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Mapping the Historicity of Turkish Footprints in Africa in a Post Neo-Ottomanism Era

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Abstract: Over the past decade and counting, Ankara's footprint within Africa and including the CEMAC region of Africa is paying off. In 1998, Ismail Cem unveiled the master plan dubbed the "Opening Up to Africa Policy," but it failed to bear fruits because of the lack of institutional frameworks and resources. In 2005, the AKP coined a novel foreign policy document for Africa baptised "The Year of Africa," which became a new cornerstone, taking off from where 1998 failed. "Opening up to Africa" began by propping up institutional restructuring and organising resources for the plan. In 2014, Türkiye' crafted the Africa Partnership Policy which is currently in operation via all spheres. Despite all these recent historical footprints within the 2000's, the Ottoman era set the pace for modern day Turkish-Africa relations prior to its collapse as the last empire. The main purpose of this paper is to historical map those key historical epochs that unleashed present day Türkiye's presence in Africa. The findings revealed that the Ottoman period was the baptismal foundation in stitching the robust Türkiye-Africa relations from a historical perspective. Also, a handicap aspect in the historical snail pace in these historical ties from Ottomanism was because of the lack of institutional resources to speed up relations with African states after the collapse of the empire and birth of the Turkish state in 1923.

Keywords: Ankara, Africa, Foreign Policy, Historical, Ottoman, Türkiye

Introduction

The era towards the ending of East-West divide, in which France, Britain, and United States of America were consistently identified solely as external forces with huge motives within sub-Saharan Africa has ended tapping from their historical engagements with the continent (Shively, 2005: 394). Affirmatively, the Republic of Türkiye is one of the newcomers into the continent with a huge foreign policy appetite in recent years which is spreading across the continent like summer 'wildfire' framed gigantically thanks to a reminiscent historical past of the Ottoman empire. Several authors have presented different viewpoints on numerous subjects concerning the connection between Turkey and Africa, along with other relevant issues. The majority of these experts have conducted extensive study on several historical epochs, with a particular emphasis on Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria, South Africa, and other North African nations. Nevertheless, they have consolidated the remaining nations without conducting autonomous investigations on them. Orakçi (2022, 2) asserts that the African continent is now experiencing rapid transformations in the 21st century, including both its physical characteristics and its prospects. Moreover, the international contacts of African states are becoming more complex as new entities establish connections with them. Aside from Western nations, China, Japan, India, and Russia, as well as Middle Eastern regional powers such as Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Israel, are now competing to gain control of Africa's resources, markets, and strategic positions.

According to Uchehara (2008, 44), discussing the connections between Turkey and African nations might be challenging. Türkiye's primary focus is in its connections with the European Union, Caucasus, Balkans, Middle East, United States, Southern Asia, Far East, and Pacific nations (Uchehara et al. 2008). In order to have a deeper understanding of Türkiye's present policy towards African nations and Cameroon, this part of the thesis examines the historical trends of Turkish involvement with Africa. The process begins by delineating these connections starting with the age of Ottoman empire's military might, extending through subsequent periods, and culminating in the current administration under the presidency of Recep Tayip Erdoğan. Ahmet Davutoglu, who previously served as senior foreign policy adviser to President Erdogan and then as Türkiye's foreign minister since 2009, has effectively expressed the significance of history and geography as a valuable strategic resource (Petroni, 2023). In his book

"Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararasi Konumu" ("Strategic Depth: Türkiye's International Position"), Davutoglu posited that a nation's strategic depth within the intricate network of global relations is contingent upon its adept utilisation of its geostrategic location as well as its historical and cultural heritage (Qantara.de 2009). Turkey is strategically located at the intersection of the geopolitical and civilisational boundaries that connect the Eurasian continent with the Middle East and North Africa (Cannon and Donelli 2024). According to Fidan (2023), the global order in the 21st century would be influenced by changes in this area, offering Türkiye a distinct chance to establish itself as a regional force. To have a deeper understanding and diverse range of relationships between nations, particularly with Africa, it is necessary to examine these connections throughout history. This paper is divided into two key historical epochs which are; Ottoman period, pre- and post-cold war era, and the 2000's.

The Different historical phases of Türkiye's presence in Africa

The Ottoman period-1923

To provide a brief historical context for this thesis, we can examine the historical relationship between Turkey and Africa, specifically Cameroon. The Ottoman Empire's initial contact with the continent occurred in the 16th Century when Ottoman Sultan Yavuz Sultan Selim defeated the Memluks in 1517. This victory marked the Turks' presence on the continent and initiated various periods of Turkish involvement in Africa (Akkoyunlu 2021; Ataman 2023). According to Okumus (2021, 63), the significance of Africa in international and domestic affairs may be traced back to the existence of the Ottoman Empire on the African continent. During this time, since the Ottoman Empire had already expanded beyond its natural boundaries, it would be more appropriate to shift our attention towards subSaharan Africa. Relations with Cape Africa, Central, and Southern Africa were established, but not extensively (Brummett 2012; Imber 2002). The term "Afrika-yi Osmanli" refers to the Ottoman Empire's presence in Africa and its relationships with African countries outside its borders (Altunışık 2023; Ilgıt 2023; Uchehara et al. 2008).

