
Understanding Turkey's Emerging "Civilian" Foreign Policy Role in the 2000s through Development Cooperation in the Africa Region

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Abstract

This paper attempts to understand the gradual "civilian" shift in Turkish foreign policy in the first decade of the 2000s through its development cooperation activities in the Africa region. To this aim, by applying the "civilian power" role concept developed by François Duchêne, it first investigates how Turkey's 1) domestic democratic and economic preconditions, 2) normative commitments, and 3) power instruments evolved throughout history to make it possible to talk about an emerging "civilian role" in Turkish foreign policy during the first decade of the 2000s. Then it looks more closely at Turkey's civilian foreign policy practice through the "development cooperation" activities of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) across Africa and specifically in Somalia throughout the 2000s. Finally the paper will question whether this specific development cooperation policy has so far been successful in constructing a credible "civilian foreign policy role" for Turkey in the Africa region.

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Key Words

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Introduction

The "normative" turn in international relations associated with a "civilizing" discourse through democratization processes has impacted the way Turkish foreign policy decision makers interpreted and conceptualized world politics during the first decade of the 2000s. Faced with systemic as well as agency-based shifts at the international order level, such as the rise of new powers from Asia and Latin America, enhanced regionalism, and a growing focus on issues like development, democracy, human rights and fairness in global governance, Turkish foreign policy makers felt both the necessity and opportunity of linking the country's foreign policy framework to the new trends and approaches in international relations. Accordingly, Turkey witnessed a doctrinal foreign policy change accompanied by renewed or content-enriched diplomacy

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Developments in Turkish foreign policy have become a source of heated debates in academic and political milieus, and widely discussed with reference to Turkey being a “soft power”,¹ “normative power”,² “rising power”³ and “regional power”,⁴ together with both the positive and negative global, regional, and domestic outcomes of those approaches. Yet, compared to other theoretical conceptualizations, the normative-civilian dimension of Turkish foreign policy choices and the challenges that Turkey has confronted in its foreign policy have so far been neglected in Turkish foreign policy scholarship. Furthermore, although there is a rich scholarly debate on Turkish foreign policy towards its

region—and in particular, the Middle East—during the first decade of the JDP era, few serious attempts have been made to theoretically analyse the developments in Turkish foreign policy towards the Africa region in the 2000s.⁵

This study takes the “civilian power” and “civilian foreign policy role” concepts developed respectively by François Duchêne and Hanns Maull as its point of departure for analysing Turkey’s increasing willingness to adopt a “civilian foreign policy role” during the first decade of the 2000s. Furthermore, it specifically looks to question whether this conceptual role fits with Turkey’s “raison d’être” today, as well as its development cooperation strategy towards the Africa region. This paper assumes that the “civilian power” concept that has frequently been employed in EU, German and Japanese studies literature for defining the EU’s foreign policy role and actorness could also be used in conceptualizing other countries engaged in enacting a civilian foreign policy role in world politics. Here it must be acknowledged that performing an “*ideal type civilian foreign policy role*” is a difficult endeavour even for developed Western democracies. In this respect, the enactment of such a role by less developed democracies may be perceived as incomplete and inconsistent, in the sense that the latter are still trying to “civilize” their own democracies at home while

directing "civilizing" missions outside their borders. Regarding the familiar norms/values and interests divide in normative/civilian power literature, this paper considers that since they are mutually constructed, they can not be easily separated from each other.⁶

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This study aims to contribute to both the ongoing debates on normative and civilian issues in international relations and the existing literature on Turkish foreign policy, from conceptual, theoretical, and empirical perspectives. As a modest attempt to apply "civilian power" and "civilian foreign policy role" concepts to Turkish foreign policy, this article also aims to shed light on the foreign policy makers' quest to adopt a more "civilian" role in the 2000s, as well as the limitations of that effort. Ankara frequently used "civilian" foreign policy instruments like mediation, trade, and humanitarian assistance during the

first decade of the 2000s. Among many, Ankara's strong willingness to extend humanitarian assistance to Africa and further develop trade relations has been remarkable. Yet, the civilian dimension of Turkish foreign policy choices and the challenges that Turkey has confronted in its civilian foreign policy choices have so far been neglected in Turkish foreign policy scholarship in general and Turkish foreign policy towards Africa specifically. Therefore, the use of the "civilian power" and "civilian foreign policy role" concepts as an alternative analytical framework to understand Turkey's foreign policy would certainly bring novelty to the Turkish foreign policy literature.

The civilian foreign policy role concept has also been only very rarely applied to cases of developing democracies or rising democracies. This study acknowledges that the use of the concepts of "civilian foreign policy" and "civilian power" should not be restricted to the foreign policy analysis of developed democracies. Placing the "*civilian power*" and the "*civilian foreign policy role*" concepts at the centre of the analysis, this paper aims to understand to what extent the civilian power approach is a plausible means to describe Turkish foreign policy in the first decade of the 2000s and to explain Turkey's motivations in pursuing its "development cooperation" policy towards the "Africa region".

To this end, departing from the “civilian power” concept first developed by Duchêne and building on the “civilian foreign policy role” defined by Hanns Maull, the following analytical framework will be applied: (1) *domestic democratic and economic preconditions*; (2) *normative commitments*; and (3) *power instruments*. It will be applied first to Turkey’s traditional foreign policy to investigate how Turkey’s foreign policy role has gradually evolved towards a more “civilian” context from the Republican era up to the 2000s. Second, Turkish foreign policy during the 2000s, and in particular the first decade of JDP era, will be analysed using the same framework, to distinguish certain types of practices, mechanisms, and platforms in which Turkey’s civilian foreign policy role started to gain visibility. Third, attention will be paid to Turkey’s activism in the Africa region by specifically focusing on the development cooperation activities of Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA Turkish Development Agency). Finally, this paper will question whether this particular development cooperation policy has been successful in constructing a credible “civilian foreign policy role” for Turkey in the region, despite limitations.

