

Article

Becoming Global Actor: the Turkish agenda for the Global South

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Abstract

Interpretations about Turkey's strategic orientations in the post-Cold War had simplified the divide between the Western, and non-western orientations. The problematic relations with the European Union, the increasing discussions about the role of Turkey in the Syrian crisis, and the increasing rapprochement with the Russian Federation are lively examples of the tangled options of Ankara's foreign policy. Despite that, there is an proliferating literature about the growing role of Turkey in the Global South, especially related to the expansion of diplomatic networks, foreign aid, humanitarian assistance and quasi-interregional cooperation. This paper will address the southern dimension of the Turkish foreign policy by identifying the main international and domestic variables that have pushed for further activism in the Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. The main argument is that the political and economic emergence of the non-western world, next to the narrative promoted by the ruling JDP elite - especially connected to the quest for a global engagement and partially related to the identity nexus - helped to expand this strategic perspective formulated in the late 1990s.

Keywords

Turkish Foreign Policy, Southern Dimension, Middle Emerging Power, South-South Cooperation, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America

Introduction

As a matter of fact, Turkey is geographically interlocked between the European and the Asian continents, located at the crossroads of the Afro-Eurasia landmass. Despite the quest for security and autonomy has been a constant in the Turkey's

diplomacy, the country has been a witness of movements and counter-movements in multiple directions based on external and domestic incentive and constraints. In this sense, systemic changes at the end of the Cold War produced a new scenario which offered a possibility to empower Turkey's role beyond the general Atlantic alliance and the NATO membership. In line with the broader opportunities in the international political system, Turkey started to replace a traditional foreign policy (Davutoğlu 2013). While issues such as economics, development cooperation and humanitarian aid become increasingly relevant, a broader agenda emerged in the international context, characterized by the reduction of the value of military power and territorial defense. Simultaneously, the overemphasis on the security factors was slowly changing towards a more trade-oriented foreign policy at both regional and global arena. Turkey's foreign and security policy has moved toward a more Kantian approach, with emphasis on being active, cooperative and constructive (Chiriatti & Donelli 2015). Even if the security has continued to be relevant for the foreign policy strategists, its impact in the overall foreign policy agenda has decreased significantly, until 2013 where the spillover of the Syrian crisis began to affect seriously the national security.

The interlocking tripod of power, wealth and status helps to frame the Turkish foreign economic policy (Katzenstein 1978). In this tripod, the quest for wealth and status has required additional efforts in order to increase the engagement of new actors and non-traditional regions, leading beyond the regional limits of Turkey's foreign policy. Thus, Turkey has moved from her traditional 'threat assessment approach' towards an 'active engagement in regional political systems' (Kardaş 2012). As part of this new agenda, Turkey has expanded its diplomatic, economic and humanitarian networks toward different regions, including Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, adopting a multi-directional approach. Turkey's multi-directionality is defined by the ability to project her influence and interests in different directions, while it is open to all regions around the Turkish cornerstone (Danforth 2008). These developments reflect a new stance toward the Global South – especially toward the Least Developed Countries (LDC) – after years of disinterest, opening a new window for channeling Turkey's interests in the global political economy.

According to the mainstream literature of her traditional foreign policy, Turkey has been focused on the "West" – and thus, considered to be close to the "global North" – due to the identity/security nexus their developmental profile was pretty similar to her southern peers (Hale 2000, p.1-11; Deringil 1989, p.1-12). However, late discussions about the "new" Turkish foreign policy incorporate non-western foreign policy approaches, reflecting the increasing tensions in the strategic orientations among Europeanization, Eurasianism and Middle-Easternism (Öniş & Yılmaz 2009; Öniş 2011; Kirişçi 2012), highlighting the role of Tur-

key toward the global South (Bayer & Keyman 2012; Özkan 2010, 2012). In this sense, the “new” Turkey’s activism in the global South has opened a new space to expand her interests: the southern dimension.

Considering the rising prominence of South-South Cooperation (SSC) in the foreign policy agendas of the emerging powers, this paper aims to enlighten the Turkish agenda for the global South. The assertion is that an interplay of external and domestic factors has shaped Turkish foreign policy’s southern dimension. In the case of the southern dimension, the interaction between external dynamics – such as the translation of power the emergence of non-western powers, the consequences of 2008-2009 financial crisis-, and domestic variables –such as the dynamism of the Turkish economy, and the ideology of the ruling political coalition as status-seeker-, are central to provide a general explanatory framework.

These complex interactions should be addressed by the central research question of this work, why and how the southern dimension rise in the Turkey’s foreign policy?. In order to answer this question, this paper postulates that the roots of the southern dimension should be found in the sizeable changes in the distribution of resources in the global political economy combined with the needs of the Turkey’s economy and the ideological nature of the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party, JDP) government.