According to Enwere and Yilmaz (2014, 2-3), the Ottoman empire had significant economic connections with Africa. These connections played a crucial role in facilitating the rapid growth of economic cooperation and commercial contacts between Africa and contemporary Turkey. In 1518, the Ottomans gained control of Egypt, which allowed them to establish a significant presence in the African economic system. They

deliberately extended their economic influence farther into the interior of Africa. The Egyptian districts gained strategic and economic significance within the Ottoman Empire due to their sizable population, fertile agricultural lands, and trade connections with Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. Additionally, the presence of a sublime port granted the Ottomans strategic dominance over the Nile valley and the East Mediterranean (Enwere 2014). According to Orakçi (2022, 4), Türkiye's presence on the continent may be traced back to the 16th century, when the Ottomans first landed in North Africa. Subsequently, the Ottoman Empire's dominion extended to include the coastlines of the Red and Mediterranean oceans, as well as the Sahel area.

The Ottomans exerted their authority over Africa over a span of four hundred years, during which they built distinct governing bodies in Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Eritrea. Nevertheless, in 1912, Ottoman soldiers withdrew from the continent, relinquishing control of its strongholds to European colonial powers (Alloul and Martykánová 2021; Quataert 2003). Although the academic community is wealthy, there is still a shortage of detailed study on the historical impact of the Ottomans on the continent. Furthermore, throughout the Republican period, Türkiye's attention switched towards the Western countries. Tekin (2012, 1-2) argues that the Ottoman Empire had control over whole or partial territories of Muslim countries until 1918, with a specific emphasis on North Africa. The last Ottoman province to be surrendered was Trablusgarb, which was formally transferred in 1918. The Ottomans continually strived to protect the African continent from European colonialists as long as they had the potential to do so (Palabiyik 2012; Tanvir Wasti 2020).

The partitioning of Africa was formally concluded in 1920 by European powers, resulting in the continent's isolation from the rest of the world until the era of decolonization. Türkiye's foreign policy during this time consistently adhered to the interests and alliances of Western nations, as dictated by the Cold War era. The Ottoman Empire initiated diplomatic ties with African sultans throughout the sixteenth century with their arrival in Egypt, situated in North Africa, in 1517 (Brummett 2012). The Ottomans' influence and their relationship with the African sultans endured until the Turks withdrew from Tripoli in 1917 with the downfall of their empire at the end of World War I (Dursun-Özkanca 2023). In addition, the Ottomans effectively established diplomatic relations with the rulers of those countries, including political, economic, social, and religious dimensions. This claim is supported by a substantial number of Turkish assets that

remain in North African countries (Mohamed 2020, 7). The Ottoman Empire had a strong economic relationship with Egypt via a proactive trading policy, which allowed them to tap into the economies of many African nations, namely those in North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa (Palabiyik 2012). The Ottoman Empire engaged in commerce with the nations of Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, and Algeria in the North African area (Altunışık 2023). The Ottomans had a significant economic impact on sub-Saharan Africa due to their favourable geographical position (Uchehara et al. 2008).

The Ottomans had established commercial ties with nations like Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Somalia. The Ottomans established commercial links and formed a strategic alliance with the Kanem Bornu Empire, including the present-day regions of Northern Nigeria, Niger, and Chad, in the northern sub-Saharan region (Cagaptay et al. 2022; Turhan 2021). The Kanem Bornu region obtained military equipment via imports from the Ottoman Empire, while also exporting valuable solid minerals (Hazar 2000, 109-110). The Turks engaged in a protracted struggle to maintain their presence in Africa, which lasted from the 9th century until the early 20th century. Turkish troops made their first arrival in Africa as Muslim forces transitioning from Iraq and Syria to Egypt. Subsequently, the Turks took control of the governance of Egypt and founded the Tolunoğulları State (868-905). The İhşidiler dynasty, which ruled from 935 until 969, was the second Turkish dynasty to be formed in Egypt. Throughout the Fatimiler period (909-1171), the Turks maintained their position as a formidable military presence within the Fatimi army. Between 1171 until 1250, the Turks provided assistance to the Selahaddin Eyyubi dynasty.

The Eyyubi State expanded its jurisdiction from many regions in North Africa to Yemen. Throughout history, troops originating from the Caucasian and Transoxiana regions, often known as “Memlük,” progressively gained power over the Eyyubi State and founded the Memlüklüler State, which lasted from 1250 until 1517. The Memluks exerted their control over the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, Yemen, and expanded their authority as far as the border of Tranblusgarp during a span of more than three centuries. The Ottoman Empire, led by Sultan Yavuz Sultan Selim, swiftly conquered the Memluks and thereafter gained control of North Africa, Yemen, and East Africa (Cannon and Donelli 2024; Dahir 2019; Donelli 2022; Eyrice Tepeciklioğlu et al. 2024; Neba 2019). In 1517, the Ottoman Empire gained control of Egypt, followed by Algeria in 1520, Tunisia in 1534, and Tripoli in 1551. Although the Ottomans gained control of

Morocco in 1554, they could not sustain their influence in the region and never expanded their authority beyond eastern Algeria. The Ottoman Empire developed an interest in Northern Africa as a result of two primary considerations. Initially, the disintegration of the Andalus Empire in Spain resulted in the emigration of Muslims from Spain to North Africa, and reports of this reached Istanbul.