Setting the Theoretical Framework: From the “Civilian Power” Concept to “Civilian Foreign Policy Role”

Civilian power is a complex, multifaceted and highly contested term which has become the subject of various academic debates, especially in the fields of EU, German and Japanese studies. The concept of “civilian power” was first introduced by François Duchêne in the early 1970s, with a specific reference to the role of the European Economic Community (EEC) in the Cold War years. According to Duchêne, since the European Community is a civilian group of countries long on economic power and relatively short on armed force, it would only make the most of its opportunities if it remained true to its inner characteristics, which are civilian ends and means.⁷ Though he did not explicitly offer up a clear definition of either the *essence* or *exercise* of a

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"civilian power" approach, Duchêne's conceptualization has been the main reference point of a rich scholarly debate and of various case studies discussing the "civilian" dimension of states' foreign policy practices.⁸

In his 1999 seminal article, "Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers" published in *Foreign Affairs*, Hanns Maull was the first to reinterpret the "civilian power" concept by applying it to Germany and Japan.⁹ He defined civilian powers as "states (or other political entities) which are willing to take initiatives and exercise influence over events, and which use particular strategies and instruments to achieve their objectives."¹⁰ Considering Germany and Japan as *prototypes* of a "civilian power", Maull underlines three main characteristics of civilian powers:¹¹

- 1) The acceptance of the necessity of *cooperation* with others in the pursuit of international objectives;
- 2) The concentration on *nonmilitary*, primarily *economic means* to secure national goals, with military power left as a residual instrument serving essentially to safeguard other means of international interaction; and
- 3) A willingness to *develop supranational structures* to address critical issues of international management.

Another prominent scholar in EU studies, Ian Manners, suggests that most civilian power formulations place a *specific emphasis* on the importance of being "long on economic power" or "the concentration on non-military, primarily economic instruments."¹² Accordingly, Ian Manners and Richard Whitman depict the differences between civilian power, military power and normative power in terms of their "means of influence" in international politics.¹³ Christopher Hill argues that "civilian powers" rely also on *persuasion* and *negotiation*, and they use their *economic* and *diplomatic* strength in pursuit of their objectives.¹⁴ Similarly Hazel Smith maintains that the word 'civilian' is an essentially *non-military* one, putting strong emphasis on a *peaceful foreign policy*.¹⁵ However, there exists an ambiguity in the literature regarding whether the concept totally excludes the use of coercive instruments, including *military means*. For instance, Hedley Bull criticized Duchêne's concept of "civilian power Europe" and made an appeal for a "military power Europe", arguing that the concept of a civilian power Europe was a contradiction in terms.¹⁶ Likewise Stelios Stavridis criticized the "*non-military*" definitions of the concept and asserted that what matters is the *output*, which is, the *promotion of human rights* and other *democratic principles* in the world.¹⁷ All these various scholars'

competing approaches illustrate the vagueness and flexibility of the concept.

In order to apply civilian power to foreign policy analyses, Maull introduced an ideal “civilian foreign policy role” concept out of his comparison of German and Japanese post-war foreign policies, compared to other role concepts, such as “great power”, “middle power”, “military power”, or “regional power.”¹⁸ Key to the civilian foreign policy role conceptualization introduced by Hanns Maull¹⁹ and later categorized by Tewes²⁰ is the intertwining of the three dimensions of civilian power:

domestic preconditions, normative commitments, and power instruments.

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Figure 1: Ideal-Type Civilian Foreign Policy Role

Domestic Preconditions	Normative Commitments	Power Instruments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democracy • Material Prosperity • Consensus on supranational cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multilateralism • Supranational Integration • Rule of Law • Development and diffusion of human rights and democracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peaceful Resolution of Conflicts (Diplomatic cooperation, mediation) • Trade • Development cooperation • Humanitarian aid • Democracy promotion

The first precondition of ideal-type civilian foreign policy role concept concerns *domestic prerequisites*. Here

“democracy” appears as the principal *domestic prerequisite* of this civilian role conception and “material prosperity” as

an essential factor for the stability of the domestic democratic order. Domestic *prerequisites* also include a historical learning process that serves to establish a general consensus within the country, of the importance of "supranational cooperation".²¹ The second category, *normative commitments*, encompasses a state's commitment to multilateralism, supranational integration, diplomatic cooperation, rule of law, diffusion of equality, justice, development, democracy, and restriction of the use of force in international politics.²² The third precondition of this ideal-type civilian foreign policy role, *power instruments*, includes the use of *non-military*, primarily economic and also diplomatic instruments such as mediation in conflict resolution, humanitarian aid, democracy promotion, and development cooperation.²³

Building on Maull's ideal type "civilian foreign policy role" framework above, the empirical part of this study specifically looks at the historical evolution of Turkey's *domestic preconditions*, *normative commitments*, and *power instruments* since the Republican era, in order to investigate whether there exists enough empirical evidence supporting the idea of a shift towards the exercise of a more *civilian role* in Turkey's foreign policy in the 2000s, compared to the past. Acknowledging that the ideal-type

civilian foreign policy role model assumes a highly coherent foreign policy,²⁴ the rest of the paper will try to critically assess the civilian credentials and accomplishments in Turkish foreign policy while still recognizing their limitations.

