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Federico Donelli

Department of Political Science, University of Genova, Genova, Italy

ABSTRACT
Since 2005 the Ankara government has increased its diplomatic engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Along with the improvement of political and economic relations, Turkey has carved out an interesting role in humanitarian assistance and development aid. Taking principles and norms from both, Turkey has elaborated its own way of development which lies between the DAC[1] and non-DAC countries. A feature that makes Turkey's approach toward SSA different from the other extra-regional powers is its unconventional multistakeholder implementation policy on the ground that attributes relevance to the non-state actors (NSAs). These, such as NGOs, trade and businesses associations, have pushed forward the country's economic, cultural and political interests in SSA. Drawing critically on the informal diplomacy literature and on the studies of Turkey-Africa relations, this article aims to show that Turkish rapprochement toward SSA has made Turkey a new relevant player in the region. Further, it aims to contribute to the literature on the interaction between state and NSAs, providing an empirical analysis within North–South interactions.

KEYWORDS
Turkey; multitrack diplomacy; Sub-Saharan Africa; non-state actors; development

Introduction

Turkey's presence in Africa has increased significantly in recent years. Africa's place in Turkish foreign policy is not something new or accidental, but it is the result of a mid- and long-term strategy begun at the end of the 1990s under the auspices of the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ismail Cem. Nowadays, after the fifteenth years since Turkey's opening toward Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), it is possible to take stock of Turkish engagement in the region. Drawing critically on the informal diplomacy literature and the studies of Turkey-Africa relations, this article aims to show that the Turkish rapprochement toward SSA has made Turkey a new relevant player in the region. Further, it aims to contribute to the literature on the interaction between state and non-state actors (NSAs) in foreign policy implementation, highlighting Turkey's unconventional use of multitrack diplomacy. This article presents its arguments in four sections. In the first section, the conceptual framework is identified and structured around the notion of networked diplomacy. The second section traces the landmarks of the Turkish rapprochement toward SSA, analysing the peculiarities that have led

Turkey to present itself as an actor different from all the others. The third section defines the different tracks or dimensions of Turkish efforts epitomising an unusual version of multitrack approach. Finally, conclusions look at the limits of Turkey's African policy. The research methodology is built around qualitative semi-structured interviews with key public and private actors involved in Turkey's African agenda. The interviews were conducted at different stages of the research between 2018 and 2020 and incorporated by the search for statements and official documents (report and preparatory paper) drawn up over the years. Interviews and discourse analysis have been implemented with the extant literature on the topic.

The structure of diplomacy into the globalised world: the role of non-state actors (NSAs)

Vast transformations that have been taking place in the international system since the end of the Cold War have affected the areas of world politics and diplomacy. Nowadays, those who study modern diplomacy, embedded or not into International Relations (IR), have to take into account the interdependent nature of reality as well as the fact that decision-making on the international stage involves the so-called two-level games or double-edged diplomacy (Putnam 1988, 429–433). Therefore, with accentuated forms of globalisation and communication revolution, the scope of diplomacy has moved beyond the traditional core concerns to encompass a myriad set of issue areas (Cooper, Heine, and Thakur 2013). Beyond the framework of state-based actors, there is a wealth of non-state groups emerging as protagonists on the world's stage. As pointed out by Heine (2013, 54–56), many sub-nationals and civil society actors linked up, have favoured the conceptual shift from the old model of an international system based only on independent states – club diplomacy; to one in which states remain the key actors but they are not the only ones – network diplomacy. The adoption of the network diplomacy, also defined multistakeholder model (Hill 2003), enables nations to cooperate with non-state actors (NSAs) that now influence the diplomatic playing field. The diversification of the actors in international politics has made an essential revision in the definition of the term 'diplomacy' itself. Recent years have witnessed a strong debate among the scholars belonging to the field of IR as well as diplomatic studies concerning new and more flexible definitions of diplomacy. Among others, Melissen (2005, 5) extended the scope of diplomacy by defining it as 'the mechanism of representation, communication and negotiation through which states and other international actors conduct their business'. Melissen's definition appears particularly suitable to explore some features of Turkey's policy toward SSA because it gives emphasis to the role played by NSAs diplomacy. With the term NSA the IR's scholars commonly refer to an entity or group which seeks to have an impact on the internationally related decisions or policy of one or more states (Bieler, Higgott, and Underhill 2004). The NSAs form a broad category that would be misleadingly defined only as by the independence from states and state authority. Indeed, the theoretical purity of this ideal type is muddied by the complexity of reality.[2] The importance of NSAs at international level has intensified over the past three decades. The input of NSAs has sometimes been taken into account, but their role has been characterised as primarily discursive, attempting to influence the 'agenda-setting', 'framing', 'lobbying' or

'norm-building' of official policy-makers (Goldstein and Keohane 1993, 301–309). Recently, there is an emerging literature that studies the role of NSAs in the foreign policy 'implementation process' (Davidson 2006).

