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Does “rising power” mean “rising donor”? Turkey’s development aid in Africa

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For each newly emerging donor in Africa, there are different ways of dealing with the continent, different ways of spending aid and prioritizing the problems. At a political and security level, traditional actors are still the major actors in the continent, while economic and development aid is mostly dominated by the newly emerging non-traditional actors. Turkey as a non-traditional actor has been focusing on development aid and economy, but now it has interested in political affairs and state-building too. This has put Turkey in a middle position between traditional and non-traditional actors in the continent. Since 2011, Turkey is interested to be a more political actor in the continent than being merely an economic power or donor country. This certainly has repercussion for the continent and international actors for possible cooperation and coordination. The main focus of this article will be explaining and contextualizing Turkey’s aid involvement in the continent as the main underlying elements of its interest to be a political power in the last few years.

Keywords: Turkey; Africa; rising power; development aid; donor; south–south cooperation

Introduction

The rise of new global actors is changing the dynamics of global power. The challenges this presents for peace and security at a geo-strategic level have generated much analysis and debate, but the impact of rising powers on peace and security and economic development with regard to a rising Muslim power – Turkey – has received less attention. Perhaps because of that one cannot find Turkey within the south–south cooperation debates nor in the south–north relations. This article intends to locate Turkey within these debates and discuss Turkey’s contribution to Africa as a new rising donor to the continent. Indeed, the economic growth of rising powers depends in large part on access to overseas markets and resources, so their commercial ties with the developing world – including conflict-affected states – are fast-growing. This is also the case for Turkey.

Building consensus between rising powers like Turkey and other international actors about how to promote peace and security in conflict-affected states especially in Africa is becoming an important issue especially after Turkish involvement in Somalia. One need to understand how the growing engagement of rising powers like Turkey in these contexts is affecting conflict dynamics – and what does this mean for policy-makers. This is essential both to inform strategies towards conflict-affected states and as a basis for dialogue between Turkey and other international actors about how to support peace and security in Africa. Since 2011, Turkey is interested to be a more political actor in the continent than being merely an economic power or donor country. This

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certainly has repercussion for the continent and international actors for possible cooperation and coordination. The main focus of this article will be explaining and contextualizing Turkey's aid involvement in the continent as the main underlying elements of is interest to be a political power in last few years.

Rising powers and aid in Africa

Since the early 2000s, there is a growing visibility of the "rising powers" in international development cooperation especially in Africa that has led to claims that they represent a "challenge to the development paradigm" (Six 2009). These countries' own statements and explanations mostly emphasize the distinctiveness of the horizontality, solidarity, mutual learning and potential for "win-win" partnerships of their development cooperation. This suggests the emergence of a new paradigm, with major implications for traditional aid donors. Yet beyond the political rhetoric, it is far from clear whether such a new paradigm is indeed emerging, and if so what it comprises for the continent and beyond. Despite this, the shifts in geopolitical and economic power associated with the rise of the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) countries, the "paradigm shifts" in their domestic development models (Chibba 2011), the associated shifts in discourses on the nature of international development cooperation and the specific implications for the landscape of "Aidland" (Mosse 2011) are undoubtedly significant. At the macro level, these shifts have increasingly attracted the interest of both policy-makers (Manning 2006) and researchers (Humphrey and Messner 2006, Hurrell 2006, Kragelund 2011, Mawdsley 2011) to contextualize these developments. However, to date very little research has explored the links and disconnects between discourses, policies and practices in the actual development cooperation activities of the rising powers as they take shape on the ground. There is, therefore, one can talk about a critical gap in the evidence required to assess the nature, extent and implications of any emerging "new paradigm" for international development cooperation in Africa and beyond.

For each newly emerging donor on the continent, there are different ways of dealing with the continent, different ways of spending aid and prioritizing the problems. While China mostly focuses on construction of the infrastructure and developing the transportation capacity of the states, India prioritizes win-win trade relations. Brazil and Russia are trying to develop their old links in terms of energy and economic developments, Turkey is re-discovering the continent after leaving to its own destiny more than a century. At the same time, there is an unspoken competition for the control of the energy resources and economic benefits between traditional and non-traditional actors in Africa. At political and security levels, traditional actors are still the major actors in the continent, while economic and development aid is mostly dominated by the newly emerging non-traditional actors. Turkey as a non-traditional actor was focusing on development aid and economy, but now it has interested in political affairs and state-building too. This has put Turkey in a middle position between traditional and non-traditional actors in the continent. What does that mean for the continent is the content of another article; however, perhaps Turkey can open the channel for non-traditional actors to be one of the traditional actors in coming years. Therefore, the case of Turkey may be more interesting those other newly emerging actors in that sense.