Dealing with southern dimension of the Turkish foreign policy, this paper is divided into three sections. In the first section, the main international and domestic variables that shape the political economy of the emerging powers in general, and Turkey in particular, are identified. This initial analytical framework is based on the state-centric understanding of the international political economy. The second section elaborates a theoretical scheme to compare four dimensions of the Turkish foreign policy. Finally, the third section explains the main features of the Turkey’s southern dimension, through the analysis of two case studies: Turkey’s opening toward Sub-Saharan Africa, especially the involvement in the Horn of Africa, and Turkey’s approach toward Latin America. At the end, the goal of the present work is to describe the Turkish policy towards the global South, showing how the southern dimension can help the Turkey’s ambition to become a rising power in a context of a shifting global governance.

Domestic and International Sources of the Turkish Foreign Policy Orientations

The second image reversed has a long tradition in IR and foreign policy studies. According to Gourevitch, the ‘international system has powerful effects upon the character of domestic regimes: the distribution of power among states, or the international state system; and the distribution of economic activity and wealth, or the international economy’ (Gourevitch 1978, p.882-883). In middle emerging

powers, the range of action for domestic factors to influence foreign policy is more limited than in advanced industrial states, therefore political and economic forces operating at home and abroad do not have the same conceptual weight. However, in a changing international system, the change in the distribution of resources can provide more space for the intervention of domestic factors such as the ideology of ruling coalitions who define policy objectives. In the case of a declining hegemony of a certain economic international order, international and domestic forces intertwined shaped the foreign policy, both in terms of policy objectives (a choice of values) and the instruments of policy (means). At the same time, periods of hegemonic ascendancy and decline in which the structure becomes unpredictable and the relative weight of domestic factors increase (Katzenstein 1978). Nowadays, the rise of China is presenting a new cycle of great power ascendancy, affecting progressively global and regional dynamics, for example in Latin America (Schenoni & Escudé, 2016).

Although increasingly constrained by the distributional effects of the uneven world politics and economics and the growing role of societal actors that lies beyond the scope of the governments, states still are the most relevant actors of the international arena. These intertwined dynamics between domestic and international factors represent a serious challenge for emerging powers in their ambitious idea to climb positions without delegitimizing the existing liberal international order. Instead of being caught in a semi-peripheral position in the hierarchy of global capitalism, middle emerging powers have given significant contribution to the international political economy showing their ability to serve as role models based on their soft power resources, their capacity to identify niches, building effective coalitions on the basis of normative principles and applying self-aware governance capacity (Öniş & Kutlay 2015). Turkey – as other similar countries – has been a lively example of the strength and limits of these new range of actors.

This work focuses in the first building block of the middle power activism and the capability to serve as a role model both on a regional and global basis. According to Holsti, role conception includes the policymakers' own definitions of the general kinds of decisions, commitments, rules and actions suitable to their state, and of the functions, if any, their state should perform on a continuing basis in the international system or in subordinate regional systems. (Holsti 1970, p.245-246)

Nowadays, Turkey has been redefining its international identity from being a passive to a constructive, and more independent, global actor. In this sense, her role in the world politics has been shaped by ruptures, alliances, tensions and realignments that can be interpreted in relation to her geographical location, the multiple geopolitical identities, or the state-building process.

From a strategic perspective, the literature about Turkey and their regional and

global position has presented the country as a torn (Huntington 1993), pivotal (Fuller 2008), peripheral and, lately, as a central country (Davutoğlu 2008). According to the former Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, Turkey's unique geographic and geo-cultural position gives her a 'strategic depth', therefore she should act as a 'central country' and break away from a static and single-parameter policy (Davutoğlu 2008). All of these characterizations have been related to the geographical location, but the quest for an identity and the state-building process on which these characterizations are shaped need to be taken into account as well. The Turkey's alternative geopolitical identities have been defined, according to Şener Aktürk (2015), in four senses – Pan-Islamism, Pan-Turkism, Westernism, and Eurasianism –, which reflect alternative interpretations about Turkey's national interests in the contemporary world. In this sense, Eurasianism have a pro-Russian orientation, Pan-Turkism looks for a greater role in the Turkic world – especially with the five Turkic 'brother states' –, Pan-Islamism goes in the direction of Arab-Islamic countries, and the Westernism calls for further integration in European and Atlantic institutions (Aktürk 2015, p. 54). A more practical account should be pulled out from the state-building process in which orientation changes are usually constant, although they are routed to strengthen the role of the state, domestically and internationally. Following this approach, this work identifies three ideal-types of foreign policy orientation: Western, Anatolian and Southern. The southern dimension is neither a primary intellectual interpretation about the Turkey's geopolitical identity, nor a natural outpouring from her geographical position, it is more of a practical consequence of the state-building process, in which there is an historical process of governmental agencies empowerment that creates incentives to become more internationalized.

Beyond the traditional links with Middle East and North Africa that are normally considered as a part of the "global South", Turkey has also improved her ties with other regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. At the same time, Turkey has begun to present itself as a developmental facilitator of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and a supporter voice for their claims within international fora, thus adopting an intermediate position between the high-income economies and the low-income ones. This novel orientation followed a multi-directional approach stated first by Ismael Cem, and then developed more effectively by Ahmet Davutoğlu. According to this second, multi-directionality is defined by Turkey's ability to project her influence and her interests in different directions (Baudner 2014). This approach has overturned Turkey's national role conception, making it a hub of a wider region defined as 'Afro-Eurasia' (Donelli 2015).

