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TURKIYE AS AN EMERGING POWER IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

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Abstract: While the whole African continent is at the headline politics of global and regional powers, the Eastern Africa, especially the Horn, has today been in the priority of African policies of countries. This is mainly due to the fact that recent economic, political and security developments in the Horn of Africa have turned the region especially the coastline, giving on to the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the Indian Ocean, into one of the world's most important geostrategic locations. This transformation of the Horn of Africa to a hub of security and economic activities pushes global and regional powers to focus more on this region. Among emerging countries in the region, Turkiye can also be cited with its recent policies towards Africa. Today, Turkiye attaches great importance to the Horn African countries in terms of political, security, humanitarian, development and even military aspects. Considering all of these, this paper will cover the interest, challenges and aspirations of Turkish engagement in the Horn of Africa, under the Government of Justice and Development Party from 2002 to our days and tries to determine why Horn of Africa has a particular place in Turkiye's African policy. It aims to determine how the « Turkish model » that occurred from the Turkish engagement in Somalia in 2011 has an impact on defining and structuring Turkiye's approach towards other countries in the region. Case study methodology, which provides the understanding and analysis of complex issues, will be applied from trying to answer to the questions "how" and "why" of the research. Case study helps to explain both the process and outcome of a situation through complete observation, reconstruction and analysis of the cases under investigation. Empirical data collection from various documents and books will be made.

Keywords: Horn of Africa; Turkiye; Somalia; Foreign policy.

Introduction

With the beginning of the 21st century, where world powers such as China and US compete with each other to maintain and increase their influence in Africa, we also observe other actors such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Israel as well as Turkiye which are also seeking to become key players in the continent. Turkiye, the seventeenth world economy in 2017, whose trade volume with Africa now reaches about 25 billion USD, is more determined than ever to be a key player on this continent where it is looking for new political allies and reliable economic partners.¹ The coming to power of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi-AKP*) in 2002 marked the start of a new chapter for Turkish-African relations. Indeed, the former Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ismail Cem, prepared an Opening Plan to Africa in 1998, but the economic crisis which hit the country in the same years did not allow the government to put the plan into action. Few years later, Turkiye could finally focus fully on developing its relations with the continent in a meaningful way by declaring the year 2005 “Year of Africa”; AKP’s government openly expressed its interest in focusing on the development of its relations with African countries at diplomatic, economic, cultural and religious levels.² While the Turkish state had only 12 embassies in 2002 across Africa, it has today a total of 44 diplomatic missions on the continent.³ It is in this context and through the principle of diplomatic reciproc-

¹ Turkiye İstatistik Kurumu. Dis Ticaret Verileri. <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/>

² Uchehara, K. (2008) «Continuity and Change in Turkish Foreign Policy toward Africa. » *Gazi Akademik Bakış*, 2/3.

³ Official website of the Republic of Turkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-afrika-iliskileri.tr.mfa>

ity that Ankara hosts today 38 embassies from African countries.⁴ Turkish Airlines (THY) serves nearly 60 African destinations across 30 countries of the continent.⁵ The total aid volume in Africa, generated by TİKA's humanitarian and technical assistance (Turkiye's governmental Agency), was around \$26.6 million in 2014; this figure doubled in 2017 to finally peak at \$102.64 million in 2019.⁶ This humanitarian aid is beneficial to the image and development of Turkiye's global influence on the continent, constituting an important factor of its soft power.