Turkey as a rising power in Africa

One of the most novel aspects of Turkish foreign policy in recent year is indisputably its outreach to Africa. Having almost not-more-than-formal relations in less than a decade ago to initiate an increasingly powerful and fruitful partnership does not only indicate the scope and the content of these developing relations, but also its speed. How Africa can benefit from Turkey's forceful

interest in Africa has been a quite serious question among the political and intellectual elite. In part, taking up this question to elaborate; and in part outlining a neglected dimension of Turkey–Africa relations, this article intends to sketch the boundaries of Turkish aid to Africa and discuss Turkey as a new donor.

Since 2002, a new Turkish foreign policy is in place. Active participation in the fight against poverty, and increasing development and humanitarian aid are both part of Turkey’s new foreign policy and international image. The more actively Turkey engages in regional and global affairs, the more often Turkey’s involvement can be seen in providing development aid. Turkey’s official development agency, Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) and Turkish civil society organizations have been active for a long time in the Middle East, Central Asia and the Balkans. However, there is a huge interest and increase in terms of both official and unofficial aid to Africa in the last decade, which represents an extension of activities to a much broader geographical area. The question is here what created the need to expand to Africa in a short time, and what are the main underlying reasons? The basic reason lies in the re-orientation of Turkish foreign policy within the global politics which basically has, at least, three dimensions: (i) the visible prominence of a new geographical perception in Ankara’s outlook towards the whole world, which accepts that Africa and Asia are not regarded as distant and troubled regions but as possible partners; (ii) considerable efforts to re-position itself in a changing global economy by defining Turkey as a “central country” rather than a “bridge” and developing an institutionalized partnership with Asia and Africa in order to play a more active role in international relations and (iii) increasing activities in all regions and international organizations in order to contribute to regional and global peace (Ozkan 2011, 116–117). Ankara’s increasing interest in Africa is part and parcel of this policy. With regard to Turkish aid to the continent, one should note here that some Turkish non-governmental organizations already have a long history of involvement in Africa such as Istanbul-based the Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (IHH) since 1996. What we see today is an official state involvement in terms of sending developmental aid to Africa as part of Turkey’s developing relations with the continent and to catch up civil society activities.

Turkey’s development aid profile: from recipient to donor

Put simply, Turkey, as a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), is both a provider and recipient of international assistance. The OECD lists Turkey as not member of the Development Assistance Committee (non-DAC) donor. As part of Ankara’s intention to be listed as a donor country by OECD, Turkey is closely following the international agenda and regulations in terms of international aid. For example, a clear follow-up the rules set by the Paris Declaration and thus adopting a programme-based approach to aid delivery can be observed easily. That is also what explains Turkey’s participation in the 4th High Level Forum on international aid in Busan, South Korea (TIKA 2011).

Turkey’s contribution as a donor was not visible until recently because it was both little to consider and far from being implemented in a coordinated manner (Kulaklikaya and Nurdun 2010). As Turkey grows economically at 7% annually in last seven years (in 2010 it was 8.9), which are little less than that of India, her ambition and the possible scope of activities in the field of development aid have also increased. Turkey’s Gross domestic product (GDP) in 2010 reached to US\$1116 billion (OECD 2013). Currently Turkish trade has exceeded US\$300 billion as the European Union (EU), Russia and China being major trading partners (EU 2013). According to GDP figures (at Purchasing Power Parity), Turkey is the 16th biggest economy in the world, the 6th in Europe. Complimenting this, Turkey has been continuously increasing its official development aid since 2004 and implementing opening policies towards

historically neglected areas in Turkish foreign policy, such as towards Latin America, Africa and Far East. The economic results of the openings are much clearer in Turkey–Africa relations. For example, Turkey’s trade volume with African countries was only US\$5.4 billion in 2003, and increased more than three-fold exceeding US\$17 billion in 2011, while China’s trade with Africa was around US\$100 billion, and India–Africa trade was US\$46 billion in the same year. Turkish investments in Africa are steadily increasing and estimated as \$US1 billion by the end of 2007 (Yildiz 2007). This has been an important accelerating factor in increasing Turkey’s official development aid to Africa.

