

Turkey's growing interest in the African continent

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Abstract:

In the last decades major and regional powers became more and more involved in the economy of the African continent, where there is a so called “second scramble” for Africa’s raw materials. This is a major example of multiple economic and other possibilities Africa provides. Dozens of books and studies tell about the African presence of great powers such as the USA, China, Russia, UK or France. We know less about the regional powers that become increasingly important, such as Turkey, India, Japan, Brazil or Iran. Regional powers offer alternatives for African countries who want to cooperate with other states based on their genuine national interests. In this article I present Turkish-African relations because Turkey is a rising power in political, economic and other terms increasingly influencing the African continent. This fact became so obvious that the African Union recognized Turkey as its strategic partner since 2008. Turkey developed good relations with the North African countries because of its historic connections, but Ankara is also getting evermore involved in the economy of Sub-Saharan countries. This is done not only in the framework of inter-governmental cooperation but through Turkish Government-backed organizations – such as IHH and TIKA – and also by Turkish companies. This increased Turkish interest is greatly visible since there are more and more Turkish diplomatic missions in the continent. Turkey emphasises that Ankara also takes part in various humanitarian and reconstruction aid programs, mostly in Somalia, where Turkey is involved in the restoration of the country. The result of this is that Turkey has become an unavoidable actor not only in North Africa but also in East Africa. Furthermore, Turkey is engaged in cultural and educational activities, that is why many African students are studying in Turkish universities and multiple Turkish educational institutes are established and run in numerous African countries. I will specifically deal with the strengthening military, defence and security cooperation between Turkey and African countries.

Keywords:

Turkey; Africa;
economic cooperation;
commercial cooperation;
military cooperation;
cultural cooperation;
TUSKON; IHH;
Maarif Foundation;
humanitarian help;
educational programs.

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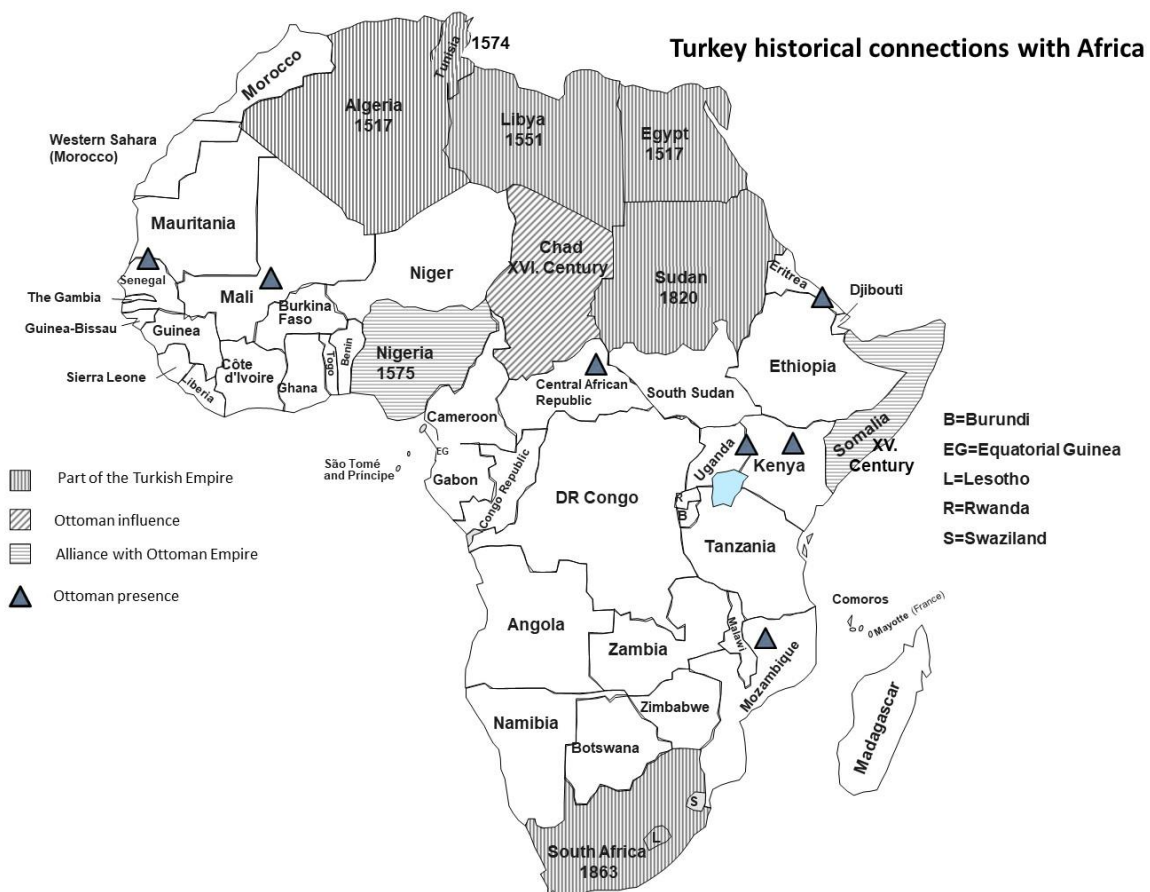
Historical relations between Turkey and the mainland

Historical relations between Turkey and Africa go back at least four centuries. In terms of the evolution of political relations, two geographical areas can be distinguished: on the one hand, North Africa, with its Muslim population, and on the other hand, the sub-Saharan territories. The first region belonged to the Turkish Empire for centuries, in a looser, sometimes tighter system of dependence, and occupies a particularly important place in the broader interpretation of the Middle East. In this respect, it is still important for Turkey to this day. Although there has not been such a close relationship with the sub-Saharan region, in the last two decades the countries here have become increasingly important to the Turkish leadership, with whom they have begun to build better economic, diplomatic, military and other relations (Donelli, 2018, p. 57). In terms of historical interactions, three eras can be distinguished. The past dating back to the Ottoman times, the period from 1923 to 1998, and the period thereafter.