While the whole African continent is at the headline politics of global and regional powers, the Eastern Africa, especially the Horn, has today been in the priority of African policies of countries. This is mainly due to the fact that recent economic, political and security developments in the Horn of Africa have turned the region especially the coastline, giving on to the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the Indian Ocean, into one of the world's most important geostrategic locations. In addition, it overlooks Bab el Mandab, one of the most important straits that play a dominant role in global and regional trade, and which is adjacent to the Arabian Peninsula. The strategic importance of Bab el Mandab is crucial, indeed most of the commercial activities between the markets of Asia and the Middle East and Europe pass through this channel. More than 10% of maritime goods are transported through its waters each year, including the majority of Asian trade with Europe.⁷ The Horn of Africa which for the purpose of this study is defined as the region comprising Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Eritrea covers approximately two million square kilometers (with Ethiopia as the largest country, covering over half

⁴ Official website of the Republic of Turkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-afrika-iliskileri.tr.mfa#:~:text=2002%20y%C4%B1l%C4%B1nda%20sadece%2012%20B%C3%BCy%C3%BCkel%C3%A7ili%C4%9Fimiz,2022%20y%C4%B1l%C4%B1nda%2044'e%20y%C3%BCselmi%C5%9Ftir>.

⁵ Official website of the Republic of Turkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-afrika-iliskileri.tr.mfa>

⁶ TİKA Turkiye Kalkınma Raporları (2019), <https://www.tika.gov.tr/upload/sayfa/publication/2019/TurkiyeKalkinma2019Web.pdf>

⁷ De Waal, A. (2020) "The Red Sea: A vital artery for the world economy". *The Africa Report Red Sea Dynamics Part 3*.

of the region's area; 1.1 million square kilometers) and has a population of 106.2 million (including 90 million in Ethiopia, 10 million in Somalia, 4 million in Eritrea and 0.97 million in Djibouti).⁸

Following the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the strategic importance of Bab el Mandab strait has increased and the region became an arena for different actors that want to compete. The region is also well-known by hosting many military bases particularly in Djibouti and Somalia.⁹ This transformation to a hub of security and economic activities pushes regional middle powers such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Israel and Turkiye to focus more on this region, alongside the traditional powers like US and China that are already implemented in the region through military bases and economic collaborations. Among emerging countries in the region, Turkiye can also be cited with its assertive policies towards Africa. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of the Republic of Turkiye, then Prime Minister in 2005, started his first tour in Africa with Ethiopia, one of the core countries of the Horn.¹⁰ President Erdogan was also the first country leader to visit Somalia after nearly thirty years, since the collapse of the central government in the country due to the ongoing civil war in Somalia.¹¹ Today, Turkiye attaches great importance to Somalia in terms of political, security, humanitarian, development and even military aspects; it constructed its biggest embassy including a military base in Somalia in 2017.¹² Considering all of these, this paper will cover the interest, challenges and aspirations of Turkish engagement in the Horn of Africa under the Government of AKP from 2002 to our days and tries to determine why Horn of Africa has a particular place in Turkiye's African policy.

⁸ World Atlas. <https://www.worldatlas.com/geography/horn-of-africa.html>

⁹ US, Japan, France, China and Italy have military bases in Djibouti. For more information: Jean Luc Martineau, "Djibouti et le « commerce » des bases militaires: un jeu dangereux ?" *L'espace Politique*. (2018).

¹⁰ Hürriyet Gazetesi. <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/erdogan-afrika-gezisine-cikiyor-38701628> (2005).

¹¹ TRT Haber. "Somali Ziyareti Dünya Basınında. (2011)" <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/dunya/somali-ziyareti-dunya-basininda-6550.html>

¹² Akpınar, P. (2017) "From Benign Donor to Self-assured Security Provider: Turkey's Policy in Somalia." *Istanbul Policy Center*.

In the light of the information mentioned above, the main research question of this paper is;

- At what level Turkiye's foreign policy in the Horn of Africa has a different particularity from its policies towards other region of Africa?

Other sub-questions that will be attempted to be answered are;

- What is Turkiye's historical ties with the region?
- What are Turkiye's interests in the region?

According to this, I argue through this paper that the region of the Horn of Africa has a priority in Turkiye's Africa Policy because of its historical and religious ties with the region and its economic, military and strategic interests as a regional power.