In the state-building process, the foreign policy should be interpreted as a result of both international and domestic forces. In relation to the first dynamics, dis-

tribution and changes in the economic and political power globally are central to locate the context and degree of autonomy of the Turkey's position while the national system of political economy and the ideology of the ruling governmental elite – Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party, JDP) – reflects the main domestic incentives for the foreign policy. In this case, the source of explanation are the trends in global distribution of resources, the nature of the Turkish political economy and the ideology of the JDP while the dependent variable are the dimensions of the foreign policy. In Table I, it is presented how these variables structured, and shape the three “ideal-type” orientations of the foreign policy. Following Lichbach, 'ideal-type taxonomy contains differentiations that facilitate comparisons (...) because a thing is best understood via contrasts with the available alternatives' (Lichbach 2003, p.16). As an ideal-type, it does not explain the overall reality, but it is useful to model general understandings of the phenomena.

Table 1: Domestic and International factors of Turkish Foreign Policy orientations¹

Variable	Dimension	Western	Anatolian	Southern
International Economic System		Status-quo	Diversifier	Revisionist
International Political System		Status-quo	Revisionist	Normative
National System of Political Economy		Security Statis Integrated	Welfare Market Fragmentation	Equity Market Fragmentation
Ideology of Ruling Coalitions		Pro-Western	Conservative	Conservative Social-Democrat

In broad terms, the western dimension has been very conservative in terms of how to respond to international changes, heavily influenced by the ideology of the different political coalitions, that followed the secular principles established in the early Kemalist Republic. These ruling elite originally perceived that Turkey had a narrow space to move in the world politics because being a 'small country at the crossroads' do not allow excessively freedom of movement (Deringil 1989, p. 3-4). At the same time, initially the political economy has been thought as mercantilist. In such a context, in which a developmental state plays a key role intervenient in the national economy, the quest for security was the main aim and

¹ The systemic variables have been borrowed from the Gourevitch's explanation of the international factors in domestic politics (Gourevitch 1978) and Robert Gilpin's work about structural change in world politics (Gilpin 1981) while the domestic ones are based on the Gilpin's explanation of national system of political economy (Gilpin 2001, p.148-195) and the Katzenstein's arguments about the role of the ideology of ruling coalitions to shape foreign economic policy (Katzenstein 1971).

organizing the structure of the corporate sector and private business practices in an integrated manner. Nowadays, this approach has suffered changes due to the influence of the neoliberal reforms and the impact of globalizations, but we keep it for conceptual reasons.

The Anatolian dimension has taken the advantages of global political and economic changes since the Turgut Özal's reforms in early 1980s. Based on a self-confident understanding of their role, the conservatives' elites has tried to diversified the sources of strategic and economic ties beyond Europe and the United States while trying to promote an alternative agenda and gaining autonomy in her surrounding regions. The domestic political-economic setting is also different. This orientation is supported by a more liberal and welfare-oriented understanding of the national economy in which the private structure is divided by those who are more prone to take business risks abroad, especially in the non-Western world (represented by MÜSIAD) and the traditional industrialists who are mainly oriented to the domestic market and focus on Western economies (TÜSIAD). The more pro-market profile can be illustrated by the Turkish solution to the Mundell-Fleming "impossible trilemma" – that –Turkey shares with the others established and middle emerging powers – in which monetary policy autonomy and capital mobility dismiss a fixed exchange rate controlled by the state (Frieden 1991). Referring to domestic factors, it should be noted that political consolidation, as well as economic growth, have been influential in this change, both at the psychological level and in altering understandings of national identity. The reform process – that transformed the economy from a ISI model to a neoliberal one – favored the rise of a growing number of civil society groups, which influence on policy makers have grown progressively (Findley 2010). These socio-political changes weakened the power of the traditional military-bureaucratic elites over the state in favor of an emerging Anatolian Muslim middle class. This class has aimed at promoting progress and integration into the global market without neglecting Islamic values and dogmas. As such, foreign policy changes also reflected the increasing influence of this sort of counter-elite with different political view, and a different interpretation of the national interests. The internationalization of the 'Anatolian tigers' turned out to be the 'practical hand' of the external policies (Kutlay 2011; Atlı 2011).

