

PERCEPTIONS OF TURKEY AND FRANCE IN WEST AFRICA: THE CASES  
OF MALIAN AND SENEGALESE STUDENTS IN TURKEY

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **PERCEPTIONS OF TURKEY AND FRANCE IN WEST AFRICA: THE CASES OF MALIAN AND SENEGALESE STUDENTS IN TURKEY**

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This study aims to disclose perceptions of Turkey and France in West Africa within the framework of soft power and public diplomacy. Furthermore, the study questions Turkey's and France's prospects on the continent in the long run. To this end, Malian and Senegalese postgraduate students have been chosen as cases. Evaluating perceptions and attitudes of those students in these two cases is worthwhile to measure the effectiveness of the public diplomacy practices of Turkey and France in the region, and yet, this undertaking is also significant for measuring Turkey's and France's soft power projection in West Africa. The research examines Turkey's development of its relations with the continent and relations between France and its (ex)colonies of West Africa respectively. In the empirical chapter, ten Malian and nine Senegalese postgraduate students studying in Turkey were interviewed and their perceptions of Turkey and France are investigated. From the empirical and theoretical data, general conclusions as to how the Malian and Senegalese students receiving an education in Turkey perceive Turkey and France are drawn.

**Keywords:** Soft power, Public Diplomacy, Turkey-Africa Relations, France-Africa relations, French colonialism

## ÖZ

### BATI AFRİKA'DA TÜRKİYE VE FRANSA ALGISI: TÜRKİYE'DEKİ MALİ VE SENEGALLİ ÖĞRENCİ ÖRNEKLERİ

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Bu tezin amacı Türkiye ve Fransa'nın Batı Afrika'da nasıl algılandığının yumuşak güç ve kamu diplomasisi teorik çerçeveleri içerisinde değerlendirilmesidir. Çalışma ayrıca bu iki ülkenin uzun dönemde bölgedeki geleceğinin nasıl olacağını da sorgulamaktadır. Bu amaçla, Türkiye'de lisansüstü öğrenim gören Mali ve Senegalli öğrenciler örneklem olarak seçilmiştir. Bu öğrencilerin Türkiye ve Fransa'ya karşı olan algı ve tutumlarının değerlendirilmesi bu iki örnek ülkede ve bölgede Türkiye ve Fransa'nın kamu diplomasisi etkinliklerinin ve dolayısıyla yumuşak güçlerinin ölçülmesine katkı sağlayacaktır. Çalışmanın ilgili bölümlerinde Türkiye'nin özellikle son yirmi yılda kıtadaki ülkelerle bağları ve Fransa'nın Batı Afrika'da eski sömürgeleriyle ilişkileri de detaylı şekilde incelenmiştir. Ampirik bölümdeyse, Türkiye'de lisansüstü öğrenim gören on Malili ve dokuz Senegalli öğrenci ile görüşmeler yapılarak, bu öğrenci örnekleminde elde edilen veriler ve teorik bilgiler ışığında Türkiye ve Fransa'nın Türkiye'de öğrenim görmekte olan Malili ve Senegalli öğrencilerin gözünden nasıl algılandığı saptanmaya çalışılmıştır.



**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Yumuşak Güç, Kamu Diplomasisi, Türkiye Afrika ilişkileri, Fransa Afrika ilişkileri, Fransız sömürgeciliği

*To My Family*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM .....	III
ABSTRACT.....	IV
ÖZ .....	VI
DEDICATION.....	VIII
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	IX
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	X
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	XII
CHAPTERS	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	16
2.1. Power(s) in International Relations: Hard, Soft, Smart .....	16
2.1.1. Soft Power: Nature, Definitions and Its Evolution .....	20
2.1.1.1. The Relationship Between Hard and Soft Power .....	22
2.1.1.2. Agent – Subject Relations.....	26
2.1.1.3. How To Measure It: Sources of Soft Power .....	28
2.2. Putting Soft Power into Operation: Public Diplomacy.....	31
2.2.1. The Emergence of the Concept of Public Diplomacy and Its Historical Evolution.....	35
2.2.2. Diverse Approaches to Public Diplomacy.....	39
2.2.3. A Neglected Component: Listening.....	43
2.2.4. The New Public Diplomacy.....	44
3. TURKEY'S RELATIONS WITH WEST AFRICA .....	50
3.1. Diversification of Turkish Foreign Policy .....	50
3.2. Synopsis of Turkish-African Relations.....	54
3.3. The Africa Opening Plan .....	63
3.3.1. Political Relations After the Opening Plan.....	69
3.3.1.1. High-level Visits .....	69
3.3.1.2. Diplomatic Missions .....	70
3.3.1.3. Cooperation in Their International Relations and Military .....	71

3.3.2. Economic Relations after the Opening Plan .....	72
3.4. Turkish Public Diplomacy Initiatives in West Africa .....	76
3.5. The Cases of Mali and Senegal.....	82
3.5.1. Relations with Mali.....	82
3.5.2. Relations with Senegal.....	84
4. FRANCE'S RELATIONS WITH WEST AFRICA .....	87
4.1. The Historical Evolution of Relations between France and Francophone Africa .....	87
4.2. Political Relations After 1990: The Retreat of France from Africa .....	93
4.3. Unwavering Interdependence between Metropole and Françafrique .....	96
4.3. Economic Relations .....	99
4.4. Military Relations After 1990.....	101
4.4.1. Military Interventions .....	105
4.5. French Public Diplomacy Initiatives in West Africa.....	107
4.6. The Cases of Mali and Senegal.....	114
4.6.1. Relations with Mali.....	114
4.6.2. Relations with Senegal.....	115
5. RESEARCH FINDINGS .....	118
5.1. The Interviews with Malians .....	119
5.1.1. Being an African Student in Turkey .....	119
5.1.2. (Dis)connection with Turkish/French Culture .....	123
5.1.3. Comparing Power and Credibility of the Two Countries .....	129
5.1.4. The Impact of (Neo)colonization on Perceptions .....	131
5.1.5. Future Projections .....	134
5.2. Interviews with Senegalese.....	138
5.2.1. Being an African Student in Turkey .....	139
5.2.2. (Dis)connection with Turkish/French Culture .....	143
5.2.3. Comparing Power and Credibility of the Two Countries .....	148
5.2.4. The Impact of (Neo)colonization on Perceptions .....	152
5.2.5. Future Projections .....	159
6. CONCLUSION.....	166
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	175
APPENDICES	
A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE	190
B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS .....	191
C. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET .....	192
D. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU .....	205

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFD	Agence Française de Développement (French Development Agency)
AFDB	African Development Bank
AFISMA	African-led International Support Mission to Mali
AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
AU	The African Union
CFA	Communauté Financière Africaine (Africa Financial Community)
CIAN	Conseil Français des Investisseurs en Afrique
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease of 2019
DEİK	Dış Ekonomik İlişkiler Kurulu (Foreign Economic Relations Board)
EAC	East African Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	The European Union
FETO	Fethullahist Terrorist Organization
G5S	G5 du Sahel
IHH	Humanitarian Relief Foundation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KIZILAY	The Turkish Red Crescent
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OECD	The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
RECAMP	Renforcement des Capacités Africaines de Maintien de la Paix
RFI	Radio France Internationale
TABA	Turkish-African Business Association
THY	Turkish Airlines

TIKA	Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency
TRT	The Turkish Radio and Television Corporation
TUSKON	Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists (Türkiye İşadamları ve Sanayiciler Konfederasyonu)
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USA	The United States of America
USSR	The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization
YTB	Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı (Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities)





## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

*“Power is also like love, easier to experience than to define or measure, but no less real for that.”*

Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power:  
The Means to Success in World  
Politics*

Perception has not occupied the agenda much in International Relations (IR) discipline while reflecting on issues of global politics. Indeed, given how hard has been acceptance of non-state actors in analysis of IR, it is natural that a phenomenon literally borrowed from Psychology, namely perception, initially received such lukewarm reception in scholarly circles. Yet, this has ceased to be the case lately thanks to new global trends involving liberalization and diversification of treatment of research subjects in almost all fields of social sciences. Such a shift from one-dimensional approach to a more comprehensive line of thinking in social scientific questions throws fresh light on and brings new blood in social scientific research. As a matter of fact, not only adopting unorthodox concepts and viewpoints, but also utilizing new data collection methods or reforming the ones already in use is of utmost significance for advancement of the discipline of IR.

This master's thesis can be taken as a modest contribution to development of the field in this regard. This piece of work will analyze the perceptions that Malian and Senegalese students studying in Turkey have of Turkey and France comparatively by means of semi-structured interviews. The research elicits ideas and interpretations of

those research participants and draws conclusions from the interviews as to how Turkey and France are perceived in the region in the eyes of Malian and Senegalese students receiving an education in Turkey. In the data assessment process, theoretical frameworks of soft power and public diplomacy are used. Put differently, over the course of the data collection, the research subjects were covertly provided with two lenses (soft power and public diplomacy) through which they were asked to express their thoughts. Instead of situating it remotely in the past, the roles of France and Turkey in Africa are embedded in their current soft power capabilities on the continent. Yet, colonial background of France and Turkey's absence of colonial history are used as subcategories while eliciting the data.

This introductory chapter provides a blueprint of the subject matter, argumentation, and overall structure of the thesis. First, a background explanation is unfolded. Following that, the 'problematique' of the research is expanded on with reference to the main and supplementary research questions. Afterwards, the significance and limitations of the research are sketched. Finally, the chapter ends by briefly outlining the contents of the subsequent chapters of the thesis.

Turkey can be qualified as a late-comer when it comes to establishment of relations with African countries. Even if the Ottoman Empire ruled northern and some eastern parts of the continent, it is safe to suggest that in the Sahel region and sub-Saharan Africa, Turks and Turkey remained until recently an unknown quantity. This is because of the fact that there has been no persistent and in-depth contact between these areas and Turkey. Indeed, what contact there had been during the time of the Ottomans was in effect all but abandoned after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923.

This lack of interest in relations with Africa in the republican period is easily understandable as the newly established Turkey was preoccupied with building and consolidating its own constitutional structure, coping with domestic unrest, and 'westernizing' the political, economic, and social nature of the new state. It is important to underscore that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's ideas and aspirations for

modernization of the republic were also effectual in the newly established Turkey's efforts of rapprochement with Western states. To that effect, Turkey turned its face to the Western world and for a while neglected development of relations with other parts of the globe, including Africa. This trend in Turkish foreign policy lasted until the mid-1960s, when relations between Turkey and the USA became tense due to the issue of Cyprus. This was, perhaps, the first time that Turkish foreign policy makers came to realize the exigency of ameliorating relations with other potential partners in different parts of the world and of 'diversifying' Turkish foreign policy. This was a milestone, and Turkey began to make contact with African countries to establish firmer international relations.<sup>1</sup> In the 1990s, Turkey's attempts to increase its visibility and become more agile in Africa gained momentum, culminating in adoption of a new policy document called the "Action Plan for the Opening Policy towards Africa" in 1998.

Following this plan, Turkey began to exert great effort to secure its place as an emerging power in the continent. During the administration of the Justice and Development Party (AKP)-from its accession to power in 2002 until present- Turkey's presence in "distant parts" of Africa increased, and in 2005 Turkey obtained "observer status" in the African Union (AU). The same year was declared the "Year of Africa" by the Turkish government. Turkey's diplomatic representations rose significantly following Turkey's newly gained status as an observer country on the AU. Today, Turkey has more than forty diplomatic representations on the continent and with every passing year it consolidates its presence there thanks to its public diplomacy initiatives and rising soft power.

France, on the other hand, is a traditional power in Africa as it was one of the prime colonizers of the continent along with Great Britain, Portugal, Spain, and Italy. Hence, France's weight in and wide network of relations with the continent are indisputable. Particularly, the first six decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed great efforts by France

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<sup>1</sup> Elem Eyryce Tepeciklioğlu, "Turkey's African engagement: A critical analysis," in *Eurasia Goes to Africa* (European Policy Centre and Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung, 2020).

to hold sway in its area of influence in “Francophone Africa” in the political, economic, and social spheres.

In its endeavors to keep its African colonies under French control and to legitimize its presence on the continent as a patron in the eyes of international society, France took – and continues to take - advantage of the discourse *La mission civilisatrice* (the “Civilizing Mission”). This was a rationale explaining the colonial advancement of France in Africa through the objectives of Westernizing and modernizing the indigenous peoples of Africa. This framing of its colonial efforts was a means of justifying its political and military presence on the continent. The goal of France has always been to raise Frenchman out of the natives in its colonies.

In effect, what made France what it is today is its colonial heritage. Nevertheless, as the time has passed, France’s attempts to rule its African colonies with an iron fist withered under fierce and unstoppable resistance in the 1950s and 1960s, culminating in decolonization and the – at least ostensible - independence of Francophone African countries from their former master. Yet, as many have remarked, decolonization also brought benefits to the colonizers, now shed of the burden of financing political and economic tutelage. Yet, it would be naïve to suggest that France’s tutelage in Africa ended with formal decolonization, as today Francophone West Africa remains under the political and economic control of France, a complex arrangement of relations dubbed “neo-colonization”. West African countries, as illustrated in the cases of Mali and Senegal in this thesis, have not cut loose from French rule just yet.

Neo-colonial affairs between France and its former colonies are maintained with new political, military, and economic deals. As a matter of fact, maintaining and even further improving relations with France is more of an exigency for former French colonies in West Africa as they are dependent on France some respects and are not that free in diversifying their foreign policies because of France’s domineering style of relations with these countries. Therefore, one can suggest that even if these

Francophone West African countries have sovereignty, they face difficulty in enjoying their sovereignty rights because of France's encroachments.

The research problem and aim of this thesis is to ascertain how the soft power and public diplomacy initiatives of France, as a traditional power in West Africa, and of Turkey, an emerging power in the African continent, are perceived in Mali and Senegal on the basis of interview data. This problem is worthy of extensive research since the literature concerning the soft power and public diplomacy of France and Turkey in Africa glosses over the perspective of perceptions. That is, existing research mostly concentrates on the activities of the agents - Turkey and France - in building and consolidating their soft power in Africa; whether the efforts of these two powers resonate with the target populations, and if so, what the -potential- repercussions of the countries' respective initiatives are among the peoples of West Africa (Mali and Senegal, in this study) are neglected aspects of the literature on public diplomacy and soft power.

The listening component of the empirical research, namely assessment of interview feedback from the recipient population, is a neglected area in public diplomacy studies. There are already studies delving into the public diplomacy activities of Turkey and France on the African continent, but studies investigating how these initiatives are perceived is overlooked and understudied. This study is a modest attempt to fill this gap in the literature by drawing from research findings acquired from semi-structured interviews with a sample of Malian and Senegalese students studying in Turkey.

According to Geun Lee, soft power implementation is a complex process comprised of three steps: application of soft power, changes in the mental course of the recipients of soft power projection, and, eventually, realization of soft power.<sup>2</sup> This understanding of soft power does justice to the complexity of the concept, and that of its one of the primary instruments, namely public diplomacy. Giving ear to what those

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<sup>2</sup> Geun Lee, "A theory of soft power and Korea's soft power strategy," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 21, no. 2 (2009/06/01 2009), <https://doi.org/10.1080/10163270902913962>, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10163270902913962>.

who are at the other end of public diplomacy implementation process - i.e., the target population or subjects - have to say is significant for numerous reasons. Such an approach, for one thing, would result in more effective public diplomacy initiatives and techniques since countries wielding public diplomacy would be able to map out their soft power policies and try to identify any defects in them. Therefore, listening to what the subjects have to say can pave the way for an improvement in soft power policies. Second, and more importantly, considering their opinion and taking their feedback comes to mean that the subjects of the agent country's soft power policies are pleased that their thought and demands are being taken into consideration. For these reasons learning about how Turkey's and France's soft power engagements are received from the viewpoints of Malian and Senegalese postgraduate students studying in Turkey is worthy of in-depth study. The aim of this thesis is thus to explore this sample group's reflections, as citizens of selected target states (Mali and Senegal), on public diplomacy initiatives of Turkey and France, and provide insights into both practitioners and scholars of soft power.

The soft power of a state lies in the hearts and minds of people at whom soft power policies are directed. Evidently, then, soft power is not tantamount to the soft power resources of a country; soft power is something more than merely possession of certain resources. In fact, the resources that qualify as soft power resources are at the very most peculiarities with the potential to be transformed into attraction: language, culture, religion, historical heritage, political culture, foreign policy projection, and so on. They are potential assets serving as a complex set of resources which together comprise a nation's soft power.

Following on from the main research question set out in the preceding paragraphs, answers will be sought to a series of subsidiary research questions:

1. How do the soft power capacities of Turkey and France differ in West Africa?
2. To what extent are Turkey and France known in West Africa?

3. Which of the two countries is seen as more credible and prestigious in the region?
4. Which of the two countries enjoys a more positive perception in the region?
5. Does France's colonial background in the region figure in people's perceptions of France as a current power in West Africa, and, if so, how? Does having a colonial background benefit France today? What is the likelihood that France might lose its authority and credibility in Africa in the future?
6. Is having no colonial history in the region an advantage for Turkey as a newly emerging power striving to develop and increase its visibility in West Africa? Does Turkey as a new player in the continent have a chance to build a promising future in Africa?

As for period covered by the research, it explores the period starting from 1990s to the present. The selection of Turkey and France is deliberate. The image of these two countries in the region is academically intriguing because of the fact that France is a traditional power in West Africa, where it has former colonies, while, in contrast, Turkey is a newly emerging power on the continent. As has been indicated in the subsidiary research questions, whether having a colonial background in the continent strengthens France's hand, and whether Turkey as a late-comer has a chance of building a positive image and securing a prominent place in the international relations of the region are two significant questions deserving close examination. At first sight, one might assume that France quite easily outweighs Turkey's clout in the region; however, the reality may not reflect this supposition, and having a colonial background may actually run against France's current interests in the region. The whole narration in this study is to address and explore the manifold twists and turns of this question. In this regard, analyzing the views of a sample population to garner a general idea as to the attitudes towards Turkey and France is significant. In this way, comparing and contrasting how Turkey and France are perceived in the region and making an educated guess as to what the future holds for them in the region is both feasible and desirable.

Another significant question in need of clarification is why Malian and Senegalese students were selected as case studies. First and foremost, because this study aims to analyze the image of Turkey and France in French speaking Africa within the theoretical framework of soft power and public diplomacy. The fact that Senegal and Mali are former French colonies located in West Africa, where the dominance of France even today makes itself felt, makes them appropriate selections to conduct case studies on.

Senegal, for its part, was selected since it is politically and economically one of the leading countries in West Africa. Turkey's relations with Senegal stretch back further than with other countries in the region. In effect, Turkey's Dakar embassy, opened in 1962, was one of first Turkish Embassies in Africa. From an economic point of view, Turkish businesspeople have seen Senegal as a country to invest in in recent years. It has become a top priority country for Turkey's foreign trade relations in West Africa in the last two decades. For instance, bilateral trade volume between the two states surpassed 540 million USD in 2020, an increase of 150 million on just one year before.

Turkey has also been an active contributor to the infrastructural development of Senegal in diverse fields, ranging from agriculture to industry, under the ambit of the *Rising Senegal Plan* which was put forward during Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to Senegal in February 2018. This signified the momentousness of high-level bilateral visits between the two countries, visits which have been on the rise in recent years. Senegal carries a lot of weight in Turkish public diplomacy efforts. The prime demonstration of this argument is that Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), one of the leading state institutions in conduct of Turkey's public diplomacy around the world, opened its first office in West Africa in Dakar, Senegal in April 2007. It follows from this that just as for France, Senegal is an indispensable ally for Turkey to stay engaged with the region.

When it comes to the reason for picking Senegal as a case study from the perspective of France, as is the case with Turkey's relations with Senegal, France's ties with Dakar



are also strong and multidimensional. France is the biggest investor in Senegal, so much so that France's trade surplus with Senegal was €834.2 million in 2016. In addition to that, Senegal is also among the central countries to which France gives special importance in military terms, and it is one of the major countries benefitting from defense cooperation with France. On the other hand, France also gains favor from this relationship in terms of its security policies. A prime example of this phenomenon is the presence of French troops on Senegalese soil, with the country being the center for operational cooperation in the region.

Mali is the second case study of this thesis. Mali has strategic importance both for Turkey and France. However, there are differences with Senegal from the perspective of Turkey. Turkey was comparatively late to forge relations with Mali. The Turkish embassy in Bamako was opened only on 1 February 2010. Since then, Turkey's relations with Mali have warmed and intensified. For instance, trade volumes between two countries rose significantly since then and stood at around 57 million USD in 2019. Furthermore, TIKA has been carrying out diverse projects in the country lately. Turkey, with its humanitarian and enterprising foreign policy, along with its Muslim population, has a great likelihood of entrenching its political and economic relations with Mali, and of earning sympathy among Malians as France's authority in the country shows a tendency towards decay.

As could be expected of a former colony, Mali's relations with France are longstanding and deep seated. There is a large Malian diaspora residing in France. France is also the second largest supplier of consumer goods of Mali, ahead even of the neighboring countries of Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire. Mali is also strategically significant for France. This is because, military operations of France and its interference in Mali's domestic issues on rise more than ever. While both Turkey and France have strong and developing relations with Senegal, the same does not hold true for Mali. Because Turkey's relations with Mali manifest a rising trend, and because those between Mali and France are in decline and are prone to collapse any moment, the image of Turkey and France in Mali is also worthy of close examination as a case study.

The choice for the time frame covered by the thesis is based on the fact that, as already mentioned, Turkey's presence in West Africa is a comparatively recent phenomenon. Turkey started to make inroads in the region more systematically in the 1990s, a process which was intensified in 1998 when Turkey adopted a new policy document to make room for Africa in its foreign policy. The late 1990s were also a turning point in the policies of France towards its former colonies in Africa. This era coincided with the presidency of Jacques Chirac, when French foreign policy makers decided to recalibrate the country's Africa policy afresh based upon four principles: reconstituting the image of France on the continent; ensuring stability and order on the continent by handling political crises; helping out African countries with their economic management; and coping with Anglophone influences on the continent.<sup>3</sup> Seeing that the year 1990s coincided with a paradigm shift in French foreign policy towards Africa, and was also the time when Turkey made an expansion in its foreign policy to bring relations with Africa onto the agenda, it is reasonable and makes sense that this thesis takes 1990s as a starting point for analyzing the subject matter. Overall, the narrower the scope and time frame of the research, the more likely it is to identify convincing and substantiated answer(s) to the research questions.

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology. Alongside an extensive literature review, within which books, scholarly articles, policy papers, newspapers, and governmental websites are analyzed, over the course of the data collection process, semi-structured in-depth interviews were also conducted. The interviews make-up the backbone of the thesis as the empirical findings from the study are based on these interviews. The interviews were conducted with ten Malian and nine Senegalese graduate students studying in Turkey. The rationale behind this choice does not only derive from relative convenience to locate research subjects, but, more importantly, it is thought that graduate students are more knowledgeable about and interested in the research problem owing to the longer duration of their stay in Turkey (almost all of

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<sup>3</sup> Xavier Renou, "A New French Policy for Africa?," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 20, no. 1 (2002/01/01 2002): 16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02589000120104035>, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02589000120104035>.

them had also received their undergraduate education in Turkey) and their commitment to academia.

The crude data obtained from the interviews were processed on the basis of certain categories and subcategories in order to reach diverse themes under which analyses can be made. These themes were reviewed closely to ensure that each one had enough data to support them. The themes are: Being a student in Turkey; (Dis)connection to the culture of France and Turkey; Trust in Turkey and France; Impact of colonization on perceptions; Suggestions and future projections. Even if this thematic division was made for the sake of more effective analysis and to aid comprehension, there would be some obscurities in the boundaries between them. However, I strove to make them appear as distinct from each other as the volume and complexity of the data allow, so that a more convenient reading was facilitated. The processed data categorized under five distinct themes are supported with authentic interpretations.

Some conclusions were drawn from the views of the research participants to get an overall picture of Turkey and France in the eyes of Malian and Senegalese students. Evidently, there are some shortcomings in methodology. To generalize the views of the interviewees is doable but expecting a full representation would not be possible. However, one also cannot deny that there are grains of truth in the conclusions generalized to these two societies with reference to the ideas of the interviewees. This piece of work seeks instead to make presumable generalizations on the basis of substantiated interpretations and educated guesses to insert as many pieces of the jigsaw as possible into place based on the responses of carefully selected research participants in order to obtain a likely general image of Turkey and France. This research is not after revealing “the truth” per se, but instead seeks to generate a metanarrative and comprehensible perspective. It aims to shed light on just one face of the phenomenon, namely perceptions of Malian and Senegalese students studying at Turkish universities towards France and Turkey, by setting forth from the research findings obtained primarily from interviews and, secondarily, from the literature review.

Another potential limitation would be that the questions directed at the interviewees could have been more explicit and straightforward. During the interviews, I realized that answers to some questions overlap. This is not necessarily detrimental to the research, but for the sake of practicality and maintaining the interest of the interviewees, brevity in terms of questioning and eschewing repetition would have perhaps elicited better results.

The thesis is organized as follows. The second chapter deals with the theoretical framework of the study, viz soft power and public diplomacy. They are inseparable and irreplaceable parts of the same structure. The soft power concept constitutes a base for public diplomacy in this structure, while public diplomacy is the more visible element of this structure. Soft power is somewhat intangible compared to public diplomacy. By all means, public diplomacy finds its niche within the concept of soft power. Publics diplomacy, then, “the visible hand of soft power”, touches the hearts of foreign publics and at the same time addresses their minds. It is an extension – or form - of soft power that is more measurable and down-to-earth than is the concept of soft power itself. This chapter, effectively, discusses these two significant phenomena, which serve the analysis of perceptions. The chapter discusses emergence of the soft power concept, its evolution, and its measurability. The second part of the chapter is devoted to public diplomacy, considered here a concrete manifestation of soft power. The historical development and coinage of public diplomacy as an academic concept, different approaches to it and the emergence of new public diplomacy and its implications are addressed at length in this part of the chapter.

Chapter 3 concerns Turkey’s relations with and policies towards African countries. The chapter begins by outlining a brief timeline and providing some background to Turkey’s interaction with Africa. After touching briefly on the Ottoman Empire’s expansion into the continent, the chapter centers on the interactions of the Turkish Republic with Africa from the late C20<sup>th</sup> to date. Turkish foreign policy makers’ efforts to diversify relations with the geographies long ignored in Turkish foreign policy are put into perspective. How have trends in Turkish foreign policy changed in recent

decades? What have been the turning points causing policy makers to take Turkish foreign policy out of the Western orbit and to make it more multifaceted? How was the ground leading up to the adoption of the opening to Africa plan laid? What have been the repercussions of Turkey's opening to Africa in its international relations? How did the AKP administration treat Africa? How has Turkey's diplomatic visibility been increased on the continent? What public diplomacy activities have Turkey conducted on the continent? What substate actors have been influential in implementing Turkey's soft power? These are the main questions constituting the skeleton of this chapter. The chapter concludes with some concise remarks on Turkey's relations with Mali and Senegal, respectively.

The fourth chapter considers the foreign policy of France towards the continent of Africa. The chapter starts with the historical relations between France and Africa, specifically with its "sphere of influence" on the continent. The chapter continues with an investigation of legacy of unbalanced relations and interdependence between the former colonizer and the former colonized states. Following that, the narrative of France's revision of its African policy from the era of Jacques Chirac until today. This chapter seeks answers to such questions as: Has the colonial background of France provided it with an upper hand in West Africa? How did the path leading to the retreat of France from the continent as a colonial power take shape? What was the motive of France to ease the subjugation of its former African colonies? What are the key areas where France has long enjoyed cultural domination? The chapter eventuates in brief explanations of the relations of France with its two former colonies, Mali, and Senegal, respectively.

The final body chapter is an empirical one, conveying the research findings thematically under two separate divisions: Research findings from the interviews with Malian students and research findings from the interviews with Senegalese students. In this chapter, the responses of the research subjects are put under the spotlight and the subtexts in their replies are distilled. These insights are integrated into the body of the thesis in the form of excerpts from these responses. As stated, the research findings

are categorized in respect to diverse themes: the ideas of Malians and insights drawn from their replies, on the one hand, and the ideas of Senegalese participants and insights derived from their replies, on the other, are narrated under two sections, respectively.

The interviews were conducted on a fully voluntary basis. The comfort of the participants as well as ethical standards were strictly observed over the period of data collection. The interviewees were recruited through a non-probability sampling technique of snowball sampling, meaning that each participant was asked to provide the contact information of (further) individual(s) who have similar qualifications to them. Even though most of the interviews were carried out through audio-visual teleconference methods, some were done in person depending on the availability of the concerned participant. The dates and locations were decided by the interviewees and each meeting lasted approximately forty minutes. Although the language of the interviews had intended to be English, the interviewees were welcome to reply in either English or Turkish so that they had opportunity to prefer the language in which they wished to express themselves. It is worth noting that, from the interviewees, only three preferred to reply in English and the rest said that they could express themselves better in Turkish. Thus, I acted accordingly.

One final criticism directed at the method of thesis may concern its objectivity. That is, one may think that the selection of the participants from among those studying on post-graduate programs in Turkey would jeopardize the objectivity of the research given there is no voice of Malian and Senegalese graduate students receiving an education in France (i.e., the fact that they were studying in Turkey may be a reflection of some attraction or reason that might make them look favorably on that country, such as a scholarship, etc.). Comparing and contrasting the ideas of Malians and Senegalese graduate students in Turkey, on the one side, and those receiving a postgraduate education in France, on the other hand, may be thought of as a better method to ensure objectivity of research. However, this thesis is a case study and does not make any pretensions to illuminate all aspects of reality on this topic. Its quest is to contribute to

the construction of only one face of the problematique. As far as that goes, during the interviews, ethical standards laid down for working with human subjects in research were strictly observed; thereby, a zone of comfort was created for the participants to make them feel at ease and to respond truthfully with their ideas without fear or favor. In this manner, the limitation of conducting interviews with research participants only in Turkey was overcome. As such, the data collected is ensured to be in line with scientific standards.

Each interviewee was asked pre-arranged questions' Yet, as is common with semi-structured interviews, spontaneous arose as responses were probed on the flow of the interview, allowing them to elaborate on their ideas. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed. However, for the sake of confidentiality, the identities of the interviewees was kept undisclosed and all the participants were given codes (S1, S2,... M1, M2, ...) throughout research findings section of the thesis.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are diverse approaches to power in IR, just like in other disciplines in the social sciences. In the preliminary section of this chapter, definitions and conceptualizations of power are explored.

#### 2.1. Power(s) in International Relations: Hard, Soft, Smart

The most trusted dictionary of English, the Oxford Dictionary of English, describes power as follows: “The ability or capacity to do something or act in a particular way; the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behaviors of others or the course of events.”<sup>4</sup> In fact, power is a rudimental concept in the sense that one cannot explicate it by basing it on other concepts that are less controversial than power itself. This is because power can only be attributed meaning with reference to some assumptions about what is significant in or about it.<sup>5</sup>

Power was initially seen as the preserve of the realist IR paradigm. Attaining power is the foremost aim of all countries. Realist scholars identified power with military might and categorized states on the basis of their military power and used this concept to make sense of state behavior. Hence, power was used as an analytical instrument to interpret an array of phenomena in international politics.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Oxford Languages, *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 3rd edition ed. (Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Steven Lukes, "Power and the Battle for Hearts and Minds," *Millennium* 33, no. 3 (2005): 56, <https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298050330031201>, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/03058298050330031201>; Joseph S. Nye, "The Power We Must Not Squander," *The New York Times*, 3 January 2000 2000, <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/01/03/opinion/the-power-we-must-not-squander.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Felix Brenskoether, "Thinking about power," in *Power in World Politics*, ed. Felix Berenskoetter & M.J. Williams (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2007).



Power is generally accounted for in abstract terms. Because it is a rather broad concept, scholars approach it by defining it in a narrow sense. To illustrate, one definition of power is that it is a process of effect production through social interactions. Another definition of power sees it as a thing belonging to a group, and that its existence is contingent upon that group's cohesion.<sup>7</sup>

There are two major methods of conceptualizing power. One of these methods sees power as the possession of a state, referring to “elements of the national power approach” or “power as resources”. The second way to conceptualize power is “relational power”, which claims that power arises out of influences in relationships. According to the proponents of the first approach, power is highly related to the resources a state has. Such resources can be counted as the funds allocated for military development, size of armed forces, quality of population and bulk of territory. In this vein, for instance, Morgenthau proposed that these possessions of a state constitute a country's steady power stockpile.<sup>8</sup> This approach, which sees power as an aggregation of resources, can be placed within a “hard power” conceptualization. On the other hand, when one thinks of power in relational terms, it is not independent of other actors in the international arena. It is an illusion to think that resources in the service of a state make it powerful and that power usually results in a state getting the outcomes it. Power resources may change over time and may change hands between diverse agents. That is why basing power upon resources alone is rather misleading:<sup>9</sup> resources do not

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<sup>7</sup> Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1970), 44, as cited in Aigerim Raimzhanova, *Hard, Soft, and Smart Power – Education as a Power Resource* (Peter Lang Edition, 2017), 22.

<sup>8</sup> Raimzhanova, *Hard, Soft, and Smart Power – Education as a Power Resource*, 24.

<sup>9</sup> Joseph S. Nye, "Responding to My Critics and Concluding Thoughts," in *Soft Power and US Foreign Policy: Theoretical, Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Inderjeet Parmar and Michael Cox (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010); Hendrik W. Ohnesorge, *Soft Power: Forces of Attraction in International Relations* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2019).

equal outcomes. In particular, conversion from resources to outcomes is formed significantly through interactions and circumstances.<sup>10</sup>

Relational power is linked with Joseph Nye's understanding of power. Nye likens power to weather and maintains that people talk about it, but there are few who get its meaning in its full sense. He also associates power to love in that it is easier to feel than to elaborate on. Yet, power is as real as love is. According to Nye, power in its broadest terms means a person's capacity to get the outcomes he wants by influencing the behavior of others. He further clarifies that there is more than one way of affecting others' behavior, such as coercion using threats, encouraging them with payments/reward, or "co-opting" them by getting them to want what you want them to want.<sup>11</sup> This third method is closely linked with soft power. According to Nye, "Fully defined, soft power is the ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes"<sup>12</sup>

Nye highlights that the effectiveness of soft power rests on the credibility of the wielder of power. Credibility is a significant parameter that assists scholars to measure the impact of soft power on the receivers of it. In other words, credibility, trustworthiness, and attractiveness determine the efficacy of soft power among the subjects.<sup>13</sup> It is important to note that both soft power resources and outcomes arising out of using those resources deserve attention and assessment while treating soft power according to Nye's line of thinking.