Methodology

Qualitative research methodology is applied in this research. Various sources such as interviews, documents, newspapers, articles, official documents etc. is used through an in-depth examination. Case study has been the main methodological process of this study. According to Feagin, Orum and Sjoberg, for a holistic and an in-depth investigation in social sciences, case study is the ideal methodology.¹³ It provides the understanding and analysis of complex issues, which is applied from trying to answer to the questions "how" and "why" of the research. Robert Yin, one of the prominent methodologists in social sciences research strategy, explains the concept of case study methodology as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are

¹³ Feagin, J.R. Orum, A.M. and Sjoberg, G., (1991) *A case for case study*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

used.¹⁴ He proposed four applications for a case study model; to explain complex causal links in real-life interventions; to describe the real-life context in which the intervention has occurred; to describe the intervention itself and to explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear set of outcomes.¹⁵ He also identified six primary sources of evidence for case study research; documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts.¹⁶ For the reliability of this study, the researcher has used multiples of these sources. Then, analysis of data and interpretation has been made in order to enhance the reliability and validity of the investigation.

From Past to Present: Ottoman Empire in Africa

Turkiye's relationship with the African continent is often thought to begin on the Ottoman period. However, the first contact of Turks with Africa goes back to pre-Ottoman times. The earliest presence of the Turks in Africa dates back to the 9th century; in the year 868, Ahmed Ibn Tulun, a Turkic emir converted to Islam, who was in the service of the Abbasid caliphate of Baghdad, took control of Egypt and established his own dynasty known as the Tulunids.¹⁷ The following centuries saw the arrival of many Turks on the banks of the Nile, as well as in the neighboring regions of the African continent, such as the Shia Fatimid Caliphate which was known to employ Turkic mercenaries to fill the ranks of her own armies. These Turks, being governors, mercenaries, or even slave-soldiers, called Mamlukes, were often either very influential within the political sphere of the Nile country, and sometimes eventually

¹⁴ Yin, R.B. (2009) *“Case Study Research: Design and Methods.”* Sage Publications ISBN: 0803956622 0803956630 (PBK.).

¹⁵ Yin, R.B. (2009) *“Case Study Research: Design and Methods.”* Sage Publications ISBN: 0803956622 0803956630 (PBK.).

¹⁶ Yin, R.B. (2009) *“Case Study Research: Design and Methods.”* Sage Publications ISBN: 0803956622 0803956630 (PBK.).

¹⁷ Hazar, N. (2011) *«Küreselleşme Sürecinde Afrika ve Türkiye-Afrika İlişkileri»* Uluslararası Statejik Araştırmalar Merkezi Yayınları (USAK).

taking control of Egypt.¹⁸ But the real establishment of the Turks on the African continent occurred especially later, with the arrival of the Ottomans. With the conquest of the country by Sultan Selim, in 1516 and 1517, the Ottomans settled in Egypt, while also absorbing Algeria to the more west. Gradually, the whole of North Africa, with the exception of Morocco, entered under the domination of the Ottoman Empire until the 19th century.¹⁹

Ottomans and the Red Sea

Even for its geo-strategic location and its importance for eastern trade route, the Red Sea caught attention of many powers since many centuries including the Ottoman Empire. In order to extend its power through Eastern Africa in the mid-sixteen century, the Ottoman Empire clashed with the Portuguese maritime forces to gain control of the Red Sea.²⁰ The Ottoman Empire's interest in East Africa was based mainly on the desire to acquire trade-ways in the land and the shore of East Africa, as well as precious metal and gold trade which were also attractive to Portuguese sailors. Many factors give to the domination of the Red Sea too many importance. One of them is the trade of goods in the East that crossed the Red Sea from the Indian Ocean and reached the Suez Canal and Europe from there.²¹ As a result, the power dominating here would dominate the trade route. Another important factor is the fact that the Red Sea was also located at the junction of the Arabian Peninsula and the African continent. Its proximity to the holy lands also gave it a special importance for the Ottomans. In this context, there were important ports supporting the strengthening of dominance in the Red Sea region; the islands of Zeila, Suakin and Massawa

¹⁸ Alican, M. (2016) «*Türklerin Kurduğu İlk İslam Devleti: Tolunoğulları.*» Beyaz Tarih.