From the 16th century onwards, control of the Muslim territories of North Africa came into the hands of the Ottomans, partially or entirely. Egypt and Algeria were occupied by the Turkish armies in 1517, Libya in 1551, and Tunisia became a province of the empire in 1574 after several changes of ownership. However, the Southern parts of Africa have never been as closely associated with Istanbul as the Maghreb region. Although today's Nigeria, Chad, Sudan, and Somalia have repeatedly become Ottoman-dependent, they have never actually become part of the empire, so the Ottoman presence was only indirectly perceptible in the region (Aybar, 2016). By the end of the 19th century, in parallel with the general decline of the power of the sultans, the dependence of North African territories had eased. However, Turkey continued to have significant influence in the eyes of African Muslims. As a consequence, the leaders of the Dervish uprising – that broke out in British-occupied Somalia – asked for and received support from Turkey to fight the British (Abdinor, 2018, p. 83).

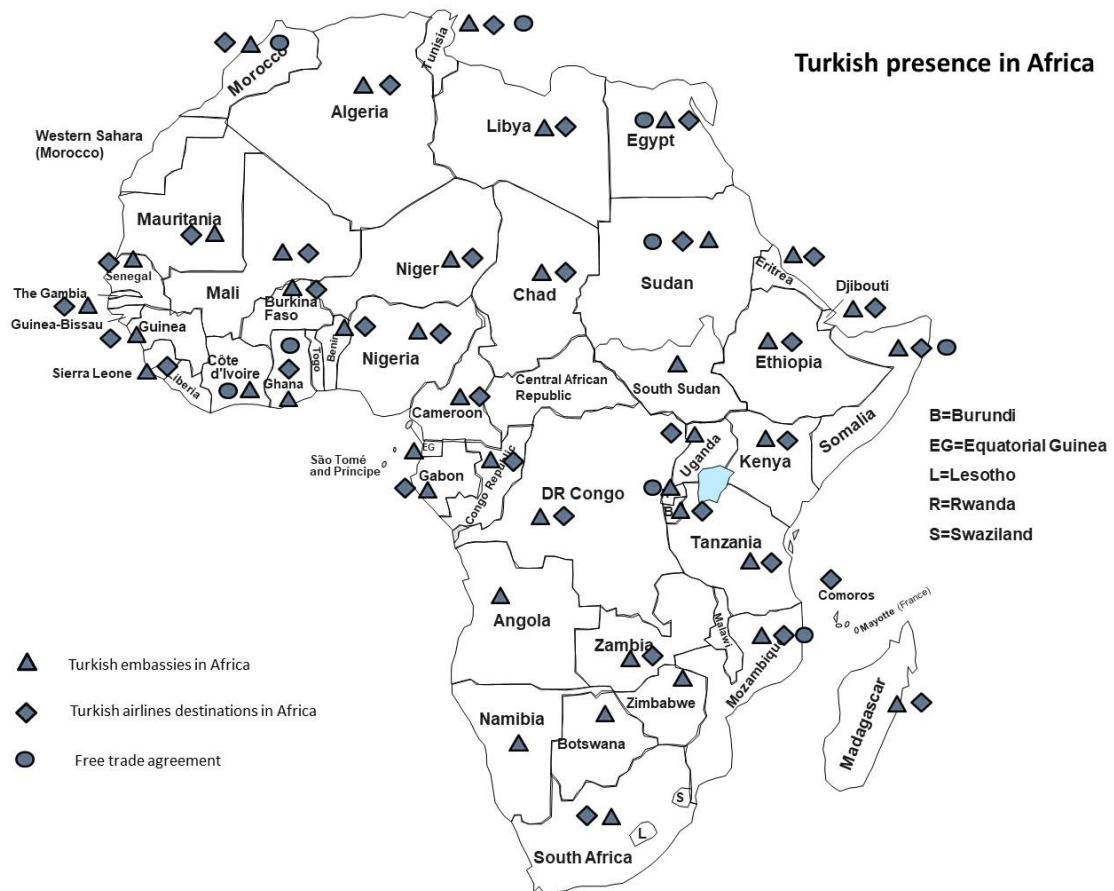
After 1923, the new Turkish Republic remained a distant observer of events in the African continent. After 1945, with the advent of the bipolar world order, the roles stabilized. With the end of their colonial status in the '60s and '70s, Turkey sought to build balanced diplomatic and political relations not only with North African but also with sub-Saharan states. While Turkey has recognized all African states that have become independent and has even actively contributed to the independence of Zimbabwe and Namibia, Turkey has tended to have well-functioning diplomatic and economic relations only with North African states. This policy did not change until 1990, when Turkey's place in world politics became precarious after the shakeup of its foreign policy balance, and its accession to the European Union was rejected in 1997, so that the Turkish leadership turned to Africa (Ozkan, 2016, p. 218). In the light of the new foreign policy objectives, an Africa Action Plan was launched in 1998 but its contents were put into practice only to a limited extent (Besenyő and Oláh, 2012, p. 137). However, the "Justice and Development Party," which came to power in 2002, succeeded in its implementation. They have strengthened their ties primarily with North African countries, but were soon open to Southern countries as well. This was particularly necessary because, after

the end of the bipolar world order, Turkey had established good relations primarily with Arab states, but this relationship with some countries (Egypt, Saudi Arabia) had deteriorated for some reasons and due to the events of the “Arab Spring,” markets had also shrunk. But Turkey has developed ties with sub-Saharan countries not only for economic reasons, but also for political benefits, as it generally needed the support of African countries voting in a bloc in the United Nations (Shinn, 2015, p. 5). This was evident when, with the support of largely African states in the United Nations Security Council, Turkey was elected as a temporary member for the period between 2009 and 2010 (Venkatachalam, 2019, p. 3). Turkey can count on the support of African states not only because of good diplomatic, economic, trade and humanitarian (aid) relations, but also because, unlike other great powers, it did not have colonies in the continent, at least not in the same way as most European countries did (Republic of Turkey, MFA, 2019). To further establish Turkish presence in Africa, the country also appears in Turkish official communications as an “Afro-Eurasian” state that has not just begun to explore Africa, but has been present for centuries in countries in the continent with which it has historical, religious, economic, etc. ties.