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<sup>10</sup> Richard Ned Lebow, *A Cultural Theory of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 551. as cited in Ohnesorge, *Soft Power: Forces of Attraction in International Relations*, 32.

<sup>11</sup> Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (PublicAffairs Books, Apr 5, 2005, 2005), 3. <http://www.publicaffairsbooks.com/publicaffairsbooks-cgi-bin/display?book=1586482254>.

<sup>12</sup> Joseph S. Nye, *The Future of Power* (Public Affairs, 2011), 20-21.

<sup>13</sup> Li Ji, "Measuring Soft Power(Section Overview)," in *The Routledge Handbook of Soft Power*, ed. N. Chitty et al. (Taylor & Francis, 2017), 77.

Another type of power is “smart power”. Nye defines this as “the ability to combine the hard power of coercion or payment with the soft power of attraction into a successful strategy.” The wielder of smart power has to have full awareness about what he wants and his own capacities and capabilities to achieve what he is seeking. Also, keeping the pulse of global and regional developments while taking action is a significant aspect of smart power. Furthermore, not only having the necessary equipment and possessions aid the smart power implementor, but also determining the right time and right place to act are also significant in this regard.<sup>14</sup> As Nye emphasizes, both hard and soft power function better when they mutually reinforce each other.<sup>15</sup>

The most prominent type of power discussed in the discipline of IR is hard power. In effect, the conventional power conception among IR scholars has been grounded on military might and economic prowess. Nevertheless, scholars have opened up this single dimensional apprehension of power to discussion and critique. This is why there has been definition and characteristics of power in IR are so contested. Scholars dissatisfied with the traditional understandings of power have claimed that reducing the content and form of power to military and economy might is simplistic and fallacious. They opine that power is a relationship, a process, an ideation, rather than a thing, a hard fact, condition or discernible and measurable truth. However, in the habitual IR academic arena this new idea was not initially well received because notions of power as a “hard” phenomenon held (and to some extent still holds) sway among the everyday actions of international actors and commentators. Hard power is thought to have a certain amount of autonomy to speak for itself in the name of its wielder.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ernest J. Wilson, "Hard Power, Soft Power, Smart Power," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616 (2008): 115, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25097997>.

<sup>15</sup> Nye, "The Power We Must Not Squander."

<sup>16</sup> Janice Bially Mattern, "Why 'Soft Power' Isn't So Soft: Representational Force and the Sociolinguistic Construction of Attraction in World Politics," *Millennium* 33, no. 3 (2005): 587, <https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298050330031601>, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/03058298050330031601>.

### 2.1.1. Soft Power: Nature, Definitions and Its Evolution

*Everyone is familiar with hard power. We know that military and economic might often get others to change their position. Hard power can rest on inducements ("carrots") or threats ("sticks"). But sometimes you can get the outcomes you want without tangible threats or payoffs. The indirect way to get what you want has some-times been called "the second face of power." A country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries-admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness-want to follow it. In this sense, it is also important to set the agenda and attract others in world politics, and not only to force them to change by threatening military force or economic sanctions. This soft power -getting others to want the outcomes that you want- co-opts people rather than coerces them.<sup>17</sup>*

After end of the Cold War, voices discussing American decline began to emerge, motivating Nye to introduce the concept of soft power. He used this term for the first time in a 1990 book called *Bound to Lead*, which questioned and criticized the idea that the US was in decline based on its declining hard power vis-à-vis rising competitors.<sup>18</sup> Nye worked on the term and its implications throughout the 1990s and has been at the forefront of it taking hold both in academia and journalism to such an extent that everyone academically interested in IR and those concerned about international politics began to contemplate the concept.<sup>19</sup>

Soft power is the ability to influence, to persuade, and to attract. This type of power is rather based on “attracting” the subjects. The resources associated with soft power are those that serve the realization of attraction. Concerning those to whom the soft power is directed, one can use diverse methods to elicit their views and attitudes. Obtaining

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<sup>17</sup> Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, 5.

<sup>18</sup> Ohnesorge, *Soft Power: Forces of Attraction in International Relations*, 38-39.

<sup>19</sup> Geraldo Zahran & Leonardo Ramos, "From hegemony to soft power: Implications of a conceptual change," in *Soft Power and US Foreign Policy: Theoretical, Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. I. Parmar, & Cox, M. (Routledge, 2010), 14-15.

their feedback enables a researcher to ascertain whether or not a particular thing or action is a soft power resource.<sup>20</sup>

In actual fact, there had long been soft power in the IR literature before the specific phrase was coined by Joseph Nye in 1990. For instance, Morgenthau had listed nine pillars of national power, of which he noted national character, national morale, quality of diplomacy, and quality of government. These elements of national power are associated closely with Nye's conceptualization of soft power. In the same vein, Edward H. Carr had even earlier pointed out that power over opinion is as significant as military and economic power for political purposes. Again, in the view of Raven and French, the principles on which power rests are reward, coercion, legitimacy, reference and expertise. In this conceptualization, soft power can be compartmentalized as referent power hinging upon identification and attraction, and can be seen as even more influential than other types of power.<sup>21</sup>

Soft power can be categorized under five main headings with respect to its policy objectives: the first one is about a country's security environment; that is, soft power may help a country to keep itself secure in the international arena by diffusing the image of a peaceful and attractive country. Secondly, soft power can be taken as a means of teasing other countries into backing certain foreign and security policies of the country seeking to implement soft power. Third, soft power can be seen as an instrument to steer other countries' conception and interests. The fourth use of soft power is about keeping the unity of a country intact. The last categorization of soft power concerns policy objectives, namely that it raises and maintains domestic support for a government as well as a leader.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, 6.

<sup>21</sup> Ying Fan, "Soft power: Power of attraction or confusion?," *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 4, no. 2 (2008/05/01 2008): 149, <https://doi.org/10.1057/pb.2008.4>, <https://doi.org/10.1057/pb.2008.4>.

<sup>22</sup> Lee, "A theory of soft power and Korea's soft power strategy," 207-08.

To exemplify the first category of soft power, China's peaceful rise and Japan's non-military investments and ambition can be qualified as methods of projecting their peace-oriented character. This soft power strategy aims at combining soft resources so as to strengthen these countries' peace-minded nature in their interactions with other members of the international society. The second category of soft power aims to garner the support of other actors in global politics; to this end, constructing a justifiable reason along with "decent cause" is mandatory on the part of the soft power wielder. The third category of soft power aims at contributing to a state's efforts at diffusing its values worldwide to bring about a change in preferences and the behavior of other state actors in global politics. Soft power in this context requires a state to make use of theories, notions and discourses to mold other countries' thinking in a manner that serves its interest best. For the fourth category, states may draw upon soft power with the objective to reinforce their stance in international relations not only through their hard resources but their soft resources as well. Put differently, exerting aggressive effort constantly to keep their international relations in check is both costly and not sustainable for states. For this reason, they hardly have recourse to solely hard power; instead, states complement their endeavors by building a positive image and attracting other states. The last use of soft power is realized through creating national heroes. This can be done in many ways: successes in international sporting competitions, building a strong image of the country's leader in summit, and so on. This type of soft power is, by and large, catered to the domestic audience; yet, reverberations of a state's soft power in the international dimension is sine qua non for creating admiration in the domestic sphere too.<sup>23</sup>

#### **2.1.1.1. The Relationship Between Hard and Soft Power**

What makes soft power distinct is its relativity, intangibility and contextual nature; due to its distinct resources, measurement of it is an arduous task. Indeed, soft and hard power are related since both seek to bring about changes in the behavior of those at

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<sup>23</sup> Lee, "A theory of soft power and Korea's soft power strategy," 209.

whom the soft policies are directed. However, soft power needs a much more ardent interpretation than hard power does. Soft power is way more context-sensitive compared to its counterpart, i.e., hard power, given that geographic proximity, historical, and economic relations, cultural commonalities, have an impact on soft power.<sup>24</sup> Another point that distinguishes them from each other is that hard power has more direct and visible sway compared to soft power. Moreover, it takes longer for the effects of soft power to come into existence.<sup>25</sup> This is because the realization of aims by means of soft power rests greatly on modifications in the perceptions of the targets; this modification process lasts rather longer with soft power than with hard power.

Hard and soft power are related in that both aim to affect the actions of those to whom the power is directed. Yet, they differ in the techniques and resources they use to change behavior. Hard power revolves around command capacity, which is the competence of changing what others do by either inducement or coercion. Soft power, on the other hand, is associated with a co-optive power that is built upon the attractiveness of a culture and a set of values, which can serve to shape others' preferences. However, despite these observations, there is still not a clearcut affiliation between power types (hard and soft), on the one hand; and command/co-option capabilities, on the other. For instance, command power may appeal to some, and hence might create soft power. By the same token, a type of resource highly associated with hard power may result in attraction (co-opting) among the subjects and, in turn, an unwitting implementation of soft power by the power wielder.<sup>26</sup>

One of the salient differences between hard and soft power concerns the form of resources they are composed of. Hard resources can be cited as population, territory, economic well-being, military prowess, technical and technological capabilities and the like. On the other hand, soft resources are culture, ideology, values, institutions, and so on. The former resources are interrelated with commanding power behavior

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<sup>24</sup> Fan, "Soft power: Power of attraction or confusion?," 150.

<sup>25</sup> Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, 7-8.

<sup>26</sup> Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, 7-8.

whereas the latter are associated with co-optive power behavior. Yet, matching between type of power and the resources they are composed of is not straightforward as use of soft resources by command power can occur while, conversely, co-optive power may use hard or tangible resources.<sup>27</sup>

Hard power is the capacity to change the position of others, either by force or inducements, whereas soft power rests on the ability to adapt preferences through attraction. Another point is that while hard power makes use of military or economic power to coerce subjects, soft power is derived from the co-optive influence of the more inchoate and nebulous notion of cultural power. For this reason, hard power is more concrete than soft power. That is, soft power is highly sensitive to contextual parameters. Even though this makes hard power more ownership specified, due to the more diversified sources of soft power, it is unspecified. Another point that makes hard power hard is that it is under the command of state and state institutions. Put another way, states (especially liberal democracies) enjoy a higher degree of autonomy on their hard power resources and their implementation of it. Soft power, on the other hand, is more democratically scattered and less rigid on account of its uncontrollable nature (for example, a free media) and the role non-state actors (such as NGOs) play. Last but not least, the impacts of hard power are speedier, while those of soft power take more time to come about.<sup>28</sup>

Nye is perfectly aware of the shortcomings of associating hard and soft resources with command and co-optive power behaviors. However, he maintains that even if the link between them is not clear cut, it is a useful shortcut to help us conceptualize hard and soft power in general.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ramos, "From hegemony to soft power: Implications of a conceptual change," 17-18.

<sup>28</sup> Fan, "Soft power: Power of attraction or confusion?."

<sup>29</sup> Ramos, "From hegemony to soft power: Implications of a conceptual change," 18.



Some believe that soft power is already situated in hard power. Coercion is a precondition for gathering the support of people. Hence, it is obligatory for a country to execute a certain number of hard resources in order to promote and convey its soft power. To this respect, soft power is nothing more than the flip side of hard power: soft power is truly embedded in a hard shell. Soft power is an integration of, an extension of, and not independent of, hard power. Soft power owes its existence to the assistance lent it by hard resources.<sup>30</sup>

According to some, one has to further distinguish between potential and real soft power. To transform potential soft power into real soft power, one condition must be met: a country needs hard resources in order to profit from the conversion of its potential soft power into a real one. Absence of hard resources automatically results in failure to attain soft power. Not only is a country desperate to put its soft power potential into practice in the event of having no hard resources, but it also fails to propagate its soft power capacity in international society.<sup>31</sup>

One should first ponder hard power and its resources before attempting to comprehend soft power. Nye relates hard resources with military and economic capabilities. In effect, historically, hard power has been seen as an extension of population, size, territory, natural resources, military and social stability. What makes hard power resources distinct from those of soft power is that they are tangible and visible. On the other hand, soft power resources are less apparent, more intuitional and obscure.<sup>32</sup>

For Nye, soft power is not necessarily less effective than hard power. At times, states have no choice but to use soft power to secure the outcomes they want. As a matter of fact, this preference does not seem groundless as the power of ideas is fundamental in changing the actions of humans. Wielding soft power, in this sense, is promising as it brings about change not from outside but from *within* by persuading individuals. For

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<sup>30</sup> Fan, "Soft power: Power of attraction or confusion?," 151-52.

<sup>31</sup> Fan, "Soft power: Power of attraction or confusion?," 152.

<sup>32</sup> Raimzhanova, *Hard, Soft, and Smart Power – Education as a Power Resource*, 46-47.

all the many differences between hard and soft power, their goals overlap since both aim at causing a modification in the behavior of others.<sup>33</sup>

Another distinguishing element between soft and hard power is that while the former is less likely to pose an existential threat, the latter may have devastating outcomes in the sense that it can lead to unintended and irrevocable results (think Hiroshima). That is why Nye goes on to say that before resorting to hard power processes, one should give priority to the use of soft power. As he says, “Minds can change over time while the dead cannot be revived.”<sup>34</sup>

### **2.1.1.2. Agent – Subject Relations**

Different subjects may take the agent’s soft power strategies and actions differently even if the soft power strategies applied to them are exactly the same. In fact, disparate regions of the same political entity can be affected in different ways from the soft power applied to that entity. This is mostly the case for countries with diverse ethnicities or minorities. In short, bilateral relations between the soft power applicant agent state and the state exposed to that state’s soft power, the subject state’s demographic traits in terms of having distinct ethnic groups and religious affiliations, and the subject state’s political regime may all impact the overall perception of the agent’s soft power strategies in a subject country or region.<sup>35</sup> In this context, in general, soft power applying states design their strategies pursuant to particular recipients. For instance, it can be seen that states follow a more active foreign policy in the near abroad than in distant geographies.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ohnesorge, *Soft Power: Forces of Attraction in International Relations*, 51-52.

<sup>34</sup> Joseph Nye, "Notes for a soft-power research agenda," in *Power in World Politics*, ed. Felix Berenskoetter and M.J. Williams (Routledge, 2007).

<sup>35</sup> Artem Patalakh, "Assessment of Soft Power Strategies: Towards an Aggregative Analytical Model for Country-Focused Case Study Research," *Croatian International Relations Review* 22 (10/07 2016): 90, <https://doi.org/10.1515/cirr-2016-0007>.

<sup>36</sup> Eleonora Tafuro, *Fatal attraction: Russia’s soft power in its neighbourhood*, Fride A European Think Tank for Global Action (2014). as cited in Patalakh, "Assessment of Soft Power Strategies: Towards an Aggregative Analytical Model for Country-Focused Case Study Research," 90.

Furthermore, soft power wielder states often tailor their strategies by putting regional peculiarities into consideration. To illustrate, a certain set of values of a soft power applicant state may contradict the values of a recipient state. In such cases, the applicant state does not hesitate to deemphasize its values disfavored by recipient state, or else, it risks wasting its energy for raising a positive image of itself in the recipient state.<sup>37</sup> In other respects, countries, on occasion, may resort to policies unfavored by their own population on account of the fact that they are attracted by the charm of certain countries or international organizations. This sort of occurrence happens, for instance, when a state seeks admission to an international organization or a treaty.<sup>38</sup>

It is significant to take into account both elite and public perceptions in the recipient country so as to get a comprehensive picture of the soft power exerted by an applicant state. The rationale here is that because soft power is used for certain political goals rather than for the sake of it, having an impact on opinion leaders and those who have strong hand in domestic politics is imperative for securing the desired outcomes. Yet, having an impact on the general public by enhancing one's attractiveness still benefits the applicant country in the sense that a positive image may draw investors, tourists, labor, and students to it. Yet again, without having an influence on politicians in the recipient country, getting political decisions serving interests of the applicant state is hard.<sup>39</sup> However, attracting solely the elites of the recipient country is as undesirable as attracting only the general public because this would bring short term success rather than long-lasting results.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Patalakh, "Assessment of Soft Power Strategies: Towards an Aggregative Analytical Model for Country-Focused Case Study Research," 91.

<sup>38</sup> Patalakh, "Assessment of Soft Power Strategies: Towards an Aggregative Analytical Model for Country-Focused Case Study Research," 93.

<sup>39</sup> Joseph S. Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616 (2008), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25097996>; Ohnesorge, *Soft Power: Forces of Attraction in International Relations*, 93.

<sup>40</sup> Patalakh, "Assessment of Soft Power Strategies: Towards an Aggregative Analytical Model for Country-Focused Case Study Research," 94.

### 2.1.1.3. How To Measure It: Sources of Soft Power

Soft power is essentially a power of attraction which makes one consider what exactly others find attractive. For Vuving, the attractions of soft power are benignity, brilliance, and beauty. Benignity is about how the soft power implementing agent treats others. If the agent treats the client or subject respectfully and with good faith, the chances are that gratitude and sympathy will be cultivated. The second pillar of attraction is brilliance, which is the capacity to yield success by drawing the appreciation of others. It is also a way of contributing to the accumulation of knowledge as people are likely to emulate the success of the agent. Beauty is an actor's ideals, values, and principles. This type of power currency is mostly visible in the condition that one needs other's emotional and intellectual company, a kind of feeling better and more secure with "like-minded people".<sup>41</sup>

Measurement of soft power is more demanding than that of hard power and is de-facto not be as precise as measurement of hard power. In addition, the resources and time devoted to soft power institutions are significantly less than those given over to hard power institutions. That is to say, the limited funds allocated for soft power alongside lack of sufficient institutional backing result in retardation of theoretical and practical development of soft power literature.<sup>42</sup>

In his 2004 book, Nye recounts a wide range of soft power components such as foreign immigrants, asylum applications, international students, tourists, book and music sales, popular sports, Nobel prize winners, life expectancy, overseas aids, number of internet hosts and so on.<sup>43</sup> Hence, soft power is more than cultural power since a government's manner of acting in the domestic sphere, the values it adopts in its relations with international institutions, and in its foreign policy behavior hold sway

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<sup>41</sup> Alexander Vuving, "How Soft Power Works," *SSRN Electronic Journal* (09/01 2009): 9, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1466220>.

<sup>42</sup> Raimzhanova, *Hard, Soft, and Smart Power – Education as a Power Resource*, 58.

<sup>43</sup> Fan, "Soft power: Power of attraction or confusion?," 149.

on how it implements its soft power. Thus, unlike hard power, possessing soft power is much more complicated as it rests on intangible assets compared to hard power.<sup>44</sup>

Soft power is a dynamic process whereby resources are converted into outcomes by means of the recipients. Hence, soft power process involves both resources and their conversion into desired outcomes on a voluntary basis. This process is not immune to external factors such as context, affinity between agent and subject, and the diverse strategies of the subject.<sup>45</sup>

Intangible soft power resources are converted into capabilities by means of certain strategies such as agenda-setting, framing, and attraction. This process is a complex one as both the intangible resources and abstract nature of attraction of soft power make the conversion even harder. Both acceptance of and attraction to soft power resources are linked with the value judgments made by individuals. There are three major challenges concerning this conversion process due to the peculiarities of soft power resources and the constants ascribed to the conversion process.<sup>46</sup>

The first major challenge of soft power evaluation is that, as noted above, its resources are intangible and the results of its implementation are difficult to measure. Another point is that acquiring intended outcomes demands patience as it takes some time for outcomes to emerge. In addition, it is difficult to gauge outcomes precisely since there may be intervening variables in the conversion process. In other words, questions may remain as to how much soft power actually does have an impact on the recipients.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Joseph S. Nye, *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 11.

<sup>45</sup> Ji, "Measuring Soft Power(Section Overview)," 82.

<sup>46</sup> Ji, "Measuring Soft Power(Section Overview)," 81-82.

<sup>47</sup> Kenneth Boulding, "National images and international systems," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 3, no. 2 (1959); Ji, "Measuring Soft Power(Section Overview)," 82.

The second challenge is that, as stated above, there are distinct variables in the conversion process. The effects of soft power, by and large, fluctuate in proportion to its relationship with other variables. Two substantial variables that impact this process are the context and the pattern of the relationship between the soft power applying state and the recipient state. The better this relationship is, the more probable it will be that soft power will hold sway in the recipient country. Amicable relations between the two states pave the way for smoother soft power implementation as well as positive outcomes; in the contrary case, cultivating the yield of soft power in the recipient country would not be possible for the agent. In such a case, distortion and hindrance of the agent's soft power endeavors are highly probable, and this would presumably bring about hostility not only between state administrations but also between two nations.<sup>48</sup>

The third parameter one has to factor in while assessing the outcomes of soft power is that of the compatibility of soft resources - political values, worldview, foreign policy objective, culture - with those of recipient country. Harvesting desired soft power outcomes requires detection and understanding of incompatibility potentially taking place in the recipient state. Otherwise, achieving the intended consequences, viz getting the subject to want what the agent state wants, would be out of the question. Hence, it is important to take this third factor into consideration when evaluating soft power outcomes.<sup>49</sup>

Having soft assets and even implementing them are not enough to achieve desired outcomes without contemplating whether these resources and efforts resonate with the recipient country. At this point, the issue of "listening" comes into play. "Being soft is

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<sup>48</sup> Michele G. Alexander, Shana Levin, and P. J. Henry, "Image Theory, Social Identity, and Social Dominance: Structural Characteristics and Individual Motives Underlying International Images," *Political Psychology* 26, no. 1 (2005), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3792498>; Ji, "Measuring Soft Power(Section Overview)," 82.

<sup>49</sup> Ji, "Measuring Soft Power(Section Overview)," 82-83.

not soft power!” Transformation of soft resources into soft power comprises its application, changes in the mindsets of recipients, and finally soft power production.<sup>50</sup>

The application of soft power may bring about changes in the behavior of the subject in line with the agent’s preferences; yet, these changes would not be long lasting. At first glance, certainly, soft power functions by being genuinely attractive and introducing new thinking patterns to the recipient, but in order for the changes to be habitual, or “common sense”, soft power should be long-standing, which only comes through institutionalization, standard setting, penetrating the host nation’s social rhythms, and so on. There is a distinct link between the aforementioned concepts of coercive and co-optive power, on the one hand, and soft power, on the other. Soft power is not necessarily equal to co-optive power as it may make the recipients feel threatened at times. In this case, soft resources are channeled into the formation of coercive power. On the other hand, if the soft power implementation process leads to feelings of comfort and safety in the recipients, then it is understood that soft resources are transformed into co-optive power.<sup>51</sup>

## **2.2. Putting Soft Power into Operation: Public Diplomacy**

Interaction is a reality in international relations, and this means that no state can turn a deaf ear to the actions of other states and/or the opinions of their publics. This is a must for all state actors seeking to achieve their national and/or vital interests. States ought to sustain their independence within the international order, where they take account of interests and ideas of other actors.<sup>52</sup> In this context, one can easily see the importance of public diplomacy in state initiatives. Putting public diplomacy into practice brings about interaction with other states through their general publics who, in liberal democracies, have some sort of say in state policies.

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<sup>50</sup> Lee, "A theory of soft power and Korea's soft power strategy," 210.

<sup>51</sup> Lee, "A theory of soft power and Korea's soft power strategy," 211.

<sup>52</sup> A. Watson, *Diplomacy: The Dialogue Between States* (Routledge, 1982), 1.  
<https://books.google.com.tr/books?id=yTgIVQu5ilwC>.

In the broadest sense of the concept, public diplomacy encapsulates the exertion of international communications such as international broadcasting and student exchange programs. The aim here is to control and design the international environment so that the policies followed resonate with foreign publics.<sup>53</sup> Public diplomacy is basically an instrument of soft power and can be defined as “direct communication with foreign peoples, with the aim of affecting their thinking, and ultimately, that of their governments.”<sup>54</sup> Another description comes from Sharp, who defines public diplomacy as “the process by which direct relations are pursued with a country’s people to advance the interests and extend the values of those being represented.”<sup>55</sup> Differing from the past, today public diplomacy is not only used by state actors, but also by nonstate actors. Also, unlike the past, today’s public diplomacy draws greatly on communication technologies for the exchange of ideas, making it continuously in contact with foreign publics.<sup>56</sup>

Public diplomacy has not been granted the attention it deserves in academia. The major difference between conventional diplomacy and public diplomacy is that whereas the former is conducted by state representatives, the latter is put into practice by non-official groups, organizations, and individuals, as well as states. The extant public

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<sup>53</sup>B Gregory, "Public diplomacy: sunrise of an academic field," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 666, no. 1 (2008); Efe Sevin, "Understanding soft power through public diplomacy in contrasting polities," in *The Routledge Handbook of Soft Power*, ed. N. Chitty, Ji, L., Rawnsley, G., & Hayden, C. (2017), 66.

<sup>54</sup> E.C. Nisbet, Nisbet, M.C., Scheufele, D.A., & Shanahan, J.E., "Public Diplomacy, Television News, and Muslim Opinion," *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 9, no. 2 (2004); Umut Yukarıoğlu, "A Critical Approach to Soft Power," *Journal of Bitlis Eren University Institute of Social Sciences* 6, no. 2 (2017): 494.

<sup>55</sup> Paul Sharp, "Revolutionary States, Outlaw Regimes and the Techniques of Public Diplomacy," in *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, ed. Jan Melissen (2005), 106.

<sup>56</sup> Eytan Gilboa, "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (2008): 56-57, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207312142>, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0002716207312142>.



diplomacy literature emphasizes three principal elements of public diplomacy, namely, its primary purpose, substantial agents, and key functions.<sup>57</sup>

According to Malone, the primary purpose of public diplomacy is to affect steps taken by foreign governments by influencing its nationals. This is because states engage in public diplomacy activities to promote their foreign policies, cultural values and political actions abroad. Secondly, they aspire to form stable and reliable relations with different stakeholders of public diplomacy.<sup>58</sup> Yet the reality dictates that even if effectual policies may bring about positive outcomes, no matter how much effort is put into it, occasionally these efforts may not yield the desired or expected results owing to the fact that the recipient country may have a negative image of the public diplomacy of the applying country. Hence, attaining effective results is not necessarily the result of public diplomacy.<sup>59</sup>

The power measured as resources and power measured in the sense of behavioral outcomes are two different things. If we see the rationale in the interplay between resources and outcomes, it is likely that we will come up with a more vivid image of how soft power and public diplomacy interact. Public diplomacy operates in conjunction with a country's soft power, which largely draws on a country's culture and other intangible assets. But what if the recipient does not find this culture appealing? In this case, it is unlikely that the applying country will be able to yield an attraction out of its soft power through public diplomacy.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Jan Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice," in *The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice: Soft Power in International Relations*, ed. Jan Melissen (Palgrave macmillan, 2005), 5.

<sup>58</sup> Anh Dung Bui, "Public Diplomacy in ASEAN and the Cases of Vietnam and Singapore" (Master's thesis, University of Leeds, 2011). as cited in Sonia Hukil, "Is Public Diplomacy Inherently a Manifestation of 'Soft Power'?", *Glendon Journal of International Studies* (2015): 10.

<sup>59</sup> Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice," 14.

<sup>60</sup> Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," 95.

Another issue to take into account is that public diplomacy will not generate soft power if public diplomacy applying state pursue selfish and narrow-minded foreign policy.<sup>61</sup> However, one should not fall trap of thinking that public diplomacy serves solely soft power objectives. As a matter of fact, states may resort to public diplomacy to realize their hard power interests like alliance management, military interventions, and conflict prevention. Public diplomacy is a significant tool for the successful implementation of soft power.<sup>62</sup>

The rationale behind imparting a country's foreign policy objectives directly to foreign publics is of utmost importance in that public diplomacy implementing states may be able to pressurize foreign governments to agree with the terms best by influencing target publics. This type of public diplomacy initiative has two substantial underpinnings. First, governments, on occasion, may favor an agreement in its international relations, but would not be able to execute it because of domestic pressures. There are two options for this government. The first one is to ignore the feedbacks of its own citizens and risk losing the next election. The second is to forget about the agreement. Public diplomacy comes into play at this moment. That is, it allows the applying state to conclude the agreement favoring its interests by persuading foreign public of recipient state before it becomes too late to take action due to domestic pressures exerted by its own public.<sup>63</sup>

Over the course of time, definitions of public diplomacy have undergone changes. Unlike in previous descriptions, today public diplomacy is generally seen as a strategy to manipulate the target country's public opinion in order to create an environment amenable to boosting the image and aspirations of the applying state. The conventional conception of public diplomacy, which sees it as a mechanism to get the target country

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<sup>61</sup> Hukil, "Is Public Diplomacy Inherently a Manifestation of 'Soft Power'?", 18.

<sup>62</sup> Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice," 14.

<sup>63</sup> Colleen Graffy, "Public Diplomacy: A Practitioner's Perspective," *American Behavioral Scientist* 52, no. 5 (2009): 791, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764208326524>, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0002764208326524>.

to act in line with the interests of the public diplomacy of the applying country by influencing the former's general public, has gradually faded into disuse.<sup>64</sup> For public diplomacy to be able to convert resources into the soft power of attraction, it must be grounded upon national credibility. As Nye states, "The effectiveness of public diplomacy is measured by minds changed (as shown in interviews or polls), not dollars spent or slick production packages."<sup>65</sup> Public diplomacy rests -inter alia- on communication strategies. Governments allocate a significant amount of time to explain their actions, both in domestic politics and foreign politics, to the media. They create simple themes with communication strategies. This somehow appears to be a political or advertising campaign aimed at introducing certain main themes or particular government policies.<sup>66</sup>

### **2.2.1. The Emergence of the Concept of Public Diplomacy and Its Historical Evolution**

Public diplomacy is not a novel phenomenon; indeed, it has ancient roots. Jan Melissen points out that ancient Rome, Greece, Byzantium and Renaissance Italy were all civilizations familiar with the practice of winning the hearts and minds of foreign peoples. To illustrate his arguments, he maintains that reaching out to foreign peoples in foreign lands was done by the representatives of states. Image formation and identity creation were seen important in this regard.<sup>67</sup>

The emergence of public diplomacy as a fully-fledged concept dates back to the mid-1960s in the USA. Dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and former diplomat Edmund Gullion contrived the term "Public Diplomacy" at the height of the Cold War, when the USA was combatting the USSR

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<sup>64</sup> Gyorgy Szondi, "Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding: Conceptual Similarities and Differences," *Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael'* (2008): 7.

<sup>65</sup> Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," 101.

<sup>66</sup> Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," 102.

<sup>67</sup> Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice."; Hukil, "Is Public Diplomacy Inherently a Manifestation of 'Soft Power'?", 5.

to extend and promote its own way of life across the world. Hence, it is no surprise that the term appeared in an American school, by a former civil servant who had established the Edward R. Murrow Center of Public Diplomacy. At the time, though, this term was sharply criticized by some as it was seen as extending and entrenching the Cold War paradigm, but the prevailing atmosphere in the international system at the time meant these criticisms were muted until the collapse of the USSR in the early 1990s.<sup>68</sup>

The prime reason behind the appearance of the term in American parlance was that policy circles in the USA needed a solid concept connotating a positive image rather than the tainted term “propaganda”. Public diplomacy was seen as more inclusive and sounded more able to encompass the agenda of the United States Information Agency (USIA). That is why its adoption and use in daily communication took route and also why crafting policy papers did not take so long. The USIA was granted the right to control public diplomacy processes and outreach programs. Gradually, the USIA was restructured in such a way that all the activity in the information domain fell under its remit. After its demise in 1999, the Edward E. Murrow Center at Tufts University became the Murrow Center for International Information and Communications.<sup>69</sup>

One of the main concerns for public diplomacy applying states is foreign publics’ perception of their foreign policies. Public diplomacy goes beyond traditional diplomacy in that the former caters to the creation of public opinion in favor of the applying state.<sup>70</sup> The end of the Cold War brought about enhanced interest in public diplomacy because the rise of democracies and international organizations and regimes, together with the liberation of the media, resulted in new approaches to power, keeping governments’ freedom of action in check. This has come to mean that

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<sup>68</sup> Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice," 6.

<sup>69</sup> Nicholas J. Cull, "Public Diplomacy Before Gullion: The Evolution of a Phrase," in *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, ed. Nicholas J. Cull Nancy Snow (Routledge, 2020), 21.

<sup>70</sup> Cull, "Public Diplomacy Before Gullion: The Evolution of a Phrase," 21.

being in touch with foreign publics as well as foreign governments is not an option but a necessity.<sup>71</sup>

Public diplomacy has numerous functions. It facilitates foreign publics' becoming acquainted with the public diplomacy applying country by getting them to reevaluate their prior conceptions. Public diplomacy also creates an opportunity for the applying state to improve perceptions of itself in foreign countries. Moreover, it paves the way for an influx of foreign investment and makes the applying state's government take measures that are in the interests of the wider country rather than those of a narrow elite. Furthermore, public diplomacy ensures the consolidation of existing foreign ties. All these factors make it imperative that governments take account of feedback from the publics of the recipient states.<sup>72</sup>

Despite some similarities in character between propaganda and public diplomacy, given the differing nature of propaganda, it is not much the same thing as public diplomacy. According to David Welch, propaganda is

the deliberate attempt to influence the opinions of an audience through the transmission of ideas and values for the specific purpose, consciously designed to serve the interest of the propagandists and their political masters, either directly or indirectly.<sup>73</sup>

Understanding public diplomacy through the lens of propaganda is a mistake since the latter is often devoid of credibility and impartiality,<sup>74</sup> two key pillars of public diplomacy. For this reason, the liberal concept of communication is a must. The significant point here is that this communication should be a two-way avenue; the applying country must listen carefully to the governments and publics of the target

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<sup>71</sup> Conrad Smewing Catherine Stead, and Mark Leonard, *Public Diplomacy*, ed. The Foreign Policy Centre (London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2002), 2-3.

<sup>72</sup> Catherine Stead, *Public Diplomacy*, 9-10.

<sup>73</sup> Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice," 16.