¹⁹ Peacock, A.C.S. (2018) «The Ottomans in Northeast Africa.» *Colonial Conquest and Rule, East Africa and Indian Ocean, Northeastern Africa, Political History.*

²⁰ Pearson M. and Borges, C. (2007) "Metahistory, History Questioning History : Festschrift in Honour of Teotonio R de Souza." *Lisboa, pp. 497-508.*

²¹ Orhonlu, C. (1974) "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti." Ankara.

are among the important ports for trade in the region. In the 16th century, especially the Portuguese and the Ottomans gave great importance to the capture of these ports.

At that time, the Portuguese navigator Vasco de Gama descended from the West coast of Africa to the south, and in 1487 he traveled around the Cape of Good Hope and reached the coast of Mozambique. City-states were established on the East African coast and were run by Muslim rulers. After seeing the region, the naval fleet led by Vasco de Gama, who suggested increasing the number of the Portuguese navy, visited these city-states. The Portuguese sent their first fleet to the Red Sea in 1505. The Portuguese navy, which captured the Kilve Sultanate (Tanzania), Mombasa Sultanate (Kenya) and Mogadishu, the capital of today's Somalia, also defeated the Mameluke navy and advanced to the vicinity of Jeddah.²² With religious motivation, the Ottoman Empire, which wanted to maintain its military and commercial power in the region, sent support to the Red Sea and Indian Ocean with its navy to the region to stop the advance of the Portuguese. In 1517, the Ottoman Empire, which put an end to the Mameluke state and took over the Egyptian administration, then faced the Portuguese navy in the Red Sea. The Ottoman naval power and the Portuguese navy continued to clash in the Indian Ocean. The two powers clashed over the port cities in the region at different times and overcame each other in different places.²³

The Ottoman Empire's center of dominance over East Africa was first on Suakin Island in the Red Sea. Then, another important event marked the Ottoman presence in East Africa through the progress in the region; in 1554, Özdemiş Pasha, with a force of approximately 10 thousand people gathered from Istanbul and Egypt, went to Musavva Port on the west coast of Red Sea, which is another important port city that opened the door to East Africa through Ethiopia.²⁴ After the capture of these areas on behalf of the Ottoman

²² Yüksel, A. T. And Hashi, Y. I. (2021) "Osmanlı Devleti'nin Doğu Afrika Bölgesiyle İlişkileri (1550-1885)." *OTAM*, 159-178.

²³ Yüksel, A. T. And Hashi, Y. I. (2021) "Osmanlı Devleti'nin Doğu Afrika Bölgesiyle İlişkileri (1550-1885)." *OTAM*, 159-178.

²⁴ Çalık Orhun, F. (2019) "Sevakın Adası Ve Türkiye'nin Afrika Politikası", *International*

Empire, the Abyssinian Governorship was established in Suakin in 1555 and an officer named Abdülvehhab was appointed here as a judge.²⁵ After this first domination, the region was sometimes connected to Yemen and sometimes to the Hejaz Provinces, and took its place in the Ottoman administrative structure under the name of Abyssinian Province.²⁶ With the British occupation of Egypt in 1882, the city, which was de facto under Turkish control, was left to Egypt under British rule in accordance with the 17th article of the Treaty of Lausanne dated 24th July 1923.²⁷ With Sudan's independence from Anglo-Egyptian rule in 1956, Suakin also became a part of Sudanese territory.