In addition, the Crusaders began the occupation of the Southern Coasts of the Mediterranean, a development that also captured the interest of the Ottomans (Kavas 2006 as quoted in Tekin (2012, 12). The Ottoman Empire had significant territorial expansion from Morocco to Somalia during the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, including the present-day territories of 13 states (Uluışık Arabacı 2022). Given the vast expanse of the region, it was impractical to administer it directly from Istanbul. As a result, the Turkish nobles, who received the Sultan's mandates, established strong provincial administrative systems and functioned as relatively independent entities. The Karamanlı period in Tripoli, the Hüseyniler period in Tunisia, and the Kavalalı and Hidivs period in Egypt might be seen as times where semi-independent administrations had more favoured positions (Hume 1980; Pennell 1989). During the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire was divided into 32 provinces based on geographical boundaries. Out of these provinces, four were located in Africa, namely Egypt, Tripoli, Tunisia, and Algeria, where Arab residents lived (Brummett 2012; Kritoboulos and Riggs 1970; Quataert 2003). In the same century, the Ottoman Empire established the Abyssinia province in the East Africa region, namely in what is now recognised as Ethiopia.

During the same century, the Ottoman Empire exerted influence over the bulk of the Muslim people in Africa. These territories, including Sudan, Ghana, Mali, Kanim Bornu, Songay, Timbuktu, Cano, Darphur, Vaday, Hara, and Zengibar sultanates, were situated in the southern parts of the Great Sahara Desert (Altunışık 2023; Coşkun 2023; Ergun 2023; Özkeçeci-Taner and Akgül Açıkmeşe 2023b). The Ottoman Sultan was recognised as the Caliphate in these regions, and sermons in mosques were delivered on behalf of the Caliphate. The Zengibar sultanate, which governed Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Senegal, and the eastern coast of Africa including Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, Malawi, and Madagascar, dutifully fulfilled their responsibilities to the Ottoman Caliph, as did the Muslim population living in South Africa. This situation endured for over four centuries until the start of the twentieth century. Ottoman governors in Africa autonomously used their own resources to

cultivate their domain, without any fiscal backing from the capital (Kavas 2006 as cited in Tekin 2012, 12-13).

The historical connection between Türkiye and Africa has profound origins (Cannon and Donelli 2024; Donelli 2022). Their social and cultural ties predate the formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 and may be traced back to its predecessor, the Ottoman Empire (Dahir 2019). At its peak, the empire included vast territories throughout North Africa. The Ottomans started their presence in Sudan during the late nineteenth century via their association with the Mamluk dynasty in Egypt, although belatedly (Reid 2022). It has already spread to many parts of West Africa in the western direction. Even in cases where it did not have a physical military or bureaucratic presence, it nonetheless managed to establish diplomatic and political ties, as shown by its association with the Sultanate of Zanzibar (Enwere 2014). The Ottoman Empire, often referred to as Kânum Bornu or The Sultanate, has the distinction of being the oldest and most enduring governing authority in central Africa, with a history spanning almost a millennium (Uchehara 1999). Formerly, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, and Ethiopia were regions that were part of the Ottoman Empire. However, they were divided and separated when they were sent to the United Kingdom, France, and Italy (Hess 1973, 55). Orhonlu (1996), as cited by Tekin (2012, 13), states that the Ottoman geographers identified Abyssinia as the region situated between Sevvakin and Babul Mendeb.

In fact, it spanned from Egypt to Mombasa. In 1525, the Ottoman fleet seized control of these beaches by destroying the Portuguese strongholds. Furthermore, they accomplished a noteworthy achievement by skilfully traversing Babul Mendeb and ultimately reaching the Indian Ocean. Due to Abyssinia's possession of coasts on both the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, it had considerable significance as a central point for trade in the eastern area (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2024). The Ottoman Empire's interest in East Africa was driven by two main objectives: firstly, to establish trade routes on both land and along the East African coast, and secondly, to engage in profitable activities such as slave trade and the trading of precious metals and gold, which had attracted Portuguese seafarers. Moreover, the Ottomans aimed to protect the Red Sea from Portuguese intervention in order to prevent them from accessing the Kaaba (Ferguson 2019; Montana 2023). The Portuguese's attempts to establish trade centres along the Red Sea were thwarted by the resistance from the Ottoman Empire. The Abyssinia Province of the Ottoman Empire was established in 1555 and lasted until

1560 (Erdem 1996). It may be argued that the Ottomans were driven to establish stronger connections with some regions in Africa because of the presence of a Muslim population and the discovery of substantial gold and diamond resources in certain African nations (Barkey, 2005).