Applying a "Civilian" Foreign Policy Role Framework: Turkish Foreign Policy in Perspective

Like the foreign policies of many other international actors, Turkish foreign policy is marked by some claims and trajectories regarding its civilian features at varying degrees over time. To better understand the continuities and differences between Turkey's "civilian" path both in the past and today in terms of foreign policy and to what extent Turkey has taken a differentiated and relatively more successful path towards acting as a civilian foreign policy actor in the 2000s compared to the past, the civilian references associated with Turkish foreign policy since the Republican era first need to be briefly highlighted. Secondly, specific attention will be paid to the 2000s and most specifically to the JDP era in which the "civilian" concept started to gain ground discursively and empirically in the country's foreign policy. In doing so, the triad of 1) *domestic democratic*

and economic preconditions, 2) normative commitments, and 3) power instruments used by Maull in defining the “civilian foreign policy role” will serve as a basis to understand to what degree present-day Turkey has been enacting a civilian foreign policy role.

The “Civilian” Accomplishments in Turkish Foreign Policy Tradition in the 20th Century

Ever since the early Republican era in Turkey, the country’s foreign policy has been conducted by referring to certain principles, guided by a *normative commitment* to the unchanged ideal of “*peace at home, peace in the world*” as stated by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. These include, among many, peaceful resolution of disputes, non-interference in the internal affairs of third parties, international law and legitimacy, a strong commitment to multilateralism, and supranational integration through European Union membership. In fact, since its entry into the League of Nations in 1932 and later in 1945 to the United Nations, a closer look at the main historical parameters during and after the Cold War era shows that despite some exceptional periods in the 1960s and 1970s, -when Turkey had to intervene militarily in Cyprus due to the growing inter-communitarian

conflicts on the island with reference to the 1959 London and Zurich Agreements.²⁵ Turkey has generally pursued a peaceful diplomatic policy by remaining explicitly attached to the norms and decisions of major international organizations.²⁶

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Although shaped by ups and downs, Turkey’s efforts at supranational integration to become a full member of the European Union (EU) have been an integral part of its normative commitments throughout the 20th century. Of course, an important landmark event that affected the shift in Turkish foreign policy towards a normative approach was the declaration in 1999 of Turkey’s official candidacy for EU membership. This resulted in a rapid Europeanization process by Turkey, which also contributed

to raising Turkish leaders' awareness about the increasing importance of supranational integration for further development of *civil society* and *democracy* as well as for *political reforms* and *economic development* in Turkey.²⁷

Yet, Turkey's road to the establishment of a working democracy with its political and civil society institutions has neither been easy, nor complete. On the contrary, progress has been difficult, along a road beset with obstacles and interrupted by many setbacks.²⁸ On the one hand, since the Republican period there have been numerous efforts for modernizing the country with economic development accompanied by a gradual progress towards a more open society. The basic reason behind this particular evolution has been the fact that modernization was identified with westernization,²⁹ and democracy was viewed as an indispensable component of westernization.³⁰ On the other hand, Turkey's long and difficult journey towards democracy has been interrupted several times, with no fewer than three military coups during and after the Cold War years. Despite frequent regime breakdowns and significant democratic deficits, the history of modern Turkey since the 1950s has been, and today remains as, a process of modernization with democratization.³¹

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Turkey's *domestic economic conditions* have impeded the government's ability to adopt a *civilian role* in its foreign policy during and after the Cold War era. In fact, the Turkish economy was previously identified with recurring crises and a controversial relationship with international institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In this regard, Turkey's particular *domestic preconditions* with regards to long-lasting *democracy deficiencies*, and also *Turkey's problematic EU accession process*, largely hindered it from pursuing a civilian foreign policy role in the 20th century.³²

Although there exist some important periods in contemporary Turkish history where the Turkish economy flourished and *economic power instruments* gained relative importance, as clearly seen during the Turgut Özal era of the late 1980s, Turkey has largely been identified by low economic growth rates and high government

debts. It was defined as a developing country and was a development aid-receiver state until the 2000s. When Turkey transitioned from single party to multi-party rule in the 1950s, official development assistance (ODA) to Turkey through the Marshall Plan helped it lay the foundation for its economic development during the Cold War years. However, it was not until the 1980s that the country launched its own ODA program as *an instrument* under the Özal government, while at the same time remaining a donor recipient.³³ Bolstering Turkey's *economic strength* by integrating into the world economy and using aid as a *power instrument* to enhance *trade and soft power relations* in developing countries were among Prime Minister Özal's foreign policy priorities.³⁴ By the early 1990s, Turkish leaders began to realize that development assistance efforts would be more effectively administered through the establishment of an official state sponsored agency.³⁵ Accordingly, in 1992, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) was established. However, Turkish ODA during this period was only restricted to Turkic countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Furthermore, political instability due to fragile coalition governments and economic crises

in the country made it difficult to use aid as an effective foreign policy instrument, which could apparently be observed in the sudden increase in the total amount of aid in 1992, followed by a visible decrease and then irregular rise and decline in subsequent years.³⁶

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It can be argued that the systematic and structural change in both *economic development* and use of *economic power instruments* in the form of development cooperation began in the 2000s, especially over the last decade. Within the theoretical framework offered above, in the following section this paper will question how Turkey's *domestic precondition* and *normative commitments* evolved over the last decade to make it possible to talk about an emerging civilian role in Turkish foreign policy based upon new *power instruments*.