Following the establishment of the Abyssinian Province by Ozdemir Pasha on behalf of the Ottoman Empire, as it was difficult to control these regions, the Ottoman administrative organization was established in these distant provinces through Beylerbeyis, which were sent to the region.²⁸ Portuguese, who were also in the search for expansion in the region, were also aware that holding on to the region was going through cultural-religious change. Therefore, Portugal tried to maintain dominance here by spreading Catholic Christianity and controlling the native Abyssinian kings through governors-general.²⁹ Likewise, the Ottoman Empire tried to maintain control by bringing Turkish-Islamic culture and institutions

Social Sciences Studies Journal. 5(35):2500-2511.

²⁵ Orhonlu, C. (1996) "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti" İslam Ansiklopedisi 14.cilt 363-367.s.

²⁶ Habeş Eyaleti: This administrative region is the last border that the Ottomans could reach in East Africa. In the 16th century, the widest borders of the Ottoman state stretched from the Egyptian border to Mombasa in East Africa, and included some of today's Sudan and Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia.

Cengiz Orhonlu, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti" İslam Ansiklopedisi 14.cilt 363-367.s. 1996.

²⁷ Orhonlu, C. (1996) "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti" İslam Ansiklopedisi 14.cilt 363-367.s.

²⁸ The military and administrative chief of the province, which is the largest administrative unit in the Ottoman provincial organization, is called Beylerbeyi. Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi. <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/beylerbeyi>

²⁹ Malekandathil, P. (2010) "Maritime India: Trade, Religion and Polity in the Indian Ocean" *Primus Books, New Delhi, pp. 110-130.*

and the administrative organization of the state to the region and reviving the economic life. Osman Pasha, son of Ozdemir Pasha, gathered the weakened Ottoman administration after Özdemir Pasha, and tried to prevent the connection between the Catholic missionaries, the King of Abyssinia and Portugal.³⁰ It was difficult for the Ottomans to keep Abyssinian Province due to the geographical distance of the region from the Ottoman Empire, the diversity of ethnic and religious structure there, inter-tribal struggles as well as the high level of Portuguese maritime in this period.³¹

Another important port to be noted for emphasizing the dominance of Ottomans in East Africa is the port city of Zeila, situated in today's Somalia. After Özdemir Pasha founded the Abyssinian Province in 1559, this port city also came under Ottoman rule. Zeila, which was managed by the Sanjak beys sent from Istanbul, passed to the British after the Ottomans lost territory in the First World War.³² These port cities helped many years the Ottoman Empire to gain control over Red Sea.

In the light of the historical information that has been discussed above, it can be concluded that the Ottomans had close relations with East Africa. The Ottoman Empire, which dominated the region and clashed with Portuguese maritime forces for struggle of power in the area, wanted to dominate the eastern trade route by capturing important ports in the Red Sea. With the establishment of the Abyssinian Province by the Ottoman Empire, Ottomans increased their influence, but this trend ended with the attempt of Egypt to establish dominance in the region with the support of the British. Following the First World War, Ottomans lost its control over these regions.

³⁰ Orhonlu, C. (1996) "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti" İslam Ansiklopedisi 14.cilt 363-367.s.

³¹ Orhonlu, C. (1996) "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti" İslam Ansiklopedisi 14.cilt 363-367.s.

³² Kavas, A. (2001) "Doğu Afrika Sahilinde Osmanlı Hâkimiyeti: Kuzey Somali'de Zeyla İskelesinin Konumu." *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Sayı 5, 109-134.

Opening Up to Africa

In the years of its establishment, following the WWI, the Republic of Türkiye did not attach much importance to its relations with Africa, with the aim of preserving its independence and achieving economic development, while also reforming the country at the local level. Years later, a more stable Türkiye, seeking alternatives in foreign policy, has turned its face to Africa. Today, Turkish foreign policy has expanded into the African continent as never seen before, by boosting its humanitarian contributions and economic cooperation agreements. Türkiye's policy of opening to Africa dated back from 1998 and was conceived as a part of the multidimensional foreign policy vision of the then Foreign Minister İsmail Cem, in the search for alternatives in Turkish Foreign Policy. Although Foreign Minister İsmail Cem aimed that with this plan, Türkiye's economic and political relations with African countries will improve inductively, the internal political and economic crisis that started with February's post-modern coup (1998) and continued with unstable governments, did not allow this policy of opening up to Africa to be launched. Türkiye's Foreign policy initiatives remained on paper due to financial, military, economic and political shortcomings; the next government would have to arrive in order to put into action this opening plan. Following this initiative, Türkiye's policies towards Africa have undergone a serious transformation since 1998 and the "opening up to Africa" policy was implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on this date and put into action in the beginning of 2000's with the AKP government putting into action the plan.

