Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı Başkanlığı
Türk Cooperation and Coordination Agency

AVRASYA ETÜDLERİ 54/2018-2 (7-26)
Received: 11.09.2017 Accepted: 06.09.2018

The Role of Education in International Cooperation: The Case of Turkey and Sub-Saharan Africa

Abdu DJAMANCA[1]

Abstract

This article analyses the role of the cultural factor (education, grants or exchange programs) in the international cooperation, namely the case of the cooperation between Turkey and Sub-Saharan Africa countries. The place of the cultural factor in the international politics is analyzed here through a liberal vision: 'soft power', 'public diplomacy' and 'exchange diplomacy' concepts. Turkey and Sub-Saharan Africa States use these concepts as a strategy in order to develop their political, diplomatic, economic and cultural relations. Thus, in this paper, public diplomacy is seen as a 'strategy' for the development of these relationships. Shortly, the students - future elites - trained through Turkey-Africa scholarships program are contributing to the enhancement of Turkey and Sub-Saharan Africa cooperation in both public and private sectors. Therefore, it was concluded that Turkey is using more exchange diplomacy and public diplomacy than the classical soft power in order to know Africa better and develop its cooperation with this zone.

Keywords: *foreign policy, Turkey–Sub-Saharan Africa international cooperation, soft power, public diplomacy, exchange diplomacy.*

[1] Ph.D. Student at Hacettepe University, Department of Political Sciences and Public Administration; Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), a.djamanca@tika.gov.tr

Uluslararası İşbirliğinde Eğitimin Rolü: Türkiye-Sahraaltı Afrika Örneği

Öz

Bu makale, uluslararası işbirliğinde Türkiye-Sahraaltı Afrika ilişkilerinin gelişimini (eğitim, burs veya değişim programları) ve bu gelişmenin kültürel faktörler üzerindeki etkilerini analiz etmektedir. Kültürel faktör veya eğitimin, uluslararası politikadaki yeri, bu makalede, liberal teori perspektifinden analiz edilmiştir. 'Yumuşak güç', 'kamu diplomasisi' ve 'değişim diplomasisi' kavramları çalışmanın temel çerçevesini oluşturacaktır. Türkiye ile Sahraaltı Afrika ülkelerinin eğitimin sağladığı 'strateji' veya 'araçsal yöntem' ile aralarındaki politik, diplomatik, ekonomik ve kültürel ilişkilerinin nasıl geliştirilebileceğine işaret edilmiştir. Kısaca, Türkiye-Sahraaltı Afrika burs programı kapsamında Türkiye'de eğitim alan Afrikalı öğrenciler – gelecekte elit olarak – iki taraf arasındaki işbirliğinin gelişimine, kamu ve özel sektörde de, katkıda bulunmaktadırlar. Türkiye, Afrika'yı daha çok tanımak ve Afrika ile mevcut işbirliğini geliştirmek üzere, klasik yumuşak gücün yerine daha çok değişim diplomasisi ve kamu diplomasisin kullandığını sunucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: *dış politika, Türkiye-Sahraaltı Afrika uluslararası işbirliği, yumuşak güç, kamu diplomasisi. değişim diplomasisi.*

1. Introduction

The main purpose of this paper is to explain the contribution of African students in Turkey to the enhancement of Turkey and Sub-Saharan Africa cooperation. More specifically, it will try to point to the role played by education – scholarships – for the development of Turkey and Sub-Saharan Africa relations. To achieve this aim, the paper endeavor, firstly, to analyze the nature of these relations after the establishment of the *Plan for the opening up to Africa, 1998*.[2] Second and lastly, it examines the role of education illustrating the challenges and strategies used for the development of this cooperation.

The *Strategic Action Plan, 1998* has been an important step for the development of Sub-Saharan Africa-Turkey relationships. Currently the 16th largest economy of the world, the 6th in Europe and as the heir of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey is a very prominent actor in the international cooperation. With an estimated population of 230 million in 1950, Africa currently has 1,4 billion, of population and it is predicted to reach 2 billion in 2050 and 4 billion in 2100. Africa is represented by 54 countries with more than 20% of worldwide commodities.[3] Turkey was almost absent in Africa until the early 2000s, but as the heir to the Ottoman Empire, Turkey had historical relations with the Maghreb. This paper focus only on the cooperation between Turkey and Sub-Saharan Africa countries analyzing the metrics and factors that could be crucial in the development of the international relationships; the case of Turkey Sub-Saharan Africa countries.

In parallel to the development of the diplomatic-economic relations, Turkey has implemented several educational programs. The scholarships granted by the Turkish Government to African countries gradually increased reaching 1300 students in 2017, compared to about 1000 in 2000.[4] Moreover, the fields of studies evolved from the teaching of Turkish language to all possible literature, science and culture departments available in Turkey. All the 54 African countries are concerned by Afrika-Türkiye Burs Programı (Turkey Scholarships Program for Africa) coordinated by Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı (Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities, YTB).

---

[2] "Le cadre de coopération pour le partenariat Afrique-Turquie", 21 Aout 2008, Report adopted by the Summit Turkish-African Cooperation in 2008, Istanbul.

[3] "Active with Africa", *Better Policies for Better Lives, Global Relations Secretariat OECD*, October 2017, Paris/France, pp. 4-5.