In 2003, under the leadership of Turkish Foreign Minister Ismael Cem, another economic strategy plan focusing on African countries was created, which the government successfully

implemented with the involvement of the civilian sector (Tepeciklioğlu, 2017, p. 4). In 2005, the government declared the “Year of Africa” and in the same year Turkey was granted observer status in the African Union, and in 2008 it became a strategic partner of the organization and established close relations with other regional African organizations (Habiyaemye and Oğuzlu, 2018, p. 314). In 2014, the Turkish president, who pursued a more active African policy than his predecessors, visited 20 African states and received 30 African heads of state (Sıradağ, 2018, p. 314). In addition, Turkey-organized Africa summits where not only politicians but also business and other leaders could meet. The first Turkish-African Economic Forum was held in Istanbul on 2-3 November 2016, where not only presentations and consultations took place, but also several cooperation agreements were concluded with African states (DEIK, 2016). Turkish foreign policy has made the importance of its "opening to the South" clear in other ways, as the number of Turkish embassies in the African continent almost quadrupled between 2008 and 2018 to 42 today, but the Turkish leadership wants to be represented in all 54 African states. However, not only the Turks increased their representation in Africa, but the Africans did the same in Turkey. While in 1997 only South Africa had an embassy in Ankara, today more than 32 African countries have foreign missions in the Turkish capital (Abdinor, 2019).





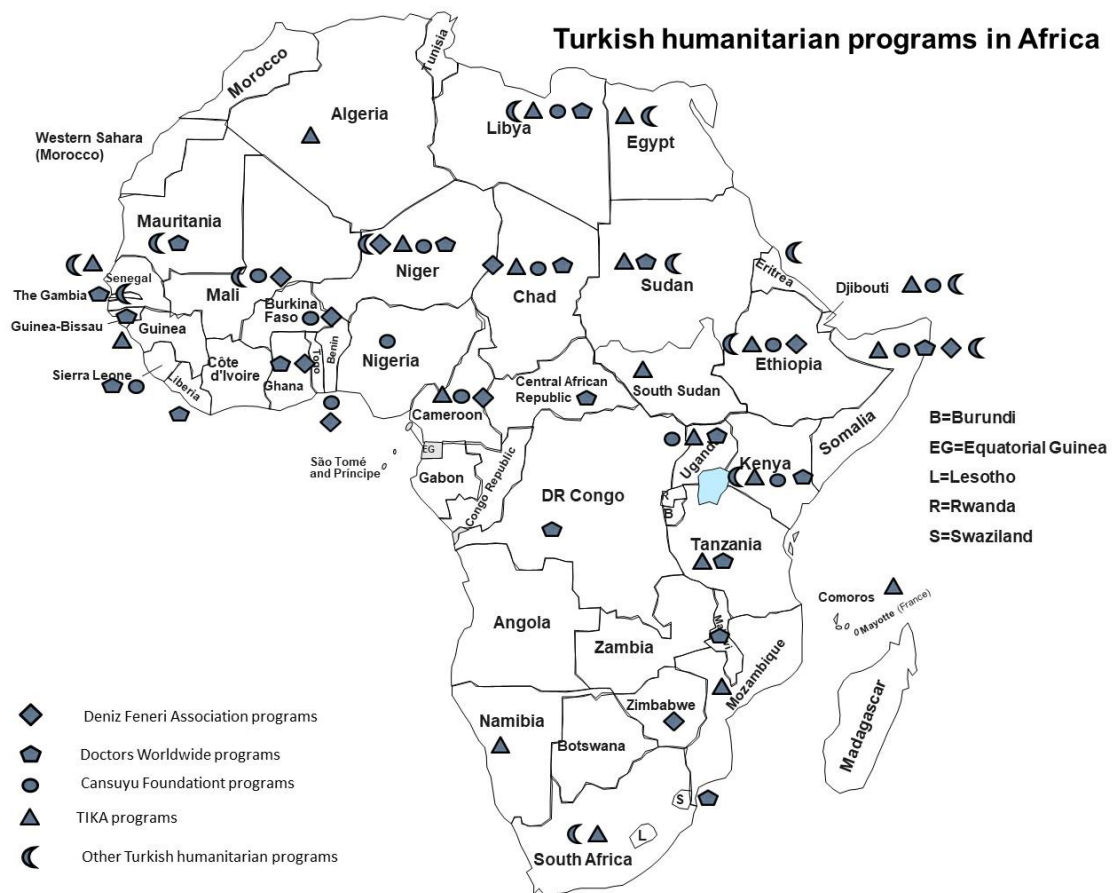
Humanitarian assistance and cultural cooperation

Humanitarian aid is perhaps the main and most effective political tool of the Turkish government. It is important to note that government work in Africa is also supported by the Turkish Agency for Cooperation and Coordination (Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı, TİKA), which was established by the government in 1992 to deal with new political and economic challenges affecting Turkish successor states in the post-Soviet period. The agency has set up regional headquarters in three countries, Ethiopia, Sudan and Senegal, as well as offices in 21 countries, providing assistance to African countries (TİKA Overseas Offices, 2020). In 2002, the organization spent only \$ 85 million on various aid programs and grants, which steadily increased to \$ 780 million by 2008. Of this amount, \$ 51.73 million - 6.6% of the total - was awarded to programs in the African continent (*Presentation by Dr. Rahman Nurdun*, 2020). In 2010, this amount increased further, and between 2011 and 2014, \$ 315 million in aid was already provided to African states (Tepeciklioglu, 2017, p. 16). Among the supported countries, Sudan stood out, where various programs worth \$ 13.21 million were implemented. Sudan is currently the third African country to receive aid from TİKA, with only Somalia and Niger ahead. TİKA's African programs focus on health, agriculture, providing safe drinking water, education, and humanitarian (aid) programs (Turkish Development Assistance Report, 2017). In addition to TİKA, there are other Turkish aid organizations in the African continent (Cansuyu Foundation, Doctors Worldwide, Deniz Feneri Association, etc.) which provided \$ 93.22 million in aid in 2013, mainly to Somalia, Niger, Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso and Egypt (Tepeciklioglu, 2017, p. 17).