Assessing Turkey's Civilian Foreign Policy Role in the 2000s

a. Domestic democratic and economic preconditions

The increasing civilian role in present-day Turkey's foreign policy was made possible as a result of positive developments or relative progress in its *domestic democratic preconditions* and *economic development* in the first decade of the 2000s. First, Turkey's most important *soft power* is defined to be its *democracy*.³⁷ In line with this reasoning, since 1999, when Turkey was attributed official candidate status to the EU, Turkey has implemented a series of reforms on civil liberties and democracy with regards to many issue areas, including the role of the military, the Kurdish question, and civil and social rights. Of course, Turkey's EU accession process has also impacted the way the domestic democratic environment and increased civil liberties have evolved in the country. Still, long-standing public pressure prevails, which is supportive of a new and more democratic and civil constitution.³⁸ Since the 2000s, Turkish leaders have put special emphasis on a *stable and peaceful domestic order*, which is a necessary precondition to building a proactive foreign policy.³⁹

For instance, Foreign Minister of Turkey between 2009-2014, Ahmet Davutoglu, indicated that if there is not a peaceful and democratic environment inside a country, it may not have the political stability required to influence its external environment.⁴⁰

Secondly, it can be argued that Turkey's increasing *material prosperity* and *economic growth* since the 2000s, has also so far provided *favorable domestic conditions* for Turkey to adopt a civilian foreign policy role. In the first years of the 2000s Turkey rapidly recovered from the negative effects of the 2001 financial crisis and reached a steady growth rate in its economic performance. The country also survived the 2008 global economic crisis with minimum damage.⁴¹ The available *systemic conditions* also bolstered the relative growth of the Turkish economy, both in its domestic environment and in global context. In this respect, Turkey took due advantage of the international environment in the 2000s, in which new operational areas were opened for emerging powers in the world system.⁴² The Turkish case also exemplifies what Maull suggested about the existence of a strong correlation between favorable *domestic democratic and economic conditions* and an increasing *civilian foreign policy role of a state, as well as its frequent use of civilian power instruments*.⁴³

b. Normative commitments

During the first decade of the 2000s, Turkish foreign policy moved smoothly towards an increased “civilian” approach. In the first years of the 2000s this “civilian” path of Turkish foreign policy was conceived both as a part and consequence of Turkey’s rapid Europeanization process. When Europeanization started to slow down after 2006, with the EU’s decision of interrupting negotiations with Ankara mainly due to political reasons, the “civilian” orientation of Turkish foreign policy started to gain a new dimension informed by a more “cosmopolitan” commitment rather than being purely “European” as in the past. Turkey’s strong criticism of the EU’s controversial approach to the Egyptian military coup in 2013 is a clear sign of the existing differences between Turkey’s own understanding of “cosmopolitanism”⁴⁴ and those of the EU. In parallel to this, Turkey’s call for international justice in the Syrian case and its harsh critiques regarding the inaction of its Western allies against the Syrian tragedy illustrate the extent to which Turkey’s new “civilian” foreign policy approach goes beyond only having been committed to European values and norms. Rather, Turkey’s new “civilian foreign policy role”—despite its limitations in practice and in the domestic realm—

has been universally constructed. Here it must also be reminded that the first years of the 2000s, especially under İsmail Cem (Foreign Minister of the coalition governments from 1997 to 2002), were marked by an increasing number of normative commitments in Turkish foreign policy. Going beyond the traditional foreign policy traditions and conceptualizations, Cem’s proactive and multidirectional foreign policy informed by a strong historical, cultural and geographical legacy⁴⁵ sought to entail significant civilian dimensions mainly due to its strong commitments to both European and universal norms and values. Cem’s “world state” concept⁴⁶ also points to how Turkey’s foreign policy role was conceived normatively at the global level. Cem’s tenure was also characterized by Turkey’s attachment to multilateralism, supranational integration through

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EU membership, as well as a stronger emphasis on democracy and human right factors in foreign policy.

Turkish foreign policy-making in the era of former foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu (2009–2014) also merits special attention for its emphasis on Turkey's "civilizing" role as being not only "a firm defender of universal values such as human rights, democracy, good governance, development and rule of law," but also for showing a strong willingness to "extend its assistance" to the people who 'rise up' and demand such values. Former foreign minister Davutoğlu's foreign policy agenda entails many references to civilian foreign policy instruments such as mediation, trade, development cooperation, and humanitarian aid. Under Davutoğlu's tenure, humanitarian diplomacy was also set as the new objective of Turkish foreign policy.⁴⁷ In practice, Turkey has been a vocal advocate for Palestinians and Syrians in its region. It has also emerged as a major force in addressing the issues of global underdevelopment in general and the humanitarian suffering in Africa specifically. Turkey's quest for an equal, representative and just normative order is best echoed in President Erdogan's discourse of "the world is bigger than five".⁴⁸ Thus, Turkey's civilian foreign policy role has become increasingly more apparent, not only in the leaders' normative rhetoric, but also in practice.