Some scholars have proposed that the expansion of the Ottoman empire in the 14th century had an indirect impact on the exploration of southern Africa and the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope (Chirot 2001). Based on the aforementioned study, it can be deduced that diplomatic relations between Türkiye and African nations were formed many centuries ago, namely in the 16th century (Spies 2019). Multiple African nations were under the dominion of the Ottoman Empire. A comprehensive evaluation indicates that the Ottoman Empire had more robust and intimate connections with Sub-Saharan Africa (Martin 2022). The previously existing historical, cultural, economic, administrative, and military links between the Turks and Sub-Saharan Africa have ultimately vanished. Without a doubt, the end of this partnership may be attributed to a shift in political leadership and personal characteristics on both sides. Nevertheless, Turkey has actively endeavoured to reestablish its historical connections with Sub-Saharan Africa in recent years (Uchehara 2008, 51). According to Çaycı (1995, 3), the Ottoman Empire was self-assured in its capacity to safeguard its North African provinces, known as Garp Ocakları, without relying on European armies for help. As a result, it allowed these provinces to maintain their independence.

Regrettably, the Ottoman Empire's annexation of Algeria resulted in a shift in their position towards Garp Ocakları. The African regions of the Ottoman Empire saw a gradual decline and were gradually deserted throughout the early 19th century. France started military campaigns in Algeria in 1830 and invaded Tunisia in 1881. In 1882, England launched a military attack on Egypt and Sudan. During the early 1900s, England, France, Belgium, Spain, Germany, and Italy established colonies over the whole continent, included Biladu's Sudan and Abyssinia province. Özkan (2010, 4) had a unique perspective on the matter. Türkiye's relations with Africa may be divided into three main eras. The first phase covers the Ottoman state's dealings with Africa until the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923. During this time, the Ottomans had significant connections with Africa. The Ottoman Empire exerted dominion over Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria, either wholly or partly, within the North African region. Sub-Saharan African states such as Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Niger and

Chad experienced partial subjugation under the authority of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans sent both religious officials and diplomats to the area (de Carvalho and Swanepoel 2023).

During its four-century presence on the continent, the Ottoman Empire avoided forcefully forcing its own culture on the inhabitants in a violent and imperialistic manner. As a result, the Turkish language is primarily used in only a small number of localities throughout the former provinces, such as Algeria, Tunisia, and Tripoli. One of these groups is the Kuloğlu branch, which has ancestral ties to the Ottoman Empire. French is now the official language of 25 African states, but English is widely used in several more countries. However, in several former colonies of Portugal and Spain, the official languages are the languages spoken in those nations. Each country exclusively recognises its indigenous languages as national languages, strictly prohibiting the teaching or use of any other languages. Despite the ability of even the tiniest tribe to preserve its own cultural traditions under the Ottoman Empire, African people were deliberately denied the fundamental chance to develop reading skills in their native language (Kavas 2006). The time span from 1923 to the 1990s, including both the period before and after the Cold War, is designated as currently.

I want to depict the significant historical connections between Türkiye and the African continent, commencing with the establishment of the Turkish state after the downfall of the Ottoman Empire, and continuing into the post-Cold War era. Tekin (2012, 14) contends that the time span from 1923 to 1998 may be regarded as the second stage, characterized by little or non-existent contacts between Turkey and Africa. The foreign policy of the newly formed Republic was influenced by the Kemalist legacy, which emphasized “non-intervention, a Western orientation, and careful protection of national independence.” Prior to the early indications of the Second World War, Turkish foreign policy aimed to achieve several important objectives, including maintaining neutrality by avoiding conflicts, aligning with Europe and the West, and safeguarding its territorial integrity. Turkey started its attention towards Africa during the Cold War era, establishing commercial and political ties with countries in North Africa. Nevertheless, these linkages were influenced by the circumstances of the Cold War’s bipolar nature, and as a result, often conflicted with the prevailing popular opinion towards the continent.

Akcay (2012, 89) said that Ozal’s foreign policy connections included the all-encompassing aspect of globalisation, with a special emphasis on the economic

dimensions of production and consumption. The Ozal policy towards Africa exhibited both a structuralist and opportunist approach, with a focus on the economics as the central aspect in its foreign political engagements with developing countries. During the Ozal administration, the first occurrence of foreign aid was sent to the continent of Africa. Turkey used a pragmatic economic diplomacy approach, which led to a rise in aid to Africa. In 1985, Turkey sent food aid to Sub-Saharan Africa as a reaction to a severe drought situation in the region. This help was delivered as part of the United Nations plan. The assistance provided was valued at USD 10 million. Okumus (2021, 640), citing Ogurlu (2018, 66), states that the second era begins with the formation of the Republic and may be described as a period when the level of connections with Africa was at its minimum. The “New Republic” adopted a restrained approach to foreign policy in its first years, with the state’s capacities and economic conditions playing a crucial role in executing this plan. During this period, engagements with the African continent were limited in their extent. Relations with the nations in the northern half of the continent were stronger due to a common history and religion.

The interactions with African states during this period were shaped by the conditions of the Cold War. From the wake of World War II until the early 1960s, the independence movements in Africa endured, reaching its culmination with the eventual independence of the whole continent. Turkiye was embroiled in a cold war standoff with Western countries, which is why the movements in Africa did not get support from Turkiye. For instance, Algeria, a country that had one of the most intense struggles for its independence, did not get support from Turkey. Instead of supplying Algeria with arms and ammunition, Turkey provides them with assistance. Furthermore, it exercised its right to vote in the United Nations Resolution on the self-determination of Algeria. After Algeria gained independence in 1962, Turkey quickly established its embassy in 1963 to establish diplomatic relations with Algeria. Furthermore, Turkey has opened its diplomatic missions in cities located in sub-Saharan Africa, such as Ghana. Nigeria is a sovereign nation. We want to establish bilateral relations with Senegal, Kenya, Egypt, and Morocco. Turkey temporarily closed some of its embassies in Africa, namely in the sub-Saharan region, as a result of political, economic, and other considerations.