The multitrack strategy as a capacity-building approach

With the growing role of NSAs into global affairs the academic awareness on the concept of unofficial or informal diplomacy has increased substantially. In this debate Davidson and Montville (1982, 145–150) were the first to introduce the term 'track two' or 'citizen diplomacy'. Later, Montville reconceptualized this kind of diplomacy as:

> an unofficial, informal interaction between members of adversary groups or nations that aims to develop strategies, influence public opinion, and organize human and material resources in ways that might help to resolve their conflict. (Montville 1991, 162)

In other words, citizen diplomacy is characterised as a nongovernmental, informal, and constructive interaction between citizen groups aimed at de-escalating disputes by reducing anger, fear, and tension, and by improving communication and mutual understanding. Track two diplomacy is not an alternative but a complementary method to official state-based diplomacy. This kind of diplomacy is often needed either to establish the basis for further track-one activities or to put into practice a former track one agreement (Papa, Mapendere, and Dillon 2010, 353). Government officials participate in such negotiations alongside the non-officials, merely in an informal way. It is an important mechanism in overcoming psychological barriers between adversaries by opening non-official interaction channels (Volkan, Montville, and Julius 1991).

Generally speaking, because of the diversity of track-two diplomatic efforts, this form of diplomacy is further subdivided into new categories by scholars and practitioner. For instance, McDonald (1991, 201–220) expanded track-two diplomacy into four separate tracks. From this categorisation, some scholars have developed a concept known as track one and a half (Mapendere 2006).

All the above mentioned new categories are commonly referred to as multitrack diplomacy. The term multitrack diplomacy was popularised by Rupesinghe and refers to the contributions of a variety of actors at different levels of a conflict that work together effectively to attain peace. Alternatively, the multitrack has been described as a web of interconnected parts – activities, individuals, institutions, communities – that operate together for a common goal (Diamond and McDonald 1997). The essence of this concept is that combined efforts often prove to be more effective than an individual contribution in preventing conflicts from escalating. Rupesinghe presents six strands of multitrack diplomacy: (1) intergovernmental diplomacy; (2) governmental diplomacy; (3) track two diplomacy; (4) ecumenical diplomacy; (5) citizen diplomacy; and (6) economic diplomacy (Rupesinghe 1997). Therefore, his concept of multitrack diplomacy departs from the standard definition of track two diplomacy through the detailing six specific preventive diplomacy tracks and serves to form a more complete theoretical framework.

The rational of this article is that Turkey has unconventionally applied the multitrack approach to both post-conflict and non-conflict African scenarios. As illustrated in the following sections during the foreign policy implementation process toward SSA, Turkey has used multitrack framework as a method to coordinate effort among public and private

NSAs (multistakeholder approach), enabling Turkey to open and strengthen its relations with several African countries.

Turkish rapprochement to Sub-Saharan Africa

During the last two decades, the ruling Justice and Development Party (JDP) has led Turkey into a new foreign policy activism throughout, but not only, the former Ottoman lands by a mixing paradigm of constitutive material – i.e. economic investments (Kirişci 2009; Dal and Dipama 2020) – and discursive means – civilizational dialogue, honourable foreign policy, Turkish politics of grandeur (Demirtas-Bagdonas 2014), humanitarianism (Çelik and İşeri 2016) –, which carried a general restate of Turkey's international role (Göksel 2016). Among the region in which Turkey has expanded its presence also SSA. For years, the area south of the Sahara Desert has been outside the geographical maps of Turkish policy-makers because considered to be peripheral to Turkey's interests. This predisposition has started to change during the 1990s when the progressive openness of the economy, the increasing global financial and commercial interconnection and the search for new opportunities in the non-Western world, provided a basis for the establishment of the Africa Action Plan (1998).[3] In 2004 Turkey has significantly increased its presence in the SSA through trade agreements and bilateral projects initiated by the Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade. All the efforts promoted by Turkey led to the appointment as observer status in 2005 and strategic partner of the African Union (AU) in 2008.[4] Turkey has used its membership in multilateral organisations and other international fora to reach out to Africa, gaining credibility in the African eyes (Eyrice Tepeciklioğlu 2012). During this period, the JDP government experienced several constraints within the Turkish institutions, including some key ministers and most of the diplomatic service and cadres.[5] To bypass the institutional blocks, the JDP opted for the establishment of a large number of new state's agencies (i.e. AFAD, Yunus Emre Institute), to the strengthening of the prerogatives of pre-existing ones (i.e. TIKA, Diyanet, DEIK), and the involvement of a growing number of civil society organisations.[6] The bases of one of the distinguishing traits of the Turkish presence in Africa, the civil-society-state nexus, were thus laid.[7]