<sup>74</sup> Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," 101.

country(ies). Doing so ensures credibility and impartiality and paves the way for more long-lasting and solid relationships between applying and recipient state(s).<sup>75</sup>

One can take seven lessons from the history of public diplomacy. First of all, listening is the core pillar of public diplomacy. Secondly, the relevance between public diplomacy and policy should be maintained. Third, using diplomacy should not be used for domestic issues. Fourth, it is important to ensure credibility in public diplomacy endeavors. Fifth, it is not necessarily correct that one's own voice is the most credible in public diplomacy. Sixth, public diplomacy is not always about you. Seventh, everyone, somehow, can play a role in public diplomacy. These lessons are all fruits of revisiting conventional public diplomacy practices, and from them a new conceptualization is borne out: "new public diplomacy". This reinterpretation of public diplomacy has generated fresh possibilities for advancement in the field thanks to the efforts of Nicholas J. Cull. This understanding, in a sense, constitutes an approach which reconciles the extant public diplomacy literature and practices with fresh ideas.<sup>76</sup>

As stated, and clarified above, public diplomacy is an instrument catering to a state's foreign policy objectives in order to secure desired policy outcomes. Yet, even if public diplomacy is a political tool, by and large, states prefer to conduct activities within the framework of this instrument in a subtle manner so as not to arouse suspicions among the target foreign audiences about the applicant state's intentions. In this regard, public diplomacy requires states to designate a clever strategy to circumvent unintended consequences. As Melissen indicates, there is a likelihood that the link between the public diplomacy and the foreign policy objectives of a state may harm its communication with the foreign public, thereby endangering its efficaciousness.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice," 16-17.

<sup>76</sup> Nicholas J. Cull, "Public diplomacy: Seven lessons for its future from its past," *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 6 (2010): 11.

<sup>77</sup> Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice," 15.

### 2.2.2. Diverse Approaches to Public Diplomacy

There are distinct aspects of public diplomacy. The first aspect concerns daily communication. Governments in democracies do not hesitate to explain their policies to the domestic audience, for which they must carefully consider what to say and how they will relay their policies to the media. However, the same interest may not be shown in laying bare these policies to foreign media. Leonard voices concerns that neglecting foreign audiences and the foreign media is a grave mistake for governments when they are explaining their policies and the context.<sup>78</sup> Public diplomacy appertains to interaction strategies with foreign audiences. The strategies for dealing with foreign publics have to be discerned from those produced for engaging with the home population. This situates, in effect, public diplomacy and public relations in separate places. Having said that, such an approach is actually conflictual with interconnected facts in the international arena. Indeed, the messages a state extends to its own public may have repercussions in its international relations, and vice-versa. Thus, a state's fashion of approaching its own citizens can be incorporated into the scope of its public diplomacy domain.<sup>79</sup>

The second aspect of public diplomacy is strategic communication. This involves developing symbolic events and communications so that particular government policies and/or central themes are underscored. Its last one is about forming long-lasting relations with key actors in society. This is realized by means of a bundle of public diplomacy practices such as scholarships, exchanges, training programs, seminars, conferences, and media interaction. This dimension of public diplomacy is, indeed, most effective as it is not just selling messages, but is truly transformation of individuals.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, 108.

<sup>79</sup> Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice," 13-14.

<sup>80</sup> Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, 108,09,10.

The former ambassador of the USA to Syria and Algeria, Christopher Ross, listed seven core elements that constitute public diplomacy, available to any actor of public diplomacy. They are: to preserve national interest by clarifying policies; to broadcast the country's cultural virtues; to put credible messages across with a full sense of accuracy; to tailor messages accordingly by considering the target audience; to profit by mass media and new technologies while diffusing messages; to form partnerships and alliances with non-state entities in international politics with the aim of buttressing the credibility of messages. These principles can be realized to the extent to which they are integrated into public diplomacy rationale and practice.<sup>81</sup>

Professor of International Communication and Director of the Center for International Communication at Bar-Ilan University, Eytan Gilboa, defines public diplomacy as “direct communication with foreign people, with the aim of affecting their thinking, and ultimately that of their government.”<sup>82</sup> Along the same lines, Paul Sharp, a specialist in public diplomacy at the University of Minnesota, defines public diplomacy as “the process by which direct relations with people in a country are pursued to advance the interests and extend values of those being represented.” Yet, because of the assumption that nation states are the sole actors able to engage in public diplomacy practices by carrying out such communication activities, both of these descriptions fail to determine the full range of actors that are part of these process.<sup>83</sup>

In the view of Manheim, public diplomacy is “efforts by the government of one nation to influence public or elite opinion in a second nation for the purpose of turning the foreign policy of the target nation to advantage.” However, this definition overlooks

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<sup>81</sup> Christopher Ross, "Pillars of Public Diplomacy: Grappling with International Public Opinion" (2003); Adriana Grigorescu, "Public Diplomacy," *Valahian Journal of Economic Studies* 5, no. 1 (2014): 106, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/info:doi/>.

<sup>82</sup> Gilboa, "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy," 57.

<sup>83</sup> Gilboa, "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy," 57.



importance of interaction and the full chain of events the process goes through.<sup>84</sup> Another definition comes from Turch, who describes public diplomacy as “a government’s process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation’s ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and current policies.” This definition is perhaps more accurate and comprehensive than the others, although it fails to make mention of the desired foreign policy outcomes of governments from their foreign policy activities.<sup>85</sup>

Definitions of public diplomacy have been updated in line with developments in IR and communications. Signitzer and Coombs claim that public diplomacy and public relations are similar in that both draw from the same instruments and look to obtain the same goals. According to them, public diplomacy is a way for governments or NGOs to mold public perceptions and stances that directly relevant to another government’s foreign policy decisions. In this definition, contents of public diplomacy involve public relations and non-governmental actors are taken into account. This is quite an elongated definition of public diplomacy. In contrast, others do not put public diplomacy and international public relations in the same equation, saying that the former is a working area of government whereas the latter is the business of firms and corporations.<sup>86</sup>

Hans Turch’s defined public diplomacy as follows:

[Public diplomacy is] a communication process of the government of a country with foreign audiences, trying to explain his ideas and ideals of respective nation, its institutions and its culture as well as national interests and policies... [It is] official government efforts to train abroad

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<sup>84</sup> Hukil, "Is Public Diplomacy Inherently a Manifestation of ‘Soft Power’?," 4-5.

<sup>85</sup> Hukil, "Is Public Diplomacy Inherently a Manifestation of ‘Soft Power’?," 4-5.

<sup>86</sup> Gilboa, "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy," 57-58; Benno H. Signitzer and Timothy Coombs, "Public relations and public diplomacy: Conceptual covergences," *Public Relations Review* 18, no. 2 (1992/06/01/ 1992), [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/0363-8111\(92\)90005-J](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/0363-8111(92)90005-J), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/036381119290005J>; Dennis L.; Agee Phillip H. Wilcox, Warren K.; Ault, *Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics*, Third Edition ed. (HarperCollins, 1992).

communication environment in which US foreign policy is conducted in order to reduce the degree to which misconceptions and errors of perception complicate relations between the U.S. and other nations.<sup>87</sup>

Tuch acknowledges that public diplomacy does not override traditional diplomacy or replace interaction between state representatives or hamper any sort of confidential diplomatic affairs. His point is to emphasize the significance of the novelty brought by public diplomacy, but that we should also be wary of exaggerating and bending the concept.<sup>88</sup> He does not see public diplomacy uniquely preserve of states. Nonstate entities also have their own public diplomacy strategies. To exemplify, international companies create elbow room for themselves to practice public diplomacy so as to realize their social responsibility initiatives. This demonstrates that a sophisticated network atmosphere is much more conducive to accomplished public diplomacy operations.<sup>89</sup>

The point to be emphasized here is not what an international actor articulates, but what it *does*. Hence, arousing attraction through deeds is of the essence here. This comes to mean that compensating for bad policies with public diplomacy is out of the question. Public diplomacy ought to establish links between research and policy making so that the influence of an actor's foreign policy on foreign audiences is ensured. Effective policies pursued in accordance with the feedback received on prior public diplomacy endeavors have to be well coordinated in order to engender soft power.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>Hans N. Tuch, *Communicating with the world : U.S. public diplomacy overseas* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 7; Elena Gurgu and Aristide Cociuban, "THE ROLE OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN FULL PROCESS OF GLOBALIZATION," *Annals of Spiru Haret University Economic Series* 16 (07/07 2016): 127, <https://doi.org/10.26458/16210>.

<sup>88</sup> Tuch, *Communicating with the world : U.S. public diplomacy overseas*, 3; Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice," 12.

<sup>89</sup> Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice," 12.

<sup>90</sup> Nicholas J. Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616 (2008): 36, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25097993>.

### 2.2.3. A Neglected Component: Listening

The paramount characteristic attributed to public diplomacy by the pioneers of the new public diplomacy is that it has to cease to be a monologue. They maintain that public diplomacy has to be performed in a dialogical manner; listening has to be put on the agenda by public diplomats if their efforts are to be rewarded.<sup>91</sup> Public diplomacy is a “two-way street”. That is, it involves listening as well as speaking. Soft power is a process through which a state aims to get others to want what it wants. This process requires seeing the resonance of the messages sent to the recipient so as to adjust its strategies finely. This can be seen as an identifying and better knowing the recipient of public diplomacy endeavors. However, the link between public diplomacy and public opinion is an under-researched field.<sup>92</sup> In the conduct of public diplomacy, exchange of ideas is as significant as disseminating them to the interlocutor. Being cognizant of what is going on in the mind of the other party is crucial for the smooth implementation of public diplomacy. Again, for this very reason becoming acquainted with foreign publics is key.<sup>93</sup>

The best public diplomacy is established on the basis of listening to the other party. Nevertheless, states, more often than not, disregard this reality and prioritize speaking over listening to their counterparts in public diplomacy. This is a mistake as collecting and systematically assessing foreign public opinion lays the groundwork for more effective public diplomacy practice. However, one has to keep in mind that the listening component of public diplomacy has to be a genuine attempt to listen. Listening in public diplomacy practice is worthwhile and fruitful as long as it

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<sup>91</sup> R. Nelson and F. Izadi, "Ethics and Social Issues in Public Diplomacy," in *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, ed. Nicholas J. Cull Nancy Snow (New York: Routledge, 2020), 140-41; Filippou Proedrou and Christos Frangonikolopoulos, "Refocusing Public Diplomacy: The Need for Strategic Discursive Public Diplomacy," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 23, no. 4 (2012/12/01 2012): 734, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2012.736339>, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2012.736339>.

<sup>92</sup> Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, 111.

<sup>93</sup> Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," 103.

contributes to the policy-making process. Otherwise, the entire public diplomacy process would turn out to be in vain.<sup>94</sup>

Public diplomacy ought to rest upon discourse. If - and only if - it is discursive can public diplomacy play a central role in international politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This process involves analyzing the data gathered from foreign publics and, on the basis of that, revising policies if need be. The next stage is synthesis and dissemination. In the course of public diplomacy practice, practitioners should build-up convincing counter arguments against critiques. As a matter of fact, one cannot talk about a single public diplomacy conduct model due to diversified national cultures and values. Consequently, discursive processes must be tailored in with due regard to the interlocutor on the basis of its cultural values plus behavioral motifs.<sup>95</sup>

Another significant point scholars keep in mind is that putting emphasis on listening as an internal characteristic of public diplomacy differentiates it from propaganda and other types of intelligence collection activities. That is why the listening component in public diplomacy practice is vital. Moreover, listening points out the dialogic feature of public diplomacy. Most scholarship agrees on these observations, but the literature still lacks an accurate definition of the concept of listening and how it should be conducted.<sup>96</sup>

#### **2.2.4. The New Public Diplomacy**

Public diplomacy is no longer at the margins of international politics. Over time, public diplomacy, which transcends propaganda, has become an integral tool of standard diplomacy. Nevertheless, many foreign ministries make scant use of public diplomacy

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<sup>94</sup> Cull, "Public diplomacy: Seven lessons for its future from its past," 13-14.

<sup>95</sup> Proedrou and Frangonikolopoulos, "Refocusing Public Diplomacy: The Need for Strategic Discursive Public Diplomacy," 736-37.

<sup>96</sup> Luigi Di Martino, "The Spectrum of Listening," in *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy* (Routledge, 2020).

as an integral aspect of their daily operations, and some diplomatic services build-up their public diplomacy engagement on the old propaganda-making tradition. Yet again, the shortcomings of public diplomacy do not obstruct its adherence to mainstream diplomatic activity. In addition, the practice of public diplomacy has already become a quintessential element in everyday diplomatic affairs.<sup>97</sup>

The patterns of public diplomacy have been subject to change lately for it not only takes account of interstate relations, but gradually pays heed to the fluctuating configurations of transnational relations. For this reason, diplomatic representatives also pay regard to the host country's civil society activities. Over the course of time, the common man has become more visible in diplomatic practice, not least in consular relations. This demonstrates that diplomacy has evolved to a new phase. Hence, conceding that public diplomacy is a modern form of propaganda, or accepting it as a new trend in performing international relations, is misleading.<sup>98</sup>

The term "new public diplomacy" has come on the agenda recently due to new ideas about and in public diplomacy practice. These shifts include end of the Cold War; the emergence of new actors in international politics (e.g., NGOs, MNCs, intergovernmental organizations, and so forth), the advent of new communication technologies, the blurring of the line between domestic and international news, and the appearance of new concepts elucidating public diplomacy practices. Public diplomacy has been recalibrated in such a way that it is not a process the state actor directly communicates with foreign publics, but is a process where one public contacts directly with another public. Nevertheless, although new public diplomacy may be conceived as a new practice enriched with new concepts and conventions, it does not relinquish its deep-seated ties with the old public diplomacy. The new public diplomacy is one step ahead of conventional public diplomacy in that it has coalesced the riches of traditional public diplomacy with new dynamics in the international environment.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice," 11.

<sup>98</sup> Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice," 23-24.

<sup>99</sup> Cull, "Public diplomacy: Seven lessons for its future from its past," 15.

Certainly, there have been novel changes in global politics which have induced the emergence of new issues, questions, and institutions in international regimes. First of all, new international actors other than states have come to the fore in international relations. Moreover, information transmission mechanisms have become more sophisticated thanks to advancements in science and technology. The lines between the international and domestic spheres have blurred. Public diplomacy has begun to be perceived in parallel with marketing and communications rather than with propaganda.<sup>100</sup>

Another development paving the way for the emergence of new public diplomacy is the advent of new communication channels which have been created between the applying state and the recipient state. That is, instead of an actor-to-people type of communication pattern, a new one – people-to-people communication - has become more prominent. In this equation, the applying entity, the state, has begun to undertake the role of a “facilitator”. Thereby, public diplomacy is no longer a top-to-bottom communication approach; instead, its main duty has been to become form of a communication.<sup>101</sup>

Cull identified major pillars of public diplomacy for effectively furthering the national interest, unveiled in a report drew up for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of Great Britain.<sup>102</sup> First and foremost, the listening element of public diplomacy is attached the utmost importance in Cull’s report. Listening is literally a precondition for successful public diplomacy venture. The listening process involves collecting data from the recipients, analyzing it in an effort to untangle complexities and penetrate the

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<sup>100</sup> Elena Gurgu and Aristide Cociuban, "New public diplomacy and its effects on international level," *Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People* 5 (09/30 2016): 48, <https://doi.org/10.26458/jedep.v5i3.506>.

<sup>101</sup> Gurgu and Cociuban, "New public diplomacy and its effects on international level," 48.

<sup>102</sup> Gurgu and Cociuban, "New public diplomacy and its effects on international level," 51.

perceptions and sentiments of the target group. This provides the agent with opportunities to rethink its policies and readjust them to meet needs of the recipient.<sup>103</sup>

The second pillar is advocacy. Advocacy in public diplomacy is an agent's action to remold the international arena through international communication to actively advance a specific policy conception. This operation involves relations between embassy and media. Advocacy can be spotted in almost all fields of public diplomacy.<sup>104</sup> This term amounts to controlling the international environment by enshrining an element of foreign policy, an idea, or the general interest of the target public. This process is realized by embassies disseminating ideas to local populations. As an aspect of almost every area of public diplomacy, this item is a deep-rooted one, especially in American public diplomacy.<sup>105</sup>

The third pillar of public diplomacy practice is cultural diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy can be conducted in two substantial ways. For one thing, it is done to enhance the diffusion of the cultural peculiarities of a country abroad. The other way is to propagate the cultural resources of a country. This pillar is often linked with French public diplomacy as that country has built an extensive educational network to teach the French language and culture abroad. This is because France has never renounced the dream of Francophonie as a means of maintaining French prestige and influence worldwide.<sup>106</sup> Cultural diplomacy is an attempt by an actor to readjust the international environment such that its cultural features and resources are transmitted overseas. To put it more conventionally, cultural diplomacy is a policy process of transferring examples of a country's cultural values, be they material or immaterial. Two countries attaching great importance to cultural diplomacy have been France and Britain. France, as noted, has allocated significant funds to its education activities in order to maintain

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<sup>103</sup> Gurgu and Cociuban, "New public diplomacy and its effects on international level," 51.

<sup>104</sup> Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories."

<sup>105</sup> Gurgu and Cociuban, "New public diplomacy and its effects on international level," 52.

<sup>106</sup> Gurgu and Cociuban, "New public diplomacy and its effects on international level," 52.

the dominance of French in line with the philosophy of *Francophonie*. It is important to note that negative connotations adhered to advocacy roles and open diplomatic goals have caused cultural diplomacy institutions to keep away from the concept of cultural diplomacy and public diplomacy as well. To illustrate this, the British Council identifies itself not as an agent of cultural diplomacy, but as a body of cultural relations, notwithstanding the fact that its engagement falls within the scope of cultural diplomacy.<sup>107</sup>

The fourth substantial element of public diplomacy in Cull's work is exchange diplomacy, which concerns sending one's own citizens abroad, and in exchange hosting foreigners for acculturation and/or studying. This is, as the phrase goes, a win-win case whereby both parties can learn from each other. In fact, this pillar aims to create a solid basis for cultural diplomacy, but it can also be of use in designating peculiar policies like military or trade cooperation.<sup>108</sup> Compared to other dimensions of public diplomacy, this is the area where mutuality is felt most. Both parties gain from this process as they are able to learn from each other and mutually transform themselves. As such the main pillar of exchange diplomacy is cultural work, but it can be used for specific motives such as development and military cooperation with an ally.<sup>109</sup>

New public diplomacy pays attention to global issues such as environmental degradation, economic crisis, and humanitarian intervention. Thereby, new public diplomacy strategies are supposed to reorient attention to new and all-encompassing themes. That is to say, topics concerning identity, culture, and education are not sufficient to address foreign publics, but the aforementioned serious issues facing the

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<sup>107</sup> Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories," 33.

<sup>108</sup> Gurgu and Cociuban, "New public diplomacy and its effects on international level," 52.

<sup>109</sup> Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories," 33.



planet are of interest to the global population and so ought to be taken into consideration.<sup>110</sup>

The key factor for a political entity to wield public diplomacy effectively is following sound and appealing policies; otherwise, it is very likely that superficial public diplomacy discourses would not reap favorable outcomes. Yet, there is an inextricable relationship between public diplomacy and following favorable policies. That is, in order for a state to project its soft power, it is imperative that policies are linked with the public diplomacy agenda so that they are publicized in the international environment. In contrary cases, there is a risk that policies might not resonate with an international audience and just be conducted for the sake of impressing the domestic audience. This comes to mean that so-called public diplomacy activities follow the function of propaganda at home.<sup>111</sup>

The main aim of public diplomacy should be to explain how a state's policies and ventures contribute to global society in general. However, one has to keep in mind that public diplomacy is not all about marketing policies, values, culture, and national image. Public diplomacy, in its new form, has to be crafted and implemented by taking account of the foreign public's sensitivities. Put differently, new public diplomacy rises on the shoulders of both applying and recipient state. In the absence of one party, it is not possible to speak of public diplomacy in its fullest sense. New public diplomacy has to rest on the principle of reciprocal advantage, whereby both domestic public and foreign publics benefit.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Proedrou and Frangonikolopoulos, "Refocusing Public Diplomacy: The Need for Strategic Discursive Public Diplomacy," 733.

<sup>111</sup> Cull, "Public diplomacy: Seven lessons for its future from its past," 13.

<sup>112</sup> Proedrou and Frangonikolopoulos, "Refocusing Public Diplomacy: The Need for Strategic Discursive Public Diplomacy," 733-34.

## CHAPTER 3

### TURKEY'S RELATIONS WITH WEST AFRICA

#### 3.1. Diversification of Turkish Foreign Policy

The Republic of Turkey was established on the back of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire by reformist elites led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk following World War I. The major motivation for the founding elites was to create a state predicated upon the Western model with particular reference to two indispensable tenets, namely, sovereignty and independence.<sup>113</sup> Afterwards, Atatürk's renowned saying - "Peace at home, peace in the world" - put its stamp on the foreign policy of the newly founded Republic. After a period of isolation in international relations, Turkey clung to the Western block following the end of the World War II due to what it perceived as aggression and threats from the Soviet Union. Broadly speaking, Turkey has maintained its west-oriented foreign policies. Turkey's integration efforts with the Western world have been in line with Atatürk's views; he constantly underscored the vitality of being a member of what he saw as the "civilized world". Within the purview of this philosophy, Turkey has prioritized its relations with the Western world. Over the course of this epoch, foreign policy makers have disregarded other regions in the world.<sup>114</sup>

The collapse of the Soviet Union was a milestone in Turkey's attempts to diversify its foreign policy. This event brought about both opportunities and uncertainties that have

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<sup>113</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Mehmet Özkan and Birol Akgün, "Turkey's opening to Africa," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 48, no. 4 (2010): 527, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40961827>.

<sup>114</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's opening to Africa," 527.

been influential in Turkey's international relations.<sup>115</sup> The dissolution of the Soviet Union coincided with social and political fault lines which began to reshape Turkish foreign policy.<sup>116</sup> Both Turkish society and politics have undergone profound changes in the face of domestic and foreign forces in recent decades. Turkey decided to diversify its foreign policy and to pursue a multidimensional approach instead of its usual Western-oriented, monolithic foreign policy of the Cold War era. In that vein, Turkey has turned its face to neighboring countries and improved its relations with them. Furthermore, membership in international organizations other than the ones falling under the umbrella of the Western world have come onto the agenda in Turkish foreign policy. Among them, the Arab League, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Gulf Cooperation Organization, and a number of Africa-based organizations can be cited. Turkey has reconstructed its international image and recalibrated its foreign policy trajectory by identifying itself with its peculiar geopolitical position, economic prosperity and cultural richness.<sup>117</sup>

The Justice and Development Party's (AKP) rise to power has contributed to the diversification efforts in Turkish foreign policy. During the AKP administration, many reforms of Turkish political and economic life have been seen since 2002. Most of these reforms have been the outcomes of Turkey's bid to join the EU, which has required Turkey to take new initiatives in the domestic sphere to meet EU membership criteria. Additionally, in this period Turkey has speeded up its efforts to remold its foreign policy in an attempt to expand it.<sup>118</sup> The influences of Turgut Özal and İsmail Cem on the diversification of Turkish foreign policy should not be overlooked, but the AKP era was the first time that Turkish foreign policy was readjusted so as to make

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<sup>115</sup> Ahmet Sözen, "Changing fundamental principles in Turkish foreign policy making" (2006 Annual Conference of the International Studies Association, San Diego, USA, 2006).

<sup>116</sup> Bülent Aras, *Turkey and Greater Middle East* (İstanbul: TASAM yayinlari, 2004).

<sup>117</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's opening to Africa," 526-27.

<sup>118</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's opening to Africa," 528; Philip Robins, "Turkish Foreign Policy since 2002: Between a 'Post-Islamist' Government and a Kemalist State," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 83, no. 2 (2007), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4541699>.

more multifaceted. Indeed, Turkish foreign policy has taken on a new theoretical matrix – “Strategic Depth” - which has been developed by the then chief foreign policy adviser Ahmet Davutoglu.<sup>119</sup>

Davutoglu asserts that Turkey cannot and should not be confined to a single and monolithic identity as it has diverse identities which make it a center power. Turkey can profit from its unique character insofar as it makes its foreign policy multidimensional. With this in mind, Davutoglu proposed five principles for a successful foreign policy. According to him, first and foremost, Turkish foreign policy must hinge on and observe the balance between democracy and security at home and soft power in the international sphere. Secondly, Turkey ought to pursue a “zero problem with neighbors” foreign policy to conserve security and stability in the region. Thirdly, Turkey has no choice but to follow a proactive foreign policy in its region and beyond. As a fourth principle, Davutoglu goes on to say that Turkey’s foreign policy has to be multifaceted and must be constructive in its relations with other global actors. Finally, in order for Turkey to attain its objective of practicing a multidimensional foreign policy, it should conduct “rhythmic diplomacy” in its international relations. As a matter of course, Turkey has diversified its foreign policy and formed multifaceted and dynamic relations with other state and non-state actors, including – indeed especially - with the African continent.<sup>120</sup> For members of the AKP, Turkey has to diversify its foreign policy and form relations with Africa in order to keep track of efforts at being a global power in international relations. Africa, drawing global interest and attention, has to be closely watched in the formation of Turkish foreign policy.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's opening to Africa," 528.

<sup>120</sup> Ahmet Davutoglu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu* (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001); Ahmet Davutoglu, "Turkey's foreign policy vision: an assessment of 2007," *Insight Turkey* 10, no. 1 (2008).

<sup>121</sup> Ali Babacan, "Speech to the Group of African Countries," news release, 24 July, 2008.

In AKP era, Turkey has become more agile and determined in its approach to the continent. Evidently, Davutoglu's *zero problem with neighbors* approach has had a significant influence on Turkey's strategy towards, and relations with, Africa. In this regard, Turkey drew on its multi-cultural and -ethnic identity in order to secure its place as a pivotal power in its international relations with neighboring countries. In the minds of foreign policy makers, Africa is a key region for Turkey's efforts to create a zone of stability and of economic integration. Turkey's aspirations on the continent can be seen in its involvement as a mediator in conflict zones in Africa.<sup>122</sup>

From 2002, a newly configured Turkish foreign policy was built. The codes of this new foreign policy involve international aid plans. As Turkey's visibility in the international realm increases, the country has become more likely to conduct and/or contribute to humanitarian relief programs through its official development agency Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA). Other Turkish civil society organizations have been taking the lead in Turkey's efforts to extend its aid to "distant and troubled lands." But why has Turkey endeavored to reach and help Africa in such a short time? What are Turkey's motives?<sup>123</sup>

The substantial answer to this is that Turkey is striving to integrate into the global political arena. Turkey began to perceive global geography differently than it did in the past. Distant regions like Africa and Asia were no longer remote areas that can be easily disregarded in the policy-making process. Instead, these remote lands are seen as opportunities for Turkey to project its power in the international arena. In line with the newly espoused philosophy of Turkish foreign policy, Turkey is not a country that is destined to be a bridge, but one that is meant to be at the center of international and regional affairs by developing its relations with Asia and Africa alongside

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<sup>122</sup> Karen Kaya and Jason Warner, *Turkey and Africa: A Rising Military Partnership?*, Foreign Military Studies Office (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 2013), 4.

<sup>123</sup> Mehmet Ozkan, "Does "Rising Power" Mean "Rising Donor"? Turkey's Development Aid in Africa," *Africa Review* 5 (12/01 2013): 141, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09744053.2013.855358>.

consolidating its stance at international organizations to contribute to global and regional peace.<sup>124</sup>

Turkey also has sought to reposition itself in terms of the transforming global economy. Indeed, Turkey's opening to the global economy started in the 1980s during the Turgut Özal period. But it was not until AKP's rise to power that Turkey systematically began to commit itself to economic growth by keeping track of developments in the global economy. Turkey's engagements in diverse areas of the globe cannot be seen as a dimension of its relations with the West. Instead, the objective here is to built-up institutionalized and firm ties with Asia and Africa so as to upgrade its global role. Thus, foreign policy practice and conception in the AKP era have been more panoramic and deeper compared with the Turgut Özal period.<sup>125</sup>

It is truly important to point out that Turkey's intensifying relations with Africa and Asia are neither an alternative to, nor in contradiction with, its relations with the West. In an international order that is not bipolar, Turkey is inclined to be active in international and regional organizations and to make its presence in international affairs be felt. That is why it tailors its foreign policy scheme accordingly.<sup>126</sup>

### **3.2. Synopsis of Turkish-African Relations**

Relations between Turkey and Africa can be divided into three periods. The first covers the Ottoman Empire era until 1923. This period witnessed significant bonds between the empire and the continent of Africa. The second cycle of relations lasted from the establishment of the Republic of Turkey until 1998, when the Africa Opening Plan hit the agenda in Turkish foreign policy. This period was unfruitful in terms of relations with the continent. In the final period, from 1998 to date, interest in and

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<sup>124</sup> Ozkan, "Does "Rising Power" Mean "Rising Donor"? Turkey's Development Aid in Africa," 141.

<sup>125</sup> Mehmet Ozkan, "Turkey's 'New' Engagements in Africa and Asia: Scope, Content and Implications," *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs* 16, no. 3 (01/01 2011).

<sup>126</sup> Ozkan, "Turkey's 'New' Engagements in Africa and Asia: Scope, Content and Implications."

relations with Africa have been revived.<sup>127</sup> In Turhan's categorization, the first period of Turkish African relations is qualified as the "early period", the second epoch is referred to as the "period of stagnation", and the third period, lasting to the present day as "revival period".<sup>128</sup>

Africa has long been taken in two distinct categories as North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. Turkey has been more acquainted with the former, with some North African territories once coming under Ottoman rule. The latter area, on the other hand, has long been perceived as a distant and unknown region. Therefore, it took Turkey a long time to engage with sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>129</sup>

There are some grounds for Turkey to downshift its relations with and interest in African countries following the end of the Ottoman Empire. First of all, Republican elites were preoccupied with forming a sound, secure and stable country that would be a candidate for membership of the civilized world. Under these domestic circumstances, it was perhaps natural that other areas of the globe were neglected as Turkey turned its face westwards in line with Atatürk's aspirations for modernization.<sup>130</sup> To put it in a different way, low level of Turkish-African relations resulted partly from Turkey's attempts to build a Republican identity and from issues in domestic politics over the course of 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s.<sup>131</sup>

It follows that Africa was not on the agenda for Turkish foreign policy at all. Besides, at the time, African nations were consumed by struggles against colonial powers.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's opening to Africa," 530.

<sup>128</sup> Yunus Turhan, "Türkiye Sahra Altı Afrika İlişkileri, Ekonomik Ortaklıktan Stratejik Ortaklığa," in *21. Yüzyılda Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu Ülkeleri ve Büyük Güçlerle İlişkileri*, ed. İsmail Akdoğan Rıdvan Kalaycı (Orion Kitabevi, 2021), 464.

<sup>129</sup> Kaya and Warner, *Turkey and Africa: A Rising Military Partnership?*, 3.

<sup>130</sup> Eyryce Tepeciklioğlu, "Turkey's African engagement: A critical analysis," 48.

<sup>131</sup> Turhan, "Türkiye Sahra Altı Afrika İlişkileri, Ekonomik Ortaklıktan Stratejik Ortaklığa," 468.

<sup>132</sup> Eyryce Tepeciklioğlu, "Turkey's African engagement: A critical analysis," 48.

Yet, even after African countries gained their independence, and after Turkey's opening of a number of diplomatic missions on the continent, the notion of deepening ties with the continent got a lukewarm response from Turkey as there was still indifference to the region among Turkish bureaucrats. This trajectory of Turkish foreign policy was not only impacted by political dynamics, but also economic meltdown due to low growth rates and trade imbalances in Turkey during the 1950s resulted in neglect of Africa.<sup>133</sup> The 1960s could be regarded as a watershed in Turkish-African relations in the sense that Turkish foreign policy makers came to agree that the country's long-standing pro-western foreign policy track had hampered initiatives at diversifying foreign policy. Following the adoption of a new paradigm for foreign policy, relations with Africa gained momentum.<sup>134</sup>

The first regular contact between Turkey and African countries in 1960s coincided with the outbreak of the Cyprus issue and Turkey's admonishment by the US president Lydon Johnson, who set out America's attitude to Turkey's attempt to intervene in the island. Johnson said that, in the event of a Turkish intervention, the USA would have no obligation to protect its ally from any contingent threat or assault by the USSR. This was a turning point in the diversification of Turkish foreign policy, and Turkey almost immediately sent ambassadors to several African countries in an attempt to persuade them to support Turkey's cause. Turkey also pressured the Non-Aligned Movement to take a position which shared Turkey's interests. From then onwards, Turkey began attaching importance to its relations with newly independent African countries.<sup>135</sup> However, this revival of interest in Africa was short lived. The opening was not well received by many African leaders as they were afraid that probable divisions on the Cyprus issue might set an example for minorities in their own countries. As the Cyprus issue fell off the agenda, Africa was again sidelined in

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<sup>133</sup> Eyrice Tepeciklioğlu, "Turkey's African engagement: A critical analysis," 48.

<sup>134</sup> Eyrice Tepeciklioğlu, "Turkey's African engagement: A critical analysis," 48-49.

<sup>135</sup> Alessandro Paolo, "Turkish schools in Africa within the framework of Turkey's relations with the continent " (Africa's changing educational landscape in a multipolar world African Studies Centre Leiden, 2013).



Turkish foreign policy.<sup>136</sup> That is to say, because of Africa's secondary position in Turkish foreign policy, its relations with African countries, although stable, were not seen as important in Ankara.<sup>137</sup>

The end of the Cold War heralded a new era in international relations as the world entered a restoration and reorganization process. Turkey sought to strengthen its position and increase its visibility in global politics. The power vacuum in areas once under the US or the USSR galvanized Turkey into taking action in these regions, namely formerly Soviet-influenced areas in Asia and the Middle East. Turkey's endeavors to secure a say in the newly founded Turkic republics came to naught as these republics took a dim view of Turkey's "big brother" presence in the region. At the same time, Turkey's candidacy process in the EU turned out to be slow and unproductive. For these reasons, Turkish policy makers decided to alternate Turkey's foreign policy repertoire, culminating in the proclamation of a "Africa Action Plan" in the late 1990s.<sup>138</sup> The implementation of this plan, however, was interrupted just after it became official policy in 1998 due to short-lived and inefficient coalition governments and the absence of sound and coherent foreign policy strategy.<sup>139</sup> The plan was not revived until the ascension of the AKP to power in 2002.<sup>140</sup>

The Opening up Policy to Africa was officially enunciated during the coalition government period in October 1998. First and foremost, the plan proposed the enlargement of Turkey's diplomatic representations on the continent. The plan also applauded high level visits between Turkey and a number of African countries alongside the formation of consultation mechanisms and interparliamentary relations.

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<sup>136</sup> Turhan, "Türkiye Sahra Altı Afrika İlişkileri, Ekonomik Ortaklıktan Stratejik Ortaklığa," 471.