Nevertheless, these embassies were later reinstated throughout the late 2000s (Mohamed 2020, 21). In addition, Ankara has formally recognised the recently formed state of South Sudan, which achieved independence on July 9, 2011. Ankara also plans

to recognise other rising nations in Africa, including the former British Southern Cameroons, also referred to as Ambazonia. The area is now involved in an armed war with the primarily Frenchcontrolled government of Cameroon. Ankara's recognition of these nations is grounded in international law and the idea of recognising states in a timely manner. Sönmezoğlu (2006, 192-193) said that African states have a significant influence on the ratification process in the UN General Assembly, in addition to their economic and commercial connections. The Non-Alignment Movement was founded with the objective of promoting cooperation among nations in the Global South while maintaining a distance from the power dynamics of the Cold War alliances. Presently, every African country is a member of the Non-Alignment Movement. In 1945, the South African Union, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Liberia were the only African states to participate in the San Francisco Conference, when they obtained the title of being founding members of the United Nations. By 1960, the United States had admitted 20 African states as members, and this number had risen to 35 by 1964. African countries, after their independence, used the United countries General Assembly as a platform to promote the elimination of apartheid and discuss issues pertaining to their own self-determination.

The Colombo Conference, coordinated by a consortium of five countries, sent invitations to 25 African and Asian nations, including delegates from both the Asian and African continents. The first arrangements for the summit were successfully completed, and it was decided to hold it on 18 April 1955 in Bandung. Turkey first participated in the nonalignment movement at the Bandung Conference in 1955. Fatin Rüştü Zorlu, the Turkish foreign minister, was present at the conference and advised the participating states to align themselves with the Western alliances and maintain unwavering support. Furthermore, Zorlu vehemently and publicly objected to the non-alignment policy, expressing his discontent with the notion that Turkey was serving as a representative and advocate for the Western countries. The conclusions reached at the end of the conference showcased the victory of the antiwesternism non-alignment group in implementing its ideas. The meeting in question laid the foundation for the future conference, which occurred in Berlin in 1961. The Berlin Conference enabled the formation of the Non-Alignment Movement. Archbishop Makarios attended the convention as a delegate from Cyprus and argued for receiving support for their uprising against the British. Cyprus was granted inclusion at the Berlin Conference, enabling the

Cypriot Greeks to enhance their standing within the Non-Alignment Movement and get backing from the UN General Assembly for Cyprus-related issues (Tekin 2012, 15-16). According to Sönmezoğlu (2006, 174-176), the second Non-Alignment Movement Conference occurred in Cairo in 1964 and had the attendance of 47 states. Turkey has chosen to send two Turkish diplomats as observers to the Conference in preparation for the upcoming deliberation on the Cyprus issue before the UN General Assembly. Despite the rejection of Türkiye's proposal by the organisers, Makarios successfully convinced the participating states to endorse the case of the Greek Cypriots. Consequently, a phrase in the declaration of the Conference on the Cyprus crisis endorsed Makarios' argument. Roughly half of the nonalignment members consisted of states from Africa. The third Conference occurred in Lusaka in 1970, and was followed by another one in Algeria in 1973. Although Makarios strongly advocated for a statement at the closing declarations of the Conferences, he had challenges in gaining support at the Colombo Conference in 1976 since the Greek Cypriots government had already been recognised as the legitimate representative of Cyprus in 1974. Turkey failed to prevent the inclusion of negative statements on the Cyprus issues in the final declarations of the Colombo Conference in 1976 and the Havana Conference in 1979. Sander (2000, 288-289) argues that in 1964, the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) consisted of 60 member countries, representing half of the total number of sovereign governments globally.

This achievement was reached during the third Non-Alignment Conference, consolidating the ideology of non-alignment. By 1986, when the number of countries reached 101, they accounted for 60% of the world's independent states. At the end of the Cold War, the growth of the movement had stopped. Nevertheless, the ideas of "nonalignment" and "neutrality" were extensively embraced as the diplomatic ideology throughout Asia and Africa. Fırat (2010, 170-175) claims that in 1965, Ankara sent three goodwill teams consisting of politicians, diplomats, journalists, and academics to several African states. The objective was to convince these governments to support Türkiye's stance on the Cyprus issue before the UN General Assembly. The original group carried out trips to Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Senegal. The second committee conducted visits to Cameroon, Gabon, Congo, Central African Republic, and Chad. Finally, the third committee travelled to Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Malawi, Madagascar, Sudan, Libya and Tunisia.

Although Foreign Minister Hasan Esat Işık claimed that Türkiye's efforts were aimed at resolving the Cyprus problem and establishing strong ties with Africa, it became clear that Turkey failed to gain support from African nations in the UN General Assembly and did not succeed in expanding its influence in Africa.