Finally, the domestic sources of the southern dimension "ideal-type" are close to the Anatolian dimension, especially in relation to the political economy approach. An open, fragmented national economy but with economic goals more oriented to equity, beyond the power and wealth concerns. In this case, this dimension provides a meeting point with both the leftist and Islamic concerns about social justice and equity in the global economy. The Southern dimension is a not new, but a secondary orientation in the foreign policy and it can be represented

historically as the tactical moves to gain support by Bülent in the context of the Cyprus issue, the strategic perspective proposed by the then Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ismail Cem in late 1990s, and, finally, the JDP's assertive foreign policy over a wide range of regions and sectors. This orientation has reacted differently to external incentives, especially when there is a cycle of economic stagnation, or political crisis that impact the established powers, especially the hegemonic one. In this case, the orientation would search for a remodelling of the international economic institutions trying to empower the middle and less-income countries whereas attempting to expand the norms in relation to justice and equity in the liberal international order, searching for fairer treatment in world politics. Compared with the Anatolian orientation, this one is less revisionist, but paying more attention to the normative elements in the context of a quest for global justice.

An interesting metaphor that reflects the relative weight in the overall foreign policy of each of these dimensions is the isosceles triangle with vertical axis of symmetry. This geometrical figure should have two of the sides and angles of equal length, while the remaining side is, not only of different size, but also smaller, thus reflecting the degree of opening in relation to the opposing angle. The Western and the Anatolian represent the two similar and expanded sides while the southernism represents the narrow side. As ideal-types, these orientations neither operate in a void nor are watertight compartments, they are mutually bonded and intertwined. In each of the foreign policy actions or decisions, there is a trade-off among the "ideal-types" that may change the balance of the overall orientation of the foreign policy. For example, Ismail Cem stated that Turkey is both European and Asian and this does not constitute a dichotomy, rather a most valuable asset (Cem 2001, p.60). One of the main argument of this paper is that Turkey has also a southern dimension, that shall not be discarded as an extra asset, neither as an alternative orientation to traditional one, but, rather, a complementary feature, useful for the country to become a global actor.

Turkey's Southern Dimension: a new post-crisis orientation

The trajectory of the global South has been widely discussed since the Cold War by emphasizing the South-South cooperation (SSC). During last three decades, many non-DAC (Development Assistance Committee) countries have begun to redefine their role in the global governance by intensifying their efforts to support various development activities undertaken by countries in the global South. As a result, the world has witnessed an unprecedented growth of what can be called 'South-South' aid, promoting horizontal cooperation based on the principle of equality, partnership and mutual interest (Quadir 2013, p. 322-323). The philosophy behind the SSC emerges from the notion of mutual growth, the underlying principle is to support each other for a win-win partnership on all sides. Nowadays, emerging powers, particularly of the Global South, are perceived to become

the agents of change (Chaturvedi, Fues & Sidiropoulos 2012), even if there is evidence that emerging powers have not always a common vision of development and orientation to the Global South. They often pursue an active agenda based on their distinct conceptualization of development, which pays attention to such values as social justice, environmental sustainability, democracy and human rights. In other words, as Quadir (2013, p. 324) vividly argued, ‘new donors place emphasis on different sets of issues and themes that do not necessarily revolve around a core ideological premise’. Foreign aid and development cooperation constitute a relatively small element within the global change, but it is an arena that is revealing of wider patterns and trends in political, economic and cultural power (Woods 2008). Emerging powers behave systematically different from traditional ones, refusing to use the dominant language of official development, which tends to rationalize the hierarchical relationship between North and South (Dreher, Nunnenkamp & Thiele 2011). However, within agendas of the emerging powers there are important differences, that some authors (Zimmerman & Smith 2011; Walz & Ramachandran, 2011) have categorized in three different groups or three distinct models: the DAC model, the Arab model and the Southern model. Even if Turkey is considered by Walz and Ramachandran (2011) as part of the first group, her current agenda shows the simultaneous presence of traits relating to all three models.

Until recently, the literature about the strategic orientation of Turkey has paid no attention to this southern dimension. Indeed, a review of the key textbooks about the central events of the Turkish foreign policy, shows that the “Third World” or the “Global South” is almost absent. Instead, the participation in the famous Bandung Conference (1955) – in which Turkey received strong criticism because of her pro-NATO position from Zhou Enlai and Nehru –, Turkey did not take part of the “Third World” network organizations such as the Non-Aligned Movement and the G77. These failed initial movements toward these alternative blocs provoked a sense of distance and mistrust with the nonaligned countries. As a result, during the international crisis in which Turkey was involved – such as the one in Cyprus in 1974 –, these countries generally took positions unfavorable to Turkey (Arıboğan 2004, p.410). Another interesting indicator of this general sense of distance between Turkey and the so called Third World can be found in the United Nations. In the UN Regional Groups, Turkey is member of both Western European and Others Group (WEOG) and the Asia-Pacific Group – formerly the Asian Group –, but electorally it only counts for WEOG.

Similarly, there is only a couple of publications that explore the relations of Turkey with the Third World in the midst of the Cold War (Bölükbaşı 1988; Sönmezoğlu 1994, p.441-481), and – after of the Cold War – the global South (Apaydin 2012). Actually, there is very little information about the Turkey’s posi-

tion toward decolonization process, the links between Turkish social and political leftist movements with national liberation movements in the non-Arab world and the Turkish multilateral policy toward main topics of the global South's international agenda before the JDP years. However - as a positive trend - there is an increasing literature of comparative perspectives with the global South - particularly with Latin America - in terms of developmental trajectories, crisis and neoliberal reforms (Öniş 2006; Bailey 2007), migrations (Escobar, Hailbronner, Martin, & Meza 2006), banking sector (Marois 2012), the role of the military (Pion-Berlin 2011), democratization (Wiltse 2015), and populism (Öniş 2014).