<sup>137</sup> Elem Eyryce Tepeciklioğlu, *Türk Dış Politikasında Afrika: Temel Dinamikler, Fırsatlar ve Engeller*, 1 ed. (Ankara: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, 2019), 26.

<sup>138</sup> Eyryce Tepeciklioğlu, "Turkey's African engagement: A critical analysis," 49.

<sup>139</sup> "Global Insider: Turkey-Africa Relations," updated June 10 2011, 2011, accessed 9 August, 2022, <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/global-insider-turkey-africa-relations/>.

<sup>140</sup> Eyryce Tepeciklioğlu, "Turkey's African engagement: A critical analysis," 49.

Increases in business visits, the formation of joint business councils, alternating contact channels for trade relations and collaboration, and cooperation in the military sector were also encouraged within scope of the plan. Further issue areas discussed in the plan include the training of African security forces by Turkish military staff and increasing Turkish contributions to the UN peacekeeping missions on the continent. Furthermore, many promising objectives under the heading of cultural relations were added to the plan, such as cooperation between research organizations, increasing inter-university agreements, increasing educational funds available to African students, and increasing the number of places for African students on educational and cultural platforms in Turkey.<sup>141</sup>

AKP has not decentered its African policy by separating the continent into North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. Instead, policies towards the continent are broader and more inclusionary. In effect, the AKP administration has viewed the continent as a land of opportunity for political and economic cooperation.<sup>142</sup> The notion of Africa as two separate regions - North and Sub-Saharan - has gradually withered away. Negative perceptions of sub-Saharan Africa have been transformed into a view of the region as a composition of potential political and military partners. Accordingly, both state and civil society organizations have undertaken collaboration activities with African countries. In this regard, both business institutions and charitable organizations have been playing leading roles.<sup>143</sup>

Turkey does not have a colonial past in Africa. Moreover, it also benefits from its Muslim identity in its relations with some countries. Turkey exerts significant effort to maintain this positive image in its opening to Africa by taking great care not to be perceived as a neo-colonial power seeking to exploit the continent. By the same token, during the administration of the AKP, Turkey has assertively stressed the egalitarian

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<sup>141</sup> Paolo, "Short Turkish schools in Africa within the framework of Turkey's relations with the continent".

<sup>142</sup> Kaya and Warner, *Turkey and Africa: A Rising Military Partnership?*, 4.

<sup>143</sup> Ozkan, "Turkey's 'New' Engagements in Africa and Asia: Scope, Content and Implications," 124.

nature of its relations with the continent on the basis of a discourse of “equal partnership”.<sup>144</sup> A discourse of “strategic partnership” with the continent and efforts in this regard have been made through joint efforts by government and civil society organizations. The AKP government, which came to power in 2002, has changed the traditional foreign policy paradigm by orienting itself towards non-Western countries and regions of the world.<sup>145</sup>

Turkey’s endeavors to strike a chord with African countries by accentuating their similarities – as defiant resisters of colonial oppression - is called the “natural partner role” discourse. This approach facilitates Turkey’s rapprochement with the continent whilst putting constant stress on its dissimilarities with the former colonizers. Therefore, Turkey reaps the benefits of its “anti-colonial discourse”.<sup>146</sup> There is also a more complicated layer in the natural partner discourse. The primal function of this discourse is to bring two parties closer to each other. Yet another layer in it is that the benefactor-protector role of Turkey should determine the level of intimacy in this close relationship. In this train of thought, Turkey is not only as a player strong enough to safeguard the rights of Africans, but also a player whom Africans will want to protect them.<sup>147</sup>

In a word, Turkey is viewed with less suspicion than Western actors that have a long history there, including many wrongdoings. At the same time, Turkey's gradually deepening relations with the continent have not harmed its relations with the West as its initiatives in Africa can be easily contextualized and clarified as typical of the post-Western global order.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Alexis Habiyaemye and T. Oğuzlu, "Engagement with Africa: Making Sense of Turkey's Approach in the Context of Growing East-West Rivalry," *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 11 (03/01 2014): 81.

<sup>145</sup> Turhan, "Türkiye Sahra Altı Afrika İlişkileri, Ekonomik Ortaklıktan Stratejik Ortaklığa," 472-73.

<sup>146</sup> Patrick Sykes, "Roles and Reality: Turkish and Brazilian Engagement with Africa," *Bilge Strateji* 7 (08/09 2015): 139.

<sup>147</sup> Sykes, "Roles and Reality: Turkish and Brazilian Engagement with Africa," 140.

<sup>148</sup> Habiyaemye and Oğuzlu, "Engagement with Africa: Making Sense of Turkey's Approach in the Context of Growing East-West Rivalry," 79-80.

The principal method of Turkish politicians when situating Turkey in the context of African politics rests on this discourse of colonialism. Davutoglu has continually reiterated how Turkey is dissimilar to “others” that have had colonial past in Africa, and has often referred to the Western colonial powers.<sup>149</sup> Likewise, Abdullah Gül, during his presidency, often stressed Turkey’s sincerity and openness to Africa in his speeches. As he put it once:

We are different from the Europeans. We do not take raw materials like they do. Instead, we bring high technology and invest here.... There is no colonialism in our past, thus we are free to be in Africa.... We have never sought only our interest.<sup>150</sup>

Turkey’s opening up to Africa has resonated warmly in African policy circles, clearing the way for a healthy diplomatic and business partnership between the two parties. Turkey declared 2005 the “Year of Africa” and gained observer status in the AU. Three years later, in 2008, Turkey’s observer country status was upgraded to “strategic partner” following the AU summit held in Addis Ababa in 2008. After a short while, Turkey arranged the first Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit in Istanbul on August 18-21, 2008. The summit ended with the adoption of “The Istanbul Declaration on Africa-Turkey Partnership: Solidarity and Partnership for a Common Future” and the “Framework of Cooperation for Africa-Turkey Partnership.” These two official documents expounded on a new era of partnership and prioritized certain issue areas.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Ali Bilgic and Daniela Nascimento, "Policy Brief Turkey's new focus on Africa: causes and challenges," *NOREF Policy Brief* (09/01 2014): 2; Sykes, "Roles and Reality: Turkish and Brazilian Engagement with Africa," 138.

<sup>150</sup> Gökhan Bacik and Isa Afacan, "Turkey Discovers Sub-Saharan Africa: The Critical Role of Agents in the Construction of Turkish Foreign-Policy Discourse," *Turkish Studies* 14, no. 3 (2013/09/01 2013): 490-91, 89, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2013.832040>, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2013.832040>; Sykes, "Roles and Reality: Turkish and Brazilian Engagement with Africa," 138.

<sup>151</sup> Habiyaremye and Oğuzlu, "Engagement with Africa: Making Sense of Turkey's Approach in the Context of Growing East-West Rivalry," 80.

The second Turkey-African Partnership summit was organized in Malabo, capital of Equatorial Guinea, in November 2014. Representatives from 30 African countries and seven African heads of state attended the summit. The subject matter was titled “A new model of partnership for the strengthening of sustainable development and integration”, heralding a new page in cooperation between Turkey and Africa with the joint implementation plan for 2015-2019.<sup>152</sup> With this plan, Turkey and the AU agreed on the development of economic, political, and social relations in a reciprocal manner. Health, communication, tourism, peace and security issues were also given special importance. These summits were arranged with the efforts of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the AU to consolidate relations. The maintenance of a strategic partnership and cooperative relations between Turkey and Africa on the basis of stability and regularity was emphasized at the summits. The participation of the head of the Africa Commission indicated a strong desire for improvement in and consolidation of relations with Turkey.<sup>153</sup>

One might be curious about Turkey’s motivation for developing its relations with African countries. There are several things to factor in here. First, enlargement of Turkish foreign policy areas and forging alliances in order to diversify its foreign policy are significant drivers behind Turkey’s rising interest on the continent. As second motivation is finding new trade partners and markets to sell its goods. Thirdly, African countries are seen as highly credible actors to establish relations with as a means of Turkey taking on a greater role in global politics.<sup>154</sup> Another driving force of Turkey’s opening to Africa is to promote the country’s image worldwide. Turkish policy makers are of the opinion that Turkey has a moral obligation to alleviate the

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<sup>152</sup> Neba Ridley Ngwa, "Turkish-African Relations: An Institutional Approach of Turkish Foreign Policy Towards Africa," *Uluslararası İlişkiler ve Diplomasi* 2 (2020), <https://doi.org/https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/uid/issue/52747/613977>, <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/uid/issue/52747/613977>; Abdurrahim Siradag, "The Making of the New Turkish Foreign and Security Policy towards Africa: The Rationale, Roots and Dynamics," *Africa Insight* 43, no. 1 (2013); Ngwa, "Turkish-African Relations: An Institutional Approach of Turkish Foreign Policy Towards Africa."

<sup>153</sup> Ebru OĞURLU, "1998-2018 Arası Dönemde Türkiye'nin Afrika Deneyimi: Fikirten Eyleme Bir Dönüşüm," *Avrasya Etüdleri* 54, no. 2 (2018).

<sup>154</sup> Eyrice Tepeciklioğlu, "Turkey's African engagement: A critical analysis," 48.

suffering of Africans from famine, malnutrition, ill-governance and other ailments. For instance, the efforts of Turkey in Somalia to bring the humanitarian catastrophe there to the global agenda is highly significant in this regard.<sup>155</sup>

In addition to a “benevolent-protector role”, there is one more undertaking of Turkey – to be a representative of African countries in the international arena. For instance, when Turkey has sought the support of African countries to become a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC), Turkey pledged to give regard to the rights and expectations of African countries. Turkey used the discourse of representation as a bargaining chip to generate the support of numerous African countries to become a member of the UNSC. The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs usually brings up Turkey’s determination to be a “voice of Africa”. Another occasion when Turkey manifested clearly its support for Africa in the international realm was at the Second Turkey-Africa Partnership Summit in Equatorial Guinea. In the summit, Turkey’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, stated that “one of our objectives is to address the concerns of the African countries at the G20 platform. We will also exert every effort to strengthen the dialogue and interaction between the G-20 and Africa.”<sup>156</sup>

A new period of Turkey-Africa relations after 2014 has been significant in the sense of both consolidating other successes and of putting relations on a more systemic course. An apparent indication of this is that while African leaders were suspicious of Turkey’s enthusiasm for resetting its ties with African countries at the summit held in İstanbul in 2008, after a while comprehensive issue areas for cooperation and collaboration in areas of mutual interest became topical. Notedly, a significant increase in public institutions’ activities in African countries can be observed from 2014. This new state of affairs is revealed at the discursive level by the constant stress on

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<sup>155</sup> Habiyaremye and Oğuzlu, "Engagement with Africa: Making Sense of Turkey's Approach in the Context of Growing East-West Rivalry," 81.

<sup>156</sup> Mevlut Cavusoglu, *Speech at the Second Turkey-Africa Partnership Summit* (2014); Sykes, "Roles and Reality: Turkish and Brazilian Engagement with Africa."

partnership. Again, intense attempts to eradicate the authority of Fethullahist Terrorist Organization (FETO) from the continent have been influential in the acceleration of relations with Africa.<sup>157</sup>

Turkey's soft power on the continent rests on its trade, institutional, and diplomatic relations. Cultural and religious initiatives, alongside humanitarian aid programs, are also ingredients. Additionally, Turkey's hosting of conferences under the umbrella of diverse international organizations and its strong voice at the UN are of interest to many African countries and have proved to be effective in its soft power building. Besides, Ankara's organizing of trade summits and meetings with businesspeople are also central to soft power composition on the continent.<sup>158</sup>

### **3.3. The Africa Opening Plan**

The opening up to Africa policy document espoused by the Turkish government in 1998 was part and parcel of Turkey's aim to diversify its foreign policy. The plan was masterminded by then foreign minister İsmail Cem, partly as a reaction to the European Union's (EU) failure to give Turkey the status of candidacy for membership in 1997. The opening up to Africa policy document comprised projections for creating and consolidating political, economic, and cultural ties with African states. This document recommended new strategies and actions in terms of how to build better and stronger relations with Africa.<sup>159</sup>

The action plan was written up with the participation of the various ministries and civil society organizations. Turkish ambassadors and honorary consuls of African countries were also present during the deliberations. In the discussions, salient areas were pointed out and a plethora of new measures were recommended. The meeting and

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<sup>157</sup> Eyrice Tepeciklioğlu, *Türk Dış Politikasında Afrika: Temel Dinamikler, Fırsatlar ve Engeller*, 54.

<sup>158</sup> Mahamat K. Dodo, "Understanding new Turkey-Africa Relations: Rationale and Challenges," *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences* 7, no. 4 (2016): 623.

<sup>159</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's opening to Africa," 532.

concluding opening document set the stage for the inauguration of new embassies on the continent. The accreditation of already existing embassies was also expanded in order to increase Turkey's diplomatic presence in Africa.<sup>160</sup>

Political measures detailed in the plan can be counted as high-level visits to and from African countries, networking with African countries in international platforms, conducting reciprocal inter-parliamentary visits, and contributing to the UN technical and humanitarian assistance programs. Economic measures have involved creating frameworks for economic cooperation between Turkey and Africa, preservation of investment and forging special technical assistance funds allocated for Africa. Also, Turkey's membership of the African Development Bank and the African Export and Import Bank, alongside the establishment of a Joint Business Council, were encouraged.<sup>161</sup>

Another set of measures has been undertaken in the field of cultural relations, with a particular focus on education, including the creation of cultural agreements and cooperation between universities and reciprocal scholarships. Probable projects for allowing each party to get to know better each other are also elaborated in this document. The action plan also has agenda items in the field of defense, such as military training cooperation, Turkey's contribution to UN peacekeeping operations in the continent, and joint military drills.<sup>162</sup>

In the 2000s, Turkey did not hesitate to improve relations with African countries even if its foreign policy agenda was preoccupied with the EU membership process. Foreign policy makers were of the opinion that the more Turkey ameliorates its relations with diverse actors in the international arena, the more would be likelihood that it might gain the upper hand over European countries. In this regard, its new Africa

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<sup>160</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's opening to Africa," 533.

<sup>161</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's opening to Africa," 533.

<sup>162</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's opening to Africa," 533.



policy was of utmost significant for Turkish foreign policy.<sup>163</sup> Furthermore, not having good relations with the EU in the second half of the 2000s, tensions in bilateral relations with the USA after that country's occupation of Iraq, contributed to rise in value of Africa during AKP administration. Another significant reason for Turkey's inclination to improve its relations with the continent was a gradual transformation of the conservative bourgeoisie, which emerged during 1980s, to become a more developed actor.<sup>164</sup>

The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has put forward some principles expounding on closer relations with African countries. These principles rest on a number of precepts: the formation of close-knit political relations with the continent by means of bilateral high-level visits; defending the rights of Africans in international platforms; establishing deeper trade relations and increasing investment in continent in order to enhance welfare; intensifying relief building in African countries; contributing to peaceful settlement of disputes; and participating actively in peace-keeping missions on the continent.<sup>165</sup>

The Second Turkish-African Congress, arranged by the Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists (TUSKON), was held in December, 2006. The issues at stake were assessment of trade opportunities, development aid and economic cooperation between Turkey and African countries. Approximately 550 businesspeople and senior bureaucrats from 30 African countries attended the summit, while around 1300 businesspeople from Turkey participated. Both parties, namely Turkey's business circles and those of Africa, were thus well represented. The summit

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<sup>163</sup> Habiyaemye and Oğuzlu, "Engagement with Africa: Making Sense of Turkey's Approach in the Context of Growing East-West Rivalry," 79.

<sup>164</sup> Eyryce Tepeciklioğlu, *Türk Dış Politikasında Afrika: Temel Dinamikler, Fırsatlar ve Engeller*, 29.

<sup>165</sup> Therence Njuafac and Filiz Katman, "Main Dynamics of Turkish-African Relations in the 21 st Century," *European Researcher* 112, no. 11 (01/01 2016): 558, <https://doi.org/10.13187/er.2016.112.556>.

was a facilitative environment where bargains and deals were made between Turkish and African businessmen.<sup>166</sup>

The Third International Turkish-African Congress was organized by the Turkish Asian Center for Strategic Studies (TACSS) and held in İstanbul in December, 2007. The establishment of a TIKA coordination office in Addis Ababa was agreed on at the summit. Subsequent to opening this office, TIKA also opened two new offices, one in Sudan and one in Senegal. A significant number of government officials and more than 60 ministers, along with 500 businesspeople from 40 African countries, participated. Notables from the political and economic milieu in Africa met about 1500 Turkish entrepreneurs.<sup>167</sup>

The Fourth International Turkish-African Congress was organized by TUSKON in Istanbul in 2008. More than 3500 businesspeople from 45 African countries and Turkey attended the summit, where the attraction of African markets for Turkey were underlined by the Turkish Foreign Trade Undersecretariat. The convention was qualified as a significant opportunity for the development of cultural and economic affairs between Turkey and Africa by then foreign minister Ali Babacan. He also reiterated that Turkey had been putting great effort into developing an agenda of partnership with Africa. Turkey's efforts and positive image on the continent reverberated throughout a number of African countries. Turkey was admitted to African Development Bank (AFDB), paving the way for the emergence of new Turkish enterprises doing business in the continent in the form of an array of economic projects.<sup>168</sup> Due to these multilateral meetings platforms, trade volumes between Turkey and African countries have grown significantly, while economic relations have strengthened alongside political ties.

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<sup>166</sup> Kieran E. Uchehara, "Continuity and Change in Turkish Foreign Policy Toward Africa," *Gazi Akademik Bakış* 2, no. 3 (2008): 54.

<sup>167</sup> Uchehara, "Continuity and Change in Turkish Foreign Policy Toward Africa," 54-55.

<sup>168</sup> Uchehara, "Continuity and Change in Turkish Foreign Policy Toward Africa," 55-56.

From the African point of view what made Turkey's opening to Africa desirable is that the legacy of colonialism has made African countries opener to partnerships with countries that do not have a colonial history, a situation which means that Turkey has been seen as an important actor with whom relations can be formed on a basis of equality, potentially leading to less dependency on the West.<sup>169</sup> Another issue is that after securing their independence, African countries failed to preserve their political and economic wellbeing and stability. They may see Turkey as a country that has safeguarded its political and economic integrity and independence from European domination and thus view it as a model on which they could build their own relations with Europe.<sup>170</sup>

Formation of security alliances with non-Western actors has begun to be seen as an engaging option for African countries. In this context, Turkey has been perceived as an experienced power in the defense realm by some African countries. As a matter of fact, being a strategic partner at NATO, fighting against internal and external terror threats, and developing its own defense industry make Turkey a likely candidate for African countries to forge a partnership with. In this point of view, African countries aspire to make use of Turkey's experience in the fields of defense and security. Indeed, Turkey's eagerness to share its experience with African countries has had an impact on this aspiration of African countries.<sup>171</sup>

Turkey's presence in Africa is multifaceted in respect to the deployment and working of diverse intrastate entities that are affiliated with Turkey. These entities are NGOs, the business and academic communities and structures alongside government institutions. It is important to acknowledge that Turkey's humanitarian and development initiatives in Africa contribute to the entrenchment of its security

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<sup>169</sup> Abdurrahim Sıradağ, "Turkey-Africa alliance: Evolving patterns in security relations," *African Security Review* 27, no. 3-4 (2018/10/02 2018): 318-19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2018.1550429>, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2018.1550429>.

<sup>170</sup> Sıradağ, "Turkey-Africa alliance: Evolving patterns in security relations," 319.

<sup>171</sup> Sıradağ, "Turkey-Africa alliance: Evolving patterns in security relations," 319.

relations with countries there. It follows that Turkey has gradually increased its exports to the continent in the shape of defense and security goods. Turkey's military presence on the continent enhances its position in the fields of defense and security in global politics. Its role as a security provider also provides it with more experience in international relations.<sup>172</sup>

In parallel with putting the Africa Strategy Document into practice, Turkey's relations with African countries gained momentum and meaning. As a result, the 1998 Action Plan for the Opening Policy towards Africa was consolidated in 2013 by the Africa Partnership Policy. The main aims of this partnership policy are to share Turkey's experiences and social, political, and cultural resources with African governments and peoples. Another point that Turkey underscores is to identify African solutions to Africa's problems in order to ensure lasting peace and stability as well as economic and social development on the continent, taking into account the principles of equal partnership and mutual gain.<sup>173</sup>

Today, the main tenets of Turkey-Africa relations are summarized by Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs as follows:

- 1- Establishing close political relations with the continent through high-level bilateral visits, and protecting the rights and interests of African countries in bilateral and multilateral deliberations.
- 2- Helping Africa overcome economic hardship by investing in the continent, doing business with Africans and providing humanitarian aid.
- 3- Using diplomatic instruments to ensure and encourage a peaceful resolution of disputes in the continent.
- 4- Contributing to peace operations around the continent.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Sıradağ, "Turkey-Africa alliance: Evolving patterns in security relations," 320.

<sup>173</sup> OĞURLU, "1998-2018 Arası Dönemde Türkiye'nin Afrika Deneyimi: Fikirten Eyleme Bir Dönüşüm."

<sup>174</sup> "TÜRKİYE-AFRİKA İLİŞKİLERİ," accessed 10 August, 2022, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-afrika-iliskileri.tr.mfa>.

### **3.3.1. Political Relations After the Opening Plan**

Some developments in Turkey's international relations have also contributed to Turkey's efforts to diversify its foreign policy. For instance, Turkey's long-standing bid for EU membership and its disagreements with the USA following the Iraq War have given rise to more importance being attached to neglected regions, including Africa. In addition to its economic motives and policy of diversifying its foreign policy, there has been one more drive behind Turkey's opening to Africa: advancing its power projection, both regionally and internationally. Turkey's aspiration to be an active global player in and have a voice in international organizations have led to Turkey arguing for reformation of global governance institutions like the UN.<sup>175</sup>

Initially, the development of relations with Africa was not high on the agenda for Turkish officials. Not until the AKP's accession to power, in 2002, was the emphasis on the Africa Opening Plan intensified. Even at the beginning of AKP period, the government's initiation to expand the horizons of Turkish foreign policy was met with criticism by opposition parties on the grounds that they thought Turkey already had priority areas in its foreign policy and focusing on secondary regions was a waste of diplomatic energy. Another obstacle facing the AKP government when it was considering how to enlarge Turkish foreign policy to previously ignored geographies was how to deal with important issues such as Cyprus, the Iraq War and Turkey-EU relations.<sup>176</sup>

#### **3.3.1.1. High-level Visits**

Some notable high-level official visits have been:

Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan went to Nigeria in 1998. Turkish foreign minister of the time Abdullah Gül visited Algeria in 2001. In September 2000, a

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<sup>175</sup> Eyrice Tepeciklioğlu, "Turkey's African engagement: A critical analysis," 50.

<sup>176</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's opening to Africa," 533.

delegation of Turkish businesspeople led by state minister Hasan Gemici traveled to the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Gambia. Again, Turkish president Ahmet Necdet Sezer visited Tunisia in March 2003. Then Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited South Africa on 1 March 2005. In the same month of that year, he went to Ethiopia. On 28-30 March 2005, Erdogan visited Tunisia. In 2005, an official visit to Morocco was made by the then Turkish premier. Afterwards, as a response to Erdogan's visit to his country, South Africa's deputy president paid a three-day official visit to Turkey.<sup>177</sup> It is worthwhile noting that Recep Tayyip Erdogan has visited the continent about 40 times in both a presidential and a prime ministerial capacity since 2005.<sup>178</sup>

The first presidential visit to sub-Saharan Africa took place in 2009, when President Abdullah Gül visited to Kenya and Tanzania. Subsequent to these visits, he also went to Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo. (The 10<sup>th</sup> Turkish president, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, had visited South Africa to attend the UN Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, but this was not a bilateral occasion and can thus not be counted as the first visit to sub-Saharan Africa<sup>179</sup>).

### **3.3.1.2. Diplomatic Missions**

Turkey is ranked among the countries having the highest number of diplomatic representations on the continent, with 44 embassies after opening of the last one in Guinea-Bissau in July 2022.<sup>180</sup> Turkey has long maintained diligent and determined efforts to increase its visibility in Africa. In this respect, Turkey has opened new

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<sup>177</sup> Uchegara, "Continuity and Change in Turkish Foreign Policy Toward Africa," 52-53.

<sup>178</sup> Daily Sabah with AA, "Turkey's women diplomats shape relations with Africa," 7 March 2022, *Daily Sabah* 2022, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkeys-women-diplomats-shape-relations-with-africa>.

<sup>179</sup> KINSHASA AND YAOUNDE, "Ottoman dreaming: The Turks have new ambitions for trade and influence in Africa," *The Economist* (2010). <https://www.economist.com/europe/2010/03/25/ottoman-dreaming>.

<sup>180</sup> "Afrika'da hedefe son 5," *Yeni Şafak*, 2022, accessed 10 January, 2023, <https://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/afrikada-hedefe-son-5-3837377>.

diplomatic missions around the continent, such as in Cote d'Ivoire and Tanzania in 2009. In 2010, the number of Turkish embassies in Africa again increased after the opening of new ones in Angola, Cameroon, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali and Uganda. In 2011, the Gambia, Mauritania, Mozambique, South Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe all witnessed the opening of Turkish diplomatic representations. Burkina Faso, Gabon, Namibia and Niger became the countries where Turkish diplomatic missions opened in 2012. Chad, Guinea, Djibouti and Eritrea joined the list in 2013.<sup>181</sup>

### **3.3.1.3. Cooperation in Their International Relations and Military**

Turkey's anticipations from the summit of 2008 were economic as well as political and stretched beyond the short term. One of the short-term expectations was to secure the votes of the African block to get non-permanent membership on the UNSC. This expectation was realized as Turkey got a seat on the council after garnering the votes of 151 countries in total.<sup>182</sup> As a long-term expectation from the summit, collaboration with African countries in international platforms and exchanges of ideas with African countries on regional and global matters can be cited. With the construction of long-term cooperation in mind, continuation and traditionalization of these summits has been decided upon.<sup>183</sup> Turkey's support by African countries has brought about expectations from African countries in the sense that they began to see Turkey as a power with a strong interest in African affairs.<sup>184</sup>

Furthermore, Turkey-Africa relations have deepened so much so that they have begun to encompass defense and security areas. Turkey's first and the biggest overseas military base was opened in Somalia in 2017. Besides, cooperation agreements with

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<sup>181</sup> David Shinn, *Turkey's engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa: Shifting alliances and strategic diversification* (The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2015), 6.

<sup>182</sup> Birol Akgün, "Türkiye'nin Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi Üyeliği: amaç, süreç ve beklentiler," *SAM Research Paper* (1 July 2009); Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's opening to Africa," 536.

<sup>183</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's opening to Africa," 536.

<sup>184</sup> Njuafac and Katman, "Main Dynamics of Turkish-African Relations in the 21 st Century," 560.

African countries on security, military training and defense have been made with Djibouti, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, the Central African Republic, Somalia and Sudan. Military agreements were made with Libya's National Unity Government in 2019, adding geopolitical and geostrategic perspectives to Turkey's relations with the continent.<sup>185</sup>

Playing a significant role on the continent in the domains of defense and security, Turkey seeks to consolidate its military presence by means of two methods. First, it has been making bilateral military deals with leading countries of the region to establish new markets for its defense products and to import replacement parts. Second, Turkey aims to promote its presence on the continent vis-à-vis other foreign powers by guaranteeing African security and trade routes by extending its military capabilities to the continent. As a matter of fact, all these activities reflect Turkey's strategy of increasing its presence on the continent, an outcome of a long-term policy.<sup>186</sup>

### **3.3.2. Economic Relations after the Opening Plan**

Turkey has given up founding its relations with Africa on a binary basis. In other words, the North Africa/sub-Saharan Africa dichotomy has ceased to exist in Turkey's relations with the continent. On the contrary, Turkey has embraced a holistic approach in its relations and built its trade affairs with the continent on this viewpoint. This new conception of a one 'united' Africa has provided Turkey with a new and resounding partnership with Africa by allowing it to dissipate economic boundaries and increase investment in the continent.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Turhan, "Türkiye Sahra Altı Afrika İlişkileri, Ekonomik Ortaklıktan Stratejik Ortaklığa," 478.

<sup>186</sup> Turhan, "Türkiye Sahra Altı Afrika İlişkileri, Ekonomik Ortaklıktan Stratejik Ortaklığa," 479.

<sup>187</sup> Chigozie Enwere and Mesut Yilmaz, "Turkey's Strategic Economic Relations with Africa: Trends and Challenges," *Journal of Economics and Political Economy* 1 (12/01 2014): 221-22, <https://doi.org/10.1453/jepe.v1i2.66>.



Turkey has been seeking to extend its commercial activities in Africa along with its diplomatic status there. Aware of the continent's rising economic potential, Turkey has unveiled its interest in enlarging business relations with the continent. These relations involve ensuring lucrative exports and opening to new markets alongside the creation of investment channels for enterprises in Africa.<sup>188</sup>

Turkey emphasizes equality and equity in its relations with African countries to build its soft power in the region in a sustainable manner. Trade volumes between Turkey and the continent have been increasing rapidly due to this strategy and due to Turkey's internal reforms and increasing integration into the global political economy, a transformation which has seen Turkey enhance its competitiveness vis-a-vis its international trade partners. Developments in the global political economy forced successive Turkish governments rethink its policies on the newly surfacing financial system and consider fashioning its foreign policy towards Africa accordingly.<sup>189</sup>

As for the interest of Africa in ameliorating its relations with Turkey, economic and human development concerns take the lead. African governments believe that inclusion of Turkey in continent's economic affairs would result in an Africa competing better against traditional trading partners such as China, the US, the UK, and France.<sup>190</sup>

International actors in Africa can be categorized into one of two groups: traditional powers and newly emerging powers. Traditional actors have dominated the political sphere and security agenda on the continent whereas newly emerging ones like China, India, Brazil and Russia have been more active in the economic sphere. China, from the second group, prioritizes improving the infra-structure of African states. India is after securing a win-win positions in its trade relations with countries of the continent. Brazil and Russia, on the other hand, mostly concentrate on reinvigorating their old

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<sup>188</sup> Mehmet Ozkan, "Turkey's Rising Role in Africa," *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 9 (11/01 2010).

<sup>189</sup> Ozkan, "Turkey's Rising Role in Africa."

<sup>190</sup> Kaya and Warner, *Turkey and Africa: A Rising Military Partnership?*, 9.

links with regard to energy developments. Turkey may be situated between these two groups of actors in that it is attracted by economic opportunities the continent offers, but is also interested in the political affairs and state building there. In this sense, Turkey's position on the continent is a more alluring one for researchers.<sup>191</sup>

Turkey has been enjoying increasing economic growth since 2002. High growth rates, together with increased FDI, have led to the rise of small and medium size enterprises in Anatolia, known as "Anatolian Tigers". Their efforts have been effectual in upgrading Turkey's social and economic transformation. The economic crisis engulfing the EU in 2009 precipitated the actions of Anatolian tigers to make inroads into the Middle East and Africa. In the same vein, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has taken certain measures to enlarge the working areas and working definitions of its diplomatic personnel abroad. Ambassadors have been commanded to attach the utmost importance and priority to Turkey's trade and economic relations with Africa. In parallel with this motivation, even Turkey's ambassadors have been granted the right to act as "general managers" of Turkish businesses abroad. The objective on the part of ministry is to expand to new markets, enhance credit flows for investment, and encourage the opening of Turkish investments in the countries where Turkey has diplomatic representation, including Africa.<sup>192</sup>

Some examples of Turkey's enhanced economic role in Africa are the accrediting of the Turkish embassy in Abuja, Nigeria, to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 2005, and Turkey's Dar-es-Salaam embassy having been accredited to the East African Community (EAC) since 2010. The mutual promotion and preservation of investment, prohibition of double taxation and conclusion of agreements in different cooperation areas can be counted as part and parcel of the Turkish opening strategy in Africa. Moreover, inviting African officials to Turkey in order to strengthen relations and consolidate cooperation network is significant by the

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<sup>191</sup> Ozkan, "Does "Rising Power" Mean "Rising Donor"? Turkey's Development Aid in Africa," 140.

<sup>192</sup> Njuafac and Katman, "Main Dynamics of Turkish-African Relations in the 21 st Century," 562.

same token. Furthermore, the contributions of civil society to the development of economic relations should not be underestimated as they play a consequential role in the establishment of joint business councils and in facilitating exchanges of businesspeople. Turkey's Foreign Economic Relations Board Turkey has founded business councils in such countries as Algeria, Morocco, Ethiopia, South Africa, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Sudan to boost commercial activities in Africa. Turkey has also intensified its relations with the ADB and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in East Africa.<sup>193</sup>

Another significant non-governmental actor for entrenchment of commercial ties between Turkey and Africa is the Turkish-African Business Association (TABA), which has organized trade and development programs since 2012<sup>194</sup> and served as a catalyzer for communication and investments between the continent and Turkey. Needless to say, this organization operates in close coordination with the Turkish government. Indeed, increasing the role of business organizations in the orientation of foreign affairs has been valued by the government as these organizations may be of use for the government to forge economic cooperation with African states. Moreover, Turkey's prestige in the region has been boosted by acting in unison with private bodies and NGOs. In this context, one should note that Turkey's increasing presence and visibility on the continent in both political and economic terms have turned it into an emerging strategic economic power in and partner of Africa.<sup>195</sup>

Economics initiatives have come to fruition and while Turkey's trade volume with African countries was 2,5 billion USD in 1995, it reached 5,4 billion USD in 2003, 12 billion USD in 2007, and 15,876 billion USD in 2010. According to figures of Turkish Statistical Institute, trade volume between Turkey and Africa reached level of 25,3

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<sup>193</sup> Njuafac and Katman, "Main Dynamics of Turkish-African Relations in the 21 st Century," 563.

<sup>194</sup> Ngwa, "Turkish-African Relations: An Institutional Approach of Turkish Foreign Policy Towards Africa," 29.

<sup>195</sup> Ngwa, "Turkish-African Relations: An Institutional Approach of Turkish Foreign Policy Towards Africa," 30-31.

billion USD in 2020.<sup>196</sup> Again, Turkey has got rid of being simply trapped in North Africa when it comes to trade relations with the continent; instead, it has boosted its trade volume with sub-Saharan Africa. That is, while its trade volume with sub-Saharan Africa was 1,35 billion USD in 2003, it jumped to around 10 billion USD in 2020.<sup>197</sup> Finally, the most significant step taken in terms of economic relations came about when the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement came put into force on 1 January 2021, effectively creating a market for free trade in Africa.