A turning point in Turkey's engagement into SSA is represented by its efforts toward Somalia since 2011. Such shifts took place at a time when Turkish foreign policy was experiencing a period of maximum confidence due to the rising popularity that Turkey gained during the early stages of the so-called Arab Springs (Öniş 2014). A few months later, after the worsening of the Syrian crisis, the SSA did not lose relevance in Turkey's agenda but rather became a new front of Middle Eastern geopolitical rivalries (Cannon and Donelli 2020). Thus, the growing humanitarian and political role in the Somali crisis gave to Turkey's policy maker the opportunity to revitalise the Turkish brand worldwide, and to shift the Turkish public's attention from regional difficulties (Özkan and Orakçı 2015).

From a practical point of view, the Somali crisis has provided Turkey with the right terrain to test its humanitarian response capabilities and to promote its alternative model of development. The defining moment of Turkish commitment toward Somalia was the visit of the current President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan which coincided with the opening of a humanitarian aid privileged channel. Erdoğan's visit had a highly political

significance because it (re)introduced the Somali situation into the international agenda and paved the way for intergovernmental organisations rapprochements. Since then, Turkish involvement in Somalia represents a cornerstone of Turkey's global agenda (Donelli and González Levaggi 2018). Turkey in its phase of assertive humanitarian diplomacy is giving largesse to Somalia as a mean of launching a wider African policy. Turkey's ability to start from scratch is facilitated in a place like Somalia precisely because of the instability, violence, and history of stymied engagements by major international actors (Cannon 2016). This has had the direct result of burnishing Turkey's image on the international stage and especially in Africa, and transforming Turkey into a humanitarian power in the region. In other words, Turkey has used Somalia as both a 'practicing ground' and 'legitimizer' of its broader international ambitions (Mehmetcik 2018, 261).

From the scholar's point of view, Turkey's engagement in Somalia is a perfect laboratory to test the Turkish unconventional multitrack policy. As in the wider African agenda, also in Somalia, one of the major traits of the Turkish approach was the massive involvement of NSAs and the ideological terrain that they share with the JDP political elites. As showed in the next section, alongside track one or bilateral actions, Turkish NGOs started to play a key role in providing humanitarian aid driven also by religious motives. Indeed, almost all of these NGOs were established in the 1990s mostly by the Islamic grassroots movement and, under the JDP, have become important implementers of Turkish foreign policy (Atalay 2013; Siradag 2015). Many of these civil society's organisations, including some of the most famous such as the Gülen movement or the IHH, were active into SSA before the JDP came to power. Their knowledge of SSA and the lack of expertise within official diplomacy, has led Turkish state to outsourced different fields and branches of its African agenda to NSAs. Therefore, one of the specificities of the Turkish case is that the state presence in SSA came after and, in part, was the result of the informal networks developed by the NSAs. Initially the Turkish state operated to ease access and increase the involvement of NSAs through the promotion of conferences and platforms. The involvement of NSAs in some SSA's countries has prepared a fertile ground for the development of political and economic relations.[8] Particularly the NGOs, most of which are faith-based, have used a discourse that aims to underline the values, religious duties and the obligations of Islam (Baird 2016), which has become part of the official Turkish narrative. The effects on Turkey's agenda towards SSA have been twofold. On the one hand, the lack of institutionalised relations has prevented control over the activities of the NSAs allowing them to develop their own agenda, even in conflict with the state's interests. A weakness that has been shattered in 2014 by the rift between the JDP and the Gülen movement which has begun to act as an anti-state lobby in Africa as well as in other regions (Donelli 2019). On the other hand, the relevance given to the religious dimension by both government and the majority of NSAs has conditioned the geographical distribution of Turkish efforts in SSA. By cloaking of religious motives its assistance, Turkey has oriented its activities predominantly but not exclusively – i.e. Tanzania and Ethiopia – towards African Muslim communities (Hausmann 2014) because it is easier to deal with (cultural proximity) and more justifiable in the eyes of the Turkish public.[9] Confessional affinity allows Turkish governmental and non-governmental agencies to better integrate with the local population by establishing relations on a mutual basis. From the Turkish perspective, the religious element helps to boost the image of a country that places itself as a partner in a horizontal way to the SSA countries (Donelli 2018). However,

there is an evident mismatch between rhetoric and practice. Despite the intentions and the many facade statements, the Turkish people involved in humanitarian activities tend to have a 'saviour-like' approach.[10]