It is possible to consider Turkey as a newcomer or increasingly emerging donor because one of the defining aspects of the new Turkish foreign policy has been increased humanitarian and development assistance programmes, evidenced by an expanding international aid budget over recent years. Turkey started its aid activities as early as 1985. These were more coordinated once TIKA came into existence in 1992. TIKA has coordination offices in 26 countries in Africa, Asia and Europe for delivering development assistance through technical projects and humanitarian activities.

TIKA is an autonomous organization that operates under the prime ministry. Its main function is to establish a bridge between development partners’ needs and experience possessed by relevant Turkish ministries/agencies. TIKA is also the main responsible state institution on Official Development Assistance (ODA) reporting and data collection. TIKA partners with a number of international organizations, including the UN, OECD, UNESCO and the EU institutions. Categories of the development assistance provided by TIKA include technical cooperation projects, direct investments, loans and credits, humanitarian assistance, peace building and contributions to international organizations to support international joint efforts.

TIKA was initially established to help transition of the states in Central Asia, Caucasus and the Balkans. However, from 2003, it was transformed into a more global aid agency and expanded its area of operation. For example, in 1992–2002 TIKA conducted 2346 projects and activities in total, and its annual average number of projects and activities was only 256 (Sahin 2007, 27). However, TIKA’s total projects and activities expanded to 2780 in 2003–2006, notably in Africa, Middle East and North Africa. TIKA-sponsored projects towards the Middle East and Africa rose from 45 in 2005 to 150 in 2006 (Fidan and Nurdun 2008, 100). The first TIKA Program Coordinator Office in Africa was opened in Addis Ababa in 2005, with Khartoum and Dakar following in 2006 and 2007, respectively. TIKA offices support development projects in their respective regions, and from these 3 offices it operates in 37 countries in Africa. With the opening of new embassies all over the continent (21 newly opened, now total 33), the number of TIKA offices in Africa is likely to increase as well, thus increasing Turkish aid flow to the continent.

The amount of TIKA’s international assistance has increased dramatically since 2004. The annual amount between 2002 and 2004 was around \$80 million, while the annual average reached \$700 million between 2006 and 2009 (TIKA 2009, Kalkinma Yardimlari Raporu, 12). In 2010, Turkey’s ODA reached US\$967 million (OECD 2012a). With regard to distribution of it, some 44% goes to the Caucasus and Central Asia, 26% to the Balkans, 3% to Far East and the rest (24%) to the Middle East and Africa (TIKA 2009, Kalkinma Yardimlari Raporu, 52). Overall, Turkey’s ODA performance is well above the EU member-Poland. According to OECD/DAC Development Cooperation Report, Turkey, which was the number one donor in 2006 among emerging donors, ranked second after the Republic of Korea both in 2007 and 2008 (OECD 2009).

Although it still represents a quarter of TIKA budget, Turkish ODA to Africa increased by 67% from US\$30.9 million in 2009 to US\$71 million in 2010. Aid to the least-developed countries (LDCs) has also increased to US\$158.95 million in 2010 (MFA 2012). The bulk of

bilateral assistance was delivered as project and programme aid, technical assistance and involvement in post-conflict peace building operations and humanitarian aid. In 2010, out of total US \$967 million Turkish ODA, 259 was technical cooperation and 519 was project-type interventions (OECD 2012b).

South–south cooperation was not existed before in Turkish discourse but now it is part of Ankara’s development cooperation. According to Turkish Foreign Ministry website, net disbursements of south–south cooperation (bilateral and multilateral) in 2007 in Colombia, the Republic of Korea and Turkey were 343 million, 270 million and 602 million USD, respectively. Between 2002 and 2007, the amount increased by 3 times in Colombia, 4 times in the Republic of Korea, and 20 times in Turkey (MFA 2012).

Besides TIKA, there are also other institutional organizations through which Turkey sends aid. After TIKA, the second institution that provides international aid is the Ministry of Education and third is the military. The Ministry of Education usually involves in providing scholarships to students and supporting educational institutions abroad. The military mostly involves in training. The Religious Directorate for Religious Affairs (Diyanet) and Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay) can also be mentioned here, because Turkey also gives direct economic support to Africa’s development but their involvements are usually minor.