### **3.4. Turkish Public Diplomacy Initiatives in West Africa**

The end of the Cold War has brought about a new thinking pattern for Turkey, with the new world order no longer hindered by the rigidities and formalities of a bipolar world. Turkey has begun to define itself from its sui-generis characteristics in autonomous terms, and put itself in a central place in international relations. This stance rests on its unique geographical position and historical role. It follows that Turkish public diplomacy activities have gained more prominence than ever. Undoubtedly, on the way to strengthening its international image, public diplomacy institutions such as TİKA, KIZILAY (The Turkish Red Crescent), the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, TRT (The Turkish Radio and Television Corporation), and the Yunus Emre Foundation, among others, have played key roles.<sup>198</sup>

Turkish aids extended to Africa are bilateral in nature and Turkish aid workers do not hesitate to operate in risky areas. These two principal features distinguish Turkey from the EU or the USA, and further increase Turkey's visibility and credibility on the continent. Furthermore, unlike other central powers present, Turkey does not pose any

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<sup>196</sup> Turhan, "Türkiye Sahra Altı Afrika İlişkileri, Ekonomik Ortaklıktan Stratejik Ortaklığa."; "Türkiye'nin Afrika politikası: Açılımdan 'nüfuz arayışına'," BBC Türkçe, 2021, accessed 26 October, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-54453903>.

<sup>197</sup> Turhan, "Türkiye Sahra Altı Afrika İlişkileri, Ekonomik Ortaklıktan Stratejik Ortaklığa."

<sup>198</sup> İbrahim Kalin, "Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Turkey," *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs* 16, no. 3 (2011): 20-21.

conditionalities or criteria whatsoever when lending a hand to these countries. This course of action and philosophy has put Turkey in a superior position to its European counterparts.<sup>199</sup> Another significant point that differentiates Turkey from other donor countries to the continent is that Turkey extends aid to African countries on a *bilateral* basis rather than through international institutions. Although Turkey collaborates with these international institutions, it performs a significant part of its aid activities by means of public institutions. In addition to the Turkish government, civil society organizations are also actively engaged with the continent, and their numbers are getting larger.<sup>200</sup>

Aid activities occupy a notable place in Turkish public diplomacy ventures conducted in Africa. In the sense that one of the bases of new Turkish foreign policy is aid, Turkey has been an emerging donor country in Africa. Turkey's aid activities date back to the mid-1980s, but the systematic integration of aid policies into the foreign policy agenda came into being in the early 1990s. In this respect, TIKA's 1992 establishment was a milestone.<sup>201</sup> As relations between Turkey and Africa deepened, the role of TIKA in bilateral relations has become more prominent. The humanitarian activities and projects pursuant to various domains such as health, sanitation, and education taken by TIKA have been an embedded component in Turkey's policies towards the continent.<sup>202</sup> In addition to TIKA, Turkey extends aid to the continent through international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Program (WFP), and the Red Crescent.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Eyrice Tepeciklioğlu, "Turkey's African engagement: A critical analysis," 52-53.

<sup>200</sup> Eyrice Tepeciklioğlu, *Türk Dış Politikasında Afrika: Temel Dinamikler, Fırsatlar ve Engeller*, 86-87.

<sup>201</sup> Mehmet Ozkan, "Does 'rising power' mean 'rising donor'? Turkey's development aid in Africa," *Ortadoğu Analiz* 4, no. 46 (2012): 142.

<sup>202</sup> Ozkan, "Does 'Rising Power' Mean 'Rising Donor'? Turkey's Development Aid in Africa," 143.

<sup>203</sup> Ozkan, "Turkey's Rising Role in Africa," 98-99.

The foundation of TİKA dates back to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The prime objective of the body was to reach out to Turkic republics in Central Asia. After the proclamation of the Africa Opening Plan in 1998, the institution became one of the pillars on which Turkey's outreach efforts have been based, and the body has established a number of headquarters in African countries. The activities of the institution have generally centered on the Muslim countries of West and Central Africa, in addition to Ethiopia and Somalia.<sup>204</sup>

As of October 2021, the Turkish Maarif Foundation has been providing education to around 17,000 students at 175 institutions in 25 African countries.<sup>205</sup> Moreover, data provided by the Turkish Council indicates that over 20,000 African students were studying in Turkey in the 2018-2019 academic year, mostly from Muslim countries.<sup>206</sup>

The Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs is also operational in public diplomacy activities conducted in Africa by means of aid campaigns that are generally concentrated in religious months and festivals. Other operations of the institution, in this context, are arranging summits for convening prominent religious leaders on the continent, offering scholarships to African students studying in Turkey, and constructing or renovating mosques on the continent.<sup>207</sup>

Another key, if perhaps surprising, institution in Turkish public diplomacy conduct is Turkish Airlines (THY). Turkey's flag carrier organizes charter flights to more than 56 destinations in more than 38 African countries. This boosts Turkey's soft power capacity on the continent. Turkish public TV's international face TRT World (which

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<sup>204</sup> Ambassador Tom Wheeler, "Ankara to Africa: Turkey's outreach since 2005," *South African Journal of International Affairs* 18, no. 1 (2011/04/01 2011): 50, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10220461.2011.564426>, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10220461.2011.564426>.

<sup>205</sup> "Türkiye-Afrika dostluğu eğitim, kalkınma ve kültür iş birliğiyle güçleniyor," 2021, accessed 14 August, 2022, <https://turkiyemaarif.org/post/7-turkiyefrika-dostlugu-egitim-kalkinma-ve-kultur-is-birligiyle-gucleniyor-1783?lang=tr>.

<sup>206</sup> Eyrice Tepeciklioğlu, "Turkey's African engagement: A critical analysis," 52.

<sup>207</sup> Eyrice Tepeciklioğlu, "Turkey's African engagement: A critical analysis," 52.

started telecasting in 2015), and Turkey's official news agency - the Anadolu Agency - smoothen public diplomacy initiatives by endowing them with a solid background in international news media. TRT World has begun broadcasting in Swahili and English and French so as to boost its viewership in Africa.<sup>208</sup>

Another influential NGO in Turkey's humanitarian engagement with the continent is the Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH). This institution is effectual in extending assistance to war-torn countries or countries suffering from natural disasters. The first operation of the institution was aid delivery to Somalia in 1996. It now functions in more than 35 African countries. The foremost examples of its activities are building water wells and carrying out cataract-removal operations. Another salient exercise of the organization is the export of domestic animals to some impoverished Muslim countries on the continent for slaughtering in Eid-al-Adha, allowing the citizens of those countries to access essential nutrients from meat.<sup>209</sup> The distinguishing character of the IHH from similar organizations is voiced in the words of its vice president: "The IHH met with people who nobody had gone to, nobody had greeted for centuries from Turkey."<sup>210</sup> The pioneering humanitarian engagements of IHH also facilitated the Africa opening process.<sup>211</sup>

The salient strategy for Turkish public diplomacy in Africa is to be in contact with key individuals. In that vein, many public institutions in Turkey offer scholarship opportunities to African students to study in Turkey. To illustrate the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), a Turkish public institution founded in 2010 to coordinate activities directed to Turks living abroad and international students studying in Turkey, has developed economic, social and cultural relations

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<sup>208</sup> Eyryce Tepeciklioğlu, "Turkey's African engagement: A critical analysis," 52-53.

<sup>209</sup> Shinn, *Turkey's engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa: Shifting alliances and strategic diversification*, 15.

<sup>210</sup> H. Oruc, *Human rights and freedoms, the Humanitarian Aid Foundation (IHH) and its activities*, TASAM (2007), 28.

<sup>211</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's opening to Africa," 541.

with cognate and kin societies, and provided scholarships to African students studying in Turkey. The Turkey-Africa Scholarship program is open to students from all African countries. This scholarship scheme has enhanced Turkish-African relations and facilitated intercultural communication.<sup>212</sup>

Indeed, there has been an unprecedented influx of students from Africa over the last two decades thanks to the efforts of the Turkish government and numerous NGOs. These students are required to learn Turkish to pursue their studies at Turkish universities. This fashion of accepting African students in Turkey has given potentially key future individuals of Africa insights into Turkish culture and Turkey's *modus vivendi*. In fact, some of those students have already acquaintance with Turkish culture and language thanks to their background (graduates of Turkish high schools in Africa) whereas others have no such a qualification and become familiar with Turkish culture and language when they are immersed in Turkish society during their studies.<sup>213</sup>

The dropout rate of these students of Africa origin studying at universities in Turkey is extremely low. Upon graduation, some of them further their career development in Turkey in a wide range of sectors, including academia. On top of that, some of them marry into Turkish families and integrate into Turkish society. Some of them take their spouses to their homeland in Africa whereas others prefer to settle in and start a new life in Turkey. Those turning back to their country-of-origin form bridges between their homeland and Turkey and often promote the Turkish language and culture there as well as demonstrating the quality of education they have received in Turkey by becoming leaders and competent practitioners in their respective fields and by contributing to their country's national development.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Elem Eyrice Tepeciklioğlu, Ali Tepeciklioğlu, and Betül Aydoğan Unal, "Türkiye'nin Sahra-Altı Afrika'da Yürüttüğü Kamu Diplomasisi Faaliyetleri," *Ege Academic Review* 18, no. 4 (October 2018): 612.

<sup>213</sup> Muhammed Bakari, "Turkish - African Sociocultural Relations" (Yükselen Afrika ve Türkiye / Rising Africa and Turkey, 2005).

<sup>214</sup> Bakari, "Short Turkish - African Sociocultural Relations." 357.



At this juncture it is worth taking a glance at a survey done jointly by the Conseil Français des Investisseurs en Afrique (CIAN - a French private employers' federation investing in Africa) and IMMAR Research & Consultancy (a Paris-based think-tank conducting researches on sub-Saharan and North Africa). In the scope of field research aiming to reveal the perceptions of opinion leaders in different sectors in 12 African countries towards foreign powers that have relations with Africa, approximately 2400 interviews were conducted. Of the interviews, eight were in Francophone and four were in Anglophone countries. The survey research, carried out between November 2020 and January 2021, attached importance to including views received from female participants, and of the 200 participants, 30% were women in each of the 11 countries.<sup>215</sup>

According to the research findings of the report, among the 11 countries whose opinions were sought, France came last in the ranking, with 48% of the participants having a positive outlook on that country. In contrast, the country that enjoyed the highest positive views (72%) was Germany. From these 11 countries, Turkey came sixth in the rank with 64% of positive votes of survey participants. Lead of Germany are followed by Canada, China, Japan, and the United States just before Turkey in feedbacks. Hence, it is safe to suggest that Anglophone and far-eastern countries, as well as France's European competitor Germany enjoy highly regarded images in the views of African opinion leaders. According to 64% of the research participants, Turkey was deemed an important soft power implementing country on the continent. Nevertheless, when asked to list the top five foreign countries with the best image in their region, opinion leaders from West Africa did not mention either Turkey or France. This result is probably attributable to the fact that the visibility of Turkey is less than those other five cited countries, namely the USA, Germany, Canada, China, and the UK. Yet this does not necessarily mean that Turkey's standing will not move upward in future.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> "AFRICLEADS 2021: Baromètre CIAN des leaders d'opinion en Afrique, réalisé par IMMAR," CIAN, 2021, accessed 9 November, 2022, [https://www.cian-afrique.org/media/2021/03/barometre\\_Africleads2021\\_defweb.pdf](https://www.cian-afrique.org/media/2021/03/barometre_Africleads2021_defweb.pdf).

<sup>216</sup> Sail, "AFRICLEADS 2021: Baromètre CIAN des leaders d'opinion en Afrique, réalisé par IMMAR."

It is important also to note that despite all these public diplomacy endeavors and Turkey's inroads into Africa over the last two or three decades, the acquaintance of Turkish society with Africans is not at a desirable level. As Hazar highlights, the Turkish public has little knowledge of Africa on the whole. North Africa is perceived as part of the Arab-Muslim world. Indeed, there are also prejudices against Black African countries. Yet, sportspersons coming from Africa to Turkey in recent years have challenged these racist stereotypes and made Africa better known in Turkey. By the same token, being celebrities in their respective countries, transferring these sportspersons to Turkish clubs contributes to public recognition of Turkey in African countries too.<sup>217</sup>

### **3.5. The Cases of Mali and Senegal**

#### **3.5.1. Relations with Mali**

Mali, with its massive land surface of 1,240,000 square kilometers, is the 8<sup>th</sup> largest country in Africa and has a population of about 20 million people. Some 65% of the land is desert located in the north of the country, and 75% of its population live in the south, where the Niger and Senegal rivers pass through. The economy is based on gold mining and agriculture. Particularly, the northern regions have significant gold reserves. One of the least developed countries in the world, the greatest proportion of Mali's population's live on subsistence agriculture and fresh-water fishery. When it comes to religious affiliations, 90% of the population are Muslim.<sup>218</sup>

Relations between Turkey and Mali started to gain momentum after the opening of the Turkish embassy in Bamako in 2010,<sup>219</sup> since when relations have steadily improved thanks to bilateral visits at the presidential and ministerial levels. The first Turkish

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<sup>217</sup> Numan Hazar, *Türkiye Afrika İlişkileri: Türkiye'nin Dost Kıtaya Açılım Stratejisi* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 2016), 229.

<sup>218</sup> "Türkiye ile Mali arasındaki ticari ilişkiler gelişiyor," 2022, accessed 10 August, 2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/ekonomi/turkiye-ile-mali-arasindaki-ticari-iliskiler-gelisiyor/2561561>.

<sup>219</sup> Ekizler, "Türkiye ile Mali arasındaki ticari ilişkiler gelişiyor."

presidential visit to Mali, on 2 March 2018, was a watershed in Turkish-Malian relations. During the visit, eight agreements were concluded between the two countries. As a matter of fact, the first attempts at deepening bilateral relations with Mali go back to 1998, when a delegation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and another from among the presidential officials of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus paid a visit to Bamako in September of that year. Mali's first ambassador in Ankara was posted with a resolution issued by Mali's Council of Ministers on 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2014. Subsequent to holding official talks in Ankara, Ambassador Birahim Soumare presented his letter of credence to then president Abdullah Gül.<sup>220</sup>

Turkey's economic relations with Mali are also on a track of development. At 5 million USD in 2003, bilateral trade volumes between the two countries rose to around 57 million USD by the end of 2019. Turkey's relations with Mali are essentially centered on humanitarian development aid. In this regard, TIKA has performed diverse projects. Another key point is that THY began three weekly charter flights to Bamako in May 2015, marking a turning point in terms of improving bilateral economic and commercial relations. Today, THY has seven weekly flights to the capital of Mali.<sup>221</sup>

According to the current Turkish ambassador in Bamako, Murat Mustafa Onart, the potential of Mali has not yet been discovered. He puts stress on the fact that Malians, having discovered the quality of Turkish products, gravitate towards procuring Turkish goods. Hence the market opportunities Mali offers hold out great promise to Turkey. Mr. Onart commented that Mali imports almost everything and has a nascent industrial structure. Hence, the country is highly tempting for Turkish investors.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> "Türkiye-Mali İlişkileri," TC. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, accessed 9 August, 2022, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-mali-siyasi-iliskileri.tr.mfa>.

<sup>221</sup> "Türkiye-Mali İlişkileri."

<sup>222</sup> Ekizler, "Türkiye ile Mali arasındaki ticari ilişkiler geliyor."

### 3.5.2. Relations with Senegal

Opened two years after the country gained independence from France in 1962, Turkey's embassy in Dakar was one of the first Turkish diplomatic representations in the continent. After Senegal's inauguration of its embassy in Ankara in August 2006, reciprocal representation was ensured and relations between the two parties gained momentum. Particularly, recent years have witnessed an invigoration of bilateral relations.<sup>223</sup>

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and a number of key cabinet members effectuated a West African tour between 28 February 2018 and 2 March 2018, during which Senegal proposed a plan – the “Rising Senegal Plan” - to enhance developments in the fields of economy, transport, infrastructure, industry, education, and agriculture. Steps taken lately have been within the scope of this plan. On that note, large scale infrastructure projects have been undertaken by Turkish companies. Turkish-Senegalese relations have been developing in all spheres, and this trend shows itself in bilateral economic and commercial relations as well. Bilateral trade volumes, standing at 292 million USD in 2019, reflect this tendency.<sup>224</sup>

The latest visit of Erdogan to Senegal was in February 2022, when he paid an official visit upon the invitation of Senegalese president Macky Sall. Erdogan also delivered a speech at the Senegal-Turkey business forum. During the visit, five agreements were signed between the two countries. During his stay, Erdogan also attended the opening ceremony of a stadium constructed by a Turkish firm in Dakar.<sup>225</sup>

The Maarif Foundation is also active in Senegal and numerous schools affiliated with this organizations have been operating in the country. Another prominent organization

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<sup>223</sup> "Türkiye - Senegal İlişkileri," TC. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, accessed 10 August, 2022, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-senegal-siyasi-iliskileri.tr.mfa>.

<sup>224</sup> "Türkiye - Senegal İlişkileri."

<sup>225</sup> "Senegal," 2022, accessed 21 August, 2022, <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/yurt-disi-ziyaretler/355/135767/senegal>.

that makes Turkey's presence felt in the country is the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, opening its first office in April 2007. Furthermore, since 1992, Turkish governments have granted scholarships to Senegalese students coming to study in Turkey.<sup>226</sup>

That Recep Tayyip Erdogan has visited the country in a presidential capacity five times reflects the significance of Senegal for Turkey. Turkey's Europeanized state structure, its Ottoman heritage, and its Islamic identity all enhance Turkey's soft power in Africa, paving the way for a proactive diplomacy to reinforce its political, economic, and diplomatic presence on the continent. Suffice to say that similarities in cultures and politics have contributed to coordination between the two states.<sup>227</sup>

The largest infrastructure projects have been realized by Turkish firms in the last ten years. In addition to infrastructure projects, cultural and educational activities also constitute important aspects of bilateral cooperation. For instance, pursuant to the agreement made by the two states' foreign ministers in September 2020, the Yunus Emre Cultural Center was opened in Dakar. Likewise, schools affiliated with the FETO have been transferred to the trusteeship of the Turkish Maarif Foundation upon the request of the Turkish government.<sup>228</sup>

In his 2022 article for the *All-Africa* website, president Recep Tayyip Erdogan elaborated on relations between Turkey and Senegal. He pointed out that the Turkish Religious Foundation has spent about ten million euros on humanitarian assistance activities conducted in Senegal since 2008. He highlighted that TIKA has put its seal of approval on the development process of Senegal by carrying out 186 projects valued at 12 million USD since its foundation. According to him, reflections of the Turkey-Senegal friendship are observable in a wide network of areas, notably in trade and

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<sup>226</sup> "Türkiye - Senegal İlişkileri."

<sup>227</sup> "Türkiye - Senegal İlişkileri."

<sup>228</sup> "Türkiye - Senegal İlişkileri."

investments. The construction and operation of Dakar's Biase Diagre International Airport, the Congress Center, an indoor sports facility, a 50,000-capacity stadium and other infrastructure projects are tangible examples of Turkey's support for development of Senegal.<sup>229</sup>

Erdogan went on to say that bilateral trade volumes with Senegal are expanding despite turbulence in the global economy. Indeed, bilateral trade volumes surpassed 380 million USD in 2020, rising by a further 150 million USD in 2021. The figure is expected to pass 1 billion USD in the forthcoming years.<sup>230</sup>

A total of 187 Senegalese students have benefited from Turkey Scholarships since 1992. The number of Senegalese students receiving an education in Turkey has since surpassed 200. In addition, 1,000 Senegalese student study at a variety of grades at schools affiliated with the Maarif Foundation in Senegal. Erdogan emphasized that Turkey is ready to enhance its already developed relations with Senegal further through reciprocal visits and investments on the basis of respect, equal partnership, and a win-win rationale.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Recep Tayyip Erdogan, "Türkiye-Senegal: Maziden Atiye Güçlü Dostluk," (21 February 2022). [https://www.iletisim.gov.tr/turkce/cumhurbaskanimizin\\_kaleminden/detay/cumhurbaskani-erdoganin-turkiye-senegal-iliskilerini-kaleme-aldigi-makalesi-allafrica-internet-sitesinde-yayinlandi](https://www.iletisim.gov.tr/turkce/cumhurbaskanimizin_kaleminden/detay/cumhurbaskani-erdoganin-turkiye-senegal-iliskilerini-kaleme-aldigi-makalesi-allafrica-internet-sitesinde-yayinlandi).

<sup>230</sup> Erdogan, "Türkiye-Senegal: Maziden Atiye Güçlü Dostluk."

<sup>231</sup> Erdogan, "Türkiye-Senegal: Maziden Atiye Güçlü Dostluk."

## CHAPTER 4

### FRANCE'S RELATIONS WITH WEST AFRICA

#### 4.1. The Historical Evolution of Relations between France and Francophone Africa

After the 1789 revolution, certain values took root in French political and social culture, reconciliation of which with imperial ambitions has been quite contradictory in itself. For this reason, France has realized its imperial and colonial ambitions under the guise of a “mission civilisatrice”, part of which was to transform colonial subjects into new individuals bearing resemblance to Frenchman in terms of culture, world view and mental codes.<sup>232</sup> Another justification of France for its inroads into Africa was that it was defending and disseminating universal values emerging from its own revolution. Yet again, however, France’s thesis for justifying its presence in Africa cannot be taken sincerely. The point is that France sought to realize its political, economic, and strategic interests on the continent. Other impulses on the part of France can be listed as getting itself perceived as a great imperial power, reinstating its prestige after defeat in the 1870-71 Franco-Prussian war, and exploiting African raw materials, markets, and labor.<sup>233</sup>

One of the many justifications for France’s application to join the UN following World War II was its having been a colonial empire. For this reason, France fervently desired to keep its hegemonic position in Africa through “neo-colonialism”. In this regard, France offered financial, military and technical assistance to African countries during

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<sup>232</sup> Gordon D. Cumming, "Transposing the 'republican' model? a critical appraisal of France's historic mission in Africa," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 23, no. 2 (2005): 233, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02589000500175984>.

<sup>233</sup> Cumming, "Transposing the 'republican' model? a critical appraisal of France's historic mission in Africa," 235.

their independence processes in the 1960s in exchange for obtaining support for its international policies.<sup>234</sup>

Even after the epoch of decolonization, Africa continued to hold significance for substantial reasons. First, African countries are important sources of support for European countries, particularly for France, in their international relations. That is to say, France may have been able to garner sufficient number of votes for gaining leverage in international organizations like the UN thanks to the support of its former colonies in Africa. Secondly, there were significant numbers of French nationals living in Africa. Third, Africa remained – and remains - an important source of raw materials, including oil, and takes a 3% share of France’s exports. French companies have strongholds in logistics, telecom, shipping, banking, and transport.<sup>235</sup>

Following World War II, France began decolonization in Africa. However, decolonization is not synonymous with loss of authority. Shortly after De Gaulle came to power in 1958, the period of the Fifth Republic began. De Gaulle did not hesitate to get in contact with African leaders. His conception of relations between France and Africa was embodied in the “Communaute Franco-Africaine”. African countries, as members of this union, were accepted as autonomous in their domestic affairs while administration of other key fields remained under the tutelage of France.<sup>236</sup> This French area of influence in Africa is called the domain reserve, or the *pre-carré*. In spite of the fact that France qualifies its policies in Africa cooperative, they are in fact, according to Martin, very much a result of France observing of its national interests at

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<sup>234</sup> Sylvain Touati, *French Foreign Policy in Africa: Between Pré Carré and Multilateralism*, IFRI: Institut Français des Relations Internationales (2007), 2, <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/1405366/french-foreign-policy-in-africa/2019630/> on 09 Aug 2022. .

<sup>235</sup> Paul Melly and Vincent Darracq, *A New Way to Engage? French Policy in Africa from Sarkozy to Hollande* (9 August 2022 2013), 4, <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/613853/a-new-way-to-engage-french-policy-in-africa-from-sarkozy-to-hollande/1593962/>.

<sup>236</sup> Guy Martin, "Continuity and Change in Franco-African Relations," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 33, no. 1 (1995): 3, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/161543>.



the expense of African interests and concerns.<sup>237</sup> This relationship has often been obfuscated beneath an array of jargon to explain – while masking - the complex dimensions of relations arising over the course of many years, such as Francophone, Eurafrique, Françafrique, Reseaux, and, as noted above, Pre-carré. Even though they have different dictionary meanings, they have a common denominator in “exceptional” and “inseparable”. Historically, connection between France and Africa can be discussed with respect to four main motivations: political, economic, cultural (mission civilisatrice) and military (security). Two factors have been influential in France’s *political* designation of Africa. The first is about the exclusive right of initiative on the part of French presidents, and the second is the continuity of politics between the two parties.<sup>238</sup>

After World War II, France was weakened to the extent that it could only pursue a “middle-power” foreign policy. Its sole trump card was its permanent seat on the UNSC, which to an extent covered its military and political decline. African leaders followed policies to guard their political, military and economic ties with France effectively for securing support of France at the UN and to consolidate their push for independence. Put simply, the foreign policy of France towards Africa during the Cold War was built on the basis of continuity, shaped as much with the consent of African leaders as being unilateral.<sup>239</sup>

When Sarkozy got into power in May, 2007, France-Africa relations gained a breath of fresh air. Compared with Chirac, Sarkozy had little experience of Africa, but he did give particular importance to it during his election campaigns. When he came to power, he gave signals that political modifications to the relationship made to the 1990s would continue; however, anxious of migration waves coming from the

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<sup>237</sup> Martin, "Continuity and Change in Franco-African Relations," 5-6.

<sup>238</sup> Yunus Turhan, "Fransa'nın Afrika Politikası - Değişim veya Süreklilik," in *Dünya Siyasetinde Afrika 6*, ed. Elem Eyryce Tepeciklioğlu İsmail Ermağan, Volkan İpek (Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, 2020), 53-54.

<sup>239</sup> Turhan, "Fransa'nın Afrika Politikası - Değişim veya Süreklilik," 59-60.

continent, he turned out to follow a balancing policy in harmony with the EU. In effect, his discourse on Africa was twofold: pre-elections and post-elections. Throughout his election campaign, he pledged to open a new page in relations with Africa, but just after his election victory, he did not act on his pledged discourse.<sup>240</sup>

Sarkozy's infamous speech in Dakar on 26 July 2007 can be considered a black mark in relations between Africa and France. At first, he talked about the malignity of colonialism; then, however, he added that ". . . the African has not sufficiently made his mark on history." Despite giving clues as to a change of policy towards Africa in the first days of his administration, Sarkozy's Dakar speech made things worse by demonstrating that the French president's thinking was one of marginalizing and denigrating the continent.<sup>241</sup>

Sarkozy propounded four shifts in France's Africa policy in his Cape Town speech in February 2008. These shifts, respectively, were: the establishment of dialogue with African states to reform old cooperation agreements; the reestablishment of bilateral relations on the basis of transparency; the use of French military presence in Africa to help Africans with their efforts to raise their own security system; the fashioning of a Europe which forges partnerships with Africa in the areas of peace and security.<sup>242</sup> During his presidency, the face of Africa's security architecture changed somewhat as French troops gradually withdrew from the region. In addition, France also diverted its attention away from its conventional partners in Africa to seize new economic opportunities elsewhere on the continent such as in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in South Africa and Nigeria.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Turhan, "Fransa'nın Afrika Politikası - Değişim veya Süreklilik," 66.

<sup>241</sup> Melly and Darracq, *A New Way to Engage? French Policy in Africa from Sarkozy to Hollande*, 7.

<sup>242</sup> Melly and Darracq, *A New Way to Engage? French Policy in Africa from Sarkozy to Hollande*, 4; Douglas Yates, "France, The EU, and Africa," in *The EU and Africa: From Eurafrique to Afro-Europa*, ed. Adekeye Adebajo and Kaye Whiteman (London: Hurst, 2012), 328.

<sup>243</sup> Melly and Darracq, *A New Way to Engage? French Policy in Africa from Sarkozy to Hollande*, 5.

Sarkozy's successor, François Hollande (2012-2017), thought that France's Africa policies should be based on an efficient diplomatic culture, and he made significant efforts to carry out France's Africa policy by way of reciprocal and equal relations.<sup>244</sup> Notwithstanding a focus on domestic issue areas in his presidency campaign, Hollande did not ignore the importance of Africa for France. The occupation of the northern part of Mali by Jihadist militants was also effectual in Hollande's decision to prioritize the continent in his campaign to be president.<sup>245</sup> When he became president, his prime concern was the 2012 crisis in Mali. Indeed, this crisis constituted the main foreign policy challenge for his entire administration. Alongside focusing on Sahelian security, Hollande also put French policies into perspective in the wider region, efforts which led to a deviation from the policies and discourse that Sarkozy had pursued. Unlike his predecessor, he strove to refashion the image of France in sub-Saharan Africa. His point was also to legitimize French military intervention in African countries.<sup>246</sup> The major motives of Hollande to direct a substantial amount of attention to Africa was the crisis in Mali. Instability there would pose a great threat for French interests on the continent in the sense that a disintegrated Mali would be a breeding ground for terrorists that may orchestrate attacks in France; an equally devastating effect would be the spread of insecurity in the other parts of West Africa.<sup>247</sup>

The government of France has sought to get approval of the UNSC to show its support for the ECOWAS plan to position 3000 West African troops in Mali, with the backing of France. France's attempts came to fruition, and the UNSC approved the plan in late 2012. In the meantime, France was also preoccupied with convincing its European partners to send military personnel to an African-led international Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) to reform the scattered and undisciplined Malian army.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Turhan, "Fransa'nın Afrika Politikası - Değişim veya Süreklilik," 66.

<sup>245</sup> Melly and Darracq, *A New Way to Engage? French Policy in Africa from Sarkozy to Hollande*, 6.

<sup>246</sup> Melly and Darracq, *A New Way to Engage? French Policy in Africa from Sarkozy to Hollande*, 6.

<sup>247</sup> Melly and Darracq, *A New Way to Engage? French Policy in Africa from Sarkozy to Hollande*, 8.

<sup>248</sup> Melly and Darracq, *A New Way to Engage? French Policy in Africa from Sarkozy to Hollande*, 9.

This was the state of affairs when Hollande received a request from interim Malian president Dioncounda Traoré to deploy French troops in Malian territories to confront jihadists inching the south from the north in 2013. This intervention was known as Opération Serval. Initial skirmishes, after a while, turned into a full-blown campaign to end the disintegration of northern parts of Mali. President Hollande went to great lengths to convince African countries that French policies towards them rest on democratic principles. This approach resulted in the perception that France respects the sovereignty of African states.<sup>249</sup>

Hollande inconvenienced himself to get in contact and to take opinions of countries in West Africa before taking military action. This apparently demonstrates Hollande's tendency to consult before taking action, differentiating him from his predecessor, Sarkozy. Hollande's cooperative and carefully taken steps while designing French policies in Africa were welcomed by African governments and led to African support for France's military intervention in Mali and contributing to stationing AFISMA forces in Mali.<sup>250</sup>

Despite the fact that France has given support to democratic governments in its former African colonies, the policy has been inconsistent as France has not hesitated to back undemocratic and authoritarian administrations in some of its former African colonies that are crucial for the economic and politico-strategic goals of France. Hence, actions have not always matched rhetoric. France rather prefers the status quo in the region in the sense that its interest is to maintain its interests in Francophone Africa.<sup>251</sup>

As a matter of fact, decolonization has not fully brought freedom from France's colonial restraint. Rather, independence has resulted in a new form of relationship of domination. The former "imperial relationship" has transformed to one of

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<sup>249</sup> Melly and Darracq, *A New Way to Engage? French Policy in Africa from Sarkozy to Hollande*, 9.

<sup>250</sup> Melly and Darracq, *A New Way to Engage? French Policy in Africa from Sarkozy to Hollande*, 10.

<sup>251</sup> Martin, "Continuity and Change in Franco-African Relations," 19.

“international cooperation” which involves political, economic, and military measures favoring France vis-à-vis Francophone countries in Africa.<sup>252</sup> Further, France has sought to preserve the institutions and agreements of the colonial period into the postcolonial period to keep its presence and authority in the region intact.<sup>253</sup>

Yet it is undeniable that independence did not fundamentally alter France’s attitude towards its former colonies. France has ceased to desire to raise French citizens out of its colonial subjects and instead turned to formally recognizing the newly independent African states by founding diplomatic missions there and striking an array of bilateral cultural, economic, and military cooperation deals. Furthermore, France abandoned the use of two cardinal discourses that had hitherto been ingrained in the country’s foreign policy, namely, the *mission civilisatrice* and *la plus grande France* (“great France”). Instead, a new discourse in France’s affairs with Francophone African countries was born: “*besoin de rayonnement*”. These discourses refer to two chief ideations: France’s objective of developing Africa culturally; and the formation of a family of former colonies in which France plays the leading role.<sup>254</sup>

#### **4.2. Political Relations After 1990: The Retreat of France from Africa**

In May 1997, The Socialist Party came to power and Lionel Jospin became the new prime minister. Jospin seized the opportunity when France’s African policies had taken a turn for the worse in the 1990s, and he took steps to implement reforms he had long been championing. For instance, the Cooperation Ministry’s existence as a separate unit of government came to an end as it was brought under the roof of the Foreign Ministry in 1998. Moreover, relief agencies were restructured and merged in

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<sup>252</sup> Bruno Charbonneau, "Dreams of Empire: France, Europe, and the New Interventionism in Africa," *Modern & Contemporary France* 16, no. 3 (2008/08/01 2008): 281, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09639480802201560>, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09639480802201560>.

<sup>253</sup> Tony Chafer, "French African Policy: Towards Change," *African Affairs* 91, no. 362 (1992): 38, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/722561>.

<sup>254</sup> Cumming, "Transposing the 'republican' model? a critical appraisal of France's historic mission in Africa," 238.

the French Development Agency/Agence Française de Développement (AFD) to upgrade their effectiveness and curb their political inclinations by fostering their technical features more.<sup>255</sup>

Jospin's administration did indeed see real fundamental change in France's Africa policy. A break from the conventional perception of Africa in the foreign policy of France was institutionalized and the Jospin government advocated a more holistic approach to Africa. Foreign policy makers were advised not to see Africa as solely composed of Francophone African countries but to consider the African continent as a whole. On that note, the government devoted energy to transferring responsibility for regulating France-Africa relations from the outdated *Françafrique* network to the "Quai d'Orsay" (the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs).<sup>256</sup>

Lionel Jospin suggested that France had come to realize that its foreign policy is no longer sustainable in Africa and the pillars of its policies on the continent were in need of reformation. It gradually came onto agenda that France was not the sole country with key interests in security and order in Africa. There are other emerging actors in France's zone of influence in Africa. For this reason, France indicated the significance of including diverse actors in peace-building and enforcement processes on the continent, and that African countries themselves should be active in this regard.<sup>257</sup>

A measure taken in this sense concerned the reduction and positioning of French troops in Africa. These troops, in the main, were assigned to preserve stability in the region, but they were also entrusted with the task of collecting intelligence. In this context, it would be proper to cite words of the then Chief of Defense, General Kelche, who shed light on the role of French troops on the continent: "Prepositioning brings an effective

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<sup>255</sup> R. Moncrieff, *French Relations with Sub-Saharan Africa Under President Sarkozy*, South African Institute of International Affairs (2012), 9, [https://books.google.com.tr/books?id=a\\_KWAQAACAAJ](https://books.google.com.tr/books?id=a_KWAQAACAAJ).