The political development in the Turkish-African relations was accelerated especially after 2005, which was proclaimed as the 'Year of Africa' by the Turkish government. This year, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan paid an official visit to Ethiopia and South Africa, which was the first formal visit by any Turkish Prime Minister to African countries.³³ In the same year Tur-

³³ Hürriyet Gazetesi. <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/erdogan-afrika-gezisine-cikiyor-38701628> (2005).

kiye gained an 'observatory status' within the African Union (AU) and the same institution declared Turkiye as a 'strategic partner' at the summit held in 2008.³⁴ In 2005, it became the 25th non-regional member of African Development Bank and as a consequence of it, Turkiye has been able to participate in tenders for various infrastructure projects financed by this institution. Moreover, since 2008, Turkiye is also a member of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Partners Forum, which is the Eastern African regional political and economic organization, and since 2005, Turkish Embassy in Nigerian Abuja is accredited to the Western African political and economic governmental organization, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Additionally, since 2010 Turkish Embassy in Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania is accredited to the East African Community (EAC).³⁵ In this context, the first Turkiye-Africa Partnership Summit was held in 2008 in Istanbul, the second in 2014 in Malabo, the capital of Equatorial Guinea, and the third one was held in Istanbul on 16-18 December 2021. Sixteen African heads of state participated in the 3rd Summit, including Félix Tshisekedi, the current president of the African Union, Macky Sall, the president of Senegal, Nana Akufo-Addo, the president of Ghana, Paul Kagame, the president of the Rwanda, Emmerson Mnangagwa, the President of Zimbabwe and Muhammadu Buhari, the President of Nigeria. They were accompanied by 102 ministers, including 26 ministers of foreign affairs, from 39 African countries as well as other African officials who participated in the scheduled activities.³⁶ Organized two months after an Economic Forum focused on investment and trade, this summit aimed above all to strengthen Turkish-African cooperation and take stock of the projects undertaken since the previous Summit.

³⁴ Official website of the Republic of Turkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-africa-relations.en.mfa>

³⁵ Turkish Embassy to Abuja, <http://abuja.emb.mfa.gov.tr/Mission/About>

³⁶ T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Resmi Sitesi. Türkiye-Afrika Ortaklık Zirvesi. T.C.CUMHURBAŞKANLIĞI : Türkiye-Afrika Ortaklık Zirvesi (tccb.gov.tr)

Forging diplomatic foothold in the Horn

The historical visit of the Turkish president to Somalia in August 2011 was considered as a vital and geo-strategic turning point for Türkiye-Africa relations. This visit has turned Somalia into a strategic country and Türkiye formed a new partnership in the Horn of Africa. Türkiye contributed with serious financial resources to strive the humanitarian crisis caused by famine in Somalia in 2011, and deepened its relationship with Somalia and brought it to its current level. Thanks to the aid campaigns carried out at both the state and civil society levels, approximately 900 million dollars have been donated to Somalia between 2011 and 2018.³⁷ The most important feature that distinguishes Turkish aid from other countries and international organizations operating in the region, such as the UN, is that Türkiye delivers its aid directly to Somali people without intervening any third parties. Türkiye has been involved in many activities in Somalia such as the construction of roads and hospitals, the education of Somali students in Türkiye with Türkiye scholarships, and the training of the Somali public institutions staff. The Turkish-Type Development Assistance Model has been developed as the activities carried out by Türkiye for the development of Somalia have echoes in other African countries and are welcomed with praise.