[4] The Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, www.mfa.gov.tr

Today many African students are mastering Turkish language and culture through the scholarship program and many other programs such as conferences, youth meetings and exchange activities. It is evident that education is a key pillar for culture consolidation in Turkey-Africa cooperation in which both parties seem satisfied. Therefore, it is important to examine the Turkish 'soft power', which is deployed through the cultural factor to determine the main metrics to be emphasized and/or optimized.

Turkey-Sub-Saharan African (SSA)[5] cooperation can be explained through some factors of international politics by analyzing the nature of this cooperation and the means used by the main actors of the foreign policy: Turkey and African States. Thus, liberalism in terms of 'soft power' privileges the use of less coercive means in political interactions of the actors of the international society. The concept was developed by Joseph Nye to describe the ability of a political actor to influence indirectly the behaviour of another actor through non-coercive means: structural, cultural or ideological one. For Nye, "it arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies. When our policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, our soft power is enhanced".[6]

In this context, soft power can be understood as a focus on common values available between two actors – states – or communities; this enhances mutual attraction and influence in order to reach their purposes. In contrast, hard power focuses on coercive means such as military, economic or demographic influences trying to create the same effect as the soft method. Joseph S. Nye draws on this point: "hard and soft power are related because they are both aspects of the ability to achieve one's purpose by affecting the behaviour of others".[7] However, it is important to highlight that the two concepts are very similar. In this sense, Nye stated that, hard power is the ability to change what others do and it can rest on coercion or inducement. By contrast, "soft power or co-optive power is the ability to share what others do and it can rest on attraction of one's culture and values or the ability to manipulate the agenda of political choices".[8]

Theoretically, the object of this study is to analyze the nature of Turkish-Sub-Saharan African relations through the 'soft power' concept and

[5] The abbreviation SSA will be used in this article referring to Sub-Saharan Africa.

[6] Joseph S. Nye, "Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics", *Foreign Affairs,* May-June 2004, p. x.

[7] Ibid, p. 7.

[8] Ibid, p. 8.

see the level of its use in international cooperation. Added to the concept soft power, exchange diplomacy and public diplomacy are an aspect of soft power and they can be a strategy for the development of these relationship. However, two last concepts may better illustrate the nature of Turkey and Sub-Saharan African relationships using the cultural factor as a strategy. Nye illustrates the common aspect both of soft power and exchange diplomacy as follows: "seduction is always more effective than coercion".[9]

Historically, 'cultural diplomacy' has been a country's policy to facilitate the export of examples of its culture. For Nicolas Cull, cultural diplomacy can be defined as "an actor's attempts to manage the international environment through making its cultural resources and achievements known overseas and/or facilitating cultural transmission abroad".[10] Turkey often recalls its historical and cultural ties with some African countries to expand the scope of the cooperation with the continent. 'Exchange diplomacy' can be defined, in 'public diplomacy', "as an actor's attempts to manage the international environment by sending its citizens overseas and reciprocally accepting citizens from overseas for a period of study and/or exchange".[11]

So, can the cultural factor be considered as a strategy for Turkey targeting Sub-Saharan Africa? What impact will the presence of African students in Turkey have on the relationship of this country with Sub-Saharan countries? The cultural field (education) would be elected as a prominent factor for the development of Turkey-African relationships. In the long term, these students trained in different fields at Turkish universities would contribute to the development of Turkish-African relations in several areas. This gradual presence of African students in Turkey could be a source of immigration and a strategy for exporting overseas the positive image of both Turkey and Africa. Statistically there is a lack of exact number of African students in Turkey and its impacts on the Turkish-Africa cooperation; so this research may contribute to it. For a better analysis, we realized a field study, namely interview and direct observation about African students in Turkey, their professional insertion and the policy of Turkey about these students for the development of cooperation. We also examined some general and empirical documents, reports and articles about Turkey and Africa. Today, it is evident that there is a gradual and mutual sharing of knowledge between Turkey-Sub-Saharan Africa with the increase in this sectorial cooperation.

---

[9] Ibid, p. x.

[10] Turkey has historical relations with North Africa (Maghreb) from the Ottoman Empire.

[11] Nicolas Cull, *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past,* Los Angeles: University of Southeastern California, Figueroa Press, 2009, p. 18.

2. The Cultural Factor, a Strategy for Turkey-Sub-Saharan Africa Rapprochement

According to Nicholas Cull & Geoffrey Cown, cultural diplomacy (CD) is a prominent element of Public Diplomacy (PD) and one of the most important factors of the 'soft power'. In his terms, "cultural diplomacy is an actor's attempt to manage the international environment through making its cultural resources and achievements known overseas and/or facilitating cultural transmission*"*.[12]

For Mbabia Oliver, "in a historical point of view, relations between Turkey and North Africa date back to Ottoman times. But in black Africa, they only date from the 1990s".[13] However, in these last years, the cultural factor, namely scholarships, cultural exchange programs and creation of 'think tanks' on African studies in Turkey have contributed greatly to the development of these relationships.

In this part of our work, we will analyze the issue of multi-sectorial nature of the cooperation between Turkey and SSS with focus on the cultural component. Therefore, Turkey and SSA advocate a multi-dimensional and multi-sectorial strategy to enhance their relations in several areas such as political, economic and cultural ones. Education is therefore one of the strengths of Turkey-SSA relationships, and specially a promoting tool of Turkish image across the continent and Africa's image in Turkey.

