

In the Context of the Political Economy of Sub-Saharan Africa During the Post-colonial Period: Turkey's African Investments Example of "Renaissance DAM"

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The strategy implemented by the Republic of Turkey in Sub-Saharan Africa needs to be examined not only in terms of Geopolitics, but also in terms of Political Economy. From this point of view, it is necessary to examine the economic difficulties or advantages that may arise. In our era, it is still being revealed whether it finds a response in "Hierarchical African policies" and whether "white rule" in Africa can continue effectively. The trade systematics and ranking of the top five countries in Africa's trade system are also changing. The most important data is that the will of African people and decision makers not to be "passive" is also visible. The hypothesis of the article is that the political negotiation process, which will be created under equal conditions, can be organized by increasing commercial dependence. African history and the political structure of Africa have not only a geopolitical point of view. The African continent, which was seen as a raw material and human resource during the colonial period, was also subjected to foreign influence in terms of "European Harmony" and other theories of domination. The role of Africa in the system put forward by Klemens von Metternich is being re-examined by the emerging new powers in the contemporary world. In this context, undoubtedly, the thesis "African solutions to Africa's problems" put forward by Turkey should be considered not only as a point of view, but also as a historical, economic and sociological proposition. In this study, Turkey's current policies towards sub-Saharan Africa will be discussed on the example of the Renaissance dam. What policies are needed to avoid increase the welfare of a region? Which ethical processes can be ignoring for conduct by these policies? In order to answer these important questions, a historicity appropriate to the Annales School approach is required in the light of premodern "market" dynamics and social sharing theories. The aim of the article is to cover the weaknesses and strengths of Turkey's African policy after the presentation of African ecopolitics from a historical perspective.

Keywords: African geopolitics, African economic policy, African investments, Turkish foreign policy

Introduction

Despite having an important place in human history before colonization, African history is generally told through a Euro-centric reading. In this regard, Africa may be a sub-narrative of European history rather than a historical entity. This judgment alone serves the idea that the management of Africa, which should be dominated,

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should not be left to its internal dynamics. This approach, which is placed at an even lower level than the phenomenon of Orientalism, is also at the basis of western-centered readings of civilization. Undoubtedly, the alienation of Africa includes not only political but also economic approaches.¹

The desire to rule has been implemented in the form of establishing a hegemony over Africa. It was an important priority to obtain Africa's resources more cheaply and sustainably in a western-centered production system. This kind of thinking appears as an effort to keep the welfare of the region low with a very primitive system. It would not be wrong to say that the "unequal development process" put forward in Immanuel Wallerstein's World System Theory is the result of this belief.

There is hope that communications will lead to democratic and stable governments on the African continent. The "PAX AMERICA" process did not and does not bring regular trade in a peaceful environment for Africa, but the new international system with multiple competing players brings new hope.

African Geopolitics and Political Economy to the Present

Unknown Lands "Terrae Incognite"

Contemporary approaches to historiography suggest that a chronological text alone does not reflect history. The need to take into account factors such as geography, climate, sociology, etc. in historiography can answer the question "Why" (Burke, 2006). Undoubtedly, the fact that a long period in Africa's history has been treated only as the history of North Africa is due to the climatic and geographical difficulties in reaching Sub-Saharan Africa. Throughout human history, the relationship between Africa and western civilization has continued through North Africa. For example, Carthage, the greatest enemy of Rome, invaded Spain and ruled for a long time, just as the Umayyad Caliphate and the Ottomans had a long period of conflict with Spain. The Strait of Gibraltar, a narrow strait separating Spain and Morocco, was undoubtedly instrumental in this model of "invasion". The warlike tribes of North Africa and the empires that controlled them were always a threat to the West.