Today, Türkiye attaches great importance to Somalia in terms of political, security, humanitarian, development and even military aspects. In this context, Türkiye's presence in Somalia contributed to the reconstruction of Somalia. Within the framework of its strategic plan, Türkiye established its military base near Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, in 2017. This base is recorded as the largest military base that Türkiye has built abroad. The construction of the base constitutes the first phase of efforts to rebuild Somalia's army, which collapsed during the protracted civil war. Moreover, Türkiye has stepped up its investment in Somalia, through the construction

³⁷ Şahin, M. (2021) "Türkiye'nin Somali Politikasının İncelenmesi: 2011-2020 Dönemi", *Türkiye Ortadoğu Çalışmaları Dergisi* ISSN: 2147-7523 E-ISSN: 2630-5631 Cilt: 9, Sayı: 1, ss. 109-147.

and management of both Mogadishu ports and airport, in addition to the construction of an international airport. Today, the volume of trade exchange between the two countries is over 360 million dollars.³⁸ The fact that Turkiye opened a military base in Somalia strengthens and reinforces Turkiye's presence in the Horn of Africa, but it also drags Turkiye into a competition with other regional actors. Somalia become a country where new forces enter into competition in the globalizing world. For this reason, Somalia has become the focus and the strategy of Turkiye's foreign policy towards Africa. In response to this reality, the international community is trying to develop relations with Somalia; the US and former colonial powers of Somalia are faced with new competitive countries like Turkiye and China.

In the same context, Turkiye has strong relations with Ethiopia and other countries in the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia confirms that it takes the largest share of Turkish investments in Africa, which is over 2 billion dollars and a trade volume of 398, 8 million USD in 2019.³⁹ There are 350 Turkish companies, of which 120 companies entered in 2014, and employs more than 20.000 Ethiopians. Today, relations between Turkiye and Ethiopia are developing in a positive direction with a momentum that develops over different dimensions, especially in the diplomatic, humanitarian and commercial fields. Turkish NGOs operate in the field of humanitarian aid in the country. In addition, Anadolu Agency's headquarters in Africa is located in Addis Ababa, the capital of the country.

On the other side, the civil war that broke out again in 2020 in Ethiopia is currently occupying the agenda of Turkish diplomats in the region. The allegations that Turkiye has sold SiHAs (Turkish drone) in Ethiopia may bring Turkiye-Africa relations based on humanitarian aid and economic cooperation since the opening up policy to a different dimension. This situation, which is also interpreted as Turkiye's meddling in the internal affairs of African

³⁸ T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı. Somali Ülke Profili. <https://ticaret.gov.tr/data/5b885d7baf23be7c5c10c692/SOMAL%c4%b0.pdf>

³⁹ Official website of the Republic of Turkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-ethiopia.en.mfa>

countries, may cause other African countries to reconsider their relations with Türkiye. All of these may bring to mind the question of whether Türkiye's policies, which started by using soft power in Africa, shifted to the military and strategic field and switched to hard power.

Djibouti is another strategic country of the Horn. Despite its small population of about 1 million, its geographical location gives Djibouti a strategic importance in the region of the Horn.⁴⁰ The fact that the Red Sea is the gateway to the Gulf of Aden (Indian Ocean), negative security problems such as the civil war in Yemen and sea pirates originating from Somalia, and Ethiopia's becoming the only outlet to the sea after the separation of Eritrea, constitute a significant source of income for the economy of Djibouti. Since it is located at the exit of the Red Sea and has a coast to the Indian Ocean, it can control regions that have an important share in world trade such as the Bab al-Mandeb Strait and the Gulf of Aden. The geopolitical position of Djibouti also directs the countries that want to gain political and military influence in the region. Djibouti, which has limited resources in terms of the country's population and economic potential, provides a large income by receiving significant rental fees from the military bases in the region, and therefore, the presence of foreign bases in the country is not disturbed. As a matter of fact, the country's \$125 million income from military bases is one of the main sources of income for the country's economy.⁴¹ The Bab al-Mandeb Strait, which can be described as the transition zone between the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden connecting the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, has a very important economic potential due to the intense commercial interaction. This situation increases the global competition in Djibouti, where countries such as the United States, China, France, Japan and Italy have established military bases.