2.1. The Cultural Component: The Turkish Government Scholarships

According to Ibrahim Kalın, current spokesman of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, in accordance with a multi-dimensional foreign policy, showed that "there is a necessity to pursue a multi-dimensional strategy for the promotion of Turkey abroad, which covers a broad spectrum ranging from economy and trade to culture, from social development to education and from cultural diversity to richness of intellectual life".[14] For Kalın, *"*the goal is to promote Turkish culture, language and art and to contribute to bilateral relations between Turkey and other countries, as

[12] Geoffrey Cowan and Nicholas J. Cull, "Public Diplomacy in a Changing World", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences,* Vol. 616, March 2008, p. 33.

[13] Mbabia Oliver, "Ankara to Africa: Turkey's outreach since 2005", *South African Journal of International Affairs,* Vol. 18, Issue 1, May 2011, pp. 13-14.

[14] Selcen Öner, "Soft Power in Turkish Foreign Policy: New Instruments and Challenges", *Euxeinos*, Vol. 10, 2013. Mathieu Rousselin (ed.), "Editorial: Strategic Depth through Soft Power: The Domestic Production and International Projection of Turkish Culture"*, Euxeinos,* Vol.10, 2013, p. 35.

well as to help Turkish citizens in their adaptation to the country in which they live".[15]

In fact, it should be recalled that since the USSR's collapse in 1990, Turkey has rather oriented its foreign policy towards the Turkic world, including former Soviet republics with which Turkey has linguistic, cultural and historical ties.

In this context, the Turkish government grants scholarships, sets up cultural exchange programs and promotes cultural relationships toward the Turkic world. Similarly, and in conjunction with the implementation of the *Action Plan for the opening up to Africa, 1998*, the Turkish government announced the implementation of the cultural exchange program between Turkey and Africa and started granting scholarships to African students.

In fact, the Turkish government has developed specific and comprehensive African policies since the early 2000s with the rise of the AKP to power. As stated by the researcher on Turkish foreign policy, Mehmet Özcan, "like Turgut Özal, Erdoğan's AKP sees the world as a place full of opportunities, and therefore the opening of Turkey to the world is an important component of Turkish foreign policy".[16] Thus, Turkey has implemented several educational programs in order to facilitate the relationship between Turkey and Africa and open up opportunities for African students.

The number of Turkish government scholarships for African countries has gradually increased since the 2000s covering various levels: from learning the Turkish language to doing undergraduate, master's and Ph.D. studies. We note that this is a program aiming to improve Turkish-African cooperation in the long term.

Thus, we can find the 54 African countries on the list of the Türkiye-Afrika Burs Programı, (Turkey Scholarships Program for Africa), coordinated by the Fellowships Branch for foreigners Yurtdısı Turkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı (Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities, YTB*)*. Through these grants, many students from almost all African countries are studying in Turkey, appropriating, progressively, the Turkish language and culture. They have become well-trained elite that can be useful in the context of the cooperation between Turkey and African countries. Education is a pillar of Turkish diplomacy in Africa.

[15] Öner, "Soft Power in Turkish Foreign Policy: New Instruments and Challenges", p. 36.

[16] Mehmet Özkan, "Türkiye'nin Afrika'da Artan Rolü: Pratik Çabalar ve Söylem Arayışları", *Ortadoğu Analiz,* C. 4, S. 46, Ekim 2012, s. 18-19.

Thus, this is also a realization of the program of cooperation between the two parties for which the cultural component is essential to give effect to their short and long-term reconciliation. Today it is difficult to quantify the exact number of African stock in Turkey.

Nevertheless, Mehmet Ali Bolat, chairperson of the Federation of International Students in Turkey (UDEF) stated that "the great majority of African students in Turkey come from the countries of North and East Africa including Somalia, Morocco, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Djibouti. The number of African students has increased substantially over recent years".[17]

In addition, it is important to highlight that some of these students are sponsored by the Turkish government through the Diyanet foundation but the majority of the Turkish government's scholarships are sponsored by YTB.[18]

2.2. The Grants of Diyanet Foundation and Yunus Emre Institute

Through the program Imam Hatip International Student Program, Diyanet foundation grants scholarships to students from some African countries from high school to Ph.D. degree. It can be seen in its website:

"We conduct jointly with the Ministry of Education within the International Imam Hatip Student Program, students from abroad to Kayseri, Konya, and Istanbul International Anatolian Imam Hatip High School offering good training opportunities to many students from different countries".[19] Currently, around 1.216 students are enrolled in above-mentioned schools and under this program, 686 students have graduated so far.

It means that the Turkish Diyanet Foundation, under supervision of the Presidency of Religious Affairs, Diyanet, Presidency, has also a considerable role in the development of Turkey-Africa relationship trough the promotion of education and exchange programs.

Shortly, in total, until September 2017, the estimations indicate that around 13.000 African students (for the entire continent) have benefited from scholarships granted by the Turkish Government. Only in 2016-2017

[17] Mehmet Ali Bolat ve diğ, "Türkiye'de Afrika Çalışmalarının Bugünü ve Yarını Çalıştayı Raporu", Kayseri, Türkiye: Erciyes Üniversitesi Afrika Ekonomik ve Sosyal Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezi, Eylül 2014, p. 28.