Özal's president saw the effective execution of the economic reforms that he had undertaken while serving as prime minister. By the late 1980s, the Turkish economy had undergone significant changes, becoming more vibrant, focused on exporting, and deeply integrated into the global economy. Özal quickly saw that many bordering nations of Turkey has the potential to become lucrative markets for Turkish exports. Furthermore, he comprehended that enhancing political alliances would be the rational first step in establishing a profitable business collaboration. Özal exhibited his commitment to promoting Türkiye's economic interests by accompanying a significant contingent of entrepreneurs throughout his overseas trips, so underscoring the significance of Türkiye's regional connections (Danforth 2008, 7). The post-Cold War era ushered in substantial changes for all actors in the global system, and Turkey was no exception. Türkiye's principal foreign policy direction throughout the time after the Cold War continued to priorities the United States and NATO. Turkey saw substantial transformations in both domestic politics and foreign policy dynamics throughout the 1990s. Similar to the leadership of Reagan in the United States and Thatcher in Britain, the Turgut Özal period in Turkey established the foundation for the emergence of neoliberal policies.

In the 1990s, Turkey adopted a foreign policy approach that included actively pursuing diplomatic partnerships with other countries. Türkiye's relationship with Europe was undergoing substantial changes. In 1987, Turkey formally applied for full membership in the European Community. During the Helsinki summit in 1999, the European Union formally acknowledged Türkiye as a candidate for membership (Burak 2021, 5). Turkey and African nations have established official diplomatic ties at both the consulate and embassy levels. Turkey officially recognised and established diplomatic relations with all the newly sovereign African states in the 1960s, and it still acknowledges and maintains diplomatic relations with successive African governments. Turkey now has 43 representative offices in several African countries, operating as embassies, as well as honorary consulates. Turkey was granted the status of "observer" in the African Union on April 12, 2005. To showcase the robustness of these alliances, Nigeria, Tunisia,

South Africa, Morocco, Egypt, Algeria, Ethiopia, Senegal, Sudan, Libya, and other African countries all eagerly created their own embassies to advance their own interests and strengthen their links. Mohamed (2020, 16) asserts that Türkiye's foreign policy, spanning from the inception of the Republic to the present, may be seen as a seamless extension of the foreign policy followed in the latter years of the Ottoman Empire.

After the Ottoman Empire was dissolved, the Republic of Türkiye established and deliberately isolated itself from Islamic, Arab, African, and other nationalities. Türkiye's main emphasis was solely on the western orientation, namely towards Europe. Since the 1950s, especially after the 1960s and 1980s, and particularly after the 1970s with Erbakan and the 1980s with Turgut Özal, there has been a notable change in aligning Türkiye with its geographical location. Nevertheless, the most prominent trend became evident after the AKP took government in 2002. This trend was rather characteristic, considering that Turkey had a significant and enduring impact on the region, especially during the era of the Ottoman Empire. From the thirteenth century onwards, the Ottomans exerted a substantial influence throughout the Mediterranean region. After the Cold War, Türkiye's foreign policy focused mostly on the newly formed Turkic republics in Central Asia. However, the internal political structure, the existence of coalition governments with several parties, economic crises, and military intervention in Turkey led to a decline in its attractiveness and impact on the Central Asian republics.

Since 2002, Turkey has had political stability as a result of a government controlled by a single political party. The stability has resulted in substantial domestic and global policy reforms in the nation. After this change, Africa became an important centre of attention for Turkish foreign policy (Tekin 2012, 2). On April 12, 2005, the African Union bestowed to Turkey the status of a "observer". Uchehara (2008, 52) states that African countries have 10 representative offices in Turkey, which function as embassies and honorary consulates general. The mentioned embassies include the diplomatic missions of Nigeria, Tunisia, South Africa, Morocco, Egypt, Algeria, Ethiopia, Senegal, Sudan, and Libya. Recently, Turkey has been making strides in reestablishing its ties with African states, with significant diplomatic visits taking place between Turkey and several African countries. After the Cold War, Turkish foreign policy was based on many crucial factors, such as political and diplomatic features, which serve as the basis for the current political relations between Africa and Turkey. This component of relationships has had a gradual improvement, especially since the mid-2000s. Specifically, with Türkiye's

declaration of the “Year of Africa ‘‘in 2005, Two cooperation summits between Türkiye and Africa were held in 2008 and 2014. This reveals a common real desire to develop interrelations in the political sphere, as well as a kind of positive mutual understanding between the two sides (Mohamed 2020, 19).

However, Türkiye during the decolonisation process in Africa, Türkiye tried to rekindle the flame of itself-power by recognising the sovereignty of all newly independent countries through the establishment of a resident embassies in number of them. The strategic objective of this soft power approach was to present itself to Africa as defender of national sovereignty and a vanguard against imperialism, so as to secure a penetrative linkage to participate in the allocation of economic values in Africa. But this form of Türkiye’s soft power outcomes was cowed by the superior soft power of China and America which had become a source of attraction, driving the economy of Africa because of their increasing roles as global superpowers that seem appealing to Africa states. This hegemonic influence of America and China’s soft power brought about a strategic reduction of Türkiye’s soft power (Enwere and Yilmaz 2014, 13). It is necessary to see the root cause of Turkish approach towards the Middle East and African countries in 60s and 70s as a manoeuvre to balance its relative isolation in the Western axis and to prove its relative “value” to the West. However, this strategy did not adequately work, and Türkiye could not receive the support it expected from countries from the Middle East and Africa.