The Turkish way for development and sustainability: the Ankara Consensus

As from the Year of Africa (2005), Turkey has tried to portray itself as an active partner for development assistance, emphasising its nature as a country in the middle, between the West and the East, but also between the (Global) North and the (Global) South. An approach that has become the pillar of a second phase of Turkish policy into SSA. Formally ratified during the second Turkey-Africa cooperation summit (2014), this new African agenda has paved the way to the projection of the Turkish development formula that could be defined as the Ankara Consensus. Even though it is still not a well-defined concept, Ankara Consensus is conceived as a new model for economic, political and social development of the African countries, alternative from both the so-called 'Washington Consensus' – US and European dominated neo-liberal economic and developmental discourse – and the most recent 'Beijing Consensus' as state-led economic growth and prioritisation of stability over democracy (Donelli 2018).

From its entrance into the African arena, the Ankara government has been careful to distance itself from both the traditional donors, especially those associated with colonialism in Africa, and from relative newcomers that look for opportunities to obtain the materials and resources required for the continued economic growth. Turkey's ambition to offer itself as an alternative to both traditional and emerging powers has led it to promote a hybrid approach to development where principles and norms of different origins are integrated with some specificities of the Turkish development path (Donelli 2018). Significantly, criticising the development policies of traditional donors, Turkey distances itself from them, emphasising the novelty of its own approach based on a mutually beneficial and sustainable partnership between donor and recipients (Stearns and Sucuoglu 2017). Turkey has promoted a middle way, or a third way, through the implementation of a win-win policy in Africa which includes peace-building and a policy of mutual empowerment based on equality, transparency and sustainability (Özkan 2018). If from one hand Turkey's agenda adopted a neo-liberal approach in economic and development projects, mainly due to the Turkish businessman mindset (Özdemir and Serin 2016, 468–475), on the other hand, these projects are implemented by a government that increasingly seems to correspond to a 'competitive authoritarianism' (Stelgias 2016). This approach has been demonstrated by Turkey's propensity to the adoption of bilateral assistance and its adherence to the principle of non-conditionality (Sucuoğlu and Sazak 2016). Despite Turkey being a member of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and adhering to the OECD definition of the Official Development Assistance (ODA), it has recently adopted mechanisms typical of the Beijing Consensus such as the non-interference policy in domestic affairs or the impositions upon recipient countries. Like other non-traditional donor countries such as China, Turkey has adopted the idea of promoting the development capacity building in the African countries and lead them towards the road of self-reliance and independent development (Huang 2015). An idea that is linked to the belief, shared with South-South providers, that

the country has 'much success and experience to share with Last Development Countries (LDCs)' (Korkut and Civelekoglu 2013, 194). The objective, at least for the façade, is to facilitate the consolidation of African ownership of African issues.

Traditionally, and until the mid-2000s, Turkey has preferred to deliver assistance to African countries through multilateral channels, but a shift in this pattern has been observed since the second half of the last decade toward a bilateral engagement.[11] Ankara's foreign aid framework, oftentimes labelled as the 'Turkish model', reflects the approach Turkey takes in providing foreign aid. The type of projects, turnout time, allocation of resources and direct access to local coordination office without any political conditionalities (PCs) are part and parcel of this 'model' (Cevik 2017). The absence of PCs presents the provider with the opportunity to better understand, directly engage, and build relationships with the local actors on the ground (Dietrich 2013). For an emerging extra-regional actor as Turkey, the bilateral delivery of aid ensures more visibility than could be otherwise obtained via multilateral modes of engagement. However, there are several doubts behind Turkish foreign direct aid and investment impact for ordinary workers and communities, mainly in terms of exacerbating corruption. Particularly, the decision of the Turkish government to allocate monies to recipient countries without following Western protocols potentially lends itself to the financial support of African elites without doing anti-graft measures.

Although Turkey does not consider itself a country of the Global South, over the years it has stressed a rhetoric inspired by the South-South Cooperation (SSC). The desire to present itself as a third development option has required an effort from the narrative point of view because, unlike other emerging powers (China, India), Turkey has been unable to exploit the Bandung rhetoric. Consequently, Turkey has adopted a neo-Ottoman rhetoric by projecting its imperial past in the African context as an anti-colonial narrative (Langan 2017). Within such discourse, the principle of solidarity, one of the defining elements of the SSC model, is reinterpreted within a supposed common historical past where the collapse of the Ottoman Empire is depicted as a form of European colonialism. A juxtaposition recurrently present in the rhetoric of Turkish officials whose use the colonial-colonized dichotomy to distinguish Turkey's motivation from others.[12]