[18] The Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, www.mfa.gov.tr

[19] Diyanet Foundation Official website: "Eğitim-Öğretim Faaliyetleri"; http://diyanetvakfi.org.tr/site/icerik/egitim-ogretim-faaliyetleri-1077, s. 3.

academic year, 1.075 scholarships were attributed to SSA Africa countries.[20] However, statistically, it is difficult to specify the exact number of African students stock in Turkey and their professional insertion. Indeed, there are few works on the subject and it was impossible to do a field study for the realization of this paper.

Nevertheless, we note that there is a considerable increase in the number of African students in Turkey since 2008 (year of the establishment of the cooperation framework Turkey-Africa) and Turkey became gradually known by Africans and vice-versa.

In this sense, both sides appear to be committed in order to intensify their cultural relations in conjunction with the intensification of economic and geopolitical relations. The second Turkey–Africa Economic Cooperation Summit held in Istanbul in 2008, was a great occasion for the inauguration of the first Center for Academic Research on African studies. Among other institutions working for the consolidation or the development of Turkey-Africa relationships, there is Yunus Emre Institute, created in 2007 under supervision of the Yunus Emre Foundation. High-level members of this foundation are the President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu and former Minister of Culture Mustafa Kılıç; to name only the main members among other high government officials. This reveals the importance attached to this institute aiming to promote the language, culture and the image of Turkey via the cultural diplomacy and to organize and coordinate training programs toward African countries.

3. The Challenges and Limits of an Intensive Rapprochement between Turkey and Sub-Saharan Africa

It is remarkable that the opening of Turkey to Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is recent, and seems yet very dynamic. With the overall strategy of the AKP, the connection between Turkey and Africa seems to be consolidated since Turkey had, for decades, a Western-oriented foreign policy, had been passive in its foreign policy and had a very few interests in sub-Saharan Africa until the 2000s.[21] For these reasons, we intend to discuss the change in details. Thus, if the 'new policy' Turkey-Africa was a success in the last 15 years, it should be noted, however, that Turkey must still provide a lot of effort at diplomatic, political and economic levels. For these reasons, in this

[20] The Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, www.mfa.gov.tr

[21] "Déclaration d'Istanbul sur le partenariat Afrique-Turquie", 21 Aout 2008, adopted by Turkey-Africa Istanbul Summit in 2008.

section, it will be necessary to focus on challenges and limitations of this rapprochement between Turkey-Sub-Saharan Africa.

3.1. The Lack of Colonization: Advantages and Disadvantages

As stated by Ali Farah, a Djiboutian Ph.D. student in Ankara, Turkey is not like the former colonial powers or as some emerging powers that early began to develop their relations with the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Countries such as France, the United Kingdom, Portugal (former colonial powers), the United States, Japan and South Korea have been present in Africa since the declaration of independence of a good part of sub-Saharan countries, and their cooperation with the majority of these countries are at high level.[22]

In the same sense, emerging powers such as China, Brazil and India are obviously more familiar with African countries and they are among the strategic partners of Africa. Therefore, Turkey does not have paternalistic relationships[23] with Sub-Saharan Africa; therefore, it will have to invest much more in order to consolidate its relationships or its presence in this part of the world (Sub-Saharan Africa).

While benefiting from the lack of a colonial past, as a successor to the non-colonial empire (Ottoman Empire), Turkey seems to have a positive image in its rapprochement with the African continent. This reality allows Turkey to adopt a paradoxical position, which can be seen as both a challenge and an advantage for the Turkish policy for Africa.

As stated by Numan Hazar, a former Turkish ambassador in several countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, "Turkey's relationships with African countries could not reach a desired level in political, economic, commercial and cultural areas".[24] Therefore, the relationships was not in proportion to the size of a country like Turkey with a considerable economic and trade growth. In this sense, Hazar argues that, "until these last two decades, Turkey had relationships with African countries only within the international organizations, such as the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). However, in these last years, the relations between Turkey and Sub-Saharan African countries were gradually developed in diplomatic, economic and cultural areas as well".[25]

---

[22] Interview with Ali Farah, a Djiboutian Ph.D. student at one of the universities in Ankara, 07.01.2016.

[23] By paternalistic relationships, we mean a kind of relations, which have origins from the colonial era. For example, France, the United Kingdom and Portugal are former colonial powers, which relationships with the continent go back to many years.

[24] Numan Hazar, *Turkey in Africa: The Implementation of the Action Plan and the Evolution after Fifteen Years,* Ankara: Orsam Report No. 124, July 2012, p. 6.

[25] Ibid, p .6.

Therefore, it is with the 'new diplomacy' of AKP, promoted by former Turkey Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, based on the principle of 'multi-dimensionality', 'proactive diplomacy' and 'zero problems with neighbours', that the connections between Turkey and Sub-Saharan countries have reached to a certain level.

It is however important to highlight that the enhancement of these connections could be optimized thanks to the *Strategic Plan for Opening Up to Africa* established since 1998. This plan, which was seriously implemented from 2002, allowed the Turkish Governments and the concerned African countries to decide the development of their relationship not only through high-level diplomatic and economic relations, but also through cultural sector. Thus, since the 2000s, the Turkish Governments started to give scholarships to students in almost all African countries via the Turkish Ministry of National Education. From 2010 to present days, YTB is the institution that coordinate and make the necessary follow up of Foreign Students in Turkey including those from SSA countries.