Therefore, Africa would not be in the Turkish agenda for a long period of time until the late 1990s due to the debilitating instability in Türkiye’s political and economic spheres. Through the new multi-dimensional foreign policy vision launched by then minister of foreign affairs, İsmail Cem in 1998, Africa was included in the radar of Turkish foreign policy once again (Mehmet and Birol 2010, 533). Still on the same lane, Afacan (2013, 48) purported that Cem spearheaded the “Africa Action Plan” that could be considered as a new road map for the political, commercial and cultural cooperation between Türkiye and African countries. Some of the proposals of the plan like opening of new embassies, and improving political and commercial contacts later formed the basis of the “Year of Africa” policies to be launched by the AKP government in 2005. The “Opening Africa” policy, also known as the Action Plan for Africa, was introduced by Turkish foreign policy makers in 1998. Initially, efforts to establish political, economic, and social ties with African countries were in their early stages. However, the actual

implementation of this plan began in 2002 with the rise of the AK Party. Turkey leveraged its religious, cultural, and historical connections, rooted in its Ottoman history, to strengthen its relationship with African countries and position itself as a regional power and global actor. Despite some initial slow progress, Türkiye's strategic importance to the African continent has resulted in increased engagement with its people. Therefore, it is essential to analyse Türkiye's Opening Africa policy within the framework of the thesis "An Appraisal of the Economic Effects of Turkish Foreign Policy in Cameroon 2010-2022".

Joseph S. Nye, the originator of the notion of soft power, provided the following definition: soft power refers to the ability to persuade others to share your desired objectives. Put simply, it is influencing people to reach a desired outcome without coercing them. Soft power relies on the ability to exert influence and shape outcomes through means such as diplomacy, the dissemination of ideas, economic aid, the promotion of democracy, and cultural exchange. It is a form of power that enables states to persuade other countries to align with their objectives by leveraging their political values and cultural identity, rather than relying on coercive measures like military force, threats, or economic sanctions. While Turkey promptly acknowledged the newly sovereign African nations during the decolonisation period in the late 1950s, it failed to effectively or actively enhance its ties with the continent. During the Cold War, Turkey placed a high importance on its alliance with the Western countries, particularly the United States. It made a strong commitment to the political and security institutions of the West in order to ensure its own existence. This decision was possibly the most significant strategic proposal made by Turkish policy makers in the history of the country. Consequently, the importance of links with other areas, such as Africa, was seen to be of lesser significance and so, to some degree, unimportant. Nevertheless, the Cyprus conflict that arose in the 1960s and 1970s compelled Turkey to undertake new endeavours and prompted Turkey to cultivate fresh alliances, particularly in the Middle East and Africa (Afacan, 2013, 47-48).

Mohamed (2020, 20) analyses the slow progress of Türkiye in establishing connections with Africa, highlighting the importance of establishing solid diplomatic and political contacts. These interactions are influenced by a system of political objectives and interests that both sides maintain towards each other. For Turkey to effectively advance its political objectives on the global stage, particularly within the United Nations, it is

crucial for Turkey to develop strong diplomatic relationships with African nations. Africa, as a whole, requires Türkiye's assistance in addressing and resolving its numerous challenges and concerns within the global community. This is because Türkiye holds a prominent position in both the international and regional arenas, specifically as a significant regional power in the Middle East. Since the AKP took control in 2002, Turkey has been actively seeking alternative political connections outside of the European Union, which has rejected Türkiye's entry since 1997. After the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, Turkey began to view Africa from a new perspective. Therefore, it is crucial for all African nations to adopt a policy of non-discrimination, as the previous focus was mainly on the Northern and Southern regions. Turkey has acknowledged the importance of establishing strategic relationships with all African nations based on shared interests. Consequently, Africa has been a major priority in Turkish foreign policy since the end of the Cold War.

Ankara initiated strategic efforts to establish closer ties with the African continent, specifically focusing on Cameroon, when the new century started in 2000. After these countries were liberated, Türkiye emancipated itself from its complex connections with the Western world and returned to its original geographical location. Turkey and Africa have several prospects to establish partnerships at various levels. After gaining independence, Türkiye expanded its influence in Africa and has been acknowledged as a strategic ally of the African Union since 2008. The resurgence of Türkiye's strategic influence has resulted in the formation of key goals. At that time, there was a condition of political seclusion, economic bankruptcy, substantial external debts, reliance on Western nations, and general susceptibility. According to Mohamed (2020, 17), Türkiye's main emphasis was on domestic matters. The post-Africa Initiative Plan of 1998, referred to by Okumus (2021, 64) as the third stage, covers the period after 1998. Furthermore, he said that Türkiye's efforts to execute the Africa Initiative Plan, which was first announced in 1998, have been impeded by the country's constrained resources and economic conditions, hence limiting its capacity to fulfil the requirements of this initiative. Since assuming power in 2002, the AK party has implemented a comprehensive and substantial shift in foreign policy, resulting in the development and expansion of diplomatic relations with African countries. After Türkiye became an observer member of the African Union in 2005, there was a notable rise in Türkiye's involvement with Africa. In the same year, Turkey officially proclaimed it as the Year of

Africa. In 2008, the African Union upgraded the observer status to that of a strategic partner, and the Türkiye-Africa Cooperation Summit occurred in Istanbul. In the 2000s, there was an emphasis on enacting comprehensive policies that tackled several aspects. Africa had a crucial influence in the establishment and advancement of bilateral relations. The African Initiative Policy in Turkish foreign policy was discontinued in 2013 and replaced by the African Partnership Policy.