Turkish unconventional use of multitrack approach

Despite the fact that the multitrack theoretical framework is usually used in relation to the study of preventive and resolution processes, it proves to be appropriate also to analyse the Turkish multistakeholder policy in Africa. Indeed, it is possible to analyse Turkey's involvement with Sub-Saharan countries through Rupesinghe's categories or tracks, addressing the tangled relations between the state and the NSAs. This article seeks to show how the unorthodox interpretation of multitrack by Turkey is one of the main tenets of its strategy toward SSA. First and foremost, the context in which this approach is applied and its aims characterises the Turkish experience. Differing from the traditional understanding, Turkey unconventionally applied multitrack to both crisis and non-crisis scenarios and not only with the objective of ensuring a peaceful environment but also to establish and improve bilateral relations with other countries as part of its soft power strategy. In Turkish foreign policy lexicon, the concept of multitrack is used as a synonym for multidimensionality, which indicates the ability to operate on different

levels and on different fronts; from 'official' diplomatic relations, within international and regional organisations, to transnational relations or people-to-people, developed by NSAs.[13] This multistakeholder policy is based on the idea that NSAs are not only consumers but also providers of the benefits achieved through diplomatic efforts. Usually, this mode of action is a concert-oriented and participatory approach with a semi-horizontal relationship (go-between) amongst state's agencies and NSAs as well as a penchant to multilateralism (Assanvo 2006). The Turkish multitrack approach, instead, has a strong unilateral character. Ankara rarely takes part in countries' coalitions because it prefers to maintain a wide range of manoeuvers. Another trait that makes the Turkish application of multitrack approach unconventional is the relationship between the state and NSAs. If Turkey's policy implementation on the ground is a combination of government-coordinated funding, business ventures, and humanitarian work pigeonholed in different but connected fields or tracks, the decision-making process remains a governmental monopoly. In other words, there is no participatory inclusion of NSAs. Further, without a defined institutional structure, the ties between the government and the NSAs are ensured by a mix of sharing ideological roots, personal and family relationships and patronage networks.

Track one

The literature explains how citizen-based activities can be very effective in the arduous process of trust-building. However, these initiatives should be coordinated to be effective. Such coordination is ascribable to the so-called track one or official diplomacy. In Turkey's policy towards SSA, a broad coordination is provided by an institutional framework at the top of which are the Presidency of the Republic, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Despite there not being a concept paper or strategy document that informs or constitutes Turkish implementation on the ground, the main role is played by the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) with the assistance of Turkish embassies and consulates. TIKA represents an operative branch of Ankara's government with the aim of paving the way for subsequent public and private initiatives in three main areas: humanitarian aid; assistance in the development of the country; and making financial investments to consolidate business (Özkan and Orakçı 2015). On the ground, this umbrella agency has been set up to manage and coordinate the various stakeholders. The establishment of a leading agency is not new in the international landscape, especially with regard to development assistance models. Many DAC countries conduct specific assistance programmes through a dedicated independent agency. A structural difference compared to the non-DAC countries which instead are usual to operate through ministries (Gore 2013). Turkey, although formally close to the DAC model, is in essence very far away due to the TIKA's political nature. Indeed, although it was conceived as an independent agency, TIKA currently operates under the strict control of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Indeed, under the JDP government TIKA has been transformed 'into a global aid agency in accordance with government policies' (Çevik 2016, 63). Further, the agency has no institutional decision-making mechanism and it does not operate according to clear and uniform procedures.

Turkey's commitments are concentrated primarily on four areas: health; education; infrastructure; and the establishment of institutional buildings. For this reason, also

various ministries such as the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, and the Ministry of National Education and Technological Research Council of Turkey have operated on the ground as well. In terms of development, state agencies such as the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEİK) and the Turkish Exporters Assembly (TIM) are cooperating with several private organisations. The Turkish presence in SSA has recently assumed a greater security dimension after the opening of a military base in Mogadishu, the largest Turkish base overseas (Sıradağ 2018). Although the base is legally a military facility for the training of the Somali National Army (Rossiter and Cannon 2019), in practice it is a full-edged Turkish military outpost in the region.