<sup>256</sup> Benedikt Erforth, *Contemporary French Security Policy in Africa: On Ideas and Wars* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 15-16.

<sup>257</sup> Rachel Utley, "'Not to Do Less but to Do Better ...': French Military Policy in Africa," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 78, no. 1 (2002): 136, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3095978>.

contribution to crisis prevention, [and] to the reactivity of the French intervention capability. In addition, it has the double merit of allowing troop rotation, while ensuring their operational training.”<sup>258</sup>

Another shift in France’s Africa policy concerned taking the security of Africa as a multilateral endeavor. France, in a sense, was reluctant to assume full responsibility for making Africa secure. With this in mind, France devised two new policies in Africa. The first one put the foremost responsibility for perpetuating peace and order on the continent on the shoulders of African states themselves. The second was to offer external assistance. Another option for French foreign policy makers was to include the UN in the undertaking of ensuring security on the continent.<sup>259</sup>

Africans themselves have often expressed dissatisfaction with France’s rhetoric of reform and its actual policies. Yet they have not sought to terminate their relations with France. For one thing, France has been the leading supporter of them in terms of aid and investment. Changing the terms of the relationship would not have been to the advantage of Francophone African leaders as they view the French links in pragmatic terms.<sup>260</sup>

In the 1990s, French policy-makers also opined that there had to be revision in the African policy of France in the post-Cold War era because of a number of wide-ranging factors. Erik Arnoult, one of the senior advisers in the French foreign ministry qualified France’s policies in Africa to date as a failure in the sense that the aid France had been sending Africa did very little to constructively shape the future of Africans.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Utley, "Not to Do Less but to Do Better ...": French Military Policy in Africa," 136.

<sup>259</sup> Utley, "Not to Do Less but to Do Better ...": French Military Policy in Africa," 138.

<sup>260</sup> Moncrieff, *French Relations with Sub-Saharan Africa Under President Sarkozy*, 15.

<sup>261</sup> Utley, "Not to Do Less but to Do Better ...": French Military Policy in Africa," 131.

Another significant turning point in France' change of policy in Africa was the crisis which emerged in the Great Lakes region, starting with incidents in Rwanda in 1994. This crisis led France to think that the interests of other international actors on the continent should be borne in mind, in particular, American interests and attempts to forge new ties with continental countries. Yet was – and remains - fearful of this since it not only sees the region as in its sphere of interest, but also seeks to use them as instruments to project its influence in the wider international sphere.<sup>262</sup> The tragedy in Rwanda opened France's military presence in Africa into discussion in international arena.<sup>263</sup>

The other factor that can explain France's partial retreat from Africa is its decision to end conscription and form a professional army during the presidency of Jacques Chirac. Also, during the presidency of Chirac, the size of the armed forces decreased on the continent. This type of comprehensible reorganization in the French military naturally indicated a reluctance to deploy over the long-term French forces in Africa.<sup>264</sup>

### **4.3. Unwavering Interdependence between Metropole and Françafrique**

Since decolonization, France has maintained its influence in Francophone Africa. A number of cardinal actions have been taken by France in this regard. First and foremost, the political and economic agreements concluded between African countries and France have been to the interest of France, as evidenced by the numerous secret provisions authorizing France's intervention to sustain technical and cultural cooperation between France and a number of African countries. These agreements

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<sup>262</sup> Utley, "Not to Do Less but to Do Better ...": French Military Policy in Africa," 134.

<sup>263</sup> Turhan, "Fransa'nın Afrika Politikası - Değişim veya Süreklilik," 62.

<sup>264</sup> Utley, "Not to Do Less but to Do Better ...": French Military Policy in Africa," 134.



were put into practice thanks to the rapport between French and African political and business elites.<sup>265</sup>

Another enabling element for France to exert influence on the continent since decolonization has been personal interest networks created between African elites and their counterparts in France. In the light of these reciprocal relations between these small cliques, the dividing line between private and public interests has become vague.<sup>266</sup> Hence, one can conclude that personal relations and interests as well as a paternalistic discourse enshrined in French attitudes to Africa have resulted in political leverage for France. As Bourmaud poignantly expressed, the former colonies of France in Africa have undergone a process by which they are devised as natural extensions of France, where Francophonie and Francophilia are adroitly amalgamated. Dozon neatly and succinctly described this state of affairs as the “Franco-African state”<sup>267</sup>

One of the main reasons for France’s former colonies it being able to fully remove themselves from French control is summed up in the transition to a patron-client relationship. In this context, African suzerains have been offered political, financial and military assistance in exchange for carefully considering French interests before major policy decisions are made. Also, defense and monetary policy have been outsourced to France, unique access to African raw materials is granted, and France is regularly backed in various international platforms.<sup>268</sup> France has also struck bilateral

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<sup>265</sup> Alison Brysk, Craig Parsons, and Wayne Sanholdtz, "After Empire: National Identity and Post-colonial Families of Nations," *European Journal of International Relations* 8, no. 2 (2002), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066102008002004>, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1354066102008002004>; Erforth, *Contemporary French Security Policy in Africa: On Ideas and Wars*, 14.

<sup>266</sup> Jean-François Bayart and Stephen Ellis, "Africa in the World: A History of Extraversion," *African Affairs* 99, no. 395 (2000), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/723809>; Erforth, *Contemporary French Security Policy in Africa: On Ideas and Wars*, 14-15.

<sup>267</sup> Erforth, *Contemporary French Security Policy in Africa: On Ideas and Wars*, 14-15.

<sup>268</sup> Stefano Recchia, "A legitimate sphere of influence: Understanding France’s turn to multilateralism in Africa," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 43, no. 4 (2020/06/06 2020): 515-16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2020.1733985>, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2020.1733985>; Elizabeth Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror* (New

defense and military agreements with Francophone countries that have authorized France to station its military forces on African territories and to intervene with the instigation of African rulers in the event of internal upheaval or external encroachment.<sup>269</sup>

In order to achieve its objectives and maintain dominance over its former colonies, France has followed a multidimensional global policy that has political, economic and social elements, namely *La Francophonie*. The aim of this comprehensive policy structure is to establish political, cultural, and economic bridges tying Francophone Africa to France via training support, exchanges in academia, cultural exhibitions, instruction of French to Africans, and so on. France's post-colonial efforts have been based on acculturation and assimilation. This new face of colonialism has seen France infiltrate the capillaries of Francophone countries in Africa.<sup>270</sup>

The authority and influence of France have been ingrained in the political and social structures of some African countries. France has used the discourse of Francophonie wisely to preserve its say in the affairs of its former colonies through this patron-client "special relationship." France's modern Africa policy has three central goals: to sustain French prestige and power; to maintain access to strategic resources; and to protect the profits coming from monopolizing certain sectors of the economy.<sup>271</sup>

However, the end of the Cold War resulted in instability in Africa because multi-partialism became commonplace in many African countries. In addition, as the US and the USSR no longer saw a need to prop up some African countries as part of their Cold

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York: Cambridge, 2013), 175-79; A. Treacher, *French Interventionism: Europe's Last Global Player?* (Ashgate, 2003), 124-25. [https://books.google.cg/books?id=V-2\\_wAEACAAJ](https://books.google.cg/books?id=V-2_wAEACAAJ).

<sup>269</sup> Pierre Lellouche and Dominique Moisi, "French Policy in Africa: A Lonely Battle against Destabilization," *International Security* 3, no. 4 (1979), <https://doi.org/10.2307/2626765>, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2626765>; Recchia, "A legitimate sphere of influence: Understanding France's turn to multilateralism in Africa," 515-16.

<sup>270</sup> Renou, "A New French Policy for Africa?," 8.

<sup>271</sup> Renou, "A New French Policy for Africa?," 6.

War strategies, countries in Central and West Africa began experiencing economic hardship and political volatility, which was highly detrimental to the interests of France. Order and stability on the continent have been of utmost importance not only to France, but also to other global actors seeking to protect their interests on the continent.<sup>272</sup>

It has been observed that decolonization in Francophone Africa was more of an outcome of France's benevolence than of those states' ardent nationalistic bids for independence. Moreover, the conclusion of agreements between France and African countries in diverse issue areas, and the espousal of the French constitutional model by newly independent African countries all gave birth to well-established French esteem on the continent and solidified Francophone African countries' dependency on their former master.<sup>273</sup>

#### **4.3. Economic Relations**

France has sizeable commercial interests in Africa, and the promotion of these interests has been accepted as one of the key priorities by successive French administrations. French economic interests on the continent could be grouped into three categories in the colonial epoch. The first one is rent seeking; the second is strategic interests; and the final one is strategies of expansion. In pursuing these goals, French companies operating in Francophone African states have received the support of France thanks to its close relations with Francophone African states.<sup>274</sup>

The "Franc Zone" was created in 1947 and consists of 13 former French colonies + Equatorial Guinea and Guinea-Bissau. The countries in this zone use the same

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<sup>272</sup> Tony Chafer, "Chirac and 'la Françafrique': No Longer a Family Affair," *Modern & Contemporary France* 13, no. 1 (2005/02/01 2005): 12, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0963948052000341196>, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0963948052000341196>.

<sup>273</sup> Guy Martin, "France's african policy in transition: disengagement and redeployment" (2001), 99-100.

<sup>274</sup> Moncrieff, *French Relations with Sub-Saharan Africa Under President Sarkozy*, 16.

currency, namely the *Franc Communauté Financière Africaine* (CFA Franc). Value of this currency is guaranteed by the French Treasury. The zone hosts many French companies, businesses and industries investing in the region. French companies investing in the zone are even encouraged by French policy-makers by means of credit allocation for and tax cuts to them.<sup>275</sup> The chief motive of France in forming such a region is to ensure monetary stability in the region. Other purposes include controlling the money supply and credit allocation, financially regulating African countries, and having a say on the budgetary and economic policies of countries in the region.<sup>276</sup>

In the post-independence deals with 13 of her former colonies, France is the dominant actor in the planning and regulation of monetary policies in Francophone Africa. It has control over supply of money, management of finances, banking activities, loan allocation, and finally budgetary and economic policies. Strict membership rules to the Franc economic zone bring about handicaps for Francophone African countries. To exemplify, the management of all foreign currency reserves must be in tandem with France's Treasury and French administrators possess quasi-veto rights in decision-making processes in African central banks, putting the monetary sovereignty of these countries in jeopardy. Any unilateral action taken by France to update its monetary policies automatically has an impact on the CFA Franc, and thus on members of the zone. Therefore, the CFA Franc is dependent on French monetary policies.<sup>277</sup>

Today, the value of the CFA Franc is determined on the basis of a certain parity adjustable to the Euro. There are also capital movements between the *Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (the Central Bank of West African States) and the *Banque de France*. On that note, the structure of finance in Sahelian states enables France to retain its rights inherited from its colonial history into the present and to have

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<sup>275</sup> Renou, "A New French Policy for Africa?," 11.

<sup>276</sup> Renou, "A New French Policy for Africa?," 11; Guy Martin, "Francophone Africa in the Context of Franco-African Relations," in *Africa in World Politics: Post-Cold War Challenges*, ed. Donald Rothchild John W Harbeson (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1995).

<sup>277</sup> Martin, "Continuity and Change in Franco-African Relations," 12.

easy access to the raw materials of these countries below their market value. Therefore, France's modern relations with Sahelian countries have given birth to claims of neo-colonialism and dependency on France and underdevelopment problems for these countries.<sup>278</sup>

French aid to the region is contingent upon the assurance of "good economic governance". "Structural adjustment" agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are considered the foremost proof that these countries are on the way to achieving the preconditions of that good economic governance. Although the IMF and other multilateral financial bodies take precedence over France when it comes to getting loans, the main driver of aid provided by France to African countries is to contribute to these structural adjustment plans. France no longer extends a hand to these countries to help them balance their budgets and they are expected to observe a balance in their national budgets if they wish to receive IMF funds, the World Bank assistance, or financial help of France.<sup>279</sup> In this sense, France undertakes the role of a bridge between international financial institutions and Francophone African countries. Indeed, France's prioritizing of these institutions for its former African colonies paves the way for the opening of Francophone African markets to the world economy as well as for making foreign investments in those countries easier than before.<sup>280</sup>

#### **4.4. Military Relations After 1990**

France cannot afford to see instability in its sphere of influence in Africa. That is why it has preferred to turn a blind eye to oppressive and undemocratic regimes in the region.<sup>281</sup> Even after end of the colonial period, France has not given up attempts to

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<sup>278</sup> K. Devecioğlu and F.E. Şefkatli, *Orsam Analiz Sayı: 291 / Kuzey Afrika'dan Sahel'e Yayılan Güvensizlik ve Fransa'nın Sorgulanan Varlığı* (Ortadoğu Yayınları, 2021), 18.  
<https://books.google.com.tr/books?id=xvJLEAAAQBAJ>.

<sup>279</sup> Renou, "A New French Policy for Africa?," 21.

<sup>280</sup> Renou, "A New French Policy for Africa?," 21.

<sup>281</sup> Touati, *French Foreign Policy in Africa: Between Pré Carré and Multilateralism*, 9-10.

preserve and consolidate its position as a colonial power in Africa. Despite the end of its formal patronage on its former colonies, France has adeptly maintained its dominance over them to protect its status during the Cold War era. Nevertheless, the policy designated for that era turned out to be inappropriate and unsustainable after end of the Cold War, and French foreign policy pursued towards its former colonies in Africa gradually underwent changes under the presidency of Mitterrand, gaining momentum under the premierships of Juppé and then Jospin. To that effect, France has lowered its military undertakings in the continent, developed relations with African countries falling outside the Franc zone, and rechanneled its humanitarian and development aid on the basis of transparent, democratic and effectual criteria.<sup>282</sup>

After end of the Cold War, France went to great lengths to preserve the prestige inherited from having been a colonial empire. For one thing, it strove to be an influential actor in the great power multipolar environment of the post-Cold War world by retaining its colonial power through a postcolonialism discourse. To this end, France has not abstained from forging defense and military agreements with its former colonies in Africa, in the process exploiting opportunities to deploy its military forces on African soil. Additionally, these defense agreements have entrusted the responsibility for those countries' external security to France. Based on these agreements, France has supplied military equipment to African armies, provided them with technical personnel and military advisers, and admits African officers each year to train at French military academies.<sup>283</sup> Furthermore, some of those agreements granted France a license to intervene in those countries in the event of domestic or foreign threats. These developments in the military dimension of their relations have increased France's capability to penetrate into Africa militarily.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> Utley, "Not to Do Less but to Do Better ...": French Military Policy in Africa," 129-30.

<sup>283</sup> Rachel Utley, "Franco-African Military Relations: Meeting the Challenges of Globalisation?," *Modern & Contemporary France* 13, no. 1 (2005/02/01 2005): 26, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0963948052000341204>, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0963948052000341204>.

<sup>284</sup> Moncrieff, *French Relations with Sub-Saharan Africa Under President Sarkozy*, 20.

In the 1990s, French foreign policy makers came to realize that carrying on the same military policies in Africa was unsustainable and decided to backtrack on its military policies to adapt to the post-Cold War global era.<sup>285</sup> When he came to power in 1995, Chirac put reforming the French military as well as France's traditional role in Africa on the agenda. Nevertheless, he was not thinking about reducing the number of French troops stationed on the continent. Despite his speeches and discourse to the contrary, the Sarkozy period can be qualified as continuity as much as change. That is, during his administration there was no significant reduction of French troops in Africa. However, promises for change included fewer military interventions in the continent.<sup>286</sup>

Multilateralism and Europeanization in the Africa policies of France in the 1990s opened two issues up to discussion: the Africanization of regional security, and the multi-nationalization of Western interests under regional peace forces. This new phenomenon entailed risks and opportunities for France. In terms of risks, this new setting is thought to have set the stage for France to lose its weight in the military and defense domains. However, this claim seems baseless given that decisions concerning Africa taken in the EU are simultaneously in the interest of France. Looked at as a window of opportunity, on the other hand, this move offered Paris a chance to share the responsibilities, risks, and financial burden of its African operations with EU partners.<sup>287</sup> Indeed, two points are pertinent to understand the dynamics of the reformation of the French military presence in sub-Saharan Africa. The first factor is that rising costs incurred by the French presence on the continent were hindering France's efforts to rejoin the NATO command structure. Also, importance attached to relations with the Mediterranean countries by Sarkozy was a significant factor.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> Utley, "Franco-African Military Relations: Meeting the Challenges of Globalisation?," 27.

<sup>286</sup> Moncrieff, *French Relations with Sub-Saharan Africa Under President Sarkozy*, 21.

<sup>287</sup> Chafer, T. (2002), "Franco-African Relations: No Longer so Exceptional?," *African Affairs* as cited in Turhan, "Fransa'nın Afrika Politikası - Değişim veya Süreklilik," 64.

<sup>288</sup> Moncrieff, *French Relations with Sub-Saharan Africa Under President Sarkozy*, 23.

Although it would be erroneous to claim that France's military presence on the continent did not take a blow in the wake of decolonization, nonetheless its military capacity and outlook have remained important there and constant stress has been placed on the significance of France's military presence in Africa by successive administrations in Paris. France continues to train and equip African armies and its crucial Joint Intervention Force is located in southern France. Hence, France has continued to play the role of "policeman of Africa" through its military bases scattered in Francophone African states.<sup>289</sup>

France did, however, reduce its military presence on the territories of its former colonies following the end of the Cold War. Along with curbing the number of its military personnel on the continent, France has also decided to keep away from unilateral military interventions in African in-fighting. Yet, French policy makers have constantly underlined that the gradual military withdrawal of France from the continent does not necessarily amount to disengagement.<sup>290</sup> Indeed, French policy makers have become more multilateral-minded in the sense that multilateral peacekeeping and humanitarian operations have been welcomed. To that end, France has kept a standby force ready on the continent to take action momentarily if needed. Multilateralism and the Africanization of regional security have become the new norms of French security policy, although Paris remains the primary diplomatic, military and financial mover on the continent.<sup>291</sup>

The end of the Cold War was a precursor of a wide-ranging reappraisal of policies by French policy makers. Policy makers at the foreign ministry have come to see that France's policies followed towards the continent have not been successful in

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<sup>289</sup> Utley, "Franco-African Military Relations: Meeting the Challenges of Globalisation?," 26-27.

<sup>290</sup> Eric Berman, *French, UK, and U.S. Policies to Support Peacekeeping in Africa: Current Status and Future Prospects* (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, February 2002), 3; Erforth, *Contemporary French Security Policy in Africa: On Ideas and Wars*, 20.

<sup>291</sup> Erforth, *Contemporary French Security Policy in Africa: On Ideas and Wars*, 21.



ameliorating the conditions of the vast bulk of Africans; quite the reverse, military interventions in former colonies in Africa bolstered corrupt military regimes in those countries. Even some members of Mitterrand's Council of Ministers spoke up for change in African policy.<sup>292</sup> Mitterrand's address at the Franco-African Summit in La Baule in 1990 was an indication of the desire for change in African affairs, with references to the need for domestic reforms in African countries.<sup>293</sup>

As the new post-Cold War era began to take shape, things began to change for Francophone African states as well. France was no longer seen as the sole option for those states to resort to for help or advice. For instance, the USA became more prominent as France's influence waned and as it experienced troubles in the Great Lakes region.<sup>294</sup>

#### **4.4.1. Military Interventions**

Even if France has decided to act within multinational frameworks while conducting its military interventions in Africa, it has not abandoned unilateral operations alongside multilateral ones, making France the only European state to undertake unilateral operations in its defense policy. Operation Serval in Mali (2013-2014); Operation Barkhane in Mali (2014-2022); Operation Licorne in the Ivory Coast (2002 and 2015); Operation Sangaris in the Central African Republic (2013 and 2016) are illustrations of France's post-Cold War era unilateral interventions on the continent.<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> Adekeye Adabajo, "Folie de grandeur," *The World Today* 53, no. 6 (1997), 149. as cited in Utley, "Franco-African Military Relations: Meeting the Challenges of Globalisation?," 27.

<sup>293</sup> François Mitterrand, *Discours 1981–1995* (Paris: Europolis, 1995) as cite in Utley, "Franco-African Military Relations: Meeting the Challenges of Globalisation?," 27.

<sup>294</sup> Utley, "Franco-African Military Relations: Meeting the Challenges of Globalisation?," 28.

<sup>295</sup> Thierry Tardy, "France's military operations in Africa: Between institutional pragmatism and agnosticism," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 43, no. 4 (2020/06/06 2020): 535, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2020.1734571>, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2020.1734571>.

Indeed, the most active country since end of the Cold War in military operations conducted in the continent has been France.<sup>296</sup>

Having a permanent seat on the UNSC, France has also been influential in peace-keeping missions conducted by the UN in Africa in the 1990s. Moreover, France has extended substantial military assistance to regional African peace-keeping forces to enable African regional units to take control of their own security. This regional military empowerment began with a program put into practice in 1997 under *Renforcement des capacités africaines de maintien de la paix* (RECAMP). Thereafter, the military presence of France gradually dwindled in the region both in terms of military bases and number of troops.<sup>297</sup>

The presence of France militarily on the continent is a long-established tradition reflected in its 19 military interventions between 1962 and 1995.<sup>298</sup> Since the late 1990s, however, France has pushed a multilateral approach in its military relations with the continent. At the same time, though, France has tightened its grip on the continent as a new and more threatening security context has come about. For instance, approximately 7,000 French military personnel were deployed abroad in September, 2015, a significant number of whom were allocated to Africa, specifically to the Sahel.<sup>299</sup>

Hollande claimed that French military intervention in Mali in 2013 was the result of France a plea by Malians, in response to which France intervened with the backing of regional and global allies. This intervention is best seen as an undertaking to ensure

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<sup>296</sup> Tardy, "France's military operations in Africa: Between institutional pragmatism and agnosticism," 536.

<sup>297</sup> Stefano Recchia and Thierry Tardy, "French military operations in Africa: Reluctant multilateralism," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 43, no. 4 (2020/06/06 2020): 474-75, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2020.1733984>, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2020.1733984>.

<sup>298</sup> Melly and Darracq, *A New Way to Engage? French Policy in Africa from Sarkozy to Hollande*; Pernille Rieker, *French Foreign Policy in a Changing World: Practicing Grandeur* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2017), 51.

<sup>299</sup> Rieker, *French Foreign Policy in a Changing World: Practicing Grandeur*, 51-52.

stability by eliminating terrorist elements in the region.<sup>300</sup> However, with France susceptible to terror attacks from Africa-based Jihadists, a French intervention in Mali is also a qualified move to protect French national security while at the same time bolstering France's prestige in global politics.<sup>301</sup>

After end of Operation Serval in Mali on 15 July 2014, Operation Barkhane was launched to fight against Islamist extremists not only in Mali but also in the wider region. This later operation witnessed the deployment of French forces in N'Djamena, Chad's capital, and in Mali. During the operation, five African countries were effectual alongside France: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. Operation Barkhane was thus a joint-French commitment to anti-terrorism in the Sahel region.<sup>302</sup> While France secured international support and legitimacy over the course of Operation Serval, the same cannot be said about Operation Barkhane, as France cooperated with autocratic and oppressive leaders in the region such as President Idriss Déby of Chad and Ali Bongo of Gabon. The impetus of France to act in coordination with these two leaders was that, on the one hand, Chad has been an influential ally of France in the fight against terrorism; for its part, Gabon hosts a major military base of France and, moreover, it has provided military personnel for peacekeeping operations in the Central African Republic. In addition, there is a significant number of French expatriates in Gabon.<sup>303</sup>

#### **4.5. French Public Diplomacy Initiatives in West Africa**

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<sup>300</sup> Sergei Boeke and Bart Schuurman, "Operation 'Serval': A Strategic Analysis of the French Intervention in Mali, 2013–2014," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 38, no. 6 (2015/09/19 2015), <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2015.1045494>, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2015.1045494>; Shaun Gregory, "The French Military in Africa: Past and Present," *African Affairs* 99, no. 396 (2000), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/723950>; Rieker, *French Foreign Policy in a Changing World: Practicing Grandeur*, 52.

<sup>301</sup> Rieker, *French Foreign Policy in a Changing World: Practicing Grandeur*, 52.

<sup>302</sup> Rieker, *French Foreign Policy in a Changing World: Practicing Grandeur*, 54.

<sup>303</sup> Rieker, *French Foreign Policy in a Changing World: Practicing Grandeur*, 54-55.

Despite being a longstanding activity in the region, the aid policies of France have not resulted in tangible outcomes since the continent still suffers from a lack of development. One reason for this is that French leaders have made use of aid distribution as a means of executing certain policies. France thus consolidates its cultural influence in the region through the dispersal of development aid. A significant part of that aid goes to funding for education, scholarships, and cultural institutes. In this regard, a variety of intergovernmental organizations and symposia have been set up under the umbrella of the *Agence de Cooperation Culturelle et Technique* to institutionalize linguistic, cultural, and educational relations between France and its former colonies in Africa. On top of that, *the Ministere de la Francophonie* (the Ministry of Francophonie) was established in 1988. Moreover, the promotion of the French language is another important activity of the *mission civilisatrice* alongside bringing economic advantages to France. Indeed, language teaching is a part and parcel of the cultural role that France plays in Africa. Enlargement of Francophonie areas is crucial for identity-construction. As Martin put forward, Francophonie is a neocolonial concept in the sense that it facilitates the penetration of French culture into a non-French environment.<sup>304</sup>

Official development bodies of France were modernized in late 1990s. For instance, the Cooperation Ministry was brought under the roof of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1998. French authorities also sought to simplify the organization of aid activities. In this, France has emulated the development institution of the USA (USAID) in forming the Inter-Ministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (CICID). CICID is responsible for deciding where to extend France's development assistance. The body also determines the key policies of France for cooperation with other states in terms of aid and development assistance. In the meantime, responsibility for observing, controlling, and supervising bilateral cooperation lies with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economy and

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<sup>304</sup> IJ Benneyworth, "The Ongoing Relationship Between France and its Former African Colonies" (2020), 5.

Finance.<sup>305</sup> Continuation of bilateral development aid comes under the French Development Agency (AFD), which is a development bank and financial body of France in its aid initiatives. This institution is notable when it comes to the functioning of mechanisms through which aid is dispersed in the form of development cooperation. The principal contribution of it to aid efforts is to provide financial means for funding private or public projects.<sup>306</sup> The new French policy in Africa is in some ways a continuation of its old colonial association with African colonies. The aim is to preserve the national interests of France on the continent without entering into the obligation of paying the high costs of colonial rule.<sup>307</sup>

As for concrete public diplomacy tools, Radio France Internationale (RFI) spearheads it. The station was established in 1975 to broadcast abroad, particularly in Africa and the Mediterranean. It turned into a 24-hour new broadcaster in 1996 and began operating online in 2000. RFI passed to France Media Monde in 2008, whence it became a pillar for projecting French sentiments and thought to international audiences in a variety of languages. The other pillars of this project are France 24, a multilingual French news media operational since 2006, Monte Carlo Douliya, an Arabic radio station in Arabic, and TV 5 Monde.<sup>308</sup>

A document of survey findings prepared and jointly issued by CIAN and Immar points out the significance and popularity of French news media. In this research, 46% of participant opinion leaders stated that France 24 is their premier TV channel for news, ahead of even Britain's BBC. When it comes to radio stations, RFI has a significant share in the minds of African opinion leaders, and some 19% of the interviewees acknowledged that they caught up with current events by listening to RFI. However, a

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<sup>305</sup> Touati, *French Foreign Policy in Africa: Between Pré Carré and Multilateralism*, 5.

<sup>306</sup> Touati, *French Foreign Policy in Africa: Between Pré Carré and Multilateralism*, 7.

<sup>307</sup> Benneyworth, "The Ongoing Relationship Between France and its Former African Colonies," 232-33.

<sup>308</sup> Frederic Charillon, "Public Diplomacy à la française," in *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, ed. Nicholas J. Cull Nancy Snow (New York: Routledge, 2020), 266.

significant share of participants, 35%, stated that their first choice for keeping themselves abreast of things was Facebook.<sup>309</sup> Thus it is apparent that French origin news outlets have a significant place in Africa's mass communication environment.

Today, a country's image owes a lot to the education opportunities it provides and the academic excellence of its higher education. This holds true for France, too. Nevertheless, the popularity of France for international students is on the decline as Anglo-phone countries like the USA, the UK, and Australia rise. Evidently, there are economic, political and social reasons for this trend. To counter this decline, Campus France was founded in 2010. The goal was recovery and maintenance of the prestige of France in spite of funding limitations. Besides, the institution was assigned to contribute to the public diplomacy of France by transforming student exchange programs into an instrument for promoting France's image in the scope of public diplomacy.<sup>310</sup>

A considerable number of African students do receive an education in France. France has granted long-stay visas to African students to study in France since 2011. Indeed, almost half of all foreign students studying in France in 2017 were from Africa. In detail, foreign students coming from Africa constituted 44.8% of a total 323,933 foreign students in France in 2017. Of that figure, 20.6% were sub-Saharan Africans.<sup>311</sup> The number and visibility of African students have been growing in France. This is because of the fact that international partnerships between African higher education institutions and those of France contribute significantly to competitiveness and the mutual enhancement of African and French higher education

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<sup>309</sup> Sail, "AFRICALLEADS 2021: Baromètre CIAN des leaders d'opinion en Afrique, réalisé par IMMAR."

<sup>310</sup> Charillon, "Public Diplomacy à la française," 270.

<sup>311</sup> "Migration," 2019, accessed 9 August, 2022, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/africa/migration/>.

institutions. In effect, the aim of France is to double the number of partnerships between African and French education institutions by 2022.<sup>312</sup>

France has distinct instruments and procedures for establishing cooperation with partner countries. To exemplify, France supported about 25 higher education bodies and research projects in 2019 through funds provided by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. The objective of these projects was to offer high quality courses for training so as to respond to the needs of the regional labor market. Likewise, these projects aim at reinforcing institutional capacity and operational knowledge in higher education establishments.<sup>313</sup>

Another point when it comes to the development of higher education in Africa is the provision of academic staff and technical experts in France's embassies and universities in Africa. Elevating the image of the French higher education system in Africa through the attempts of Campus France is another key strategy for France to attract African students to French universities. This effort has made France the fourth most appealing country for international students seeking to study abroad. This point is well illustrated with rise of the students coming from Africa to France to pursue their education at French universities.<sup>314</sup>

Another initiative of France has been to open joint diploma programs whose graduates are able to obtain dual diplomas given by French and African educational establishments. Moreover, a host of French scientific institutes have satellites in Africa in the form of research institutions. These institutions find ways to train and move junior researchers around, enable the international expertise of countries partnering with France in ways which respond to political elites' expectations, make use of team

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<sup>312</sup> "Academic and scientific cooperation," updated February, 2019, accessed 9 August, 2022, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/africa/academic-and-scientific-cooperation/>.

<sup>313</sup> Diplomacy, "Academic and scientific cooperation."

<sup>314</sup> Diplomacy, "Academic and scientific cooperation."

networking to upgrade the innovative capacity of partners, and advance science by means of tangible measures.<sup>315</sup>

Education is a meaningful component of ensuring economic development and eliminating inequalities. For this reason, France has been willing to increase its contribution to the Global Partnership for Education tenfold as well as amplify its endeavors in primary education. With its pledge to double the number of cooperation programs between French and African institutions by 2022, the French Ivorian Education Center and the French-Senegalese campus were founded.<sup>316</sup>

Seeing that Africa is still the leading continent in terms of communicable and tropical diseases, it is natural that France factor this in while conducting its public diplomacy initiatives on the continent. France has put a new opening Strategy for Global Health into practice to support the frail health system in Africa. France has also extended a helping hand to Africa to fight against wide-ranging diseases on the continent. The AFD and Expertise France (which joined the AFD in 2021) are active agents in Africa in the domain of international health assistance.<sup>317</sup> France has also sent health assistance to some African countries torn by COVID-19 pandemic. Again, France initiated the COVID-19 Health in Common program to counter the pandemic with an amount of 1.15 billion Euros of %80 has been allocated to Africa.<sup>318</sup>

According to OECD figures, almost half of French development aid goes to sub-Saharan Africa. Education and debt relief are two cardinal sectors that France development aid focuses on. The former is known to be a conventional field of French development aid. The latter, on the other hand, came on the agenda in the late 1980s,

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<sup>315</sup> Diplomacy, "Academic and scientific cooperation."

<sup>316</sup> "After the Ouagadougou speech," accessed 9 August, 2022, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/africa/after-the-ouagadougou-speech/>.

<sup>317</sup> "Health: Africa, a high priority continent," 2021, accessed 9 August, 2022, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/africa/health-africa-a-high-priority-continent/>.

<sup>318</sup> Diplomacy, "Health: Africa, a high priority continent."



although its share in French development aid has decreased since then. This aid has granted France an active role and solid base to entrench its commercial presence on the continent.<sup>319</sup>

Sub-Saharan Africa takes one third of the French bilateral official development assistance (ODA), amounting to 2.9 bln euros in 2020. France ensures peace and stability, supports gender equality, invigorates professional training and education, counters climate change and fights for biodiversity, and advocates action in favor of healthcare. In 2019, France granted 1.6 bln euros in the framework of ODA to 19 priority countries, of which 18 are located in Africa. The leading beneficiaries were Senegal (281 million euro), Ethiopia (158 million euro), Mali (145 million euro), and Burkina Faso (137 million euro).<sup>320</sup>

A significant African diaspora lives in France. Malians make-up the largest proportion of this group, with 76,500. Senegalese follow Malians, with 67,000 in 2015. Then come citizens of the Democratic Republic of Congo, at 64,000. At the same time, approximately three million French nationals of African origin live in France pursuant to the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies. Then again, around 500,000 French nationals live in Africa, of which 150,000 live in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>321</sup>

The speech delivered by President Emmanuel Macron in Ouagadougou in November 2017 was a significant milestone in relations between France and Africa. The speech expanded on the development of relations with Africa through a new track of

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<sup>319</sup> Moncrieff, *French Relations with Sub-Saharan Africa Under President Sarkozy*, 2.