The relationship between Djibouti and Turkey dates back to many years. The lands where Djibouti is located today remained under the auspices of the Ottoman Empire from the mid-16th century

⁴⁰ Djibouti POPULATION 2022 data. <https://tradingeconomics.com/djibouti/population>

⁴¹ CRS Reports Congressional Research Service, Djibouti, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11303/5>

to the end of the 19th century. Since the Turkish Opening up Policy to Africa, Djibouti has also been a country that Turkiye strengthens its relations. Turkey and Djibouti have signed agreements on maritime cooperation, to strengthen bilateral trade and further develop relations in transportation including in the aviation, rail and maritime sectors, and, maybe the most important one, to establish a free economic zone in Djibouti, but which is not implemented yet.

Conclusion and Remarks

Since its opening up policy to Africa in 1998, Turkiye has established deep-rooted connections across Sub-Saharan and East Africa with its 44 embassies, development-oriented and cultural institutions, and THY's flights to 60 African cities. Especially the Horn of Africa has an important place in Turkiye's African policy. After Erdogan's visit to Somalia with a large delegation in 2011 during his prime ministry, Turkish humanitarian aid and development projects focused on this country. In addition to its historical ties with the Horn of Africa, Turkiye's development of relations with the countries of the region, which have great commercial and economic importance, contributed to its being more prominent in the continent. However, will Turkiye be able to continue the aid it has provided so far, especially for the development of Somalia? Turkiye, experiencing turmoil in its domestic economy, brings to mind how it can ensure the continuation of its aid to Africa as the lira melts against the dollar. However, it makes one wonder whether Turkiye's policies in the Horn of Africa, and especially in Somalia, will be sustainable. The historical relations with the region and the humanitarian aid model contributed to the entry and settlement of Turkiye in the region, and it followed a relatively successful policy. But have Turkiye's policies so far been short-term or is there a long-term African policy? It is very difficult to maintain a presence in a region where other regional and global actors are in great competition with short-term policies.

Another question that comes to mind is, when compared with other actors in the continent, it does not seem that Turkiye's trade

volume is at the desired levels. For example, although the trade volume between Türkiye and Sub-Saharan Africa has increased from 4 billion dollars to about 25 billion dollars in 2022, it remains below the trade volumes of other actors in the continent. Indeed, China is the country that holds the most shares in the African market, amounting to 192 billion dollars; while France had a total trade volume of \$84.1 billion in 2019.

On the other side, Türkiye, which has a military base in Somalia, also continues to expand its foothold in Africa in the field of defense, promoting its military equipment to African countries. This interest is largely the result of the involvement of the Turkish army and its equipment in Libya in 2020, which helped repel the Libyan National Army offensive and turn the tide of arms in favor of the government of Tripoli. Thus, to achieve the objective of tripling the trade volume with African countries until the centenary of the Republic, 2023, Türkiye seems to develop cooperation with African countries in the defense sector by relying on its SİHAs. Considering this, Türkiye may consider African continent as a potential market to sell its drones and weapons. This also pushes Türkiye in a rivalry with other competitors' actors in the region especially the Arab countries which cause a clash of interests. At this point, it is important to note that it should be careful and not to interfere in the internal affairs of African countries with regard to regional conflicts or it risks endangering its image deluded by its soft power. Türkiye's policies in Africa, based mainly on trade and humanitarian aid, are becoming militarized, but should not be perceived as a change in its basic policy which was based on humanitarian aid and economic cooperation.

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