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Regarding Turkey's normative commitment to the EU, the first years of the 2000s were characterized by a strong engagement of Turkish governments, respectively the DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government (1999–2002) and the first period of the JDP government (2002–2007). One can argue that the JDP era was marked by a certain degree of fluctuation, in the sense that the first period of 2002–2007 was characterized by a rapid Europeanization process, whereas the second and third stages (respectively 2007–2011 and 2011–to the present day) witnessed a gradual demise in this trend. It may be claimed that in the 2000s, institutionally Turkey has come closer than ever to the European Union,

yet paradoxically, the degree of anti-EU feeling in Turkey has increased.⁴⁹ However, since the West is a long-term ideal for Turkish foreign policy,⁵⁰ and despite a sense of alienation and political deadlock, Turkey still maintains its goal of integrating into the EU as a full member. One of the important points making the JDP's Europeanization different from that of previous periods is the fact that it was informed by a dual process consisting both of "reforms" and "critiques". This duality of the JDP's Europeanization can clearly be seen in Turkish leaders' rising tone of criticism regarding the EU's double standard applications vis-à-vis Turkey's candidacy. The second point relates to the JDP's own normative policy towards the EU, as marked by its aspiration of spreading its own justice and equality-based norms toward the EU while still remaining committed to the EU's own normative framework.⁵¹

c. Power instruments

The first decade of the 2000s was marked by Turkish foreign policy decision makers' willingness to adapt a civilian foreign policy role conception, contributing to the country's diplomatic cooperation, mediation and development efforts both in bilateral and multilateral initiatives. Throughout these years the successive Turkish governments have considered

civic-economic power instruments a more sustainable way to realize objectives and foreign policy goals.⁵² With regards to mediation as a diplomatic tool, Turkey has embarked over the last decade on a variety of mediating missions in its region, such as the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Iranian nuclear program.⁵³ Turkey also launched the Friends of Mediation initiative at the UN in 2010 together with Finland, arguing that mediation has become an important component of the new Turkish foreign policy.⁵⁴ Furthermore, Turkey hosted the İstanbul Conference on Mediation in February 2012, bringing together representatives of NGOs, experts, and officials from a variety of countries. As a more broad initiative, the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) was first launched in 2005 by the Prime Ministers of Turkey and Spain. Yet, it would be wrong to argue that all these efforts fostered favorable or optimal outcomes in mediation between the conflicting parties. In fact, among many, the Syrian crisis reflected the limits of Turkey's civilian resources to induce effective reform by putting pressure on Bashar-al-Assad, a leader with whom the JDP leadership was previously on friendly terms.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the increasing numbers of these initiatives prove Turkey's willingness to adopt a civilian role in foreign policy through *civilian instruments* and use of *multilateral platforms*, such as the UN.

Mediation is not the only civilian power tool that Turkish officials have employed in attempting to resolve regional conflicts. Turkey has increasingly tried to channel its resources for "*global development efforts*" in countries affected by conflicts and natural disasters. During the first decade of the 2000s, Turkish assistance to post-conflict countries seems to have shifted dramatically from military missions to *civilian capacity assistance*. Throughout most of the 1990s, Turkey deployed significant military forces to the peacekeeping missions in a diverse range of countries from Bosnia to Somalia, whereas today, while Turkey still remains engaged in these places, the nature of its assistance seems to be *more civilian* than military. Therefore, referred to as "development cooperation efforts", Turkey's Civilian Capacity (CIVCAP) initiatives are increasingly viewed as useful tools to achieve key Turkish foreign policy priorities.⁵⁶

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Since economic factors started to occupy an increasingly important place in the making of Turkey's foreign policy, it has also resorted to a variety of economic instruments. In addition to its growing volume of investments and construction projects in the surrounding regions, Turkey has initiated visa liberalization programs and, where possible, sought to establish free trade regimes.⁵⁷ Another dimension of Turkey's economic activism in external relations has been its opening up to new markets, beyond those in the West and its immediate neighborhood. Turkey has introduced new campaigns to bolster its economic and trade ties with Africa, Latin America, and East Asia. Within these favorable systemic and domestic conditions, development cooperation activities emerged as one of the most active civilian foreign policy instruments to facilitate Turkey's involvement in various regions.⁵⁸ One of the defining aspects of Turkish foreign policy has been the increased role of development cooperation programs, evidenced by an expanding international "aid budget" over recent years. Therefore, Turkey has returned to the scene of global politics as a "rising donor"—and development assistance organizations, such as TİKA, are among the most active agents in Turkey's foreign policy.⁵⁹ The following section will try to look more closely at Turkey's civilian foreign policy practice through

its development cooperation activities in the Africa region, most specifically in Somalia, over the last decade.

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Going Beyond the Rhetoric: Civilian Turkish Foreign Policy Role through Development Cooperation in the Africa Region

Traditionally Turkey’s aid and assistance activities as foreign policy instruments are hardly new. Since the 1950 Korean War, the Turkish Republic has offered assistance in terms of peacekeeping missions and other military initiatives. In the post-Cold War years, Turkey adopted a military leadership role during the UNOSOM II operation in Somalia in 1993 and made significant contributions to the stabilization of Kosovo and Bosnia by deploying both military and civilian police in the 1990s. However, since

the early 2000s, Turkey’s approach to assistance has shifted away from being primarily military to an increasingly “civilian” capacity focus with an increasing emphasis on the Africa region.⁶⁰ Turkey’s “development” ties to Africa can be traced back to its first aid package to the Sahel countries in 1985, under the Özal government.⁶¹ This was followed by the adoption of a document entitled “Opening up to Africa policy” in 1998 by the Foreign Minister of the DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government, İsmail Cem.⁶² With this policy, the Turkish government aimed at improving the political, economic, development, and cultural ties between Turkey and various African countries. The goals of the Opening up to Africa policy was defined as increasing the number of Turkish diplomatic missions in Africa and high-level diplomatic exchanges with the continent, increasing humanitarian and development assistance towards the region, as well as becoming a donor to the African Development Bank.⁶³