<sup>320</sup> "Africa: a priority for French official development assistance," 2021, accessed 9 August, 2022, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/africa/africa-a-priority-for-french-official-development-assistance/>.

<sup>321</sup> "The African diaspora in France," 2019, accessed 9 August, 2022, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/africa/the-african-diaspora-in-france/>; "The challenges for French diplomacy in Africa," 2021, accessed 9 August, 2022, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/africa/french-diplomacy-in-africa-global-issues/>.

opportunities. That day a number of new projects were decided on for the young of Africa in a wide array of fields, such as mobility, education, business ventures, health and sports to lay the ground for future African cooperation with Europe. The first three years following the speech witnessed a rise of human exchanges between France and the continent. This was because of the fact that the number of volunteer programs in Africa has been augmented, the number of visas given to Africans has increased, and business ventures are increasingly supported.<sup>322</sup>

Understanding Africans is tantamount to looking at the world from the perspective of Africans. On that note, a new initiative called the “Africa 2020 Season” was launched by Institut Français. The project aimed to see international development from the vantage point of Africans, concentrating on the arts, the sciences, technology, business and the economy, with special reference to education.<sup>323</sup>

## **4.6. The Cases of Mali and Senegal**

### **4.6.1. Relations with Mali**

Relations between France and Mali are advanced in many fields. Having historical commonalities and cultural ties have meant that relations between the two countries have generally been good. What is more, there is a large Malian diaspora residing in France. Bilateral relations between the two countries have been gaining momentum since 2013. Many French companies operate in Mali, such as BNP Paribas, Total, and Laborex. Exports to Mali make up of 3.3% of the whole volume of French exports to Africa and the Indian Ocean regions. France is the second largest supplier of Mali’s products, ahead of Senegal and Côte d’Ivoire.<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> Diplomacy, "The challenges for French diplomacy in Africa."

<sup>323</sup> "The Africa2020 Season," 2022, accessed 9 August, 2022, <https://www.institutfrancais.com/en/close-up/the-africa-2020-season>.

<sup>324</sup> "France and Mali," 2019, accessed 9 August, 2022, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/mali/france-and-mali-65154/>.

Mali is one of France's grantees and French activities there revolve around three substantial sectors: water and energy infrastructure; agriculture and rural development; and basic services like healthcare and education. To illustrate, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, to which France contributes considerably, has funded Mali to the tune of 10 million euros. Mali also enjoys significant French support in the areas of higher education and research and civil society and governance. Furthermore, Mali benefits from reconstruction efforts through the Sahel Alliance.<sup>325</sup> Official visits paid by Emmanuel Macron have also contributed to cordial French-Mali relations. To exemplify, Macron visited the country on 19 May, 2017, to meet troops fighting in Operation Barkhane, with his counterpart, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita. Again, Macron paid an official visit to the country on 2 July 2017 to attend an Extraordinary Summit of the G5S ("G5 du Sahel") Heads of State. During this second trip, he was accompanied by Jean-Yves Le Drian, the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, and Florence Parley, the Minister for the Armed Forces.<sup>326</sup>

To reciprocate the visits of Macron, President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita has paid a number of visits to France. For instance, he has been accepted at the Élysée Palace by his French counterpart on 31 October, 2017. Keita has also met with Macron on a number of other occasions, such as on 29 November, 2017, in Abidjan, where the two met on the sidelines of the G5S Heads of State Summit; at La Celle-Saint-Cloud on 13 December, 2017; and in Nouakchott on 2 July, 2018. Another noteworthy visit by Keita to France took place during the commemoration ceremonies for the centenary of World War I in November, 2018.<sup>327</sup>

#### **4.6.2. Relations with Senegal**

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<sup>325</sup> Diplomacy, "France and Mali."

<sup>326</sup> Diplomacy, "France and Mali."

<sup>327</sup> Diplomacy, "France and Mali."

Ties between France and Senegal are strong and multidimensional. The political leaders of the two countries are incessantly in touch. Senegal is also the only country where France holds intergovernmental seminars each year uninterruptedly. The prime investor in Senegal is also France, and France's trade surplus with Senegal was €834.2 million in 2016. The environment in Senegal is a favorable for France to start new companies. The opening of new companies also serves the interests of Senegal as they have a positive impact on the country's development.<sup>328</sup>

When it comes to France's presence in the field of education in Senegal, the Institut Français is well known and popular in Senegal, especially in Dakar and Saint Louis. Besides, a considerable number of schools have their curriculums taught in French in Senegal. The Institut Français works to promote the French language and culture as well as contribute to the academic sector in the region it is located. These institutions are affiliated with Campus France and offer scholarships to local students each year.<sup>329</sup>

Cooperation partnerships between France and Senegal outstrip those with all other African countries. Senegal is also the topmost beneficiary of French structural defense cooperation, while French armed forces deployed in Senegal are a center for operational regional cooperation and also train the Senegalese army. Senegal is one of 16 priority poor states for French Development Assistance. Sustainable development, democratic governance and human development are the principle areas that partnership framework papers for 2013-2017 period set as priority areas.<sup>330</sup>

*Agence Française de Développement* has allocated more than 1.5 billion euros since 2000, including all financial products and sectors. Some of the notable projects are *the*

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<sup>328</sup> "Senegal," 2017, accessed 15 August, 2022, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/senegal/>.

<sup>329</sup> Diplomacy, "Senegal."

<sup>330</sup> Diplomacy, "Senegal."

*Train Express Regional* in Dakar, the KMS III project to provide safe tap water in Dakar, and other projects to diversify the country's energy mix.<sup>331</sup>

France has recently begun to open a new page in its relations with Francophone African states. This process is seen particularly in signs of France abandoning the concept of *Françafrique* as it looks to build more balanced relations with Francophone countries of West Africa. This reconfiguration of relations was first demanded by Jacques Chirac, whose proposal has been echoed by his successors. Current French president Emmanuel Macron has also been also influenced by Chirac. That is why he appeared at the latest Africa-France summit organized in Montpellier on 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2021, a move which demonstrated France's disposition to revise its Africa policy.<sup>332</sup>

Macron, in his speech during the summit, qualified himself as a president who had come to the post of presidency after the end of the colonial era; he expressed that he was one of the presidents who does not deny the brutality and exploitation of European colonialism. He further acknowledged that the destinies of Europeans and Africans are interlocked and that moving forward together in harmony and cooperation is a key for joint success. Macron also strongly suggested a need to improve cooperation at the grassroots level, alongside cooperation efforts through governmental relations and interactions among large companies. At another summit, the Summit of the International Organization of the Francophonie in Yerevan, Macron stated succinctly that the center of the Francophone world was located "neither to the right nor to the left of the Seine, but undoubtedly in the basin of the Congo River." He added that there was growing potential for development of African countries.<sup>333</sup>

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<sup>331</sup> Diplomacy, "Senegal."

<sup>332</sup> "France and Africa: Towards a New Model of Relations?," Russian International Affairs Council, 2021, accessed 15 August, 2022, <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/france-and-africa-towards-a-new-model-of-relations/>.

<sup>333</sup> Chikhachev, "France and Africa: Towards a New Model of Relations?."

## CHAPTER 5

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings obtained from interviews conducted with Malian and Senegalese graduate students living in Turkey. The responses of the students are analyzed under two main headings. The data analysis is made under five themes crafted after close inspection and evaluation of the responses obtained from the participants.

First of all, the implications of being an African student in Turkey were investigated by directing the participants to questions concerning their motivations for choosing Turkey as a study destination. Likewise, they were asked to compare educational quality and scholarship opportunities between Turkey and France. Comparisons are fundamental way to reach a conclusion while thinking about the soft power of Turkey and France. Further questions probed whether France or Turkey has more credibility in Mali and Senegal. Next, the interview inquired into whether or not colonization has had an impact on these student's perceptions. Finally, the interviewees were asked to make projections for France's and Turkey's future positions and presence in the region.

Before examining the research findings, it is useful to describe the general profile of the interviewees. The research participants are all graduate students living in different provinces in Turkey. Some of them are doing their master's currently, while others are undertaking PhD studies in diverse fields of the social sciences. 10 interviewees from Mali and 9 from Senegal took part in the interviews. All the participants have a good breadth of knowledge about Turkey's and France's relations with West Africa, France's colonial history, power relations in international relations, and so on. Hence

there is a fit between their qualifications and the researcher's aim to question comparatively the soft power of France and Turkey in West Africa. The interviewees were given an opportunity to choose between Turkish and English to express themselves throughout the interview. In this manner, they had chance to express themselves as comfortably as possible without facing a language barrier. It is worth mentioning that except for three, all the participants preferred to give their responses in Turkish and said they would be able to express themselves better in Turkish. It should come as no surprise that they opted for Turkish given that they live in Turkey and are receiving their postgraduate education at Turkish universities. However, this preference on the part of the interviewees could also be interpreted in such a way that they have become acquainted with Turkish culture and language and that they have got used to living in Turkey.

## **5.1. The Interviews with Malians**

### **5.1.1. Being an African Student in Turkey**

Almost all participants expressed their content for being given chance to pursue their studies in Turkey. Their motivations and urges for choosing Turkey as a study destination are more or less the same, but certainly there are some differences.

Some participants expressed a true distaste, even outright hatred, for France. All of them knit their brows while expressing this in their own words. The first reason for them to follow their higher education in Turkey was because of the France's colonial history on the continent. For instance, M1 unveiled the contempt he feels for France as follows:

I have had an attitude against France since my childhood. I think that I have a negative attitude towards imperial powers. Even though my father

has worked in France for about 40 years and I have received education in French [in Mali], I have always had a negative opinion of France.<sup>334</sup>

Another participant, M2, also noted memories of France that were established in his homeland, saying that, as a result of this, studying in France was out of the question for him. He manifested a bitter resentment against France:

I have thought to receive a better education in Turkey. Why didn't I go to France? I fully hate France since my childhood. When I thought about the brutalities, they have done to us, I didn't want to study in France. They don't like us! They hate us! These ideas have been passing through my mind since my childhood.<sup>335</sup>

A significant point to consider here is that traumas experienced in childhood and constant observation of France's (neo)-colonial attitudes made some codes like "hatred of France" engrained in the minds of young Malians. It follows that their preference of Turkey as a destination to study cannot be explained solely by Turkey's soft power implementation in the region. The interviewees invariably stated that they did not have much knowledge about Turkey before going to study there. At this juncture, other factors were mentioned: that Turkish society is Islamic, for instance, is a reason for the research participants' interest in studying in Turkey. Evidently, the reason for choosing Turkey to study does not only grow out of Turks being Muslims, but along the similar lines, majority of participants think that Turkey is a better option to come and get education in the field of Islamic Theology. M3 explicated his reasons for choosing Turkey:

I am graduate of two bachelor's programs. I have studied both Arabic philology, and Divinity. I preferred Turkey to do my master's. Turkey is better to study Islamic Divinity [than France]. I have come to Turkey as it is a Muslim country. The area of theology is better developed here than in

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<sup>334</sup> Benim küçüklüğümden beri Fransa'ya karşı bir tavrım var. Emperyalist güçlere karşı bir tavrım olduğunu düşünüyorum. Aynı zamanda babam yaklaşık 40-45 yıl Fransa'da çalışmış. Gördüğümüz eğitim Fransızca olmasına rağmen anti Fransız bir düşüncem vardı açıkçası.

<sup>335</sup> Türkiye'de daha rahat bir eğitim alacağımı düşündüm. Niye Fransa ya gitmedim. Benim çocukluktan beri Fransa'ya karşı bir nefretim var. Bize yaptıkları eziyetleri düşününce Fransa'da okumak istemedim. Bunlar bizi sevmiyor. Bunlar bizden nefret ediyor. Çocukluktan beri geçiyordu ama aklımda hala var.



France. I could have studied in France too. But I have acted on the basis of where education benefits me better. If I had decided to study something else, I may have chosen France.<sup>336</sup>

The participants also discussed the education system of Mali. They stated that elementary, secondary and high schools in Mali have been developed along two different tracks. The first group of schools are those where the medium of instruction is French and the curriculum involves courses related to the history and culture of France. Graduates of those schools have more prestige before state institutions. On the other side, there are schools - called Madrasah - which teach courses are primarily in Arabic, with some given in French. The academic program of Madrasahs includes courses on Islamic sciences like Kalam, Fiqh, Prophetic biography, and courses taught at French-medium schools.

Some of these students' preference for Turkey as a study destination did not only stem from their field of study, but also from their previous academic background, for example receiving an education at a Madrasahs (in Mali). To illustrate, M2 grounded his motivation to study in Turkey in both his academic background and his expectations:

I wanted like to study abroad when I was at high school. I am a graduate of Imam-Hatib (religious vocational high school), and I was either going to go Saudi Arabia or Turkey to study. Because Turkey is a secular country, I thought I would be able to study in Turkey more freely. When you study in Turkey, no matter what sect you belong to, being Wahabi, Shiite or not having affiliation with any sect does not matter while studying Divinity. None of the theologians I know in Mali studied in France. Turkey, Saudi Arabia, or Iran is preferred to study Divinity by Malians.<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> Ben iki lisans okudum. Arap Dili ve Edebiyatı ve ardından İlahiyat. Yüksek lisans yapmak için [Türkiye'yi] tercih ettim. Türkiye'de İlahiyat okumak daha iyi. Müslüman bir ülke olduğu için Türkiye'ye geldim. Hem de İlahiyat burada gelişmiş ve Fransa'ya göre daha iyi. Fransa'da da okuyabilirdim. Hangi eğitim bana faydalı oluyorsa ona göre hareket ettim. Başka eğitim olsaydı belki Fransa'yı tercih edebilirdim.

<sup>337</sup> Ben lisedeyken de üniversiteyi yurtdışında okumayı istiyordum. Ben İmam Hatip mezunuyum. Ya Türkiye ya da Suudi Arabistan'a gidecektim. Türkiye laik bir ülke olduğundan dolayı eğitimimi özgürce alabileceğimi düşündüm. Gerek Vahhabi ol gerek Şii ol gerek mezhepsiz ol [Türkiye'de rahat eğitim alabilirsin] ... Mali'de tanıdığım hiçbir İlahiyatçı Fransa'da değil. İlahiyat okumak için ya İran ya Arabistan ya da Türkiye tercih ediliyor.

Another interviewee, M10, also opined on the efficacy of Turkish higher education system when it comes to studying Theology, saying that:

There are two types of schools in Mali: Arab schools and French schools. I studied at Arab schools. Those who receive their academic formation from these schools generally opt for studying in Arab countries. I chose Turkey to study. There are two reasons behind my decision. The first reason is religion. Once upon a time, the Ottoman Empire and caliphate were here. Thus, I preferred Turkey on the basis of religion. Secondly Turkey is a mighty country and also it defends Islam. This is why I preferred Turkey for my master's.<sup>338</sup>

It is apparent that M10 sees modern Turkey as an extension of the Ottoman Empire. Somehow, Turkey is identified with its nation's Muslimness by Malians in general. The interviewees articulate that Malian society, at large, sees Turkey as a legacy of Ottoman Empire. One can see that M10 admired Turkey when he was choosing the destination for his masters.

Another point that some participants put forward as a reason to study in Turkey is their interest in getting out of their comfort zones. That is, some of them admitted that despite seeming an unwise choice at first sight, coming to Turkey was their own choice and this choice has resulted in their professional and social development. None of the interviewees expressed any regret about coming to and studying in Turkey. On the contrary, generally they view their choice as a fortunate one.

For instance, M1 is of the opinion that coming Turkey was, initially, a wrong choice for him. But things turned out to his benefit after he got used to the lifestyle and his studies in Turkey. He recalled his experience as an undergraduate in Turkey by saying that, "Getting to know a new country; learning a foreign language; meeting new

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<sup>338</sup> Mali'de iki tür okul var. Arap okulları ve Fransız okulları. Ben Arap okullarında eğitim gördüm. Genelde Mali'de bu okullarda eğitim görenler okumak için Arap ülkelerini tercih ederler. Bu nedenle Türkiye'yi tercih ettim. Bunun iki nedeni var. Birincisi din konusunda. Tarihte Osmanlı devleti ve hilafet buradaydı. İslamiyet açısından Türkiye'yi tercih ettim. İkincisi ise Türkiye güçlü bir ülke ve İslam'ı da savunuyor.

people; have been the best experiences of my lifetime. When I was 23, I knew a new language, new culture, and a new world.”<sup>339</sup>

M4 also expressed his gratitude and satisfaction at coming Turkey to study, saying, “I have always been keen on the Turkish language and culture. My grades were high. I thought that I could acquire Turkish in Turkey. I like languages so much. Knowing that I would learn Turkish in Turkey motivated me before coming here.”<sup>340</sup>

Interviewees are generally content with scholarship opportunities Turkey offers. It is thought that Turkey’s scholarship opportunities are way more extensive than those of France, and Turkey does not require prospective students to have a certain sum of money in their bank accounts. Besides, Turkish scholarships are more comprehensive, (covering tuition fees, monthly stipends and accommodation). In contrast, French scholarships – offered to a fixed quota of African students - are relatively small. Yet, what makes France a preferable study destination for Malian students is that France allows students to work part-time, which Turkey does not. Thus, both France and Turkey have strengths and shortcomings in terms of the scholarships they provide for African students.

### **5.1.2. (Dis)connection with Turkish/French Culture**

When asked about their affinity with Turkish and French culture, the interviewees’ answers proved to be dichotomic since France is seen as close to Mali in cultural terms; in other respects, however Turkish culture is seen as more akin to Malian culture. To deconstruct this dichotomy, the way of life and culture generally in France are seen as closer to the way of life in Mali because of France’s long history in the country. France has had an immense effect on constitutional structures, economic affairs and sociocultural matters in West Africa. On the other hand, the participants highlighted

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<sup>339</sup> Farklı bir dil öğrenmek, farklı bir ülkeyi tanımak ve farklı insanlarla tanışmak gerçekten hayatımdaki en güzel şey oldu. 23 yaşındayken, yeni bir dil, yeni bir kültür ve yeni bir dünya öğrenmiş oldum.

<sup>340</sup> Türkiye kültürüne ve diline meraklıydım. Notlarım yüksekti. Türkiye’de dil kazanabilirdim. Ben dilleri çok seviyorum. Buraya geldiğimde Türkçeyi öğreneceğimi bilmek beni motive etti.

that the culture of Mali bears a resemblance to Turkish culture when it comes to religion, ethics, and etiquette.

The participants did not welcome similarities between French and Malian cultures, and opined that Mali's current characteristics have been imposed on it by France and do not belong to Mali and Malians. In simple terms, the notion that modern Mali's culture has similarities with that of France is an imported creation. Mali today has a multilayered cultural structure. The outer shell of this structure is made up of French habits and customs laid down during the colonial era. This outer shell does not reflect the deep-lying reality of a genuine Malian culture hidden beneath the cloak of French culture. In point of fact, the innermost core cultural traits of Mali bear a stronger resemblance to Turkish culture.

M1 complained about the "invasion" of Malian culture by France as follows:

French culture appears to be our own culture, but in reality, it is not. French culture has been imposed on us. I am against that culture. Why am I against French culture? Because I see that France has exploited us. I mean, I don't feel this, but I see it for myself. I see that France live off the resources exploited from us. I see that France has taken all my rights away. Why do I support this culture?! I didn't and I won't.<sup>341</sup>

That the surface appearance of Malian culture is heavily imbued with French culture may make one conclude that Malian and French cultures are identical, but they are not. The essence of Malian culture is similar to Turkish culture. This is not explained only with reference to religion. It is about a way of life and mental codes. M1 shed light on this issue:

I contend that my own culture originally corresponds better to Turkish culture. It has nothing to do with religion; it is a humanitarian issue. Yet, there is religious similarity as well. 95% of the population in Mali is

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<sup>341</sup> Fransız kültürü gerçekten sanki bizim kültürümüz gibi ama değil. Empoze edilmiş bir kültür. Ben de o kültüre karşıyım. Neden karşıyım? Çünkü Fransızların beni sömürdüğünü görüyorum. Hissetmiyorum, görüyorum yani! Ve benim üzerimde yaşadıklarını görüyorum. Ve bütün haklarımı onların elimden aldıklarını görüyorum. Ben o kültüre niye destek vereyim. Vermedim. Vermeyeceğim.

Muslim. That's why I believe that there is an association with Turkish culture since religion is also part of a culture. As I have stated before, my own culture is similar to Turkish culture. It differs from French culture. We are not going to continue to keep that culture alive as it is an imposed culture and does not suit us.<sup>342</sup>

Another central issue is that France is a better-known country compared to Turkey in Mali, both among the general public and the elites and intellectuals. For one thing, France was a colonial power in the region and was central to the acculturation process of Malians. The educational structure of Mali was inspired by the French system, and in schools there are courses on the culture, history, and politics of France. Some participants even pointed out that Malians know the history of France better than their own history. Equally relevant to the issue is Turkey's rise in the region. It is a fact that Turkey has been increasing its visibility in the region by making inroads due to its humanitarian initiatives as well as to strengthening its international relations with Francophone states of the region by opening new diplomatic representations and by making political and economic deals with them. Hence Turkey is becoming more well known in Mali. Certainly, Turkey's inroads into the region, including Mali, have made it an alternative partner to France for Malians. M1 described this new state of affairs:

France is better known in Mali because of the fact that they [the French] have been in the region all along, and they are active in education in Mali. However, the trend has changed now. Society develops familiarity with other countries. With the prevalence of the internet, people began to look at events through different windows. Therefore, Turkey has got popularity in West Africa.... Turkey has opened new trade routes to Africa. As time goes on, the power of colonization is getting weaker. This can be seen as a rebellion against colonization. This rebellion has already started, but now it is accentuated insofar as people would spit in one's face when he or she talks about France. Everything has an end and we are coming end of this story.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> Kendi öz kültürümün Türk kültürüne benzediğini düşünüyorum. Bu dini bir mesele değil bu bir insanlık meselesi. Ama dini olarak da bir benzerlik var. Bizim ülkemizin %95'i Müslüman ve oradan da Türklerle ortaklık olduğunu düşünüyorum. Çünkü din de kültürün bir parçası. Ama daha önce anlattığım bizim kendi öz kültürlerimiz Türk kültürüne benziyor. Fransız kültürüne benzemiyor. Ve biz de o kültüre devam etmeyeceğiz. Çünkü bize empoze edilmiş ve bize uymuyor.

<sup>343</sup> Fransızlar uzun süredir orda oldukları için ve aynı zamanda eğitimin içinde oldukları için daha fazla biliniyor ama şu an trend değişti. Diğer ülkeler de bilinmeye başlandı. İnternet yaygınlaşmaya başladıktan sonra insanlar daha farklı pencerelerden bakmaya başladılar. O yüzden Türkiye de Batı

On the other hand, another participant said that he naturally feels a connection with France as his mother tongue is French. It is unwise to deny the impact of France on the acculturation of Malians. M3 detailed his take on the resemblance between Malian culture, on the one hand, and French culture, on the other in different respects:

We have cultural commonalities with Turkey. Religion is also a part of culture. However, there is an affinity with France as well since our official language is French in Mali. In truth, we feel a closeness to both sides. I take some features of French culture unavoidably as a Francophone. However, I feel also close to Turkish culture as there are some similarities between Malian and Turkish cultures. For example, family is an important institution for us just like for Turkish people, but family is not that important in France. This is one of the common points between Turkish and Malian cultures. Another thing is hospitality; we are hospitable to our guests and the same is true for Turks too.<sup>344</sup>

Furthermore, a significant number of Malians live in France. One participant stated that Malians constitute the largest diaspora in France after Algerians. It follows that cultural proximity between France and Mali also results from the Malian diaspora in France. It is inevitable that Malians in the homeland get acquainted well with French society and culture seeing that their relatives make a living in France or even acquire French citizenship. That is, exchanges of information and ties between Malians in the homeland and their relatives in France make the relations tight and pave the way for the familiarity of Malians with France. M3 underscored the significance of the Malian diaspora by saying, “Most of the Malian diaspora live in France. Let’s not forget that! They are an economic source for Mali.”<sup>345</sup> In the same vein, M5 asserted, “France is

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Afrika’da meşhur olmaya başladı. Gerçekten ticaret yoluyla da Türkiye Batı Afrika’ya ticaret yolları açtı. Ama sömürge gücünün her geçen gün azaldığını görüyoruz. O nedenle bunu eski sömürgeye karşı bir ayaklanma olarak görebiliriz. Zaten eskiden de vardı ama şu anda köyde bile insanlar onlara Fransa dediğin zaman sana tükürmek isterler. Her şeyin bir sonu vardır ve bunun sonuna doğru geliyoruz.

<sup>344</sup> Türklerle kültürel ortaklıklarımız var. Din de kültür oluyor. Ama dil kapsamında resmi dil olarak Fransızca kullandığımız için Fransa’ya yakınlık var. Her iki tarafa da yakınlığımız var. Ben Fransızca bilen bir insan olarak ister istemez Fransız kültüründen bir şeyler alıyorum. Bizde aile önemli ama Fransa’da o kadar değil. Bu da ortak noktalardan bir tanesi [Türklerle]. Burada da misafirperverlik var. Bizim ülkemizde de aynı şey var.

<sup>345</sup> Çoğu Mali diasporası Fransa’da yaşıyor. Bunu unutmayalım. Diaspora olarak orada yaşıyor ve çalışıyorlar. Onlar Mali için de ekonomik bir kaynaktır.

better known in Mali owing to the fact that number of Malians studying in France is higher and there is a large Malian diaspora in France. This is why France is better known in Mali.”<sup>346</sup>

Religion is a prominent factor in the interviewees’ thoughts because when asked which country they would choose to live their whole life in, the answer was Turkey since they feel closer to Turkey in the matter of religion. M9 described the rationale behind his preference for Turkey by saying, “I feel closer to Turkish culture. Mali is a Muslim country and the same is true for Turkey too. I feel more comfortable in Turkey as a Muslim. But putting the religious factor aside, I would go to France to live.”<sup>347</sup>

Their identification of Turkey with Islam is a factor that makes Malians take an interest in Turkey’s activities in the region. This is illustrated in the statement of M3:

95% of Mali’s population is Muslim. Turkey is seen as a country representing and defending Islam. France carries on aid activities in Mali on behalf of humanitarianism, but Turkey does the same under the name of both humanitarianism and Islam. That’s why the aid of Turkey is better. Malians are anxious about whether there is something else behind France’s aid.<sup>348</sup>

Turkey’s opening of new endowments and NGOs acting on behalf of Turkey promote Turkey’s image, resulting in the formation of a positive image of Turkey. For instance, M8 said:

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<sup>346</sup> Fransa’yı daha iyi tanıyorlar. Çocuklar Fransa’nın tarihini okuyorlar. Hem de şöyle bir şey var. Fransa’da okuyanlar daha fazla olduğu için hem de Fransa’da büyük bir Mali diasporası olduğu için Fransa daha çok biliniyor.

<sup>347</sup> Türkiye’nin kültürüne yakın hissediyorum. Mali Müslüman bir ülke ve Türkiye de öyle. Ben de bir Müslüman olarak Türkiye’de kendimi daha hissediyorum. Din faktörünü devre dışı bırakırsak Fransa’yı tercih ederdim.

<sup>348</sup> Mali, halkı %95 Müslüman bir ülke ve Türkiye İslam’ı temsil eden bir ülke olarak görüyorlar. Fransa insani faaliyetler yürütüyor ama insani adıyla. Ama Türkiye faaliyetlerini insani ve İslami adı altında yapıyor. O yüzden Türkiye’nin yardımları daha iyi. Kötü tecrübe de olduğu için insanlar Fransa’nın yardımlarının arkasında bir şeyler mi var diye merak ediyorlar.

Turkey is seen positively in general public of Mali. Turkey opens foundations in Mali. France also has foundations there, but they are not preoccupied with religious activities. Society embraces and likes religious foundations. [For Turkish foundations] People ask about them, and when they hear that they are coming from Turkey, they feel pleased. That's why people have confidence in Turkey.<sup>349</sup>

When asked about his opinion on where he would like to live till the end of his life, M2 confidently asserts "I would spend my whole life in Turkey for sure. If I am not obliged, I will not go [choose] France. I read history. When I look into past events, I feel like they are happening today. To exemplify, when I see luxurious places in France, I feel smell of my ancestors' blood! I truly hate France!"<sup>350</sup>

Along similar lines, M6 admitted:

I feel closer to Turkish culture than that of France in terms of religion and humanity. On the other hand, even if we cannot claim that we are closer to France, reality remains that we know France better in the fields of politics and education. Adaptation to France is in a way easier. For instance, if I stay ten years in Turkey, I feel as a foreigner when I go back to Mali. However, when I stay ten years in France, and go back to Mali, I don't feel like a foreigner, but just normal. Especially, for an educated individual, France is closer."<sup>351</sup>

One of the interviewees, M7 complained about the attitudes of Turkish people while approaching Africans. He believes that even if he feels closer to Turkish culture owing to being a coreligionist with Turks, there is one thing bothering Africans which at times undermines their attachment to Turkish culture. The perception of some Turks

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<sup>349</sup> Halk için konuşacak olursam Türkiye daha güvenilir görülüyor. Mali'de birçok vakıf açılıyor. Fransa'nın da dernekleri var ama dini işlerle uğraşmıyorlar. Ama dini şeylerle uğraşan dernekleri halk benimsiyor, bunu beğeniyor. Halk soruyor bunlar kim diye. Bunlar Türkler. O yüzden halk en çok Türkiye'ye güveniyor.

<sup>350</sup> Kesinlikle Türkiye'yi tercih ederdim. Zorunda kalmasam Fransa'ya gitmem. Ben mezhepler tarihi okuyorum. Geçmişteki şeylere baktığımda sanki bugün olmuş gibi hissediyorum. Mesela ben Fransa'da lüks yerleri gördüğüm zaman dedelerimin kanının kokusunu hissediyorum.

<sup>351</sup> Dini ve insani açıdan Türkiye bana daha yakın geliyor ama siyaset ve eğitim alanında Fransa daha yakın diyemiyoruz ama daha çok tanıyoruz, adapte olmak daha kolay. Türkiye'de on sene kalsam Mali'ye döndüğümde yabancı gibi hissedebilirken Fransa'da on sene yaşasam döndüğüm zaman normal hissederim. Özellikle eğitimi için Fransa daha yakın.



of Black Africans may lead to resentment on the part of some Africans. The issue is succinctly interpreted by M7:

I think that people in this country [Turkey] are victims of a closed education system. They know very little about what the whole world is about. That's why what they know about Mali [or Africa in general] is all about documentaries on Africa. So, they see me through those documentaries, those aids, those foundations collecting money to help Malians, taking animals for slaughter to Africa... It is really uncomfortable for me to be seen through those lenses. I do not speak for all Malians but I speak from my own experience. On the other hand, in general, French people easily understand my difference and cooperate with me.

What M7 is expressing here is not his resentment of Turkish people. He does not think that Turkish people are ill-minded; on the contrary, he likes Turkey and thinks that Turks are warm and helpful people. However, on occasion, being a foreigner turns out to be being an "other" in some places in Turkey. The "otherness" does not necessarily mean inferiority. Here "other" does not have a malignant connotation; it is a label that a Black African living in Turkey cannot get rid of easily. M7 believes that this kind of attitude is, in a sense, a discrimination based on ignorance or lack of knowledge. It does not result from ill will, but it may still bother Malians or Africans in general. He maintains that, "I cannot really generalize. There are exceptions, but for general society it is hard to understand your [an African's] difference. They point a finger at you, not that they hate you, but they see you different and don't know how to manifest that."

### **5.1.3. Comparing Power and Credibility of the Two Countries**

When asked to compare Turkey and France in global politics, the responses identified France as a more powerful country in international relations. When assessed on the basis of basic qualitative data such as military and economic capacity, the interviewees acknowledged that France is perceived more powerful than Turkey in Mali. However, leaving aside basic data and speaking of "attraction" or soft power, the comparison was different. Turkey has boosted its soft power assets and implemented its soft power initiatives in its relations with neighboring countries and in distant geographies as well.

Another point deserving attention is about Turkey's increasing defense exports. In particular, Turkey's production of defense equipment like unmanned aerial vehicles and armed unmanned aerial vehicles is well known in African countries, including in Mali, where these Turkish-made arms are in use. M1 spoke of how France and Turkey are perceived in terms of power in Mali:

France makes use of hard power in its policy towards West Africa. On the other hand, Turkey crafts its foreign policy on soft power. Turkey puts soft power into practice. It's a win-win. The world is bigger than before thanks to globalization. France is not and should not be our only partner. Turkey does business in Africa and does not prevent Africans from doing their own business too; does not prevent them from making a profit. Turkey can put its foreign policy into practice in Africa without causing any inconvenience to African states. Turkish businesses and governmental bodies operate in Africa without harming Africans.<sup>352</sup>

Another dimension of the matter M1 put into perspective concerns France's dependency on its former colonies in Africa for raw materials which are processed to or in the "Metropole":

It is obvious in all African countries that France cannot afford to live without resources coming from its former colonies in Africa. Why is that? Because everyone knows that France has no resources of its own; all its resources come from Africa and France strives to block other countries' entry into Africa. I mean, we can evidently see that it [France's dominance in Africa] is not going to last long.<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> Fransa'nın Afrika'da uyguladığı politika sert güç olarak geçiyor. Türkiye'nin Batı Afrika'da uyguladığı güç yumuşak güç olarak geçiyor. Bir ticaret yoluyla; bir kazan kazan. Dünya sadece Fransa'dan ibaret değil. Türkler Batı Afrika'da bir koloni gibi hareket etmiyor. Türkiye savunduğu tezi politikasında da uyguluyor. Artık kazan kazan zamanı geldi. Yani dünya büyüktür. Globalleşme. Sen ticaret yapabiliyorsun, ben de ticaret yapabiliyorum. Ama sen beni engelleme ben de seni engellemeyeceğim. Ama ben kimseye zarar vermeden; kimsenin ülkesinde oturmadan herkesle çalışabiliyorum.