Nonetheless, in the last years there has been a novel interest for the increasing ties of Turkey with the global South in different regions and policy areas. Turkey's new policies towards Africa (Hasan 2007; Özkan 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014; Mbabia 2011; Wheeler 2011 Abdirahman 2013; Akpınar 2013; Baçık & Afacan 2013; Rudincová 2014; Donelli 2015; Kadayıfçı-Orellana 2016), East Asia (Çolakoğlu 2012) and Latin America (Gonzalez-Levaggi 2013; Gonzalez-Levaggi & Ferez 2016; Akıllı & Donelli 2016) has gained the attention of experts and analysts while the significant developmental and humanitarian efforts in such diverse places as Somalia, Kyrgyzstan and Haiti have raised the role of Turkey as a responsible partner in the world efforts to achieve more effective results in the quest for regional and global governance.

The general orientations of the foreign policy are affected by local-global nexus (Keyman & Gumuscu 2014), which has been channelized by the process of state-building. In the case of the southern dimension, it became empowered after two major events, the 2008-2009 financial crisis and the troubled aftermath of the Arab uprising. In this sense, Turkey has responded in two different ways. First, trying to present herself as a regional order builder in the surrounding region, trying to revive - at least ideationally - the historical and cultural boundaries of the Ottoman Empire. This strategy, heavily influenced by the JDP conservative identity nexus, tries unsuccessfully to profit from the redistribution of political power in the region since the reluctance of the great powers to intervene - initially - at a great scale. Second, Turkey tries to expand her weight as a global player, taking advantage of the crisis in the established powers and of the need for new partners in the global South, especially among the Least Developed Countries.

Regional and global process prompted the policy makers to search for alternative path in world politics, focusing their attention to other regions such as the Latin America, the Sub-Saharan Africa, and Southern Asia. The impossibility to become a regional hegemon in the post-Arab Revolution scenario, the constraints of the traditional - and the new Middle Eastern - markets in addition to the stoppage in the EU membership process led to invest more seriously time and resources in alternative regions and deepen the good practices in policy areas such

as foreign aid, humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping operations, and cultural co-operation, among others.

This southern route posits a normative and responsible stance as a middle emerging power by taking a more global and accountable approach of world politics emphasizing the ways to overcome global inequality. By using a set of soft power tools - such as the use of peacekeeping troops, developmental aid, humanitarian activities and public diplomacy - Turkey increased her role in regional and world politics reflecting a concern for justice with an 'ethical foreign policy' (Bayer & Keyman 2012, p.85). Even if this dimension tries to avoid actions that could undermine the set of international norms, it underlines the changes in the distribution of economic resources, especially those related with the likely impact in their national economy. In an attempt to portray herself as a crucial partner for LDCs, Turkey hosted the fourth UN Conference on the LDC (UN LDC) in May 2011, and framed this involvement conveying that 'Turkey as a developing country has much success and experience to share with LDCs' (Korkut & Civelekoglu 2013, p. 194).

Besides the regional and global factors, ideological preferences of the political coalition - grounded on conservative principles with pragmatic implementation -, has defined this different route for the Turkish foreign policy. The increasing involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America portrays examples of the Turkish novel orientation toward the global South.

Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America in the Turkey's Global South Agenda

Sub-Saharan Africa

In the era of globalization, Africa has become a key area where emerging powers aspire to raise their international relevance. The main reason is the transformation of the global economy that has generated an unprecedented demand for mineral and energy resources, which make Africa a geoeconomic and geopolitical competitive arena (Korkut & Civelekoglu 2013, p. 191). In the last decade, Turkey earned a special place among the so called non-traditional partners driven by two main factors: diversifying her economic relations and maintaining her re-orientation in global politics (Özkan 2012). Historically, Turkey has always found an exclusive place for relations with the former Ottoman lands of North Africa but only since the last two decades she has started to look towards the African countries geographically located below the Maghreb. Traditionally, Turkish authorities look at these regions as secondary and peripheral for their interests. Since the end of the 1990s Turkey's relations with Africa have shown an increasing revival, especially towards Sub-Saharan African countries; the progressive openness of the economy, the increasing global financial and commercial interconnection and the search for new opportunities in the non-Western world provide a basis for the

establishment of the Action Plan (1998). Turkey's opening to Africa gained momentum under the JDP government with the approval of the Development of the Economic Relations with African Countries strategy in 2003. Since 2004 Turkey has significantly increased her relations with the countries of the Horn of Africa through economic and trade agreements and bilateral projects of development and emergency aid (Donelli 2015). However, the real turning point was 2005 designated in Turkey as the Year of Africa. It was also the beginning of Turkey's involvement through a greater diplomatic activism both bilaterally and multilaterally. In recent years Turkey has multiplied her diplomatic offices² and the number of honorary consuls who are working on the continent as intermediaries.