In this regard, The JDP government adopted its predecessor’s African opening up policy to construct a more assertive strategy based on comprehensive cooperation aiming to introduce “development cooperation”⁶⁴ activities towards the region. Accordingly, *development cooperation* has become an increasingly indispensable aspect of Turkey’s arsenal of civilian

The goals of the Opening up to Africa policy was defined as increasing the number of Turkish diplomatic missions in Africa and high-level diplomatic exchanges with the continent, increasing humanitarian and development assistance towards the region, as well as becoming a donor to the African Development Bank.

foreign policy "tools" over the last decade. Displaying a systematic uptick, Turkey became the world's 4th largest donor in development cooperation and the 3rd in humanitarian aid relief in 2012, providing assistance to 131 countries listed in 2011 as aid recipients.⁶⁵ In 2015, Turkey's net ODA amounted to US\$3.9 billion. According to the 2016 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report, with respect to the international contributions of government donors, Turkey was the second largest donor of humanitarian assistance in 2015, following the United States, a rise of 31% from its reported contributions of the previous year. Turkey's assistance to Syrian refugees on its own territory make it the donor contributing the second largest amount in 2015.⁶⁶

Under the governance of the JDP, TİKA's portfolio has since been diversified and expanded to include the Caucasus, South Asia and, of increasing prominence, Africa.⁶⁷ In concrete numbers, TİKA has implemented development projects in 110 countries, on all continents, displaying the depth of the geographical scope of Turkey's aid activities.⁶⁸ Furthermore, according to statistics collected by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), Turkey's ODA in 2012 reached US\$2.5 billion, up from US\$600 million in 2005; a four-fold expansion in a mere seven years.⁶⁹ According to the 2014 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report, in terms of Gross National Income rates, Turkey is defined as the most generous country among the top 20 donors in 2013. In the 2014 report, with respect to the rates of "humanitarian assistance" as a percentage of ODA, Turkey is estimated to be the first with its %50 rate priority given to humanitarian assistance.⁷⁰ As the 2016 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report indicates, when considered as a percentage of gross national income, Turkey, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Sweden were the four donors that provided the most in 2015.⁷¹

These numbers reflect the *systematic priority* given to international aid

by the current Turkish government. Turkey's commitment to proactive development assistance and systematic cooperation with international actors is evidenced by its participation in the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) South-South Cooperation (SSC) and its initiatives with Least Developed Countries.⁷² Accordingly, Turkey is defined as an emerging and new development partner for Africa, in addition to countries like Brazil, China, India, and the Republic of Korea. Turkey is named as an emerging donor country by the World Food programme.⁷³

The country-based distribution of Turkish aid on the African continent shows that Somalia is prominent among the receiving countries of its development, technical and civilian assistance aid. In this regard, in 2011, Somalia became the fourth highest recipient of Turkey's development assistance, behind Pakistan, Syria, and Afghanistan⁷⁴. Following the severe drought crisis in 2011, Somalia ranked first among the countries who received Turkey's ODA in 2012. In fact, as Özkan puts it, no developments in Africa have appealed to Turkey's responsiveness as much as the 2011 crisis in Somalia, in which Turkey became deeply involved in political and humanitarian efforts.⁷⁵ On 19 August 2011, former Prime Minister and current President Erdoğan visited

According to Turkey's rulers, humanitarianism does not only have the components of emergency aid but also encompasses a broad "development cooperation" vision.

Mogadishu along with a delegation composed of ministers and members of Turkey's cultural and business elite. This was a significant event since it was the first visit to Mogadishu by a head of state or government from outside Africa in almost 20 years. Accordingly, on 31 October 2011, Turkey became the first non-African country to appoint a new ambassador to Somalia in more than two decades, located at an embassy in Mogadishu.⁷⁶ These developments illustrated the deepening of Turkish engagement in Somalia.⁷⁷ One should note here that, in the official discourse of the Turkish government, "humanitarianism" and "humanitarian diplomacy"⁷⁸ have been the main theme of Ankara's foreign policy engagement towards Somalia. According to Turkey's rulers, humanitarianism does not only have the components of emergency aid but also encompasses a broad "development cooperation" vision.⁷⁹ As an emerging donor in the global arena, Turkey's development vision found full expression in Somalia as its efforts there reflect a commitment to mediation,

social justice and peacebuilding. The sharp increase of Turkish aid towards Somalia specifically after 2011 is a clear sign of this involvement.⁸⁰

Turkish efforts in Somalia initially began as emergency humanitarian assistance in response to the famine in 2011 through short term material relief and services, emergency food aid, and relief coordination. Turkey's first visible initiative was organizing a meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on 17 August 2011. It ended with a pledge to donate \$350 million of humanitarian aid to Somalia.⁸¹ Not only multilateral or public efforts, but also a widespread campaign led by NGOs in Turkey, made a considerable contribution for relief efforts. Furthermore, these government and NGO activities quickly turned into wider programs to address the essential structural problems in the country, like lack of good governance, and ongoing conflicts. Labelled in Turkey's foreign policy goals as "development cooperation efforts," civilian capacity building programs, such as strengthening infrastructure and encouraging civil society engagement, have become the center of Ankara's development efforts in Somalia. The specific focus on civilian capacity building reveals Turkey's increasing use of civilian power role and civilian foreign policy instruments towards Somalia compared to military - or hard power

- policy instruments.⁸² According to TİKA's 2016 Somalia report, TİKA has initiated many projects in the fields such as education, infrastructure, health, and agriculture in Somalia.⁸³ In this regard, Turkey-Africa relations have marked a new era in Turkish foreign policy since 2011, characterized by intensified sympathy towards the region shown by the Turkish public, the ruling party, and the opposition, as well as NGOs.⁸⁴ Furthermore, as Özkan puts it, Turkey's Somalia policy, as far as it has succeeded in short term, has not only located Turkey as a "political" actor in Africa but also expanded Turkey's Africa policy into a more complicated and multidimensional one.⁸⁵