Between 2005 and 2007, the Turkish Government provided \$ 22.1 million in annual aid to the African continent, which increased to \$ 45.5 million a year between 2008 and 2010. This represented 3.5% and then 5.7% of the Turkish aid. The rate of Turkish aid began to grow significantly after the Erdogan government came to power (Aybar, 2016). In 2013, Turkey already spent \$ 1.6 billion on aid, making it the third largest donor country in the world after the US and Great-Britain (Tepeciklioglu, 2017, p. 15). According to the World Humanitarian Assistance Report, the Turkish development (aid) programs reached \$ 3.3 billion in 2014. This represented 0.42% of Turkish gross national income (GNI). Of this, \$383.3 million was spent on aid to sub-Saharan countries. The Turkish Government is involved in aid to Africa not only through its own organizations, but also through other international organizations – FAO, WFP, International Red Crescent (Ozkan, 2016, p. 218). In addition to aid programs, the Turks also play a role in the accommodation and care of refugees. Turkey currently accommodates 3.9 million refugees, including many Africans, hence the country has the world's largest refugee population (International Federation of Red Cross, 2019).

Somalia and Sudan receive most of the aid to African countries. Somalia is very heavily dependent on Turkish aid, with various subsidies accounting for 21% of its annual budget. And the country's largest donor is none other than Turkey. When the country was hit by a huge famine in 2011, the international community was not really in a hurry to help the country. In contrast, the Turkish president, heading a 200-strong delegation, visited Mogadishu. There

were two important benefits of the arrival of the Turks: firstly, they showed the Turkish people the tragedy of the Somalis, with which they sympathized, then made donations to the Somalis showing a high level of support and Islamic solidarity. The Turkish embassy was reopened in Mogadishu, almost the only one, and the Turkish national airline company Turkish Airlines launched regular flights to the country, making it possible to reconnect it to the international community. In addition to aid provided by Turkish NGOs, Turkish companies have also been involved in the reconstruction of the country and have made/are making significant investments in almost all spheres (Abdinor, 2018, p. 90). In addition, a significant number of Somali students are being awarded scholarships in Turkish higher education institutions. According to Turkish data, between 2011 and 2017, \$ 1 billion in aid was provided to Somalia (Meservey, 2017), while in 2016, the balance of bilateral trade reached \$ 120 million, which has been growing steadily since then. The activities of Turkish NGOs are greatly aided by their cooperation with local organizations and the majority of their staff are Somalis (Tepecikliogu, 2017, p. 17).



Another country receiving much Turkish aid is Sudan, which received \$ 22 million in 2017 to care for the 770,000 people fleeing the civil war that had erupted in South Sudan. According to some, if Turkey's influence and presence in the two countries were to decrease or cease,



the lost Turkish aid and the revenue generated by Turkish companies would not be replaced by the international community. This, in turn, could lead to a further deterioration of the current, not easy security situation in both countries (Venkatachalam, 2019, p. 13).

The Turkish president makes no secret of the significant role Islam plays in aid, linking both the donor and recipient. That is why the other non-governmental organization providing assistance, İHH (İnsan Hak ve Hürriyetleri ve İnsani Yardım Vakfı), prioritises the development of cultural and educational relations in addition to charitable actions. Religion plays a prominent role in their activities limited to Africa. Meeting needs is not just about basic food and hygiene-related products. The distribution of the Quran and mosque constructions also fall into the category of necessary assistance. During Ramadan, for example, collection and relief operations have been organized for hungry people in Africa for years (Besenyó and Oláh, 2012, pp. 145-146). The ideological approach represented by the Turks has been welcomed by several African countries that are trying to counteract the Wahhabite influence that had originated from Saudi Arabia, which is gaining ground in the continent (Tol, 2019). In Libya, the Turks are also gaining ground, where TİKA has been involved not only in rebuilding the public administration and health sector, but also in increasing livestock. Turkey has made particularly high investments in the health sector. To date, Ankara has concluded agreements with 20 African states where the Turks have not only renovated but also established new health facilities. Between 2007 and 2010, Turkish physicians organized and implemented several health programs in African countries. One project was the “Africa Cataract Project” with the support of İHH in the African continent since 1996, in 13 African countries – Sudan, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Mali, Chad, Uganda, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Niger, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Somalia – 100000 people underwent free cataract surgeries (İHH, 2017). In addition, the organization also has several other projects in the countries of the continent, such as the construction of wells, food donation, etc (Shinn, 2015, p. 15). TİKA established a 200-bed Turkish-Sudanese hospital in Nyala, Sudan, in 2014, which was handed over to the Sudanese Government in 2019. The organization has built another 200-bed hospital in Mogadishu in Somalia, named after the Turkish Prime Minister, which opened in 2015. Turkey has also provided significant funding for the construction of an educational hospital in Juba, South Sudan, and Black Lion Hospitals in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

One of the biggest concerns in Africa is access to safe, clean drinking water, which is why Turkish organizations also play a major role in providing access to safe drinking water and improving environmental conditions. In the recent period, TİKA has established 303 wells in African countries; 80 in Nigeria, 27 in Ethiopia, 41 in Sudan, 78 in Burkina Faso, 30 in Mali, 30 in West Africa and 17 in Somalia (TİKA’s water projects, 2020). The humanitarian work of the Turks was also recognized by the United Nations, so in 2016 the first World Humanitarian Summit was held in Istanbul (Republic of Turkey, MFA, 2019). Turkish humanitarian engagement in the African continent has grown to such an extent that Turkey became the largest donor in 2017 (Sıradağ, 2018, p. 308).

Not everyone views the rise of the Turks in the continent positively. Not only former colonizing states and countries struggling for raw materials and markets in Africa, but also Turkey's regional rivals – such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iran – are watching with suspicion the success of the Turks when developing their relations with African countries through their humanitarian and education programs (Donelli, 2018, p. 60). As these countries seek to gain as much influence as possible in the continent, they repeatedly have conflicts of interest.

Turkey is also providing more and more scholarships to African students. Between 1991 and 2014, under the Türkiye Africa Scholarship Program, 4380 African students received scholarships from the Turkish Government and other non-governmental organizations, such as TÜBİTAK, the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey, IMKB (Borsa Istanbul) and TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation). In recent years, the number of scholarships has increased exponentially, so that between 2015 and 2016, Turkey already provided 1239 scholarships to African students. There are currently 5437 African students studying in Turkish colleges and universities, and 116 African teachers and researchers working in some way in Turkish higher education at the expense of the Turkish state.