From a Turkey's perspective, the basic drivers have been a mix of identity closeness, the search for new markets and the quest for status as global actor. Turkey has tried to portray herself as an active partner for development assistance, emphasizing the SSC. Compared with traditional DAC countries, Turkey has two favorable features in her relations with African countries: the absence of a colonial past that makes possible a 'clean slate' approach (Abdirahman 2011; İpek & Biltekin 2013)³, and the existence of historical (Rudincova 2014)⁴ and religious ties (Özkan 2013; Abdurrahim 2015).

Nonetheless, beyond the significant role of the JDP elite's preferences and interests, both political and economic dynamics at the international and societal level shape these uncommon interest in Africa. Literature about the topic agrees that there are varying causes behind Turkey's opening to Africa: firstly, difficulties in the European Union (EU) accession process; secondly, searching for new markets for Turkish products; thirdly, looking for greater operating autonomy from traditional Western allies; fourthly, gaining political visibility and support inside international fora and, finally, fostering sustainable economic development by imparting Turkey's managerial skills and technological know-how (Özkan 2010, 2014; Wheeler 2011; Donelli 2015; Eyryce Tepeciklioğlu 2015). The nascent role of middle and great emerging powers in the international political economy, next to the increasing presence of non-western actors such as China, India and Brazil in Africa provide some clues about the state-to-system linkages. At the same time, the political economy progressive changes since the 1980s, towards a more open and profit-oriented economy generated extra incentives to search new market beyond the traditional ones. Since 2008, Turkey has pursued material gains, such as increased trade opportunities and investments, by convincing African states of

² The number of Turkish embassies in Africa has risen from 12 of 2009 to 34 in 2013.

³ The term has been quoting by former President Abdullah Gül during a visit in Africa. By "clean slate," Gül was presumably alluding to the crucial fact that Turkey has never been a colonizing power in the region.

⁴ Turkish leader emphasizes these historical ties: 'You are home, Turkey is your motherland, sixteenth century Ahmed Gurey fought occupying forces with Ottoman support'. 'Opening Remarks by Foreign Minister of Turkey Ahmet Davutoğlu', Somali Civil Society Gathering, Istanbul, 27 May 2012.

their shared values and goals with Turkey (Korkut & Civelekoğlu 2013).

In order to change the mutually negative perceptions and to foster new relationships useful meetings have been organized by the Turkish public and private institutions on specific issues such as health, agriculture and the media. In particular, in the field of economic and trade development private organizations are cooperating with state agencies including the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEİK) and the Turkish Exporters Assembly (TIM). Turkey joined the African Development Bank (2008) and strengthened her relations with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in East Africa and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Turkey's investment in Sub-Saharan Africa region pays: trade volume between Turkey and Sub-Saharan Africa increased from \$742 million in 2000 to \$17 billion dollars in 2015. According to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, trade volume with Sub-Saharan Africa is projected to reach \$50 billion in 2050.

Among the private actors, the conservative-based business associations such as MÜSİAD (Association of Independent Industrialists and Businessmen) is active through the promotion of forums between Turkish entrepreneurs and their African counterparts. These agencies were, and are, fundamental actors not only in the implementation of the Turkey's African policy but also as prime movers.

At the same time, this Africa sub-region is relevant for the increasing Official Development Assistance (ODA) provided by the official Turkish aid agency, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) (Cemalettin 2014). Between 2005 and 2015, aid has been one of Turkey's strongest foreign policy elements in general and in her Africa policy in particular (Özkan 2016). Besides the activities of TIKA - that currently has operations in over 40 African countries -, Turkey has also provided aid to Africa through international organizations; for example, through the World Health Organization, World Food Program, and the Red Crescent (Korkut & Civelekoğlu 2013).

Furthermore, compared to other emerging powers that are active in Africa, Turkey gives a religious dimension to her assistance and following the Arab model of development aid, concentrates on African Muslim communities. However, religion appears as a tool rather than the driving force in most of the Turkish initiatives. Additionally, it is perceived as a legitimate basis for Turkey's involvement (Özkan 2013). Indeed, most of the works carried out by faith-based NGOs⁵ are promoted as Islamic duties (Abdurrahim 2015). The active role of the Turkish

⁵ Turkish humanitarian NGOs are faith-based organizations. They are formal organizations whose identity and mission are self-consciously derived from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditions (Berger 2003, p. 16).

'pro-Islamic'⁶ civil society is another distinctive feature of Turkey's presence in Africa (Donelli 2015, p. 41). The involvement on the ground of civil organizations has allowed access to local channels and agents that the State cannot or does not want to reach. The NGOs' ability to build a mutual trust on the field leads to the inclusive approach of all conflicting parties during talks and negotiations (Achilles, Sazak, Wheeler & Woods 2015).