These government scholarships managed by YTB allows an important number of scholarship recipients in different field studies, coming from different countries of Central Asia, Balkans, Caucasus, Middle East but also a large number of students from African countries and Latin America.[26] Therefore, the cultural factor, namely the education and exchange programs between Turkey and Sub-Saharan Africa, is being a prominent element for the development of relations between these two parties. Nevertheless, the progressive presence of these students in Turkey should obviously have different impacts, and one of these impacts could be a formal or organized immigration.

3.2. The Impacts of the Turkish Government Scholarships: A Source of Immigration?

According to one expert of the Directorate for Foreign Students (YTB*)* working in the Department of Africa, with the progressive implementation of the *Plan for Opening up to Africa* in 1998, the Declaration by the Turkish Government of the Year of Africa in 2005 and the establishment of the YTB in 2010, grants have progressively been given to all African countries and some new legislations has been adopted in order to facilitate the integration

[26] The Turkish Government Scholarships have been attributed to Central Asia countries, Balkans and the Middle East for a longtime. However, for African, namely Sub-Saharan African, and Latin American countries it is a new reality and it is in parallel to the development of political, diplomatic and economic relations between Turkey and the Sub-Saharan African countries.

of all foreign students living in different cities of Turkey.[27] Nevertheless, for him "our main purpose is to train them so they may go back home and contribute not only for the development of their countries but also participate in or even work for the consolidation of Turkey-Africa relationship".[28]

Nevertheless, for Mama Saliu Mamba Camara, a Bissau-Guinean student in one of Eskişehir universities, it is clear that students are coming from almost all African countries, especially in these last years, and new legislation are being made for the integration of these students, but these grants can be a source of immigration, not only from Africa to Turkey but also to Europe, Turkey being as an ideal transit country. "Some foreign students that I met here, from Somali, Burundi, Central African Republic gave up their scholarship and studies to immigrate to Europe",[29] stated Camara.

In the same sense, Charles, a Ghanaian former student in Ankara and currently working as an English teacher in a private center for foreign language in Ankara, stated that it is very normal that students have the right to work and study at the same time. He argued that, "even European countries or the United States of America (USA) have been using the same policy since 1970 in order to guarantee the integration of foreign students in their countries".[30] In other words, these countries integrated foreign students during and after their studies. In short, Charles illustrates that Turkey could use the same cooperation policy to enhance ties with the countries where the students are coming from.

For Charles, if the Government of Turkey increased the amount (money) of the grants every year, gave opportunity to the students to work legally and provided them with social security rights that could be a good policy for the motivation and integration of these students. However, the current situation is not optimized and related policies may have immediate impacts such as immigration since many students have serious problems of Turkish language and spend years without being able to achieve their degrees.[31]

---

[27] The expert of YTB whom we talked preferred to be anonymous, 22.01.2016. In 2013, the Government of Turkey adopted a law allowing foreign students to work legally and study at the same time with scholarship and social rights. The Government also increases the grant's amount every year in order to motivate the students and to prevent them from moving to Europe because of the difficulties they face in learning Turkish language or other academic difficulties. This is one of the strategies progressively implemented by YTB.

[28] Interview with an expert of YTB.

[29] Interview with Mama Saliu Mamba Camara, an international relations student in Eskişehir, 25.01.2016.

[30] Interview with Charles, a Ghanaian former student in Turkey currently working in Ankara, 26.01.2016.

[31] Ibid.

Therefore, he said, "we need more reforms that will allow both parties, probably, to achieve better results from these grants or programs for the development of future cooperation in different areas".[32]

These reforms should not be limited to an annual financial increase of the grant, social rights and possibilities to work legally and study at the same time; but also by applying some new perspectives, they should include giving opportunities to the students to sit exams or even fully study in other languages, namely English and French. This could help students to finish their studies in time and consequently deter them to plan to stay in Turkey as illegal immigrants or encourage them to give up their intension of moving to Europe as an alternative to their studies.

However, it is important to illustrate the complexity of the policies or strategies implemented by Turkey and African countries for the enhancement of their cooperation and achievement of their mutual interest.

That is why, in the future, Turkey might have to deal with a massive presence of Africans living in Turkey. In addition, this may become an organized migration, which has positive and negative impacts both for Turkey and for African countries. This means that these two parties should implement progressively good policies with necessary reforms in order to use the cultural factor for the development of their relationships and consequently get ideal achievements from this increasing mutual interest. A considerable number of these students trained in Turkey could become future elites who might very useful for the development of relations between Turkey and African countries. It can be in different sectors, namely political and diplomatic fields as well as economic and cultural ones.

4. The Limits of Enhancement of Turkish-Sub-Saharan Africa Relations in Spite of Some Great Efforts

4.1. Diplomatic Institutions: An Instrument for Promoting Cultural Cooperation

Moreover, one of the limitations of this intensive Turkish rapprochement to SSA concerns the still limited level knowledge of Turkey by Sub-Saharan Africa (including traders, civil society and academicians or scholars) as well as the limited level knowledge of SSA countries by Turkey, in general. However, it is clear that since the AKP came to power in 2002, the Turkish Foreign policy for Sub-Saharan Africa has had considerable results such as opening of diplomatic institutions, the frequent high-level

[32] Ibid.

visits, including Heads of States and Government leaders from Turkey and Africa as well the creation of research centers about African studies in some Turkish universities.