The importance of Africa for Turkey can also be seen in the fact that three Turkish universities – the Gazi University, the Ankara University, and the Istanbul Ticaret University – offer masters' courses in African studies and seven more universities – the Kadir Has University, the Ankara University, the Izmir University of Economics, the Kırklareli University, the Erciyes University, the Istanbul Aydın University and the Gazi University – conduct research on Africa. In addition, an African Institute has been established within the renowned TASAM (Turkish Asian Center for Strategic Studies), and research on Africa is carried out at several other Turkish research sites, think-tanks – USAK, TURKSAM – carry out research of Africa (Tepeciklioglu, 2017, pp. 11-12). AFAM – the Association of Researchers on Africa – which brings together researchers on African topics, not only produces publications and analyses, but has also participated in the preparation and implementation of various professional projects at the request of the Turkish government (Abdinor, 2019). Several other education and postgraduate training programs are provided for African youth in Turkish educational institutions. For example, the Turkish Foreign Ministry has been training young African diplomats since 1992 (Republic of Turkey, MFA, 2019). In June 2016, the Turkish Parliament established the Marif Foundation, the activities of which are coordinated by the Turkish Ministry of Education and Foreign Affairs. The primary task of the foundation is to organize and supervise Turkish education abroad. This organization also took over Gulen schools abroad (Donelli, 2018, p. 75), so in June 2019, they had more than 30000 students in 270 schools in 35 countries (Anadolu Agency, 2019). Besides a significant number of foreign students, including Africans, also study at Turkish higher education institutions having their costs reimbursed. In 2012, their number was only 25000, which increased to 125000 in the 2017/2018 school year and to 148000 during the 2018/2019 school year. But there seems to be no slowing down, as in May 2018, President Erdogan announced plans to increase the number of foreign students studying at Turkish institutions to 350000 (ICEF Monitor, 2019).



However, not only do African students go to Turkey to study, but also to African institutions with which the Turkish government cooperates and generously sponsors their activities. In addition, the Turks are also interested in the establishment of African universities. In 2016, it was agreed to establish the Turkish University of Sudan, which would operate in the Sudanese capital and provide mainly technical and agricultural training (Sawahel, 2016). Many people wonder why the Turkish government has been so generously supporting African education. The answer is simple; the Turkish government has assessed that their investment in education will pay off in the long run, and that a layer of intellectual leaders sympathetic to Turkey may emerge in African countries, which could greatly facilitate Turkish-African cooperation.

The results of Turkish aid and education are known not only to the beneficiaries of international organizations or local projects, but also in almost all the countries of the continent. This is largely due to the fact that the government-assisted “Natural TV” channel, as the only Turkish TV channel in the continent, regularly reports these activities along with various other programs. The channel is available in more than 5 million households in 22 African countries (Bilgehan, 2019).

Economic ties

The African continent has not been a target of Turkish foreign policy for a long time, but that changed in 1998. Since then, Turkey has built ever-growing and intensifying economic/trade relations with African countries under the "Opening to Africa Policy," in which various Turkish humanitarian and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a significant role. As the activities of Turkish organizations are primarily in the economic interests of African states, successful projects continue in economic/trade cooperation. Economic cooperation is not only coordinated by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but it also supports companies that want to do business in the African continent in a number of ways. In 2003, the government put forward the “Strategy on the Development of Economic Relations”, which clearly defined the direction of Turkish economic activity in Africa. It has already become clear that the Turks want to strengthen the development of not only multilateral but also bilateral economic/trade relations. Ankara wants to cooperate not only with states but also with the civil and economic sector of partners (Tepeciklioglu, 2017, p. 5). Shortly afterwards, Turkey officially declared 2005 the Year of Africa and gained observer status in the African Union. In 2008, Turkey already appeared as a strategic partner in the official communication of the African Union. This is probably closely related to the fact that the Anatolian state has become an associate member of the African Development Bank and the African Development Foundation (UNCTAD, 2010). The Turks have established good cooperation not only with the African Union, but also with several other African regional organizations too. In addition, efforts were made to cooperate with as many African countries as possible and to promote the conclusions of various bilateral agreements.

Turkey's economic growth in Africa is greatly facilitated by the fact that, unlike other countries that want to procure or control raw materials that are important to them, the Turks are primarily looking for a market for Turkish products and investment opportunities for Turkish companies. In most of the cases this is a win-win policy for all parties, both Turkish and African. Probably due to this, not only Turkish state-owned companies but also civil society organizations support the Turkish Africa policy through their activities. This is also evident taking into consideration the level of investment made by Turkish companies. In 2007, 350 Turkish companies made \$ 400 million investment in African countries, reaching \$ 5 billion in 2014 and \$ 6.2 billion in 2016 thanks to aid provided by the state. The development is clear, not only in terms of the level of investment, but also in the number of Turkish companies engaged. While there was only one Turkish company in Ethiopia in 2003, in 2014 there were already more than 300 companies (Tepecikliogu, 2017, p. 19). Turkish companies are mainly successful in the construction industry, in various infrastructure investments, so much so that the most popular investment opportunity for Turkish construction companies after the Gulf states is offered by the countries of the African continent. For example, by 2010, 115 Turkish construction companies had earned \$ 26.9 billion in projects in Libya, Algeria and Morocco. Recently, Turkish companies have also made significant investments in several sub-Saharan states.

By the end of 2018, Turkey had concluded bilateral economic cooperation agreements with 38 African states. It is clear that these agreements are working, as the volume of Turkish-African trade was at \$ 3 billion in 2000 (Ozkan and Orakci, 2015, p. 345), then \$ 5.4 billion in 2003, \$ 17.5 billion in 2015 and increased to \$ 18.9 billion in 2017 (Abdinor, 2019). During this period, Turkish companies participated in 1150 projects worth \$ 55 billion (Akin, 2018). The Turkish government plans to reach \$ 50 billion in trade with African countries by 2023 (Ozkan, 2016, p. 223). Although this represents a huge increase, the countries of the African continent are still not among Turkey's most important trading partners, as evidenced by the fact that in 2015, Turkish exports accounted for just 8.6% (\$ 12.4 billion) of sales to African countries. At the same time, goods purchased from African countries accounted for 2.5% (\$ 5 billion) of Turkish imports (Tepecikliogu, 2017, p. 25).