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One should note here that the increasing role of "development cooperation" activities in Turkish foreign policy has

been made possible to a large extent as a result of the activities of various “civil society initiatives” and of NGOs in and about Africa⁸⁶. Turkey’s NGO community has been growing in size and activism since the mid-1990s after the relaxation of many of the laws and social restrictions that had impeded civil society activity.⁸⁷ In this regard, beyond ODA and TİKA, Turkey’s development cooperation activity also had an “unofficial” dimension. For instance, Turkish civil society organizations had been particularly active in the extension of aid programs in Somalia.⁸⁸ Accounting for Turkish NGOs contributions in the fields of health, education, and capacity building, Turkey’s total humanitarian assistance reaches US\$2 billion per year.⁸⁹ Furthermore, a common aspect of Turkish NGOs and charities across the African continent is that a majority of them have religious backgrounds. This last point might be problematic in the sense that it may create confusion leading to criticism surrounding the ideological roots of Turkey’s development aid and may eventually adversely affect its credibility in the long term.⁹⁰ However, while traditional donors employ the discourse of “democratization” and conditional aid, the use of historical and religious rhetoric by Turkish rulers has served to legitimize Turkey’s presence in Africa, most particularly in its Sub-

Saharan region, as a non-threatening and “benign” actor that can function as an alternative role-model to the development of the least developed African countries.⁹¹

Turkey’s “development activities” were also argued to be motivated to open and build new markets for its rapidly growing and globalizing commercial interests⁹². For instance, The Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists (TÜSİAD) is the most active Turkish business agency in Somalia. On April 7, 2012, the first business forum for Somalia in 20 years was held in Mogadishu with the participation of 25 Turkish businesspeople from various business sectors. The forum concluded with the establishment of the Somali-Turkish Business Association. In line with these developing relations, Turkey’s *trade volume* with the African continent reached US\$23 billion in 2012. Compared to the level of 2005 (which was US\$9 billion), this number represents an increase of almost threefold.⁹³ Somalia appears to be at the forefront of a broader Turkish effort to penetrate Africa’s emerging markets and gain favor among its governments.⁹⁴ Moreover, Turkey’s previous campaign for a non-permanent UN Security Council seat for the 2009-2010 period also seems to have *precipitated* a wave of Turkish aid activism toward Africa in the 2000s.⁹⁵ This was accompanied

by the opening of embassies and the financing of projects in sub-Saharan Africa in order to secure a number of votes for Turkey during its successful bid for a UN Security Council seat.⁹⁶ The support of African countries, with its 54 UN members it represents the biggest regional block in the organization, was vitally important for Turkey's UNSC nomination.⁹⁷

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Above all, Turkey's "development cooperation" activities in the Africa region seem to have a strong "*multilateral*" dimension. Turkey's leaders have remained particularly critical of the international community's ineffectiveness during the famine and its failure to achieve justice and stability in Somalia.⁹⁸ For instance, the current Turkish government acts

in tandem with many multilateral platforms in its development efforts as a part of its increasing civilian foreign policy role. In 2007, as a sign of its interest and support for the developing world, Turkey for the first time hosted in İstanbul a summit of the Least Developed Countries, at which it committed US\$20 million to development assistance.⁹⁹ Similarly, TİKA assists in the coordination of initiatives, such as the "Africa Agricultural Development Program", the "Africa Health Program", and the "Africa Vocational Training Program," which are multi-country efforts specifically designed to meet the needs of African countries. Turkey also provides assistance to Africa through international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the Red Crescent.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, in 2010 Turkey co-chaired with Egypt an "International Donor's Conference for the Reconstruction and Development of Darfur" in Cairo. Also, Turkey hosted the İstanbul Somalia Conference organized within the UN framework in May 2010. In 2011 the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries was also held in İstanbul. Subsequently, in June 2012 the second international conference on Somalia was held in Turkey under the theme: "Preparing Somalia's Future: Goals for 2015."

The Least Developed Countries Mid-Term Evaluation Summit was held in Turkey in 2015.¹⁰¹ Turkey held the first UN World Summit on Humanitarian Aid in May 2016, and the High-Level Partnership Forum on Somalia in İstanbul in February 2016.¹⁰²

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However, Turkey’s increasing multilateral engagement towards Africa has had its own limitations. Firstly, Turkey’s preoccupation in differentiating itself from the practices of other main donors has prevented it from closely working and communicating with other international donors.¹⁰³ This of course limits the success and sustainability of its multilateral engagement in those African countries governed by complex clan and kinship alliances that have well-known experience in playing donors against one another.

Yet, without addressing internal institutional issues and engaging with all international actors, the long-term success of Ankara’s policy in Africa seems to be very complicated.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, there has also been some criticism of Turkey’s efforts in Africa in the sense that Turkish aid organized by state institutions has only been concentrated on a limited number of cities in any given African country, while other regions in the same country receive little support.¹⁰⁵

Despite the above limitations regarding the “sustainability” of Turkey’s Africa policy, Turkey has become a much more visible actor in Africa with its official and civilian “development cooperation” activities compared to past years. In this regard, talking before the UN on “21-25 September 2013 Africa Week”, the Head of New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), Dr. İbrahim Assane Mayaki, defined Turkey as a “key country in the development of Africa.”¹⁰⁶ Mayaki argued that Turkey’s reputation in Africa has significantly increased in the last couple of years.¹⁰⁷

Turkey’s policy in the African region appears as a multidimensional engagement with implications both on Turkey’s increasing civilian capacity and its changing power status in international affairs. The frequent use of “economic” and “cultural” power instruments in Turkey’s development

cooperation activities towards Africa does not necessarily contradict with its willingness to exercise civilian power role in its foreign policy. In this regard, civilian foreign policy is an "ideal-type construct of a role" in which "interests and values" coexist alongside "cultural" and "economic" power instruments.¹⁰⁸ Clearly, being an ideal type civilian power is a difficult endeavor for all developed states, and Turkey, as a developing state, is no exception here.