Is there an Africa outside the above-mentioned and known history? Of course, states such as the Sultanate of Mali in Central Africa, Sudan in the Horn of Africa and the Kingdom of Ethiopia are regions that have been highly influenced by Islamic civilization and its successors. The ancient civilizations of Africa are not only Carthage and Egypt. Both the Sultanates of Sudan and Mali are the first ancient civilizations that come to mind. For example, while on his pilgrimage, the Sultan of Mali, Mense Musa, is known to have brought with him riches that caused economic abundance in Egypt and even shook the general economic order.²

Despite the myths about Africa's riches, the West only stayed on the Cape of Good Hope route during the age of exploration and did not venture further inland. There is a general consensus in the literature as to why this

¹ J. J. Rousseau takes the concept of "Alienate" as a prerequisite for acquiring power. If it is possible to alienate one group against another, or in other words, if it can be done, then what is worthy of us for the alienated group is not necessarily worthy of them. A group or a race can be alienated because the behavioral ethics in society are the same for everyone, raising what can be taken as a problem of governance. This will no longer raise ethical problems in our behavior towards the alien. (Rousseau, 2012)

In his book "Animal Farm", George Orwell describes popular culture as "all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others". The more equal group is undoubtedly the group that holds the power (Orwell, 2021).

² "During their stay in Egypt, Mense Mûsâ and those who were part of the pilgrimage caravan revitalized the commercial life by making large amounts of purchases, the sultan and his entourage, who were fascinated by the beautiful fabrics and beautiful concubines of Egypt, paid 5 dinars for 1 dinar of goods, and this abundance of gold, which enriched the people of Cairo, reached a degree that devalued the value of gold in Egypt. It is recorded that gold prices did not rise for twelve years after this expedition and that the Egyptian people lived in abundance during this period, and that the Venetian merchants in Cairo reported this situation to their administrators and reported that Mali State became an important trade center and replaced Gâne in the region." (Kavas, 2004)

was the case. Before the second half of the nineteenth century, the unknown lands, described as the "*White Man's Grave*", were not explored by the West due to natural obstacles and harsh climatic conditions. It is also argued that the riches of Africa, which has been the subject of various myths since ancient Greece, did not attract Europe's interest due to the competition from America and India (Luraghi, 2019).

Discovery of Africa

The most important achievement of hunter-gatherer society with the agricultural revolution was population growth. The abundance of human labor with the increase in population and the blending of this abundance with inventions with high energy efficiency such as water mills, sailing ships, etc., and the performance of more complicated and difficult works with less human labor prepared the agricultural society for the industrial revolution. Just like an energy reactor, humans are fed and produce labor force (Cipolla, 2021). It is also predicted that the increasing population will cause economic difficulties after a certain point. As in Malthus' proposition, the population increases geometrically, while the resources required to feed this population are scarce and arithmetically increasing (Malthus, 2017). Under the influence of mercantilism, Europe was both in need of human labor and worried about its high cost.

Africa has always been known to the West, yet it has been too lately discovered. For a while, Europe saw Africa only as human capital. In the age of exploration, mercantilist ideas had built an ecosystem in which every means should be tried to make a profit and other moral values could be ignored, and with this belief, Europe needed human labor (Knapp, 1986). Producing more, and in the process producing at less cost, meant more trade surpluses. African people continued to be seen only as a source of energy because they were foreign in appearance (Rousseau, 2011). Tocqueville mentions that even the idea of being Christian for "slaves" was not understandable for "masters". So much so that they are not even concerned about their own future. They have been kept ignorant by hard labor, so they can turn even Christianity into an exciting and ugly superstition (Tocqueville, 2016). West Africa was defined as a non-self-community with an exclusionary social perspective. They could serve the white man and natural ethics might not apply to them. This attitude meant more work for African-Americans like other Africans.

Having moved from an agrarian to an industrial society, Europe now needed more raw materials and was engaged in an imperialist competition for this purpose. Shillington named this period of African history as "*African Plunder*" (Shillington, 2020). When Europe identified Africa as an economic resource, a violent "Exploration" began. The West's appetite for exploration ended with the transformation of Africa from a very small part of Africa at the beginning of the 19th century into a full colonial continent by the end of the century. The riches of sub-Saharan Africa became the primary target of the West, so much so that a "gentleman's" agreement was even concluded (Ferro, 2017). The question is why or how Africa's peoples, rulers and primitive states were ignored compared to the West. The West turned its industrial superiority into a war machine in Africa and did not hesitate to use this violence locally. The purpose of territorial supremacy in Africa was explained as "*Protecting the Empire*". Although Ferro characterizes this emphasis as "the will of a state to expand its power without any purpose, without any borders" (Ferro, 2017), it is understood to be a balance of power policy with a strict realist system of alliances. Introduced by Klemens von Metternich, "European Harmony" was designed to balance the role of Africa through the spheres of influence of the great powers in Africa, thus preventing the rise of a power that would upset the balance in continental Europe (Arı, 2013).