Track two

Track two diplomacy describes methods of diplomacy that are outside the formal governmental system. The case of Turkey has shown how a pivotal role in fostering the trust-building process on the ground has been covered by NSAs. Since the beginning, Turkey's activities in SSA were immediately distinguished by a sudden enlargement of the Turkish public and private stakeholders – such as charities, NGOs, community groups and other forms of citizen-based entities – and by their close cooperation with their African counterparts. For instance, Turkey's engagement in Somalia, from the outset, has combined political, developmental, economic, and humanitarian support, and has brought together a variety of actors – government officials, aid agencies, civil society organisations, religious organisations, municipalities, and the private sector (Siradag 2015). These organisations often build relations with their counterparts from the recipient country, turning peace and development processes in priority countries into a uniquely inclusive, participatory process (Sucuoğlu and Sazak 2016). Several NGOs among which Yeryüzü Doktorları, Dost Eli Foundation, Türkiye Dyanet Foundation, Sema Foundation are involved in the so-called humanitarian diplomacy field and are boosting the quality and quantity of Turkish humanitarian assistance (Donelli 2017).

Thanks to the NGOs' commitment, the Turkish public has developed a widespread sensitivity to the African problems. This trend is disclosed by the wide public support to several fundraisers and relief goods collections allocated to African countries. For instance, in the summer of 2011, a widespread campaign in Turkey, led by NGOs such as İHH, Deniz Feneri Derneği and Cansuyu Charity, made a considerable contribution in finding substantial resources for relief efforts with a flow of over $365 million in humanitarian aid.[14] In the spring of 2017, the partially state-owned Turkish Airlines – a public non-state actors – the only airline that has flights to Mogadishu, has backed the campaign #TurkishAirlinesHelpSomalia,[15] as an attempt to draw worldwide attention to the famine in the Somali peninsula.

The humanitarian sector's commitment reflects a twofold need. On the one hand, the quest to gain international visibility and, on the other hand, to nurture the relationship established between the JDP political elites and Turkish social actors, particularly entrepreneurs and faith-based NGOs. The concept of 'humanitarianism' (*İnsaniyetçilik*) that links state and non-state actors on the ground seems to be a synthesis of the traditional approach to humanitarian aid and deep religious meaning (Özerdem 2016). All the efforts and actions made by Turkish stakeholders are coordinated from Ankara and on the ground by TİKA. The agency's officials, in fact, share ideological roots with most of the

NGOs; a cultural proximity that has enabled significant cooperation between the state and the NSAs. In other words, the value which Islam assigns to charity constitutes the ideological glue of the nexus between state and civil society.[16] As a consequence, there is a concern about the real autonomy of NGOs that operate in SSA. Indeed, during the last decade, the transfer of a huge amount of public money surplus money to Islamist or faith based humanitarian NGOs close to JDP's elite (Kıraç 2016), eventually turned into Government-Organized Non-Governmental Organizations (GONGO). A dynamic highlighted after the 2016 coup attempt, when the JDP government has shut down many NGOs and has taken control of others, making them political instruments (Tocci, Keyman, and Werz 2017).

Track three

In this field are business associations whose activities pursue the possibilities of using trade as a tool of international political policy. During the opening period (2005–2014) trade associations, private companies and businessmen have contributed to the growth of Turkey-Africa relations in a similar private-led approach, as that championed by the United States (US) and the European Union (EU). Turkish state institutions supported these activities through official visits and agreements such as the establishment of industrial zones or visa waiving programmes. As showed in the previous sections, Turkish opening towards Sub-Saharan countries produced political and economic results, enriching the total trade volume[17] and increasing Turkey's visibility throughout the entire continent. In order to give an incentive to this trend, the Ministry of Economy in cooperation with the African Union Commission organised the Turkey-Africa Economic and Business Forum in 2016. The summit had the aim to provide a unique platform for the business circles of Turkey and African countries to create a long-lasting cooperation.[18] Turkey is close enough geographically to be considered a friendly power by Africans, but far away enough to remain aloof in a way that the Arab states cannot.

The strongest Turkish business presence in Africa is in the construction sector. In 2015, there were 43 Turkish firms among the world's 250 biggest contractors by investment in Africa.[19] The Öztürk group – which operates in many African countries – was the highest-rated Turkish firm, by operating investments in sectors as varied as energy, education, mass housing, and healthcare. There are many other Turkish companies involved in mega infrastructure projects in the African countries, for example the airport in the Senegalese capital Dakar or the new terminal at Ghana's Kotoka International Airport in Accra (Howson 2017). Another sizable field in which Turkish companies have invested a lot is the textile and garment sector, particularly in some African countries such as Ethiopia, Nigeria and Kenya. For example, Turkish firms have so far invested about $1.2 billion in the textile industry in Ethiopia alone, which is more than total Chinese investment in the same industry. Turkish businesses are in direct competition with other businesses, many of which have been operating in the region for years.[20] This dynamic has been easily visible in the Mogadishu Airport events. The Favori LLC, a Turkish company, gained control of the airport under opaque circumstances, at the expense of the South African-staffed SKA International Group.[21] Another interesting aspect linked to the track three is that among the business associations, the conservative MÜSİAD (Independent Industrialists