Finally, the Turkey's African dimension involves a normative element, in behalf of a more equalitarian world politics. During the 2015 Sustainable Development Summit, the former Prime Minister Davutoğlu brought the Sub-Saharan Africa Turkey's policy as an example of the positive outputs resulting from combining humanitarian and development assistance programs within a collective strategy. According to him, 'Turkey has become deeply concerned with all forms of human inequality that exist in the world, especially those forms that impact upon the dignity of the individual and the community' (Davutoğlu 2012, p.3). This is connected to the conservative approach of the JDP elite, which consider humanitarian crisis and underdevelopment a test for Turkey's new role.

All efforts promoted by Turkey led to the appointment as *observer status* in 2005 and *strategic partner* of the African Union in 2008. During the same year, Turkey organized the First Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit which was considered to be the beginning of a steady and sustainable co-operation process (Bilgiç & Nascimento 2014, p. 2). Initially, Turkey operated in Africa like the other non-western emerging powers (China, Brazil, India) in the field of economic development and humanitarian aid with minor concern for political issues (Özkan & Orakçı 2015). Later, the role assumed by Turkey in Somalia pointed to a shift in its focus towards the political aspects of the sub-region's problems. Indeed, since 2011 with her active involvement in the Somali crisis, Turkey has assumed more political responsibilities in the Horn of Africa, rather than being merely an economic power or donor country (Donelli 2015, p. 40). This shift has made Turkey a hybrid non-traditional actor because it combines the traditional political-stability perspective of western powers with the economic-trade perspective of emerging ones. As a result, Turkey revised her foreign policy agenda for opening up the Horn of Africa, and in 2014 a new phase was launched under the rubric Turkey-Africa Partnership initiative. This new strategy would further facilitate the consolidation of African ownership of African issues under the motto 'African issues require African solutions' (Çavuşoğlu 2014). Nowadays, Turkey works to promote her own interests in Africa but, at the same time, is engaged in finding long term solutions for the continent's problems through southern orientation as evidenced by the Turkey-Africa Economic and Business Forum (2016) held in Istanbul.

⁶ Anne Solberg (2007, p. 432) uses 'pro-Islamic' as an umbrella term for a variety of organizations and movements that are grounded in Islam and therefore can be distinguished from the dominant secularist ideology in Turkey.

Latin America and the Caribbean

The Latin American connection seems to be a novelty for both Turkish decision-makers and societal actors. The new economic environment, in addition to the high rates of economic growth in Latin America, gained the attention of JDP officers, which started to perceive Latin America as the new space for economic engagement, even if the cultural and religious ties were almost non-existent.

Since the early days of the Republic, but especially during the Cold War, Latin America and Turkey could be understood more as distant cousins, with scattered contacts (Sochaczewski 2015). In spite of the fact that Turkey's relations with the region had roots in the late Ottoman Empire, geographical and cultural distances posed too high of a barrier for bonding (Gonzalez Levaggi 2012). In addition to the geographic realities, social and political unrest during Turkey's transition from a world empire (Ottoman) to a republic state (Turkish), also weakened Turkey's relations with the region. Turkey has been present in the major Latin American countries since the first decades of the Republic, but bilateral and regional ties were fragile until mid-1990s. This type of low profile relationship prior to the 1990s, known as a consent to resignation, was due to Turkey's dominant Western state identity during that period (Akillı & Donelli 2016).

In 1992, Turkey received the first Latin American high-level visit from the Argentine President Carlos Menem. After that, the then-President Süleyman Demirel visited Argentina, Brazil and Chile in 1995 opening a broad space for cooperation in several areas from defense to trade including educational and technological cooperation, energy and drug trafficking, among others. These moves were then incorporated into the Action Plan for Latin America and the Caribbean in 1998. This trend was strengthened during the first years of the new millennium, when the high economic performances of several countries - Chile, Brazil, and Mexico - made Latin America more attractive to Turkey. Therefore, the region gained significant importance for Turkey, creating the conditions for further cooperation on different levels. As a middle emerging country, Turkey saw economic opportunities in the region, initially related with purchase of primary resources and, then - not so successfully - with the intention to exports low and medium-technology products and develop investments (Gonzalez-Levaggi & Ferez 2016). Moreover, Turkey's role and membership in the Group of 20 (G20) in which three Latin American countries - Argentina, Brazil and Mexico - are present have improved opportunities for strategic alliances beyond the Atlantic bloc.

A new wave of activism started in 2006, declared Year of Latin America by the JDP government as an effort to create links with the Americas to boost economic, social and cultural relations. After that, several factors indicate that Turkey's relations with Latin America and the Caribbean have improved significantly: inten-

sification of mutual official visits, increased mutual diplomatic representatives, and the growing number of mutual inter-parliamentary friendship groups in Turkey's Grand National Assembly (TBMM). The number of high-level visits and contacts increased between Turkey and Latin America and the Caribbean countries (Gonzalez-Levaggi 2013). Under the flag of South-South relations Turkey and Latin American policy-makers embarked on a flurry of cross-regional travels.