The Western Economic Model in Africa

The imperialist era came had a cost for Africa. Ignored in the face of fierce competition, the indigenous population was unable to resist the newly superior West. The economic order based on value transfer was profit-centered and unequal in a way that the local population had never experienced before. African peoples, with their traditions and a specific social structure, could not accept this new Modernization dictated to them. The means of production presented to them as innovations were inherently dismissive of local traditions, changing and destroying them in a patronizing manner (Tatar, 2000). Issues such as the fair sharing of surplus value or the means of production were disregarded and the people of the conquered regions were considered as commodities.

Today, Africa is still exposed to an unequal development pattern by Europe and policies are made to ensure that it is no more than a supplier of raw materials. Galtung argues that the "living condition" is a scale of conflict of interest. The difference in living conditions brings about conflict or incompatibility of interests (Galtung, 2004). As the conflict persists, the gap increases and unequal development conditions are created. In fact, a society with low welfare and a quality of life that is just enough to survive is also the source of cheap raw materials. Africa's new cultural codes are between being content with what is given or being a party to the conflict. Undoubtedly, this newly learned model of behavior is conditioned to become a tradition (Hayek, 2011).

Colonial traditions in Africa persist even today. The British colonial system was based on a commercial superiority over local authorities who collected the products of the people, taking into account the predetermined general level of prices (Acemoğlu, & Robinson, 2012). The exploitation of local people through their administrators is a model of value transfer that was invented after slavery was rejected by the peoples of the colonial countries due to both economic and ethical concerns. In this new method, the labor force is designed to meet the West's need for raw materials and semi-finished products by producing under minimum conditions in its homeland, and the resulting reasonable commercial structure is designed in such a way that it is not exposed to public pressure.

The "foreign" people of Africa continue to be further away but in the same position. Economic sociology has also revealed a social hierarchy with the concept of "Culture Industry" in the new period (Kitapçı 2019). Europe has based the problem of "*legitimacy*" on the basis that Europe's values are superior and that only in this way can the other nations also develop. The African peoples were again positioned at the bottom as market and labor force. Blaut argues that the idea of "*Eurocentrism*" as a theory of colonialism is a question of legitimacy, and that it comes from the spirit of European expansionism. What is meant by legitimacy is that Europe naturally progresses and modernizes, whereas non-Europe is in a more static state of immutability in every period. According to this definition, "rationality, innovation and imagination" are values attributed to Europe, characteristics that are in keeping with the European spirit and characteristic of western man (Blaut, 2015).

Turkey's Nile Basin Policies in Terms of "Ability to Influence" and the Case of Renaissance Dam

Outlines of Turkey's Africa Policy

In international relations literature, the Post Westphalian period is based on producing diplomacy based on the condition of sovereignty and equality. However, the principle of sovereignty and equality of nations has been ignored by the dominant party states in certain periods. This argument is understood in the decisions of the UN bodies established after World War II. The UN organs that form the basis of this argument are the Security Council and the Guardianship Council. Although the implementation of the Guardianship Council ended in 1994,

the articles on guardianship in the UN Charter provide sufficient information about the western view of Africa during this period.³ From this point of view, while the Guardianship Council could be perceived as an alternative structure to colonialism all over the world, it is claimed that it does not present an egalitarian approach due to the idea that nations cannot govern themselves.

The common problem of Africa and other regions that were subjected to colonial policies is that the mutual relations in these regions are based on dependence. A state's ability to influence shows its power, but power is also a phenomenon that needs to be transformed into the ability to influence by using it effectively. In cases where dependence is one-way, unrest and conflict arise. This is perceived as a problem that will undermine the security of nations in the globalization process. For this reason, all actions that need to be taken to protect diplomatic or commercial interests bring along a security dilemma. It is more rational to suggest that countries should consider the use of hard power as a last option and consider civilian, military and normative elements first. It is also an accepted judgment that the expected effectiveness of an international actor in foreign policy depends on the multifaceted and calculable risks (Bretherton, & Vogler, 2005).