In the words of Ufuk Tepebaş, the increase in the number of Turkish diplomatic missions in Africa is only a beginning. However, in terms of both equipment and human resources, it is still very early for these embassies to fulfill dully their duties. There is lack of human resources and fully equipped infrastructures as well. The same observation is available for new African diplomatic institutions in Turkey.[33] That is why Turkey is trying to set up research center to work towards finding general and academic sources on the African continent in order to acquire information, to know the African countries better, and to help both Turkish and African authorities to gain profit from their economic operators by promoting and enhancing trade and commercial exchange.

Thus, until the organization of the first *Turkey-Africa Summit in 2008*, Turkey did not have research centers about Africa, and studies on the continent were previously limited to the Maghreb in some Turkish universities. For Ali Farah, a Ph.D. Djiboutian student in Ankara, "in reality Turkey has to spend much more efforts for the development of its policy toward Africa".[34] Because, he said, "for sure there are good results since the ascension to power of AKP. There is mutual interest for two sides –Turkey and Africa– but they should be more active and diversify the sectors of these relationships in order to guarantee that their relationship is being ideally consolidated".[35]

Turkey has been paying attention to sub-Saharan Africa in these last years. In this context, Turkey is working first to know the continent and then to settle there. He continues, "it should be emphasized that Turkey relies heavily on institutional via diplomatic institutions (Embassies and Consulates), business forums, trade offices, interdepartmental meetings and Turkey-Africa Summits".[36] Moreover, progressively, Africa is seeing Turkey more as a recent but strategic partner than China, India, Japan, South Korea or even the former colonial powers like France, Portugal and the United Kingdom. However, the Turkish physical presence in the continent still remains almost invisible, resulting with the need to do much more investment in the development of its cooperation with this region.

---

[33] Ufuk Tepebaş, *Dönüşüm Süresinde Sahraaltı Afrika: Kalkınma, Güvenlik ve Ortaklık,* Tasam Yayınları, İstanbul,, 2013, s. 329.

[34] Interview with Ali Farah, a Djiboutian Ph.D student at one of the Ankara universities, 07.01.2016.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

4.2. The Need for More Think Tanks

Thus, Turkish presence in sub-Saharan Africa is still very limited. If the cooperation appears to be consolidated at the institutional level, it is not the case for the micro level or more clearly for the societal level. For this matter, the first institute of African studies based in Ankara University, Afrika Çalışmaları Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi (AÇAUM)[37] or the African Studies Research Centre was established in 2008 after the first Turkey-Africa Summit. However, there is only one center with important deficit in terms of material and human resources and especially with a limited knowledge of SSA.

Regarding the opening up of Turkey to Africa in the recent years, interest of the Turkish government, civil society and economic operators in Africa grew. This required an increase or dynamism in researches on the continent, including the recognition of SSA countries and the potential of their production. In this context, others research centers on Africa studies were established like Afrika Ekonomik ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Merkezi (AFESAM) in Kayseri Erciyes University[38] and Africa Research Centre for Social Sciences based in Istanbul Kadir Has University. These centers were the first one focused on African studies in Turkey and they are more interested in economic issues on the African continent. However, their research program became gradually more ambitious and expand their research topic to economic, social and political issues.

Seminars on Africa and Turkey are periodically organized, allowing Africans and Turkish scholars to address issues concerning the continent including Turkey-Africa relations, which are still embryonic, and promoting by this way the development of the two parties' cooperation on several areas. In addition, there are often organized conferences to which teachers are invited. African and Turkish researchers studied subjects related to the Turkish-African cooperation showing the potentialities of the African continent to Turkey and presenting Turkey as an emerging power and a strategic partner of the African continent.

"Literature, an Active Tool for Understanding Symbiotic of Nations: the Case of Nigeria and Turkey" by Rex Emma Odoemenam and Melike

[37] Official website of AÇAUM (Ankara University Africa Research Center); http://acaum.ankara.edu.tr/, 13 May 2015.

[38] Official website of EFESAM Economic and Social Sciences Research Center on African Studies; http://afesam.erciyes.edu.tr, 13 Jan. 2016.

Yılmaz[39] is a pragmatic example of the importance of these think tanks. It is not an institutional, but individual work. In the same sense, a student of master's and a researcher, Hatice Gülabi, presented a subject entitled "Batı Africa Devi Nijerya Federal Cumhuriyeti'nin Jeopolitik Analizi" (Geopolitical analysis of the giant Republic of Nigeria). This reveals the importance of these think tanks that can, and should work on Turkish-SSA countries relations in order to promote knowledge both side. These think tanks are also very important for Turkish economic operators, which need to know SSA, invest in these countries, and make technology transfer as strongly recommended in the First Turkish-Africa Summit held in Istanbul in 2008.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that these research centers and the academic work they make still remain general with serious lack of knowledge of the African continent: countries, internal sociological structure, geopolitical and geographical position and regional organization. Therefore, these research center news to make a structural reform, specialization and divide center in separated research section or department like , for example, departments for Western Africa studies, department for Eastern Africa studies and department for Southern Africa and for Central Africa studies. This specialization might ensure better efficiency and dynamism as well.

