XVI/autumn-2011/Autumn_2011.pdf
- Kosova, A. (2020, October 21). Albanian Diaspora. (R. Harxhi, Interviewer)
- Kosta, B. (2004, August 1). *Migration Policy Institute*. Retrieved January 13 , 2021, from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org>: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/albania-looking-beyond-borders/>
- Krasniqi, L. (2018, November 8). Retrieved January 20, 2021, from Kallxo.com: <https://kallxo.com/gjate/mendime/vota-e-diaspores-si-infuzion-i-demokracise/>
- Leonard, M. (2009, 11 9). Foreign Policy. *Diplomacy by Other Means*. Retrieved 01 15, 2021, from Foreign Policy: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/11/09/diplomacy-by-other-means/>
- MDSI. (2019). *Mëso Shqip; Mësim plotësues në diasporë*. Prishtina: Ministria e Diasporës dhe Investimeve Strategjike.
- Melissen, J. (2005). The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice. In J. Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy Soft Power in International Relations* (pp. 3-27). New York: Palgrave.

- Muharremi, B. (2020, September 21). Diaspora Shqiptare. (R. Harxhi, Interviewer)
- NAD. (2019). *Annual Report 2019*. Tirana: National Agency of Diaspora.
- Nye, J. S. (2004). *Soft Power The Means To Success In World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Osmani, O. (2020, November 14). Albanian Diaspora. (R. Harxhi, Interviewer)
- QBD. (2020). *Relacion i mbledhjes me përfaqësuesit të shkollave shqipe në Kosovë MAj-Qershor 2020*. Tirana: Qendra e Botimeve për Diasporën. Retrieved from http://qbd.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/QBD_relacioni_mbledhjet_online.pdf
- Saliu, H. (2015). *Komunikimi në Diplomacinë Publike*. Prishtina: AAB College.
- Saliu, H. (2020, October 20). Albanian Diaspora. (R. Harxhi, Interviewer)
- Sharp, P. (2005). Revolutionary States, Outlaw Regimes and the Techniques of Public Diplomacy. In J. Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy Soft Power in International Relations* (pp. 106-123). New York: Palgrave.
- Strategjia Kombëtare e Diasporës dhe Migracionit 2018 - 2024. (2018). Tirana: Minister of State for Diaspora. Retrieved from <https://diaspora.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/STRATEGJIA-KOMBETARE-E-DIASPORES-2018-2024-DHE-PLANI-I-VEPRIMIT.pdf>
- Tuch, H. N. (1990). *Communicating with the World U.S. Public Diplomacy Overseas*. New York: St'Martin Press.
- Zylo, Q. (2020, November 18). Albanian Diaspora. (R. Harxhi, Interviewer)