Nye defines "Smart Power" as the ones that make the best use of Hard Power and Soft Power (Nye, 2009). The biggest problem in international relations is "what states demand". This issue has been an important topic of discussion in academic circles (Finnemore, 1996). There is a clear relationship between what is demanded and potential. A state should therefore analyze its foreign policy on the basis of power and expand its capacity with other spheres of influence. These spheres of influence can be military alliances, as proposed by the purely realist approach, or mutual humanitarian and normative cooperation (Baldwin, 2016). When states with mutual interests build their relations on the basis of interdependence, it becomes a projection of both peace and continuity in relations. It is argued that states that establish relations on the basis of interdependence will pursue a policy towards the continuation of their relations with the motive of protecting their own interests relatively more or less indiscriminately on both sides (Keohane, & Nye, 2001).

The post-colonial efforts of global powers to play a role in the African problematic through commercial colonialism have led to new security searches for the region. Turkey has used its soft power in its Africa policy to establish relations with local people and administrators based on mutual trust (Firat, 2007). The opening of new diplomatic missions in Africa has also been effective in increasing foreign trade with the region. Turkey's African policy, which does not adopt a colonialist approach, puts other countries with interests in the region at a disadvantage. Establishing trade relations in the region, where social memory is quite vivid, is analyzed on the basis of ease of doing business rather than a power-based analysis in the new era.

The literature emphasizes the importance of a favorable investment climate for making and encouraging investments (Bayraktar, 2013). The empirical study conducted by Bingöl and Çömez shows that "*a one-unit increase in Sub-Saharan African countries, which have the fastest rise together with Turkey, provides direct investment inflows approximately twice as much as Turkey*" (Bingöl, & Çömez, 2019). Both the local legal structure and the attitude of decision-makers are important in investment facilitation. It is essential to add to this data, firstly, sociological interaction and secondly, social memory. One could argue that Turkey has had this

³ Article 81 of the UN Charter addresses the question of who will take over the administration of countries that are not self-governing and cannot govern themselves: "*Article 81—The agreement on guardianship shall, in each case, specify the conditions under which the territory under guardianship is to be governed and shall indicate the authority to take over its administration. This authority, hereinafter referred to as the authority responsible for governance, may be composed of one or more States, or it may be the organization itself.*"

distinctive political orientation in recent times.

Without a historical burden, Turkey is producing its policies to become a "Smart Power" (Ari, 2019). Using its humanitarian and normative power centered on Soft Power in policy making, Turkey does not hesitate to use Hard Power. This has been reflected in its peacekeeping missions in Africa and its policy in Libya in recent years. African countries consider that it is important for the success of Turkey's policies to remain on a policy ground that does not require any supremacist or unilateral dependence.

Security of the Nile Basin and the Renaissance Dam

In the post-World War II period, the world evolved into a bipolar system. As an important emphasis of the period, ideologies have endeavored to establish the new hegemonic order of the world not only politically but also with their economic models. *Geopolitical strategies* built on the basis of realism and neo-liberalism have acted to achieve political outcomes through geopolitical actions on the basis of power and the use of power.⁴ Whether the geographical space is built on geographical location and/or trade routes or social structure, the most important output expectation is for the construction of a dominant power. Undoubtedly, the international system, which was structured on the basis of economic dependence, also expected the emergence of a hegemonic power and the further growth and development of the market economy in a peaceful environment (Waltz, 1970). On the other hand, "Constructivism", also known as the constructionist approach, focuses more on the identities of societies and how they define themselves, and argues that there is a code in the structure of the relationship to be established, and that this code consists of rules whose rules are determined in the social environment. While the rule determines the interests of the actor, it also codifies the interests (Onuf, 1989).