An example of this need for decentralization is the Kırklareli Üniversitesi Afrika Araştırmaları ve Uygulama Merkezi (ACM-KLU) which still remains general in its research's topic (social and economic issues) but seems to be more dynamic and quite efficient compared to the above mentioned research centers on African studies in Turkey. In addition, this research center keep organizing international conferences and keep building alliances with some Turkish and African universities, namely Kadir Has University, Istanbul Trade University and Nigerian-Turkish Nile University in Abuja, respectively. Moreover, as noted on its official website, the Library of Congress (LC) of Kırklareli University is in connection with other libraries and produce academic works in several languages. Moreover, it has a library equipped with necessary matrix and a good number of stuff, collections and virtual systems to carry out academic researches.[40]

5. Conclusion

This article focused on the role of cultural factor (education) in the cooperation between Turkey and Sub-Saharan Africa countries, which has

[39] Ibid.

[40] Official website of Kırklareli University Research Center on African Studies (KLU- AUAM); http://acm.klu.edu.tr/, Jan. 2016.

been developing since the establishment of the Strategic Action Plan in 1998. Shortly, this plan was seriously implemented with the ascension of AKP to power in 2002, the First Turkey-Africa Forum in 2003, Africa year for Turkey in 2005 and the First Turkey-Africa Summit with the issuing of Istanbul Declaration in 2008 and Malabo Declaration in 2014.[41] These remain prominent mechanism or instruments for the establishment and the development of Turkey-Sub-Saharan Africa countries' cooperation. To understand the nature of this enhancing cooperation and the contribution of the cultural factor to its enhancement, we referred to some theories and concepts of the international relations; namely 'soft power', 'public diplomacy' and 'exchange diplomacy'.

The analysis of these concepts in combination with some empirical sources on Turkey-Sub-Saharan African relations help us to understand the role of the cultural factor in international cooperation and more specifically the Turkish cultural diplomacy and Turkish soft power. The application of these concepts mutually help Turkey and African countries to develop their relations in other fields: political, diplomatic and economic ones.

As it has been the case for the United States (Fulbright Scholarship since 1980s), France and China's scholarships for Africa, Turkey uses these concepts in its foreign policy, above all, since 1990 (after the end of the Cold War) and in parallel to the implementation of the Turkish multi-dimensional foreign policy, Turkey keeps increasing its investment in cultural cooperation with Sub-Saharan Africa and Africa keep gaining a considerable place in Turkish foreign policy. Thus, the cultural factor has been playing an important role for the enhancement of Turkish-SSA relationships and it is a factor that help to establish and consolidate the ties between the two sides and open doors for mutual opportunities. Because, as Nye said, *"*soft power arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, history, political ideals and policies. Thus, when a country's policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, our soft power is enhanced".[42]

In this sense, it is evident that these students as future elites in different areas will go overseas and tell how wonderful are their countries and how wonderful is the country they enrolled for their studies, Turkey. In the mid-term, these future elites trained through Turkey-Africa training program in different fields, may work on the promotion of a positive image and on the development of their countries. In the mid and long terms, one

[41] "Déclaration d'Istanbul sur le partenariat Afrique-Turquie", 21 Aout 2008, adoptée dans le cadre du Sommet de coopération Turco-Africain de 2008.

[42] Nye, "Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics", p. x.

of the impacts of this opening policy is the multi-dimensional strategy for the consolidation of the economic, commercial and diplomatic cooperation between Turkey and SSA countries. Today, in the public sector, students graduated through these grants are working in Turkish diplomatic institutions in Africa and in African diplomatic missions in Turkey too. These elites and future elites are also working in the private sector, namely in some Turkish multinational corporations in different Sub-Saharan African countries. Thus, they are contributing automatically to the development of diplomatic, economic and cultural relations between Turkey and Sub-Saharan Africa countries.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Books & articles about international relations theories

Billion, Didier. "Tentative de mise en perspective de la politique extérieure de la Turquie", *Observatoire de la Turquie et de son environnement géopolitique / IRIS*, Janvier 2013.

Bolat, Mehmet Ali ve diğ. "Türkiye'de Afrika Çalışmalarının Bugünü ve Yarını Çalıştayı Raporu", Kayseri, Türkiye: Erciyes Üniversitesi Afrika Ekonomik ve Sosyal Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezi, Eylül 2014.

Cowan, Geoffrey and Nicholas J. Cull. "Public Diplomacy in a Changing World", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, Vol. 616, March 2008, 286 p.

Cull, Nicholas. *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past*, Los Angeles: University of Southeastern California, Figueroa Press.

Çavuş, Tuba. "Dış Politika'da Yumuşak Güç Kavramı ve Türkiye'nin Yumuşak Güç Kullanımı", *Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi,* Vol. 2, No. 2, 2014, pp. 23-37.

Hazar, Numan. "Türk Dış Polikası ve Afrika"*, Ortadoğu Analiz*, Ekim 2012, C. 4.

Hazar, Numan. *Turkey in Africa: The Implementation of the Action Plan and the Evolution after Fifteen Years*, Ankara: Orsam Report No. 124, July 2012

Kalın, İbrahim. "Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Turkey", *Perceptions*, Autumn 2011, Vol. XVI, No. 3.

Nye, Joseph S. "Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics"*, Foreign Affairs*, May-June 2004.