Turkey mainly exports processed food, iron, steel, construction materials, nuclear reactors, machinery, vehicles, electronics and clothing to African countries, and imports mainly oil, various agricultural products, raw materials, minerals and gold (World Trade Organization, 2018). Interestingly, unlike the BRIC states, Turkey is less present in the energy and mining sectors of Africa. Although Ankara needs imports in the energy sector, it imports only small amounts of crude oil and natural gas from Algeria and Nigeria, and Genel Energy PLC has acquired the right to extract potential oil fields in Somalia (Balthasar, 2014). It has also concluded bilateral agreements with Djibouti, Cameroon, Niger, Sudan, Angola, the Gambia, Rwanda and Kenya. However, these agreements are not about energy trade, but the development of energy sectors, in which Turkish companies, such as Hakan Mining, Karadeniz Energy Group, Aksa Energy, play a significant role. Economic cooperation is also facilitated by



the fact that Turkish Airlines now operates 52 flights in 35 African countries (Abdinor, 2019). Turkey's progress is also well illustrated by the fact that in 2008 it was among the 20 most important trading partners in the African continent, and in 2011 it was among the 5 countries that made most investments in the continent (Tepeciklioglu, 2017, p. 21). Although Turkey is trying to establish fruitful economic relations with as many African states as possible, its most serious trading partners are primarily North African states and, to a lesser extent, sub-Saharan states (Aybar, 2016).

Although Somalia is not one of Turkey's most important trading partners, it is a priority over them in many respects. It has received most Turkish aid in recent years (Ozkan, 2016, p. 224), and is seen by the Turkish leadership as a “gateway to Africa” and an important geostrategic location. The Turkish leadership has been working closely with the country since 2011, governed by a detailed long-term policy that sees the country not as a separate actor but as an important player and potential shaper in the East African region. Turkey has not only provided aid to the millions of Somalis in need, but has been actively involved in facilitating the signing of various peace agreements, providing some measure of political stability (Antonopoulos et al, 2017, p. 6). Turkey then began to build economic/trade relations and joined the reconstruction of the country, with Turkish companies employing mainly Somali workers. For example, the Turkish company called Albayrak has rebuilt and operates Mogadishu International Airport, and the creation of another airport has been offered for the Somali government. A Turkish company also operates Mogadishu’s largest seaport, which has been completely rebuilt and modernized. 55% of the revenue goes to the government, the remaining 45% goes to the company. Meanwhile, various humanitarian projects were constantly underway which also had a positive effect on the local economy. Turkey not only supports the activities of Turkish companies in Somalia, but also participated in the establishment of the Somalia-Turkey Business Forum, which held its first meeting on 7 April 2012, which has since been followed by several joint events. Since 2013, Turkish Airlines flights have been flying daily to Mogadishu, which also facilitates the development of economic relations, which is clearly visible. The volume of trade between Turkey and Somalia was \$ 516000 in 2001, \$ 6 million in 2010, increasing to \$ 42 million in 2011, and then reaching \$ 63 million in 2014 (Siradag, 2016, p. 100). Turkish exports were only \$ 3.5 million in 2009, reaching \$ 115 million by 2016 (Sazak and Woods, 2017, p. 172).

No matter how surprising it might be, another country, the Orthodox Christian dominated Ethiopia became an increasingly important business partner of Turkey, where in 2005 President Erdogan discussed possible forms of cooperation with the then African leadership (Aybar, 2016). In Ethiopia, Turkish companies are mainly involved in agricultural, railway construction and other projects. The development is also visible in the trade volume of the two countries, which reached \$ 27 million in 2000 (Osmond, 2016, p. 250), \$ 40 million in 2003, \$ 116 million in 2006, \$ 442 million in 2012 and then reached \$ 4 billion in 2016 (Donelli, 2018, p. 4). By the end of 2017, the value of Turkish investments in the country had reached \$ 2.5 billion (Abdinor, 2019). The Turks work mainly in the textile, construction and agricultural

industries and employ a significant number of locals, among whom there are more and more people who have obtained their qualifications in various Turkish educational institutions (Osmond, 2016, p. 255). Turkish companies have also grown significantly in Nigeria (Chigozie and Mesut, 2014, p. 224), Ghana and Sudan (Shinn, 2015, pp. 11-12).

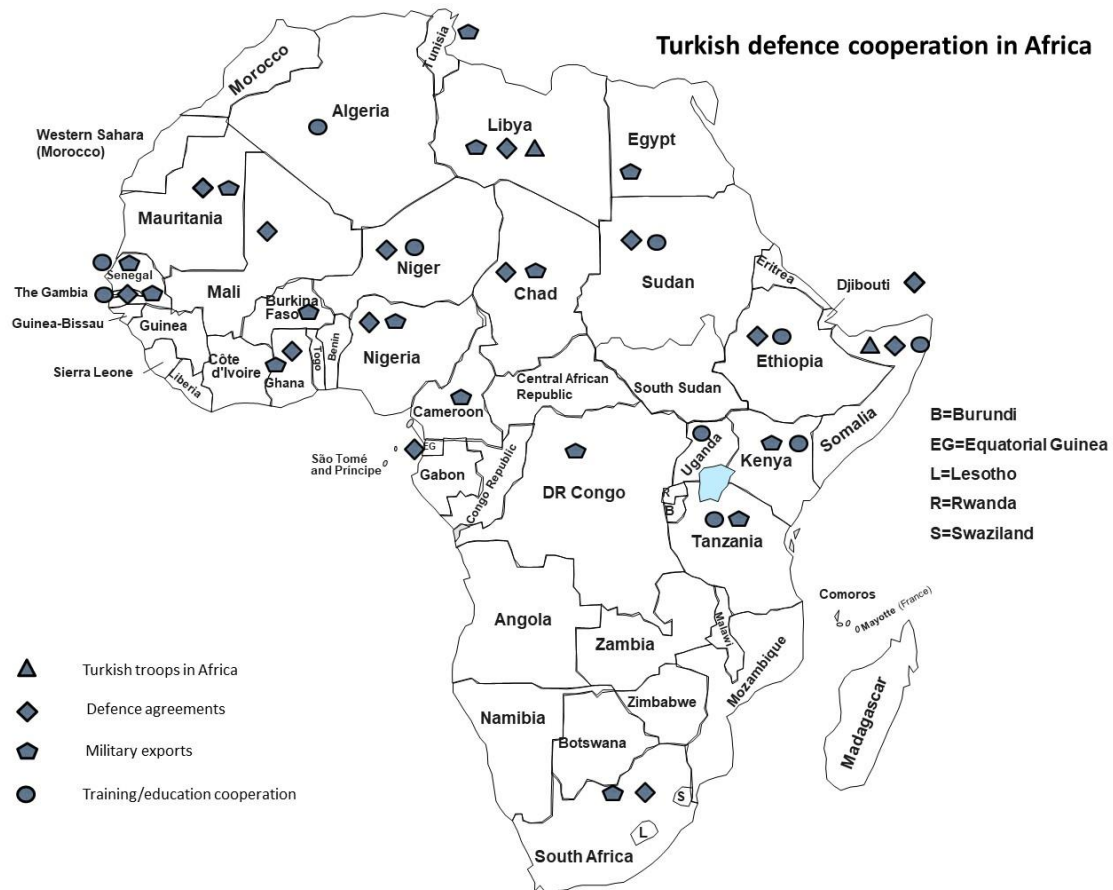
As mentioned earlier, several countries that have taken positions in the African continent see the Turks as rivals, who are gaining more and more economic opportunities, and fear losing the positions they have gained so far. The fact that this fear is real is also evident from the achievements of Turkish construction companies, since they have recently got more contracts in Ethiopia and Rwanda than China, which had previously been the only country dominating infrastructure projects (Sano, 2018). Moreover, in Tanzania, together with the Portuguese, the Turks took over a major railway construction project from the Chinese (Akwei, 2018). There was also close competition between Turkish and Chinese companies in the textile industry in Ethiopia (Shinn, 2015, p. 12). Interestingly, the French are not jealous of Turkish positions and do not see them as rivals, but rather as a kind of ally against China, which is increasingly pushing them out of Africa (Chigozie and Mesut, 2014, p. 229).