and Businessmen Association) is active through the promotion of fora between Turkish entrepreneurs and their African counterparts – stressing common economic goals, as well as exploiting the religious dimension, which is perceived as a legitimate basis for Turkey's involvement (Özkan 2013). Turkish businessmen frequently present Islam as 'the unifying bond between Africa and Turkey in order to gain advantage over their competitors' (Korkut and Civelekoglu 2013, 195). There are several doubts about Turkish actions related to this field as well. Despite the lack of institutional coordination mechanisms, most of the companies that operate in SSA have patronage relationships with JDP political elites. Some of them also have family ties with government figures, as the Albayrak group that manages the Mogadishu port.[22] Although structurally different from the top-down model of other emerging powers like China, even the Turkish case shows how the state has enough power leverage to control and constrain the activism of economic NSAs abroad. Besides, there is also a concern about the provision of Turkish arms to African countries, and non-state actors (Rubin 2014). In the last decade, in SSA Turkish defense industry companies, among which are ASELSAN, Otokar and Turkish Airspace Industries, have known impressive revenue gains (Sanchez and Morgan 2019).

Track five and track seven

According to Rupesinghe multitrack model, track five is related to the educational field while track seven to the religious dimension. To better understand Turkey's engagement in SSA, it is appropriate to treat these two fields together because, compared to other emerging non-western powers, Turkey gives a religious dimension to its efforts. Thus, whether, on the one hand, religion is an element of legitimacy to foster a reliable image or, on the other hand, it constitutes a dimension of tension and even dispute with both local groups and other extra-regional actors, it is a vital component to take into consideration. The gradual rehabilitation of the religious dimension in Turkish foreign policy must be included in its multidimensional nature, as a tool of its soft power. In Africa, the Directorate for Religious Affairs (DIB) acts through its non-profit foundation *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı* and promotes the spread and development of Sunni-Hanafi education through the opening of Turkish religious schools – Imam Hatip –, materials distribution and the organisation of meetings between African religious leaders and their Turkish counterparts. In the field of education, also the Turkish Ministry of National Education has worked a lot with Africa by allocating several types of grants for African students and distributing material for African schools. The main cultural diplomacy programme is the Türkiye Scholarship Program provides by the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB). Scholarships allow African students to attend university courses in Turkey. At the end of their education, some of them decide to join the Turkish labour market, while others return to their country where, thanks to their degree, they can find public or private positions.[23] These programmes are part of the long-term goal of increasing social-backing in many African countries.[24]

Alongside the public agencies' efforts, faith-based NGOs have also increased their presence in SSA. A special place among civil society organisations has been forged by the Fethullah Gülen movement (Hizmet). Turkish public diplomacy in Africa has been

driven by this Islamic transnational religious and social movement, Hizmet (Shinn 2015), for almost fifteen years. Between 1994 and 2014 Turkish businessmen and NGOs affiliated with the movement – like TUSKON and the charity Kimse Yok Mu – had a special place in the practical implementation of Turkey's opening in Africa. The Hizmet was at the forefront of educational projects, constructing nearly 100 schools in SSA. The Gülen inspired schools were popular among the African middle class.[25] Further, these schools allocated scholarships to the children of African high bureaucrats, gaining leverage with local officials. Thus, until 2014, the efforts to spread Turkish cultural values and educational standards were closely linked to the Gülen movement, its worldview, and its services (Angey 2018). Therefore, the Hizmet was the leading implementer of Turkey's public diplomacy in Africa to the point that in many African countries, the Hizmet schools preceded the establishment of a Turkish embassy. Moreover, the Turkish businesspersons who support the schools have benefited from the contacts they can create with the parents of the students, establishing a symbiotic relationship between the Turkish businessmen and middle-class African families (Shinn 2015).

As it did in the field of humanitarian aid with some faith-based NGOs, the Turkish state outsourced a significant part of its public diplomacy in Africa to the Hizmet. However, since 2014, the Turkish state has had a policy of pressuring and, if possible, closing down the movement's organisations within the country and abroad. Further, after the 2016 coup attempt, imputed by the Turkish authorities to Gülenist affiliations, Ankara has been putting pressure on African leaders to shut down all the movement's activities. Specifically, to counter the embedded schools' network, Turkey set up the Maarif Foundation, a hybrid public–private structure of international scope (Akgun and Ozkan 2020). Nowadays, the consequences of the domestic political warfare between the Turkish state and the Hizmet has affected Turkey's diplomacy, by damaging its prestige in the region. Indeed, the presence of the movement's affiliates is creating a kind of Gülenist diaspora in Africa that operates as an anti-Turkish state lobby (Donelli 2019).