Rules are in fact the source of anarchy. Onuf argues that systems without rules produce chaos, not anarchy (Onuf, Kubalkova, & Kowert, 2015). It is argued that Turkey's Africa policy is developing through historical sympathy and harmony based on a working relationship with the social environment. Since new rules emerge as a result of the relationship, the relations are also analyzed on a Constructivist basis in the literature (Eldeen, 2019). Turkey's "African solutions for Africa" approach for African countries has also created a new situation for third-party countries. In this context, it can be argued that Turkey has put forward a revisionist approach against the existing status quo. Despite Turkey's policy, it is inevitable that countries that want to continue their African policy with conservative tendencies will object.

Turkey's Africa policy involves an overhaul of the status quo and is perceived as a threat to third-party countries both in terms of its sphere of influence and market dynamics. One of the prominent functions of the market is the view that society is forced to organize in order for the market to function properly (Gilpin, 2015). The welfare of African society also affects Europe's raw material costs. Europe shows an uneasy approach towards possible revisions and changes in the existing rules. There is also the option of using the tense environment created between individuals or pressure groups and politicians who receive their share of prosperity from the ecosystem established by the West and the general public as a subject of conflict. The idea that the West has an order within the anarchy of Africa is therefore quite widespread.

Turkey's Africa policy has a multidimensional character. The statement "*Improving our relations and cooperation with the African Continent constitutes one of the fundamental principles of our multidimensional foreign policy*" in the booklet prepared on the occasion of the presentation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs'

⁴ The most popular geopolitical theories are Friedrich Ratzel's Lebensraum Theory, Vidal de La Blanche's Cultural Geography, Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan's Maritime Dominance Theory and Halford Mackinder's Land Dominance Theory.

2020 Fiscal Year Budget Draft to the TGNA Planning and Budget

Commission, which explains the main objective of Turkey's Africa policy⁵ In this context, the construction of the Renaissance Dam in Ethiopia is a very appropriate example to analyze the main lines of Turkish foreign policy. Since the dam is located in the upper Nile basin, it is a source of energy that meets the energy needs of Sudan and Somalia in the region. On the other hand, Egypt, which is concerned about the construction of the dam, argues that its interests will be harmed and that the Nile water should be used in accordance with the existing status quo.

The Africa section of the booklet prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Draft Budget for the Fiscal Year 2021 explains that relations are strengthening at an increasing rate and Turkey is increasing its population by using its soft power in areas such as Embassies, humanitarian aid organizations, and the activities of Turkish Airlines⁵. In the case of the Renaissance Dam, we see that in addition to its soft power, the policy implementation also uses its hard power by providing military and political support to the Ethiopian government. This is reflected in the Draft Budget for Fiscal Year 2022, which states that *"We closely follow the developments in Somalia, Sudan, Mali, Guinea and the Sahel region and continue our support for the stability of the region. Our relations with the African Union, of which we are a strategic partner, are strengthening and institutionalizing day by day"*⁶.

Turkey's strategic moves in East Africa must be evaluated under three headings. The Red Sea emerges as the main area of dispute in the region. Despite being defined as the financial center of the region, the leasing of Sevakin Island and the military cooperation agreement with Somalia are efforts to create a new status quo by acting with Turkey against Egypt's hegemony strategically by other players in the region. Sevakin Island has a strategic location both in terms of being on the trade route and its proximity to the conflict zones in the region. The newly discovered hydro-carbon deposits around the island and its location on the route of the "One Belt One Road" project further increase its importance (Alperen, 2018).

The two topics on which Turkey has taken action are our interests in our exclusive economic zone, popularly known as the "Blue Homeland". The definition of the exclusive economic zone, which is a very important security issue in terms of Turkey's economic interests and sovereignty rights, has become a status quo problem due to the differences in the theses of the riparian countries in the region. The attempt to seize our rights arising from international law defacto through a fait accompli has also turned the issue into a national security problem. Turkey's protection of its theses through the exclusive economic zone agreement with Libya has also turned Libya's internal conflicts into a security problem for Turkey (Aridemir, & Allı, 2019). Turkey takes diplomatic and military measures to protect its rights in the region and to protect the interests of the countries in the region.