Turkey’s rise as an alternative donor

A major goal of Turkish foreign policy in last decade has been to extend the scope of Turkey’s involvement beyond the immediate neighbourhood. In line with this objective, Turkey initiated development cooperation relations with African countries. The “Year of Africa” was declared in Turkey in 2005. In 2008, Turkey hosted the First Turkey–Africa Cooperation Summit in Istanbul and the same year the African Union declared Turkey a “Strategic Partner”. It is also decided that Turkey–Africa Summit will be a regular format and take place in every five year (Ozkan 2008, 2010, 2012).

In line with deepening political relations with Africa, TIKA started to design projects and activities in Africa to serve long-term purposes and the main areas of cooperation include agriculture, health, education, water and sanitation, vocational training, institutional capacity development and humanitarian assistance. But what stand out more is TIKA’s joint projects with other state apparatus. The Africa Agricultural Development Programme, Africa Health Programme and the Africa Vocational Training Programme are multi-country programmes tailored to meet the specific needs of African countries in that sense. Initiated in 2008, for example, TIKA Agricultural Development Program covers 13 countries: Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Senegal, Comoros, Madagascar, Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda and is likely to be extended in future. Implemented with the Ministry of Agriculture, now it is in the process of implementing pilot projects in partner countries. The Improving Quality Potato Production project in Comoros Islands; the national agricultural master plan for Djibouti are examples of such projects.

Turkey also gives direct economic support to Africa’s development through international organizations, although multilateral aid only constitutes around 6% both in 2008 and 2009 (OECD 2011). In 2008, Turkey donated \$7.5 million to various African countries via international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Red Crescent to assist them to cope with the effects of drought and other natural disasters. In 2008, Turkey donated US\$3.5 million in humanitarian aid through the WFP (Ozkan and Birol 2010, 537–538), while in 2009 it made a modest donation of US\$0.5 million to the African Union budget. In 2007, Turkey for the first time hosted a summit of the LDCs in Istanbul, where it committed \$20 million development aid for them and promised a further \$3 million to be allocated for combating the AIDS epidemic in three years. In May 2011, the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs

also held in Istanbul with participation of 33 African countries. Turkey has invited 650 businessmen and investors to the Conference maintaining that the biggest contribution to be made to Africa would be through its entrepreneurs and its own resources by encouraging them (<http://www ldc4istanbul.org/>). At the end, participant countries agreed to establish for the first time a mechanism that will monitor and follow-up whether the promises and pledges are kept and also to issue an annual progress report for Africa.

Turkey's boasting humanitarian involvement came to surface when drought and famine situation became worse in East Africa. On 19 August 2011, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited Somalia, arguably the worst affected country from famine and drought, to draw international attention to country's deadly situation. He has become the first leader from outside Africa to visit Somalia in nearly two decades. Erdogan took his wife, daughter and an entourage consisting of cabinet members and their families with him to Somalia, and visited refugee camps and hospitals in Somalia to witness the devastation caused by the severe drought. This followed by a massive aid campaign in Turkey and it is estimated that approximately US\$600 million has been collected for that purpose both by state apparatus and civil society organizations.

Erdogan has also brought the issue to the UN General Assembly meeting in September 2011 and called international community for a continued approach to find a long-lasting solution. Turkey has also opened an embassy in Mogadishu to show its seriousness and took several measures to help Somalia improve its infrastructure (Ali 2011). According to various sources, Turkey will dig wells to improve water supply, building a major hospital, six field hospitals and a highway from the Mogadishu Airport to the city centre, as well as facilities for waste management to clean up Mogadishu's rubbish-strewn streets. The Turkish Housing Development Administration will also build houses and schools in the country in near future. TIKA is set to open deep and semi-deep water wells in Mogadishu and other cities within the framework of a project over the next two years, and also will build six field hospitals in Somalia as well as provide five ambulances (BBC 2011).

Turkey in Africa: a civil society-led, state-followed initiative?