Conclusions

As shown, the dense intertwining of links between business, politics, NGOs, and media highlights how the different tracks are interrelated and mutually dependent. Therefore, Turkey's democratic backsliding threatens to jeopardise the outcomes achieved in recent years. Moreover, the increasing state control over civil society's activities and the symbiotic relationship between the JDP ruling party and various NGOs and business companies may reduce the different tracks into a single track, one under state control.

Having said this, it is irrefutable that Turkey's policy into Africa has achieved good results in terms of material and political gains, making it an interesting case study. This article has shown how Turkish efforts to strengthen relations with Sub-Saharan countries cannot be described following the traditional 'track one-track two' paradigm in which the main role is represented by the Turkish government and track two by the contribution of several NSAs. Rather, the last decade's developments involve a much larger and deeper engagement, epitomising a multitrack approach whose unconventional application represents a unicum in the African context.

Notes

1. DAC refers to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
2. This article focuses on NSAs which are in principle autonomous from the structure of the state and operate both in the domestic and international field.
3. Interview with former Turkish diplomat, via Zoom, 23 August 2020.
4. Turkey has multiplied its diplomatic representations with the number of embassies increased from 12 (2009) to 42 (2019).
5. Interview with foreign policy advisor who served within the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Istanbul, 19 August 2020.
6. Interview with Afrika Vakfı (Africa Foundation) worker, via Zoom, 24 August 2020.
7. Interview with Turkish scholar on Africa and MENA region, via Zoom, 31 August 2020.
8. Interview with researcher on Turkey and Africa region, via email, 23 August 2020.
9. Interview with TRT analyst – Africa desk, via Zoom, 22 August 2020.
10. Interview with TRT analyst – Africa desk, via Zoom, 22 August 2020.
11. The multilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) accounted for 2% of Turkey's total ODA in 2014, as opposed to 44% in 2004.
12. "Erdoğan: Türkiye'nin Afrika'da sömürgeci geçmişi olmadı." *Al Jazeera*, June 1, 2016.
13. "Davutoğlu Says Civil Society Key in Development of LDCs." *Sunday Zaman*, May 8, 2011. Accessed September 14, 2018. http://www.todayszaman.com/news-243200-Davutoğlu-says-civil-society-key-in-development-of-ldcs.html.
14. "Assessing Turkey's Role in Somalia." In *Policy Briefing – Africa Briefing*, No. 92, October 2012. Accessed August 12, 2017. http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/b092-assessing-turkeys-role-in-somalia.pdf.
15. The Twitter hashtags #TurkishAirlinesHelpSomalia was launched by a French social media celebrity Jerome Jarre.
16. Interview with Turkish scholar on Africa and MENA region, via Zoom, 31 August 2020.
17. Turkey's trade volume grew threefold from $5.4 billion in 2003 to $19.5 billion in 2015. Turkey's trade volume with SSA soared to $6.6 billion in 2015 from around $2.7 billion in 2005 (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs). http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey-africa-relations.en.mfa
18. See http://www.turkeyafricaforum.org/.
19. http://www.enr.com/toplists/2015_Top_250_International_Contractors1.
20. Interview with Turkish businessman, Istanbul, 20 August 2020.
21. The UN Monitoring Group for Somalia and Eritrea accused Favori LLC of paying senior members of the SFG a $1.8 million "Initial Premium Fee" to remove SKA from the airport.
22. "Turkish Firm Signs New Contract to Operate Somalia's Port of Mogadishu." *Daily Sabah*, October 12, 2020. Accessed November 20, 2020. https://www.dailysabah.com/business/economy/turkish-firm-signs-new-contract-to-operate-somalias-port-of-mogadishu?gallery_image=undefined#big.
23. Interview with Afrika Vakfı (Africa Foundation) worker, via Zoom, 24 August 2020.
24. Interview with Turkish scholar on Africa and MENA region, via Zoom, 31 August 2020.
25. Interview with a group of African students, via Zoom, 23 August 2020.

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Notes on contributor

Federico Donelli is a postdoc research fellow in International Relations at the University of Genoa. His research fields have covered international politics and security studies of the Middle East region. Among his latest works "Crossing Roads: The Middle East's Security Engagement in the Horn of Africa" in *Global Change, Peace & Security*; "Asymmetric alliances and high polarity: evaluating regional security complexes in the Middle East and Horn of Africa" in *Third World Quarterly*. He has recently published the book *Turkey in Africa. Turkey's Strategic Involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa* (London-New York: IB Tauris).

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