Another strategic incentive to being more engaged with Latin American and the Caribbean has been the ambition of the JDP government to become a regional power with global appeal. To do so, Turkey has rapidly expanded the official representation network, organized quasi-interregional meeting with the CARICOM, opened the first TİKA and Anadolu Agency (AA) offices in the region, and finally Turkey became observatory member of the Pacific Alliance, the most dynamic economic regional organization in the Americas. Nowadays Turkey holds *observer status* in the Organisation of American States (OAS), CARICOM, MERCOSUR and the Rio Group. The increasing presence of Turkish interest in the region have catapulted the Eurasian country in the second ring of extra-regional powers in Latin American next to India, Indonesia, South Korea and South Africa.

In line with the goal of developing economic and trade relations, Turkey has signed Economic and Trade Cooperation agreements with 13 countries, in addition to other agreements covering economic cooperation, technical assistance, infrastructure development and other topics. The trade volume between Turkey and Latin American countries reached almost \$8 billion in 2015, and expanded up to 800 percent over the past decade. Moreover, Turkey signed her first Free Trade Agreement in 2009 with Chile and has begun FTA negotiations with Mexico, Ecuador, Peru and Colombia, aiming to reach a trade volume of \$20 billion with Latin America by 2023, the Republic's centennial. Nowadays, these figures seem too optimistic since trade has been stagnant since 2012.

As in Sub-Saharan Africa, but to a lesser degree, the main economic, societal and state actors that has been an active part of the overall Turkey activism, are present in Latin America. The presence of Turkish state and non-state agencies has increased only recently, for example Anadolu Agency started their regional activities in 2015 and Turkish Airlines flight to four destinations in the region (Buenos Aires, San Pablo, Bogota and Panama). At the same time, TİKA opened two offices in Latin America (Mexico D.F. and Bogota), and it seems that it would play a pivotal role in Turkey's opening towards the region, thanks to several activities and assistance projects in the fields of agricultural, health and education (Akıllı & Donelli 2016). Another economic actor that has been involved is the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK) that has organized trade missions, binational trade councils and round table meetings.

Finally, the more normative stand of the Turkey's Southern dimension in Latin America is seen in her relations with the Caribbean countries in which Turkey has offered humanitarian and developmental help not only to increase her regional leverage but also to acquired greater weight in the global governance. In Turkey's perspective, the rise of a human-oriented diplomacy represents the beginning of a more enlightened foreign policy. According to Davutoğlu the global system requires an approach based on a 'critical equilibrium between conscience and power', and Turkey is determined to be a leader in establishing such an understanding on a global scale (Davutoğlu 2013, p. 866). This approach, which can help move beyond the hard-power versus soft-power dichotomy, has reinforced a broader vision of the Turkish government, and signifies growing presence of Turkey into a multipolar world, boosting her role into the global governance.

Conclusion

During the last two decades, Turkey has undergone major transformations. While the world's geopolitical balances are constantly changing, Turkey's has become more global than ever. Opening of official representations worldwide, a new wave of investments and atypical developmental and humanitarian aid, far from the range of middle emerging powers, has marked the times of Turkey's global activism. Given the importance of international and domestic variables that has pushed for Turkish activism following unusual routes, such as Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, this article aimed to understand Turkey's agenda for the Global South. In this, it tried to argued that the advent of a post-Cold War political and economic scenario, summed up to the novel narrative promoted by the ruling JDP elite, helped to expand Turkey's strategic perspective formulated in the late 1990s. The case studies presented in this article – Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America – suggest that Turkey reconsidered its priorities in regional and global policy. This change symbolizes the shifting preferences from meeting the expectations of Western partners to securing Turkey's own national interests and ambitious as a rising power. The conclusion here is that Turkey's southern route is not alternative to Turkish traditional one (Western) and post traditional (Anatolian), but it is complementary, aiming to acquired importance in global governance.

The Turkish southern dimension and her activism in the global South have had two consequences. First, the Turkish new orientation intends to be a bridge between the developed and developing world. The southern dimension has opened a new route for strategic projection, putting particular emphasis in soft power policies. Turkey's soft power has gained importance, thanks to the gradual involvement of new state and non-state actors along with the adoption of novel frameworks, such as cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy and humanitarian diplomacy. Second, the Southern dimension does not come without criticism, such

as the overemphasis of identity over economy in certain countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, an overinvestment of resources in some unattractive African countries, doubts about the long-term sustainability of the spectacular growth of official representations, and replication of a “developed” attitudes toward developing states. Other factors beyond the Turkish intentions, such as the increasing tensions with the European Union, the United States and the aftermath of the Arab uprisings, can explain better this diplomatic setback but it seems that the expectations of the southern dimension has not yet reached their optimum. It seems that the southern dimension is still too narrow to transform the foreign policy from an “isosceles” triangle into an “equilateral” one.

Bio

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