Generally speaking, the role of civil society in Turkish foreign relations has been quite limited, and it has usually played a complementary role to state policy. However, in the 2000s, probably for the first time in the republican era, civil society organizations have not only contributed to foreign policy-making but also have actively promoted policies backed by the state politically but not financially. This is the nature of Turkey–Africa relations. Conservative business associations which are ideologically and politically close to the ruling Justice and Development Party such as the Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists of Turkey (TUSKON), and international aid organizations like IHH have paved the way for the acceleration of Turkey–Africa relations, exemplifying the converging interests between state and civil society.

TUSKON, especially through the World Trade Bridge meetings, has pioneered in bringing African businessmen to Turkey and encouraging Turkish businesses to expand to Africa. Such meetings have been conducted without interruption since 2006 with increasing participation each year. TUSKON also sends several delegations to Africa to examine investment opportunities on site. Turkey also supports businessmen to do trade with Africa by providing Eximbank credit. There is not much information available about it, but Turkey signed a US\$100 million Eximbank credit with Ethiopia, US\$50 million with Tanzania in 2011 (Ekonomi Bakanligi 2011).

IHH has been doing many developmental works ranging from education, health to human development in 43 countries in Africa. Now, it is especially helping thousands of people gain

sight with its Cataract Project conducted through hospitals in Sudan. IHH is directly contributes to numerous projects, including well-drilling projects, setting-up of schools and hospitals in numerous African countries (Oruc 2007).

In addition to them, many other civil society organizations such as *Dosteli*, *Cansuyu*, *Yeryuzu Doktorlari* and *Kimse Yok Mu* are active in Africa through various projects. They serve the continent in many areas such as education and health particularly, and also offer opportunities for African students to study in Turkish universities with scholarships.

The growing Turkish civil society involvement in Africa has led close cooperation between civil society organizations and state apparatus. For example, following the success of the IHH's Cataract Project, TIKA along with IHH, El-Birr and Tavasul Association agreed to perform another 12,000 surgeries in Sudan. The surgeries will be performed in Sudan supported with physicians and nurses from Turkey. TIKA is also providing technical and financial support to the interested group of doctors that perform routine check-ups, hepatitis vaccinations and operations in Africa (Tokyay 2011).

Conclusion: implications for international cooperation and future

Turkey has made a radical transition over the course of a decade. Its economy is growing rapidly and it has become more outward-oriented and increasingly confident as a regional and global power. So far, Turkey's official development aid is connected to Turkey's geographical and social interest as well as trade consideration with recipient countries (Kulaklikaya and Nurdun 2010). There is no written policy about it, but so far Aid destination indicates that. Central Asia is likely to stay as a main destination for Turkish aid in near time, but diversification of it will not take much time. As Balkan reconciliation is becoming a main foreign policy issue in Turkey in recent years, there is an understandable increase in Turkish aid towards the region. The main indication is that the second most aid recipient country is Bosnia and Herzegovina after Afghanistan (TIKA 2009, Faaliyet Raporu, 64). One new area of increase in Turkish aid is likely to be Arab countries after the Arab Spring. While there is much interest from the Arab world to understand Turkey's development; Turkey also sees the recent developments as an opportunity to design a new regional order. Therefore, development projects and aid is likely to increase especially towards Egypt and Tunisia.

Until now there has been little cooperation with official aid institutions of any country, but TIKA recently has started signing cooperation agreements, such as with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in 2011. But there has been cooperation with international organizations. For example, in May 2011, UNESCO and TIKA concluded a Memorandum of Understanding which provides for the exchange of information and the development of operational activities in areas of common interest. This partnership is likely to provide cooperation in cultural heritage, vocational training, institutional development and water-related issues. The agreement defines the scope for joint actions in Africa, the Balkans, Central Asia and Middle East (UNESCO 2011).

With regard to Turkey's possible cooperation with other countries, as long as there is common interests and convergence, it is possible. In Balkans and the Middle East, there are plenty of rooms to discover and do developmental projects together with other countries. In Africa, it may stay as a minor cooperation at this stage, but in the long term, major cooperation to contribute development could be defined. One reason for the less interest of TIKA for cooperation in Africa, based on personal observations, could be that TIKA is discovering the continent, and largely following the civil society steps. It is yet to develop its own way of understanding the continent. Unless that happens, more cooperation in other places, such as in the Middle East, but less cooperation in Africa is likely to be observed.

Notes on contributor

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