Military assistance, hard diplomacy

While Turkey's humanitarian, cultural and economic presence has been largely welcomed in the world, its geopolitical activities and the strengthening of its military presence in Africa have raised several suspicions and concerns. When several Arab countries imposed a blockade on Qatar in June 2017, Turkey did not join them and, in fact, established closer cooperation with the secluded country than before, which neither Saudi Arabia, nor Egypt or the Gulf states accepted. Incidentally, Turkey has previously been considered a rival to the Gulf countries, which have a significant interest in the countries of the Horn of Africa, for whom the Turkish military presence in Somalia poses a high risk (Van den Berg and Meester, 2019).

The military industry, which is a top priority for the Turkish government, is also increasingly exploring African markets, providing new, untapped opportunities and secure revenues for Turkish military products. Although the Turks previously procured a significant portion of their military equipment from abroad, they have now become self-sufficient in more and more areas, producing devices and even newer, more advanced weapons and also joined the International Club of Arms Exporters (Stratfor, 2017). The Turks exported \$ 1.7 billion worth of military products abroad in 2017. This amount increased by a further 17% in 2018 and exceeded \$ 2 billion (Kirikcioglu, 2019). With this, the Turks became the 14th largest arms exporter in the world (Wezeman et al, 2019). The success of Turkish military companies seems to be guaranteed in 2019 as well, as exports of Turkish military equipment increased by more than 64% compared to the same period of the previous year. Although the Turks are not among the major arms exporters in the African continent, their presence there is important and the number of their deals is growing slowly but surely. In 2016, another \$ 63.79 million worth of military equipment was exported to the countries of the continent, while in 2018, it

was already worth \$ 84.35 million. The Turks mainly sell electronic and technical equipment and armored transport vehicles, ships for the African continent. The following states are the main recipients/purchasers: South Africa, Tunisia, Ghana, Nigeria, Chad, Libya, Egypt, Burkina Faso, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cameroon and Senegal (Sünneci, 2019). In September 2012, the Turks concluded a separate defense industry agreement with South Africa, under which the two countries bought each other's military products and even agreed on joint development (Kaya and Warner, 2013, p. 6). The African presence is so important for Turkish military companies that the 1st Turkey-Africa Defense, Security and Space Forum was organized on 7-9 November 2018, which became so successful that it was organized for the second time between 6 and 8 November 2019. In early 2019, Ankara agreed with Tanzania to buy Turkish weapons for its army (Bakeer, 2019). There are several Turkish military companies present in the area, the best known of which are Otokar (Otokar, 2019), Nurol Makina Sanayi (Sünneci, 2019), Aselsan and Turkish Aerospace Industries (Langan, 2016, p. 11).



The Turkish government has concluded military cooperation agreements with more than 25 countries in recent years, including Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, Senegal, Somalia and Sudan (Siradağ, 2018, p. 316), of which once again Somalia has the closest cooperation. The Turks first sent warships only to the American-led anti-piracy operation Combined Force 151

(Melvin, 2019). Later on, the Turkish leadership pledged humanitarian and military assistance to the country in the Horn of Africa at the UN-Somalia Summit in Istanbul in May 2010 to restore integrity, for the establishment and training of the Somali Army, Police and for the fight against terrorist organizations (Kaya and Warner, 2013, p. 6). The Turks have achieved this not only by providing financial and financial assistance for the reconstruction of the Somali Army, but also opening a \$ 50 million training center in Mogadishu on 30 September 2017, where the Turkish Task Force Command stations a 300-strong Turkish contingent (Rossiter and Cannon, 2019, p. 170), whose main task is to train Somali officers, non-commissioned officers known as the "Somali Eagles" and other Somali African soldiers (Ozer, 2018). 1 500 Somali soldiers are trained annually at the training base, but at least 10 000 Somali soldiers are planned to be trained here on a yearly basis (Melvin, 2019).