The third important chapter is the issue of water control in the Nile basin. The Renaissance dam is of vital importance for 11 countries in the region that depend on the Nile for agricultural irrigation and water needs. This is considered a vital issue in Ethiopia and Sudan (Turhan, 2021). The repercussions of Turkey's policies have been quite striking for Egypt, the "hydro-dominant" power of the region. Tandoğan argues that *"One of the*

⁵ "The African continent has a special importance in our efforts to extend our effectiveness in international politics and trade beyond our immediate geography. With its rich natural resources and human capacity, the African continent is expected to play a more active role in the international system as of the second half of the 21st century and become an increasingly important actor on the global stage." https://www.mfa.gov.tr/site_media/html/2022-yilina-girerken-girisimci-ve-insani-dis-politikamiz.pdf

⁶ www.mfa.gov.tr/site_media/html/2020-yilina-girerken-girisimci-ve-insani-dis-politikamiz.pdf

⁷ www.mfa.gov.tr/site_media/html/2021-yilina-girerken-girisimci-ve-insani-dis-politikamiz.pdf

reasons why the water dispute could not be resolved is the balance of power". He asserts that Egypt approaches the water issue from a realist perspective and in this respect, its military superiority is decisive in its policy (Tandoğan, & Yücel, 2017). From this point of view, we can say that Turkey, which disrupts the status quo and produces policies at more than one level of analysis of international relations, increases its power in the region through the principle of mutual win-win. Seeing social relations and the market mechanism as "Low Political" in the geopolitical approach is a strategic mistake for Egypt. For this reason, we observe that Egypt is still defending its conservative theses that protect the status quo. Turkey, on the other hand, draws attention with its revisionist approach against this status quo.

Since disputes over water would completely jeopardize the use of the resource, they tend to turn into cooperation rather than conflict. The literature shows that the resolution of disputes arising within the scope of transboundary waters is quite difficult, but the tendency to cooperate is more prominent in terms of not jeopardizing the use of the resource (Aydın, 2019). This trend is seen in East African countries such as Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia. Initiated in 2011, the consultation meetings were followed by the publication of the "Declaration of Principles" in 2015 (Kibaroglu, 2018). It is an important emphasis that the point reached diplomatically emphasizes the importance of Egypt's military power in the realist policy-making process. In the development of the balance of power in favor of other riparian countries, the entry of third-party countries that can influence the region has an important role.

Conclusion

It is evident that Turkey's Africa policy is multidimensional and it utilizes all elements of power when necessary. Turkey has shown its interlocutors that it is a regional power by transforming its strength into influence in the region. The country has transformed the use of power into a game-changing vision with strategic long-term policies in line with the definition of "smart power". We observe that Turkish foreign policy continues its will to protect its economic and diplomatic interests by respecting the law of the international global and regional supranational institutions in which it is involved, with a compromise understanding on a transparent policy ground. It is widely accepted that Turkey's Africa policy is vital for Turkey's global interests.

Africa has an increasing importance both in terms of its population and raw material potential. While it is obvious that the African ecosystem sees foreign influence as a security problem due to the colonial policies implemented so far, Turkey's policies that prioritize social sensitivities on the basis of mutual interests stand out as an important source of prestige. In case of possible conflicts, another important issue is to structure the policy axis in accordance with international law that respects the sovereignty rights of the countries in the region and to build political and military cooperation in accordance with this purpose.

Turkey has both close and distant interests in its vision for Africa. Considering that it is in Turkey's interest to increase the welfare of African peoples, the policies to be formulated will serve the security of the region. Increasing the income of African households will fulfill the need for a suitable market for rapidly increasing Turkish investments, while paving the way for the transformation of African peoples into a more conflict-free welfare society. The literature emphasizes that economic relations arising from mutual dependence will also accelerate the democratization process.

Turkey's revisionist approaches within the context of a rising Africa are based on a relationship of mutual interest, as opposed to a colonial relationship of interest. In the process of formulating new policies towards

Africa, Turkey must act on the basis of historical religion and in accordance with the principle of equality. On the other hand, it is important to contribute to the restructuring of Egypt's conservative approach to the Nile basin in a way to include all relevant countries in the region.

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