The 2005 "year of Africa": Trade and politics

The AKP came into power in late 2002 after the November elections, during which several prominent political personalities were ousted from their positions as a result of the profound economic crisis that had significantly affected the nation. The political calculus of Turkey. On the other hand, the AKP faced a scenario where the credibility of its past association with Islamism was being questioned. Thus, while it achieved power alone, breaking the long-standing trend of coalition governments, its political legitimacy was dubious among secular factions. Moreover, during their first two years in power, the party encountered substantial and pressing obstacles in the field of international relations, such as the 2003 Iraqi War, the Cyprus dispute, and relations with the European Union. As a result, Africa did not get significant attention or importance on the foreign policy agenda until 2005 (ibid). Although Türkiye initiated the "Development of Economic Relations Strategy with African Countries" in 2003, substantial advancements were not made until 2005.

By 2005, the AKP government had successfully built and enhanced its reputation to a certain degree, both inside the country and on the global stage. Consequently, it took advantage of the opportunity to tackle issues that were deemed less significant on the government's list of priorities, such as the African opening. In contrast to the Iraq war or the Cyprus dilemma, the African openness lacks the capacity to engender ideological differences inside the nation. Nevertheless, the fact remains that prioritising the improvement of political, cultural, and economic relations with Africa was not done. On the contrary, it was explicitly designed as a "secondary" tool to support other central foreign policy initiatives, such as the zero problems with neighbours and multidimensional foreign policy. Likewise, the trading opportunities in Africa served as substantial catalysts for economic growth for conservative corporate networks referred to be "Anatolian Tigers". The AKP relied on these networks as the fundamental basis of conservative support (Afacan 2013, 49-50). The website of the banned non-governmental organisation (NGO), African Opening, has importance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), who are considered the driving force behind economic growth. Conservative business organisations like the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (MÜSİAD) and Turkish Confederation of Businessmen have significant prominence.

Industrialists achieved notable progress, especially in the domain of exports to Africa. These two groups often include of small and medium-sized industrial and manufacturing enterprises. The listed firms' enthusiasm and drive to develop in Africa is clear, despite the perception of higher risk and unfamiliarity associated with doing business in Africa compared to well-established markets such as Europe and the U.S., particularly in Turkey. For instance, the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that have been prohibited have organised a total of seven conferences titled "Türkiye-Africa Foreign Trade Bridge" starting from 2005. The eighth matchmaking trade conference had the participation of 350 entrepreneurs from 54 African countries. During the event, a total of 10,000 bilateral business interviews were performed. Consequently, their efforts laid the groundwork for achieving a trade volume of 5 billion U.S. dollars. In actuality, Türkiye's African initiative is a strategic policy that enables the growth of export numbers, the creation of more job opportunities within the country, and the broadening of the portfolios of the "Anatolian Tigers," which have been consistently growing since Turgut Özal first facilitated their entry into global markets. Without a doubt, the rise of these conservative firms played a part in the AKP's success in three successive general elections.

The growing conservative bourgeoisie in Anatolia has taken on the task of balancing the established secular corporate elite, represented by the Turkish Industry and Corporate Association (TÜSİAD), in both political and economic spheres (Afacan 2013). The African openness in 2005 was not driven by a desire to enhance foreign policy alternatives or any sense of responsibility, as was the case in the 1970s and 1998. The African initiatives in the 1970s and 1998 were primarily motivated by the sense of seclusion encountered at the global stage. The 2005 African openness is a crucial element of the AKP government's comprehensive foreign policy strategy. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the action plan developed in 1998 and 2005 do not have different scopes. The "Year of Africa" in 2005 acted as a motivator for executing the action plan that was not possible in 1998, while also assisting in the development of strategies that are in line with Türkiye's material capabilities and expertise. For example, the 1998 action plan highlighted the need of expanding the number of embassies in Africa. However, due to unfavourable economic conditions at the time, it was not feasible to carry out this plan. The objective of creating further embassies was mostly accomplished in the subsequent years (Afacan 2013, 51-52).

Conclusion

This chapter examined the historical interactions between Türkiye and the African continent, spanning from the Ottoman Empire to the pre- and post-Cold War eras, and finally the period from 2010 to 2022 in the 21st Century. This chapter provided an overview of the economic and political relations between the continent and Turkey, focusing on the most significant and traditional occasions. The literature discusses the slow pace of Turkish involvement over various historical periods, which may be seen as a manifestation of “late Hewett Syndrome” in Ankara’s foreign policy strategies. Furthermore, the thesis explores how the presence of several political parties in Turkey and the diverse range of political ideologies have shaped both internal and international policies towards Africa, adding a distinct character to the research. Furthermore, the recent changes that drive Ankara’s foreign policy were brought to light, along with the significant aspects of foreign policy analysis that are also crucial.

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