The frequent use of "economic" and "cultural" power instruments in Turkey's development cooperation activities towards Africa does not necessarily contradict with its willingness to exercise civilian power role in its foreign policy.

Conclusion

Turkey's foreign policy during the 2002–2012 period and its development cooperation activities in the Africa region clearly reflect its willingness to structurally add a "civilian" dimension to its changing foreign policy in roughly the first decade of the 2000s. Paradoxically, this emerging civilian

posture of Turkish foreign policy seems to contradict, to some extent, the country's ongoing civilianizing process at home, as Turkey faces many security challenges. This "civilian" foreign policy role has, thus, become an ingredient of Turkey's new activist and multidirectional foreign policy orientation. Turkey's gradual "civilian" turn in foreign policy has also been accompanied by its rise as an emerging donor or aid provider.

However, performing a civilian actor role effectively seems to be a difficult endeavor for emerging donor countries like Turkey, since the credibility and consistency of such a role is also dependent on the way and the degree to which they become 'civilianized' internally. Acknowledging Turkey's development cooperation policy as a cross-purpose task, which includes both interest calculations and humanitarian intentions, Turkey's rising "civilian" actorness in its neighboring regions, especially during the first decade of the 2000s, may well be seen as part and consequence of its changing foreign policy approach and regional policies.¹⁰⁹ Here, what is at stake is how well an emerging donor country increasingly engaged in development cooperation succeeds in finding a delicate balance between its humanitarian, value-laden approach to international relations and its utilitarian motivations. The co-existence between interest-based and

humanitarian dynamics necessitates looking at how this connection is reflected in both a country's foreign policy discourse and practice. In the Turkish case, the ruling party's rising ethical and justice-based rhetoric in the first decade of the 2000s seems to fit the country's civilian vocation in foreign policy. This positively contributes to the image of Turkey's development aid policy, aiming to go beyond instrumental rational practices.

This “civilian” foreign policy role has, thus, become an ingredient of Turkey's new activist and multidirectional foreign policy orientation. Turkey's gradual “civilian” turn in foreign policy has also been accompanied by its rise as an emerging donor or aid provider.

Yet, certain limitations regarding Turkey's civilian actorness still prevail and need to be overcome. Turkey's increasing civilian capacity in the first decade of the 2000s also emanates from both its booming economic growth and the changing systemic conditions, as a result of the emergence of an enormous number of humanitarian crises around the world. However, Turkey's material capabilities still show some limitations

in terms of becoming a rising donor, when compared to those of some other rising donors like China, India and Brazil, which have higher economic indicators than Turkey. This also explains how Turkey's rising power status is closely linked to its becoming a rising donor and a rising democracy.¹¹⁰ Turkey's increasing rising power status at the global level would certainly give it more leverage in its efforts to pursue a civilian foreign policy embedded in its emerging cosmopolitan world view.¹¹¹ This would also make Turkey's development cooperation activities in Africa more “systematic” and “durable” rather than reactive to crises.

Among the three conditions of a “civilian foreign policy role” defined by Hanns Maull, Turkey seems to partially cover the first and the second criteria, respectively, *domestic democratic and economic preconditions* and *normative commitments*. The third condition, conceptualized as *power instruments*, seems to be largely fulfilled by Turkish leaders, who made use of humanitarian and development aid, mediation, trade, and democracy promotion as foreign policy tools during the first decade of the 2000s. Regarding the second criteria, namely *normative commitments*, Turkey's rising normative discourse in international affairs centered around its attempt to distribute universal values to third countries, as well as its “more just and equal international order” rhetoric,

show the country's willingness to speak and act normatively in foreign policy. Turkey's relatively decreasing interest in its EU membership bid can also be considered a challenging factor, which makes Turkey's normative commitment of fostering supranational cooperation more problematic.

Turkey's increasing rising power status at the global level would certainly give it more leverage in its efforts to pursue a civilian foreign policy embedded in its emerging cosmopolitan world view.

Despite these limitations, as seen clearly in Turkey's development cooperation policies in Africa, there is strong discursive and empirical evidence supporting the existence of a willingness in Turkey's foreign policy

towards adopting civilian foreign policy role in the first decade of the 2000s. In practical terms, Turkey's foreign policy role during the first decade of the JDP government was based on a distinctive set of normative *principles*, the use of diplomatic rather than coercive *instruments*, increasing visibility on multilateral platforms, the centrality of mediation in conflict resolution, a strong commitment to supranational integration, the importance of long-term *economic solutions* to political problems, and finally its willingness to "civilize" international relations by the pursuit of equity, legitimacy, democracy, and economic development. Therefore, evidence suggests that Turkey was enthusiastically "exercising" a civilian foreign policy role during the early 2000s; the question of whether it will construct a credible civilian power role will depend on its domestic conditions as well as on its strong, durable and consistent normative approach to international affairs.

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