In the long run, this means that the leaders and staff of the Somali Army would get their higher military qualifications in Turkey, and most officers and NCOs would receive their training in their home country, but in Turkish-operated Training Schools (Ozkan, 2018, p. 574) and it is likely that the weaponry and equipment of the Somali Army would also be provided by the Turkish military industry (Rossiter and Cannon, 2019, p. 173). A military cooperation agreement was concluded with Sudan as early as 2006 and the level of cooperation has been continuously evolving since then (Ozkan, 2010, p. 95). In December 2017, several agreements were concluded, as a result of which the Turks can establish and operate a dual-use port on the island of Suakin, and set up a Turkish training center in Sudan (Abdinor, 2019). However, the possible military presence of the Turks in Sudan could significantly change the security situation in the region, which several Arab countries fear. Although a change of government has taken place in Sudan in the meantime, there are several indications that the relationship between the two countries and the existing military cooperation are not in jeopardy (Tanchum, 2019). A military co-operation agreement was signed with the Gambia in 2007 and it can be considered a significant success that 7500 of the nearly 8000 strong Gambian Army received Turkish training, and the Gambians bought Turkish weapons and equipment or received aid (Sorwar, 2019). A military cooperation agreement was first concluded with Nigeria in 2011, under which the Nigerian Navy purchased ships from the Turks and provided reciprocal training and exercises (Kaya and Warner, 2013). This agreement was expanded and extended in 2018 for another five years (Defenceweb, 2018).

Apart from Somalia, the Turkish government is increasingly involved in the training of soldiers and police forces of other African countries, such as Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia (Saleh 2018). In addition to growing military cooperation, Turkey has also become actively involved in peacekeeping operations in Africa. The Turks first took part in the 1993 UN operation in Somalia led by a Turkish general, Lieutenant General Çevik Bir, followed by further operations from 2005, UNAMSIL, MONUC, UNMIL, UNOCI, ONUB, UNMIS and MINURCAT. Currently, there are five UN missions in Africa where Turkish soldiers and police serve; MONUSCO, MINUSMA, MINUSCA, UNAMID, UNMISS. The Turks sent troops not only to the UN but also to NATO and EU peace operations, such as Libya (Republic of Turkey, Ministry



of Foreign Affairs, 2019) to the Central African Republic and Mali (Siradağ, 2018, pp. 315-317) and provided significant support to the AU peacekeeping operation in Somalia (Sazak and Woods, 2017, p. 179). In addition to participating in peacekeeping operations, Turkish troops also took part in several military exercises in the continent to practice cooperation. For example, between March and June 2014, three warships, a logistics ship and 781 people - the Barbaros Turkish Naval Task Force - took part in a joint military exercise in the Gulf of Guinea. During the exercise, Turkish warships tested several new weapons, including “Sea Sparrow” missiles. Furthermore, a joint military exercise was organized with units of the Sudanese Navy in 2015 (Shinn, 2015, p. 8). In 2018, in addition to Turkey and several African countries, Somali naval units also took part in the “Cutlass Express 2018” exercise (Africa Defence Forum, 2019).

Some countries, jealous of Turkey's growing role in Africa, say the Turks have implemented a number of humanitarian programs that may even have military implications in the future. These were mainly projects that developed the infrastructure of some African countries. Turkish companies have been involved in the construction and modernization of airports in several locations, such as Addis Ababa, Khartoum, Nairobi, Johannesburg or Lagos. Turkish companies have also taken part in the development of seaports in Mombasa/Kenya (Kaya and Warner, 2013, p. 6). Turkish rivals have also voiced concerns about the growing presence of the Turkish military industry, as they see a growing risk of large quantities of Turkish weapons falling into the hands of separatist or terrorist groups, with unforeseeable consequences (İkiz and Eriş, 2018, p. 185). The Arab states fearing the growing presence of the Turks did not just articulate their objections. To counterbalance the presence of the Turks, they had first begun to build their own bases, which they have been developing with great enthusiasm ever since. Saudi Arabia has established a naval base in Djibouti (Brewster, 2018), while its ally, the United Arab Emirates has reached an agreement with Eritrea, where it has been given the port of Assab for 30 years, from which it has built a modern military and civilian naval port. In addition, the port of Berbera was acquired from Somaliland, which rivals Somalia, for a period of 30 years (Mello and Knights, 2016).

Conclusion

In the recent period, the African continent has become more and more valuable, where besides former new players have also appeared, such as Turkey, Brazil, Iran, South Korea or even Japan. Turkey's emergence is considered new because, although historically embedded in the North African region, it was only marginally present in sub-Saharan Africa. During the Cold War, Africa was not important for Turkish diplomacy. The continent regained its importance only in the late 1990s, after the Turkish leadership, which had previously positioned itself within the boundaries of the Western Alliance, sought to find its original roots and once again define itself as an independent great power. This has been successfully implemented and the Turkish foreign policy has been diversified by the current AKP, in which Africa has been given a much greater role again. Turkey's more active presence on the African

continent is a clear signal that it defines itself as a key regional player and a resurgent great power and that Ankara is shaping its policy accordingly. This has also been recognized by the African Union and other regional African organizations, which see Turkey as a strategic partner with an increasingly “visible” and growing influence on the African continent, following a non-Western and non-Chinese approach in Ankara’s Africa policy.

Although the continent is important for the Turks as a market, and as a source of raw materials for the country. Thus it is also a vulnerability that Ankara can reduce traditional dependence on European markets. African raw materials and energy sources are valuable resources for the rapidly expanding Turkish economy, allowing further enhancement of trade. Nevertheless, the economic policy of the Turks in Africa differs from that of other great powers, as they are not primarily interested in obtaining the raw materials they need, but in developing bilateral trade relations, which is also beneficial for African states. Despite significantly developing economic and trade relations, the Turks do not gain influence primarily through economic means, but through their humanitarian, educational and cultural programs in response to issues considered important for local communities. For example, Turkish relief efforts have contributed significantly to the reconstruction of Somalia, which has been seen as a failed state and abandoned by the international community. This makes Turkey an indispensable player in the region and ever more visible in Africa. In addition, the education system created by the Turks and operated in Africa offers an alternative for Africans who are unable to prevail in the domestic education system and can later continue their studies at Turkish universities on a scholarship basis.

The Turkish security policy and defense economy are also gaining better opportunities in the continent, where they are training more and more military-police forces. These countries increasingly purchase Turkish weapons, since they are not worse than similar products of Western, Russian or Chinese military industrial companies’ products.

Although there has been some stagnation in Turkish-African relations in the recent past, Turkish gains have not stopped. Furthermore, Turkish influence is growing in the East African region, which has attracted the attention of several African states, leading to possible conflicts between Turkey and these states.

Conflict of interest

The author hereby declares that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

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