Oğuzlu, Tarık. "Soft Power in Turkish Foreign Policy", *Australian Journal of International Affairs,* Online Publication Date: 01 March 2007.

Oliver, Mbabia. "Ankara to Africa: Turkey's Outreach since 2005", *South African Journal of International Affairs,* Vol. 18, Issue 1, May 2011.

Öner, Selcen. "Soft Power in Turkish Foreign Policy: New Instruments and Challenges", *Euxeinos,* Vol. 10, 2013.

Özkan, Mehmet. "Türkiye'nin Afrika'da Artan Rolü: Pratik Çabalar ve Söylem Arayışları", *Ortadoğu Analiz*, C. 4, S. 46, Ekim 2012.

Rousselin, Mathieu (Ed.). "Editorial: Strategic Depth through Soft Power: The Domestic Production and International Projection of Turkish Culture", *Euxeinos,* Vol. 10, 2013.

II. Official websites, documents & Press

"Active with Africa", *Better Policies for Better Lives, Global Relations Secretariat OECD*, October 2017, Paris/France.

«Déclaration d'Istanbul sur le partenariat Afrique-Turquie", 21 Aout 2008, adopted by Turkey-Africa Istanbul Summit in 2008.

"Le cadre de coopération pour le partenariat Afrique-Turquie", 21 Aout 2008, adoptée dans le cadre du Sommet de coopération Turco-Africain de 2008.

Dedet, Joséphine. "Le Sommet Turquie-Afrique de Malabo: partenaires et amis", 18 Novembre 2014.

La Déclaration finale du Sommet Turquie-Afrique de 2014 à Malabo: Second Africa –Turkey Summit, "New model of partnership for the strengthening of sustainable development", 19-21 November 2014 Malabo, Equatorial-Guinea.

Official website of "Afrika Ekonomik ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Merkezi (AFESAM)", http://afesam.erciyes.edu.tr

Official website of "Ankara Üniversitesi Afrika Çalışmaları Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi", www.acaum.ankara.edu.tr

Official website of "Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığ"; http://www.diyanetvakfi.org.tr

Official website of "Kirklareli Üniversitesi Afrika Çalışmatarı Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi", http://acm.klu.edu.tr

Official website of "Yurtdisi Turkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı*"* (YTB), http://www.turkiyeburslari.gov.tr

Official website of Ministry of Turkish Foreign Affairs; www.mfa.gov.tr

Tepebaş, Ufuk. "Rising Africa and Turkey", *1st international African-Turkish Congress Report*, Novamber 2005.

"Türkiye-Afrika İlişkileri", www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-afrika-iliskileri.tr.mfa.

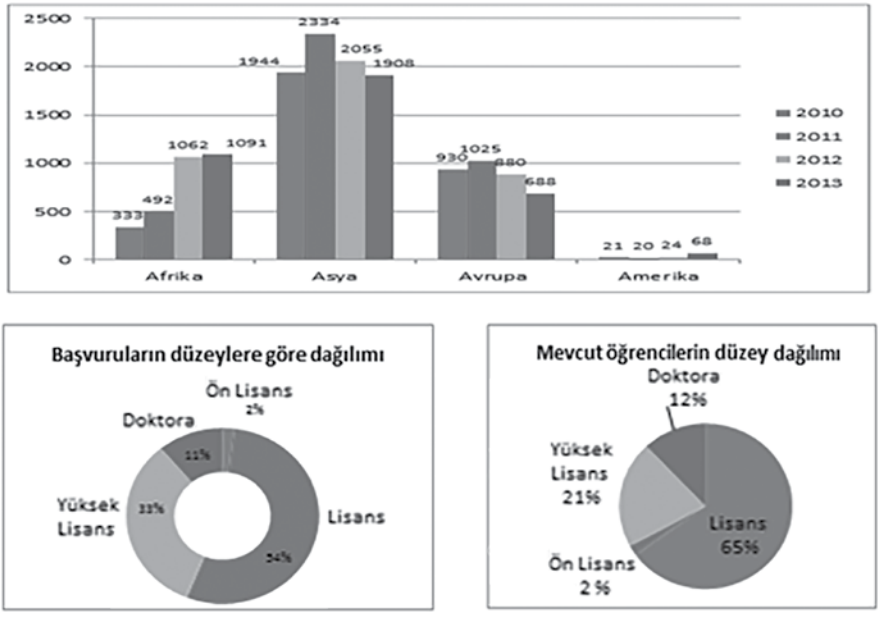
ANNEXES

I. African countries benefiting from the *Türkiye Scholarships*, a program elaborated in 1998 by the *Strategic Plan for Opening up to Africa* and consolidated from 2005.

Before 1998, *Opening up to Africa Plan*	Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan ...
After this date : 1. 2005, 2. 2008, 3. 2014, Relations keep increasing ...	Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Djibouti, Chad, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Comoros, Congo Rep., Dem. Congo, , Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Central Africa, Senegal, Somalia, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Cameroon, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritius, Mauritania, Mozambique Namibia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Togo, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Sudan, Eritrea, Rwanda, Cape Vert, Sao Tome and Principe.

Source: *Directorate of Fellowships for Foreign Students (YTB) official website; www.turkiyeburslari.gov.tr*

II. Estimated number of programs and Turkish Government grants by region: Africa, in our case.



Source: Federation of International Students in Turkey (UDEF) Official website; http://www.udef.org.tr/