<sup>353</sup> Ve Fransa'nın ülke olarak Batı Afrika ya da *Francophone* ülkeler olmadan tek başına yaşayamayacağı bütün Afrika ülkelerince biliniyor. Niye çünkü Fransa'nın elinde bir şey olmadığını; elindeki bütün kaynakların Afrika'dan geldiğini ve Afrika'ya gitmek isteyen diğer ülkelere de engeller koyduğunu herkes görüyor. Yani o yüzden bunun uzun sürmeyeceğini açıkça görüyoruz.

As another participant stated:

Turkey is developing in general. Recently, Turkey has asked international community to recognize it by its Turkish name, Türkiye, to which the UN has agreed. This demonstrates that Turkey is getting stronger in international politics. But, let's not forget that France has been in Mali for a long time, and our administrators have studied in France. Absolutely, France had an influence on them. Currently, France is politically seen as more powerful in Africa, but do they love Turkey in politics? The answer is a resounding 'Yes'.<sup>354</sup>

Turkey's rise in the region as an alternative to France was also noted by some participants. For instance, M7 said:

Malian society sees France as a declining powerful nation; on the contrary, they see Turkey as a rising powerful nation. Most Malians approve Turkish policies and think that it has a good future in Africa. They don't appreciate the politics of France. We all know that France has been a powerful nation for so many years. But in recent years we Malians see France as declining. Turkey has the potential to be much more powerful than France. France does not have a prosperous future in Africa in terms of politics.

#### **5.1.4. The Impact of (Neo)colonization on Perceptions**

That West Africans see France through the prism of colonization is clear. This conception of France is due to its persistence in maintaining a colonial mentality in its relations with African countries. France gets strength from its former African colonies in its international relations. In some international platforms France still sees itself as the patron of Francophone African states. According to takes of interviewees, Malians are aware of France's stance, and they, especially educated ones, perceive France as a behemoth living off the backs of Africans not only materially, but also immaterially by boosting its own reputation and recognition. M1 elucidates this matter:

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<sup>354</sup> Genel olarak şüphesiz ki Türkiye gelişiyor. En son olarak Türkiye'ye İngilizce 'de Türkiye denmesi için karar alındı. Bu neyi gösteriyor. Türkiye'nin siyaseti güçleniyor. Ama unutmayalım ki Fransa bizim ülkemizde uzun zamandır var ve yöneticilerin çoğu Fransa'da öğrenim gördüler. Onların üzerinde Fransa'nın etkisi oluyor. Şimdilik Fransa'nın Afrika'da siyasi gücü daha fazla ama Türkiye'yi siyasette seviyorlar mı? Evet seviyorlar.

The power of France comes from Africa. In the EU, for example, any new policy on Africa is deliberated in consultation with France. The AU speaks only with France when it comes to issues concerning Africa. France has a lot of former colonies in Africa. That's why its opinion matters. France is like an ambassador of Francophone African countries in the EU. So, these are advantages for France. France does not want to lose them.

Another action of France that makes some Malians think that France cannot rid itself of its colonial mentality is France's persistent denigration of other actors having the potential to partner with West African states like Mali. It is because France thinks that other potential partners of Francophone African states are "unqualified" to form relations with them. This mentality of France and its insincerity in the minds of Malians are reflected in the words of M1:

France tries to discredit potential partners of Africa. For instance, France says 'Turkey has itself economic problems, so how it can help you? Turkey is not good at democracy and human rights, so how can this country help you?' But there is something we do not understand: France says 'I am the most democratic country'. But nothing is like that. France is wrong. France steals money from Africans! France is against the coups. But, if there is a coup in Africa, and putschists cooperate with France, France claps hands. So, France loses its prestige, France loses its influence...

On the other hand, Turkey's absence of a colonial history gives it the upper hand in its international relations with West African states. Turkey's image is positive in the eyes of Malians, and Turkey has a veritable advantage to build to this to make inroads into the region. This phenomenon is well illustrated in the words of M1:

Turkey has some new advantages such as prestige and respect in West Africa because Turkey hasn't stolen any resources from Africa. Turkey has cooperated with Africans. Today, Turkish and African companies work together on the principle of win-win. The politics of France is, on the other hand, based on winning more than Mali.

The colonial history of France and the tragic experiences of Africa have naturally embittered their perceptions of France, as illustrated in the words of M3:

There is a saying in Mali: If a man kills a red sheep, he is going to be scared of everyone wearing red. This saying neatly describes our relations with France. In effect, we have a bad experience with France. We look at them with suspicion whenever they come. However, we open our arms to Turkey as it hasn't done such a thing [colonization] in Africa. If there was a bad experience, people would be afraid of it. Folks appreciate the activities of Turkey.<sup>355</sup>

Neocolonialization is a fact of France-Africa relations today. France has transformed “conventional colonization”, and adapted it to the needs and conjuncture of the present day. This happened to be possible with the neocolonial state of mind and policies. M9 condemned French neocolonialization as follows:

Today, the tension between France and Mali is also exacerbated by colonialism. Today, neocolonialism continues. By neocolonialism, we are talking about a colonization of people's minds rather than putting them in chains.<sup>356</sup>

By the same token, M6 complained of France's neocolonial policies, saying, “Our currency is the CFA. France gains from this. We can't get assistance from other countries without the consent of France. We are called independent, but it is not a total independence.”<sup>357</sup> Similarly, M10 described the authority of France over Mali's monetary system and how the leaders' educational backgrounds (receiving their education in France) keeps Mali under the yoke of France even today.

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<sup>355</sup> Bir Mali sözü var: Bir adam kırmızı bir koyun öldürürse, kırmızı giyen herkesten korkar. Aslında Fransa'yla kötü bir tecrübemiz var. Onlar her geldiklerinde onlara şüphe ile bakıyoruz. Ama Türkiye Afrika'da böyle bir şey yapmadığı için onlar için kollarımızı açıyoruz. Eğer kötü tecrübe olsaydı insanlar korkardı. Türkiye'nin faaliyetlerini insanlar beğeniyorlar.

<sup>356</sup> Bugün Mali ve Fransa arasındaki gerilim sömürgecilikle de körükleniyor. Bugün Neo-kolonizasyon devam ediyor. Neo-kolonializm 'de zincirle vurmaktan ziyade insanların zihinlerini, beyinlerini kolonize etmekten bahsediyoruz. Çünkü onların ekonomisine, siyasetine müdahale ediyorsunuz.

<sup>357</sup> Bizim para birimimiz Fransiva (Batı Afrika Frank'ı). Fransa kazanıyor. Değerli madenleri çoğu Fransa'ya gidiyor. Hatta başka ülkelerden Fransa'nın izni olmadan yardım alamıyoruz. Maalesef bağımsız diyorlar ama tam bağımsız değil yani.

Another interviewee stated: “Turkey is seen as more credible and sincere in Mali as it has no ‘record’, but France is generally perceived in bad terms; yet, there are some who think that France has brought civilization and culture.”<sup>358</sup>

### **5.1.5. Future Projections**

The preceding paragraphs have shown that this research’s participants hold largely negative views of France’s role in West Africa. This subsection evaluates their ideas as to what France should not do in West Africa if it is to avoid being further disliked in the region. In addition, the interviewees’ suggestions for Turkey to consolidate its presence and develop long-lasting relations with countries in the region are also explored.

First and foremost, there is a general consensus on the erroneousness and unsustainable approach of France in the region. France should halt its oppressive policies towards Francophone African countries, including Mali. Otherwise, it is unlikely for France to maintain its presence there. M1 stated that:

For me, France is like an army. As I have said before, France uses hard power...If France does not stop using hard power sooner or later, other powers will replace it. Turkey should think that it is an alternative to France for African countries. Turkey should give scholarships to African students. This is soft power. Soft power helps Turkey to be in Africa.

M3 also pointed out the significance of soft power for Turkey’s Africa policy. He opined that Mali is seeking partners with whom it can establish free and fair relations, not be a patron, as with France. The majority of the participants also censured France’s efforts to isolate its former African countries. They believe that diversification of partners is not an option, but a requirement for the region to gain its de facto

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<sup>358</sup> Türkiye daha güvenilir ve dürüst olarak gözüküyor. Mali’de sabıkası olmadığı için daha dürüst ve güvenilir olarak görüyorlar. Mali’de genellikle Fransa kötü algılanıyor ama Fransa’nın medeniyet ve eğitim getirdiğini düşünenler de var.

independence and remove itself from what France sees as “its” sphere of interest. Persistently interfering in elections, ousting legitimate leaders, and patronizing the domestic and foreign policies of the countries of the region will harm France’s position. As M9 stated:

Ties between France and Mali cannot be cut. Breaking off France completely is not possible, but we can balance our relations. Likewise, when it comes to education, Mali’s own curriculum rather than that of France may be used. Why is only French the official language? Let’s say that the most common vernacular of Mali be the official language, but French also continue to be spoken. In short, I think that we can balance our relations with France on the basis of political ethics, yet we cannot talk about an absolute break off.<sup>359</sup>

Turkey’s efforts to provide educational opportunities for students coming from Africa is highly appreciated by the participants. They believe that it could result in the consolidation of links between Turkey and Mali. Each African student returning to their homeland upon completion of their education in Turkey is a bridge between their country and Turkey. A growing number of these bridges will bring about both good relations between the Malian and Turkish governments as well as between the peoples of these two states. M2 expressed support for Turkey’s initiative in education:

Supporting [African] students in Turkey is a good policy. They are not going to cut ties with Turkey after turning back to their country. The increasing number of Turkish schools in Mali and the enhancement of industrial facilities are significant. France exploits Africa especially in these two areas. The numbers of French schools and industrial facilities have been increasing. But Turkey supports African students. This is good. Turkey does not seem to be very interested in Africa in terms of education. Turkey extends humanitarian relief to Africa, but I believe that industrial facilities and businesses are really not sufficient in Africa. I suggest that Turkey should give more weight to education and increasing business

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<sup>359</sup> Fransa ve Mali arasındaki bağ kesinlikle kesilemiyor. Fransa’dan komple kopmak mümkün değil ama ilişkileri dengeleyebiliriz. Aynı şekilde eğitim konusunda komple Fransa müfredatı yerine Mali müfredatı da olabilir. Neden resmi dil sadece Fransızca olsun. Mesela Mali’nin en çok konuşulan yerli dili resmi dili olsun ama yine Mali’de Fransızca da konuşulmaya devam etsin. Siyasi etiğe göre ilişkileri dengeleyebiliriz diye düşünüyorum ama tamamen bir kopmadan bahsedemeyiz.

activities in Mali and in West Africa generally. It is important to establish industries and Turkish schools in Africa.<sup>360</sup>

Along the same lines, M5 pointed out:

If Turkey improves scholarship opportunities further given to Malian students, this will be better. When these students come back to here [Mali], they introduce, and promote Turkey. They will make explanations in favor of Turkey. Besides, they will be inclined to work with Turkey given their strong relations with Turkey.<sup>361</sup>

Some interviewees bemoaned what they saw as Turkey's lack of interest in analyzing what really Malians need. Mali needs know-how and technology transfer in order to produce for itself and be self-reliant. M8 described this issue as follows:

Turkey should find out needs of society in Mali before putting its policies into practice. We need military equipment... We need industrial production; for instance, we can cultivate cotton, but we cannot process it. Mali should be able to do things for itself. Turkey should come and open companies, construct railways etc.<sup>362</sup>

After the gradual withdrawal of France from Mali in military terms, there is somehow a power vacuum in Mali which is tried to be filled by Russia. That is why Turkey should be agile and not wait before offering military assistance to Mali. For M5:

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<sup>360</sup> Türkiye'de öğrencilerin okutulması ve desteklenmeleri iyi bir politika. Bunlar ülkelerine geri döndüklerinde Türkiye ile bağlarını kesmeyecekler. Mali'de Türkiye'nin okullarının ve sanayilerinin çoğalması önemli. Fransa bu iki alanda Batı Afrika'yı sömürüyor. Oradaki Fransız okulları ve sanayileri çoğaldı. Ama Türkiye Afrika'ya öğrencileri alıp götürüyor. Bu güzel bir şey. Veya Afrika'ya yardım gönderiyor. Maddi destekler sağlıyor. Ama biraz eğitim açısından Afrika ile ilgilenmediler. Türkiye'deki sanayiler ve iş yerleri Afrika'da çok az yani. Türkiye'nin bu iki şeye ağırlık vermesini öneririm. Okulları çoğaltsınlar. Bir de sanayi olarak da çoğaltsınlar. Afrika'da sanayi kurmak önemli.

<sup>361</sup> Türkiye eğitim açısından öğrencilere daha fazla burs verirse onun için daha iyi olur. Burada okuyan öğrenciler Türkiye'ye döndükleri zaman Türkiye'yi tanıtıyorlar, Türkiye'nin lehinde açıklamalar yapıyorlar. Hem de daha fazla Türkiye'yle ilişkisi güçlü olduğu için Türkiye ile çalışmayı istiyorlar.

<sup>362</sup> Politika olarak gelmeden önce halkın ne istediğini tespit etmesi gerekir. Bizim askeri malzemelere ihtiyacımız var. Bir ülkede faaliyette bulunmak için neye ihtiyaç duyduğunun tespit edilmesi gerekir . . . Üretim bize çok lazım. Mesela biz pamuk satıyoruz ama bunu işleyemiyoruz. Gelip şirketler açsın, demiryolları mesela, uçak, askeri ya da tekstil alanlarında mesela.



There is no problem when it comes to the construction of schools; these are for the interests of Turkey. But if Turkey's military relations with Mali contribute to the defense of Mali, to the modernization of Mali, people are more likely to stand with Turkey. There is a power vacuum in Mali after France left. Russia is trying to fill this vacuum. Therefore, if Turkey fill this gap [before Russia], it would be better for Turkey in the future.<sup>363</sup>

Regarding Turkey's humanitarian assistance activities in the country, some interviewees voiced concerns about the methods of some Turkish NGOs. They criticized the advertising "backwardness" or "underdevelopment" of Mali through striking and dramatic images. For instance, M5 noted:

They [Turkish charities and relief agencies] do help with good faith, but the photos taken during the relief extension process harm reputation of Mali. The photos taken in poor and distant parts of Mali are shown as if the whole of Mali is like that. When people see these photos, they naturally have an adverse reaction to them.

Another research participant M7 agreed:

I think, people in Mali have confidence in Turkey, but the photographs, and videos taken by some organizations acting on behalf of Turkey.... These are not good. They document the country as if all Mali were like the media they shoot. Things are not like that. There are both positive and negative aspects. I tell you here what people talk in streets, and how they perceive the question at hand. This kind of representation encroaches on the pride of society. Not all the charities do the same thing, but some do, and they go there on behalf of Turkey. People do not think that there are some bad charities [and good ones], but think that Turkey do this and that those charities, no matter how bad they are, represent Turkey.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>363</sup> Medrese ve okul inşa etmekte bir sorun yok. Bunlar Türkiye'nin lehine. Türkiye'nin Maliyle askeri ilişkileri Malinin savunmasına katkı sağlarsa insanlar daha fazla Türkiye'nin yanında durabilirler. Fransa'nın çıkmasıyla Mali'de bir boşluk var. O boşluğu Rusya doldurmaya çalışıyor. Dolayısıyla, Türkiye bu boşluğu doldurmaya çalışırsa gelecekte Türkiye için daha iyi olabilir.

<sup>364</sup> Bence millet Türkiye'ye güveniyor. Ama bazı derneklerin çektikleri videolar, sözler, vs. bazı yerleri çekerek. Bazı şeyler videolarda kötü. Bazı yerler çekiyorlar. Videolar montaj ediyorlar. Tüm ülkeyi öyle gösteriyorlar. Pozitif şeyler de var negatif şeyler de var. Ama bu şekilde devam edilirse iyi olmayacak. Ben sokaklarda söylediklerini sizinle paylaşıyorum. Bu çok görünmüyor ama milletin guruna negatif etki ediyor. Bu Türkiye'yi kabul etmemeye neden olur. Bu sadece bir dernek [diyebilirsiniz] ama bu dernekler Türkiye adına gidiyorlar. Onlar bu dernek böyle yaptı demeyecekler. Türkiye böyle yaptı veya dedi diyecekler.

## 5.2. Interviews with Senegalese

This section of the findings spotlights the experiences, thoughts, and sentiments of Senegalese graduate students receiving their education in Turkey. One can easily draw parallels with the findings from these interviews with those conducted with the Malian participants. Yet, as could be expected, there are nuances between the responses of the two groups. Compared to the opinions of Malian interviewees, enmity felt towards France is, to a certain extent, milder among Senegalese interviewees. A significant reason behind this would be success of coup d'état that took place in 2020 when government of Mali supported by France were overthrown by Malian Armed Forces.<sup>365</sup>

The prime motivation for conducting interviews with Senegalese students studying in Turkey was to cast the research net wider to explore whether there were any subtleties and hidden details between the ideas of people from different countries in the region. However, despite the fact that there are some small discrepancies in the answers of the two groups, the general narrative and conclusions drawn from the research data are almost identical.

As with the previous section of the chapter, this part of the chapter is also divided into several categories on the basis of the themes discussed. First the motivations for coming to Turkey to study are discussed since the educational opportunities a country offers cannot be dissociated from its attractiveness, and thus from its soft power projection. Next, cultural affinities between the public of Senegal and Turkish/French society and culture are discussed. Following that, a section will be devoted to the power and credibility of these two countries in the eyes of Senegalese people. The findings from interviews with Senegalese students are concluded with an analysis of colonization's impact on their perceptions and setting out some future projections and foreign policy suggestions.

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<sup>365</sup> "Mali coup: Military promises elections after ousting president," 2020, accessed 10 January, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-53833925>.

### 5.2.1. Being an African Student in Turkey

Several factors motivated these Senegalese students to come to Turkey to study. First and foremost, they believe that their educational background is well suited to an education in Turkey as the majority of them graduated from religious education schools or, in their own words from *madrasahs*, where they were instructed in Arabic. Another driving factor behind their decision to come Turkey to do (under)graduate studies is cultural similarities between Turks and Senegalese in the form of their shared religion, namely Islam, which a leading attraction for them to study in Turkey.

Having noted that previous educational background had an impact on some interviewees' decisions to come to Turkey to study, two fine points need to be made about their preferences. The first one concerns the qualifications they have; their educational background may have led to them preferring Turkey. Students who received their education in Arabic at religious schools in Senegal are not eligible to go to France for a university degree. They are basically not seen as competent enough to study there. Therefore, coming to Turkey is more of an exigency for them rather than an option from a number of alternatives. The education structure of Senegal, therefore, limited their options. S1 illustrates this issue as follows:

Those studying in French are of more value than those studying in Arabic. Youngs graduate of French lycée are luckier than those who are graduates of an Arabic medium school. Those having studied in Arabic in high school are not likely to be admitted to university [in France]. The system does not give an opportunity to graduates of schools where the language of instruction is Arabic. That's why those students start to search for scholarship opportunities in Arab countries. If they are able to win a scholarship, they can go to those Arab countries.<sup>366</sup>

The point elucidated by S1 is mirrored in the words of S2:

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<sup>366</sup> Fransızca okuyanlar Arapça okuyulardan daha değerli. Fransız lisesi bitiren bir genç Arapça bitiren bir gençten daha şanslı. Arapça bitiren bir lisesinin üniversiteye girme imkânı çok az. Şimdi o sistemler var. Arapça okuyan öğrenciye oradaki sistem fırsat vermiyor. O da Arap ülkelerinden burs imkanlarını araştırıyor. Burs alınca Fas'a, Tunus'a, Mısır'a, Suudi Arabistan'a, Kuveyt'e vs. gidecek.

In Senegal, some private schools give weight to an education in Arabic. I have also graduated from one of those schools. Only those having studied in French consider going to France or Canada; we, students having studied in Arabic, cannot go to France. Diplomas given by Arabic schools where the language of instruction is Arabic are not recognized by France. It means that we don't have the chance to go to France. Hence, either Arab countries or other countries are options for us. It's about the system.<sup>367</sup>

The flip side of the coin, however, suggests something else. Some Senegalese students chose Turkey as a study destination because the field they seek to get education, namely Islamic Theology, is more developed in Turkey than in some other countries. They believe that this discipline is better taught in Turkey. Hence this is another important motivation in their choice of Turkey as a study destination. S3 illustrated this motivation:

I have chosen Turkey because the area I would like to specialize in, Islamic History, is developed more in Turkey. If you study this field in France, you would study it in the context of Orientalism. I was going to choose Turkey, Egypt, Syria or Malaysia to study this field. I chose Turkey because of Turkish friends I made during my undergraduate studies there. I feel close to Turkey. The reason for my application to a program in Turkey is them. They have also helped me to apply for a program in Turkey.<sup>368</sup>

The paragraphs above show that a substantial reason the research participants gave for choosing Turkey as a study destination can be summarized as acting within the boundaries of system, the educational background they have, and the quality of education Turkey offers in their area of interest. However, another point worth underlining is the words of S3, whose preference for Turkey was also based on his bonds of friendship with Turkish people. Here, we can conclude that not only a state's

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<sup>367</sup> Senegal'de Arapça ağırlıklı özel okullar var. Ben de o okullardan birinden mezun oldum. Sadece Fransızca okutan okullarda eğitim göre öğrenciler bitirdikten sonra Fransa veya Kanada düşünüyorlar ama biz Arapça okuyan öğrenciler Fransa'ya gidemiyoruz. Özel okulların verdikleri sertifikalar Fransa'da tanınmıyor. Demek ki Fransa'ya gitme ihtimalimiz yok. Öyleyse ya Arap ülkeleri ya da diğer ülkeler seçenek olacak. Bu sistemle ilgili.

<sup>368</sup> Türkiye'yi tercih etme nedenim ise okumak istediğim İslam Tarihi bölümünün en iyi Türkiye'de olması. Fransa'da okursanız Oryantalist olarak okursunuz bu bölümü. Ya Türkiye'de ya da Mısır, Suriye veya Malezya'da okuyacaktım ama lisans döneminde Türk arkadaşlarım olduğu için kendimi Türkiye'ye yakın hissettim. Buraya başvurma sebebim de onlardır ve onlar da yardım ettiler.

public diplomacy activities, but also its citizens' approach and relations with foreigners matter a lot. This is basically called "track II diplomacy" (or citizens' diplomacy) in the international relations literature. When track II diplomacy is incorporated into public diplomacy initiatives, the results become more effectual. However, what is much better is promotion of a country's image (Turkey) in another country (Senegal) through the words and deeds of Senegalese people themselves. That is to say, the representation of a country by the target country's persons themselves may provide more gains for the represented country than representation by its officials or civilians. Here the renowned saying "building bridges" is relevant. In the case here, Senegalese students receiving an education in Turkey can be seen effectively as agents representing Turkey in their country of origin, namely Senegal. This representation begins as soon as they start their studies in Turkey and climaxes when they return to their country of origin. This is soft power; an invisible power which is highly important, especially in today's interconnected world. The words of S5 demonstrate this:

In fact, I had not thought of Turkey to in study before. I would never have thought of coming to Turkey to study. But I saw posts of one of my close friends on Facebook. There were white skinned friends on the photo. Thereupon, I wrote to my friend to ask where he was and what he was doing. He said that he was in Turkey and studying there. He told me about Turkey's scholarship opportunities for foreigners. This attracted my interest. In fact, I knew a little about Turkey and the Ottoman Empire, albeit not as much as now. Second, I chose Turkey because it is a Muslim country. Finally, I applied to study here.<sup>369</sup>

Again, France as a traditional power in the region has also impacted the area of education. The scholarship programs and student exchange alternatives are more extensive and sophisticated between Francophone West African countries and France.

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<sup>369</sup> Aslında ben Türkiye düşünmüyordum. Bir gün Türkiye'ye gelip okumak aklıma gelmezdi. Facebook'ta yakın bir arkadaşımın paylaşımlarını gördüm. Yanında beyaz arkadaşlar vardı. Arkadaşa yazdım nerde olduğunu ne yaptığını nerde okuduğunu sordum. Türkiye'de olduğunu ve okuduğunu söyledi. Türkiye'nin yabancılara burs verdiğini anlattı ve benim ilgimi çekti. Sonrasında benim ilgimi çekti. Ben Türkiye'yi o zamanlarda şu anki kadar olmasa da Osmanlı Devleti ve Türkiye ile ilgili bir şeyler biliyordum. İkincisi Türkiye Müslüman bir ülke olduğu için Türkiye'yi tercih ettim.

Turkey, on the other, is a late player in the region, a fact which has had numerous repercussions in the education sector. The interviewees were of the opinion that Turkey's scholarship opportunities offered to Senegalese came into existence late. S1 made a brief comparison in this regard:

Turkey has not provided education opportunities (scholarships) for students for Senegalese students in past a France had done. Turkey belatedly started its activities in education, but even so, many students have come [to Turkey] thanks to YTB scholarships. This contributes to Turkey in political terms.<sup>370</sup>

Likewise, S2 stressed Turkey's belatedness to back Senegalese students to study in Turkey:

Because the language of instruction is French in Senegal, scholarships offered by France are more comprehensive. The YTB program is a new one. France has offered scholarship opportunities to us since our independence. This is reflected itself in Senegalese society, where %80 of our elites has studied in France. The scholarship opportunities France provide are better, but Turkey has also taken action lately and increased its scholarships.<sup>371</sup>

Unlike the scholarship application process in France, Turkey's scholarship scheme is much more useful for Senegalese students in economic terms as applicants for Turkish scholarships are not asked to pay an application fee. Turkey's scheme welcomes the greatest number of participants as possible and is more egalitarian in its application process than that of France. This is seen as a weighty advantage for Turkey. S4 points out this aspect of Turkish scholarships:

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<sup>370</sup> Türkiye eskiden Fransa gibi Senegal'deki öğrencilere eğitim olanakları sağlamıyordu. Bu konuda Fransa eskiden beri faaliyet yürütüyordu. Türkiye burs konusunda adımlarına geç başladı ama ona rağmen her sene YTB bursuyla bir sürü öğrenci geldi. Bu siyasi anlamda Türkiye'ye katkı sağlar.

<sup>371</sup> Bizim eğitim dili Fransızca olduğu için Fransa'nın Senegal'e verdiği burslar Türkiye'den daha geniş kapsamlı. Ben de burslu olarak geldim. YTB programı yeni bir program ama Fransa'nın verdiği burslar biz bağımsızlığımızı kazandığımızdan beri veriliyor. Bu da yansıyor genel Senegal toplumunda. Bizim elit tabakanın %80'i Fransa'da okudular. . . Bugün Fransa'nın sağladığı burs olanakları daha iyi ama geçmiş senelerde Türkiye de bir hamle aldı ve verdiği bursları artırmaya başladı. İkisi arasında o kadar fark var ki kıyaslayamıyoruz.

Turkey scholarships, or Diyanet scholarships, are better than those offered by France. [For France's scholarships] you are supposed to apply to Campus France. You make a payment at the beginning. And, even if you are not admitted, your application fee is not refunded. Application and visa expenses are covered by students. However, France gives a chance to foreign students to work there. This is not possible in Turkey. Foreign students are provided with accommodation and stipends by Turkey, but they are not given a chance to work [over the duration of their studies in Turkey].<sup>372</sup>

What is more, transitivity between programs in Turkey is more likely. That is to say, being able to do two major programs at the same time ("a double major") is also thought to be an advantage of studying in Turkey. S7 mentioned this opportunity from his own experience, saying, "When I came to Turkey, I studied Divinity, and at the same time did my major in International Relations. I think that this is impossible in France. I would choose Turkey for education."<sup>373</sup>

### **5.2.2.(Dis)connection with Turkish/French Culture**

In the framework of this theme, the participants' ideas about the cultural closeness or distance are discussed. When asked if they had to live in either Turkey or France for the rest of their lives, a large majority of the interviewees chose Turkey. Their major justification was based on cultural similitudes between Turkey and their homeland. Cultural similarity is mostly predicated upon sharing the same religion - Islam. S5 delved into this issue:

France has exploited us in the past. They imposed on us many things. Their culture, language etc. Senegalese don't like France. Now, we want to break off from France. Senegal is more interested in Turkey. Turkey's exports there are very much. Turkish products are bought a lot in Senegal. I would

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<sup>372</sup> Türkiye veya Diyanet bursları Fransa'ya göre daha iyi. [Fransa burslarında] önce Campus France'a başvuruyorsun. Başlangıçta bir ödeme yapıyorsun. Kabul edilmezsen sana paran geri verilmiyor. Başvuru ve vize masraflarını öğrenci yapıyor. . . Bir öğrenciye Fransa'da iş yapma fırsatı veriliyor. Türkiye'de bu yok. Bu yüzden Türkiye'de barınma ve harçlık konusu daha iyi ama iş verilmemesi açısından daha kötü.

<sup>373</sup> Türkiye'ye geldiğimde İlahiyat 'ta lisans okudum ama aynı zamanda Uluslararası İlişkiler alanında da lisans yaptım. Bunun Fransa'da imkânsız olduğunu düşünüyorum. Eğitim hayatımla ilgili olarak Türkiye'yi seçerdim.

say that we feel closer to Turkish culture because of the fact that we are Muslim.<sup>374</sup>

Another participant, S3, pointed out the same when reasoning his decision to opt for living in Turkey:

Living in the eastern countries is much easier for me as a Muslim, and easier in the sense of the family structure within which I have been raised. I mean in the sense of human type, and candor. Candor is higher in the Orient. We are similar to Turkish people with regards to personal traits and candidness. Eating halal food here [in Turkey] is easier. Our cuisines are the same. We are also practicing the same religion. People show respect for each other here. What about France? In France, people are unable to stand foreigners. For these reasons, I would prefer to live in Turkey.<sup>375</sup>

Reading the statement of S5, one can see that insofar as Turkey has “pull” features for Senegalese, France is unattractive, irritating, and domineering characteristics which are linked with its colonial past. Hence efforts to explain the participants’ closeness to Turkey and Turks solely by Turkey’s attractiveness for them would be incomplete; we have to consider the trauma resulting from having been colonized, the contemporary repercussions of which linger. S1, for instance, stated that France is to blame for every bad aspect of today’s Africa:

We could have been wealthier than Qatar or Dubai. We have double of what they have. We have petroleum, diamonds, fertile lands, gold. Today Africa is in bad situation because of policies of France. France has taken gold from us, from our traitor leaders. How can I like this county [France]? Colonization can be done through culture and language. Look, the Ottoman Empire advanced into Africa, but you cannot see Ottoman culture

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<sup>374</sup> Fransızlar bizi eskiden sömürdüler. Çok şeyler bize empoze ettiler. Kendi kültürlerini, dillerini vs. Senegalliler Fransızları sevmiyorlar. Belki onlar da eskiden bizi yaktıkları için kimse sevmiyorlar. Şu anda da onlardan tamamen ayrılmak istiyoruz. Senegal Türkiye’ye karşı daha fazla ilgili. Türkiye’nin oraya ihracatı çok. Senegal’de Türk malı çok alınıyor. Biz Türk kültürüne Müslüman olduğumuz için yakın hissediyoruz diyebilirim.

<sup>375</sup> Bir Afrikalı Müslüman olarak; yetiştiğim ailenin yapısı olarak Doğu ülkelerinde yaşamam daha kolay. Yani insan biçimi ve samimiyet açısından... Samimiyet doğu ülkelerinde daha çok. Türkiye’deki insanlarla samimiyet ve yaşam tarzı açısından benziyoruz. Burada helal yemek bulmak daha kolay. Yemek okulu aynı, mezhep aynı, burada insanlar birbirlerine saygı duyuyorlar. Fransa’da ne var? İnsanlar yabancıyı çekemeyecek duruma gelmişler. Bu nedenlerden dolayı Türkiye’de yaşamayı tercih ederdim.



in Africa. Do you see Africans reading and speaking in Turkish in Africa?  
You don't.<sup>376</sup>

We have seen that colonization has had an adverse effect on perception of France among the students and that there is a sympathy for Turkey in terms of culture, religion, and social etiquette. A comparison is now made between the familiarity of Senegalese with French and Turkish cultures. It is evident that having historical commonalities with the region because of its colonial background, France is better known among Senegalese. However, they have not wittingly chosen to be more akin to France; in the fullest sense of the word, this is a historical imperative for them, not an option. Seeing that Turkey is a newly emerging power in the region, it is natural that knowledge of and familiarity with Turkey is scant. As S5 said:

France is better known [in Senegal]; they have exploited us for years. They [have imposed on us] their culture, their language, their manners etc. These are still in the minds of people. But Senegalese don't know Turkey culturally, and Turkish society. However, for instance, Turkish products etc. are very much known in Senegal. They know that Turkey is a Muslim country; that Turkey stands behind Muslims when they face troubles. In these respects, they like Turkey. For example, both Turkey and Senegal stand with Palestine in its cause.<sup>377</sup>

S2 points out another significant challenge that Turkey faces in the region in terms of being well known:

Senegalese are under the impression that Turkey is an Arab country because of its Ottoman heritage. They think that there is Arab culture in

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<sup>376</sup> Biz Katardan hatta Dubai'den daha zengin olurduk. Bizde onlardakinin iki katı var. Bizim petrolümüz, elmasımız var; sahamız var; verimli topraklarımız var; altınlarımız var. Fransa politikalarından dolayı Afrika böyle bir hale geldi. Fransa altınları bizim topraklarımızdan ve bizim hain liderlerden aldı. Ben böyle bir ülkeyi nasıl seveyim? Sömürge kültür ve dille olur. Bak Osmanlı Afrika'ya girmiş ama Osmanlı kültürünü Afrika'da göremezsiniz. Türkçe okuyan Afrikalıları görebilir misiniz? Göremezsiniz.

<sup>377</sup> Fransa daha çok biliniyor. Onlar yıllardır bizi sömürdüler. Kendi dillerini, kendi kültürlerini vs empoze ettiler. Hala insanların kafasında olan şeyler. Ama kültür ve toplum olarak Türkiye'yi pek bilmiyorlar. Ama mesela Türk ürünleri vs. çok biliniyor Senegal'de. Türkiye'nin Müslüman olduğu, Müslümanlara bir şey olduğu zaman Türkiye'nin Müslümanların arkasında durduğunu biliyorlar. Bu açılardan Türkiye'yi seviyorlar.

Turkey. Even some in Senegal think that Turks speak Arabic. But things have changed in the past few years. Maybe Turkey has come to realize this situation, and begun to follow a different policy. For instance, Senegalese students coming from Turkey get a job in Senegal. This has not so large an effect, but it is going to be more apparent after a decade. The perception is getting changing. This is the case thanks to Senegalese students studying in Turkey.<sup>378</sup>

Another research participant, S7, highlighted that:

Senegalese don't know Turks in general. However, they begin to distinguish Turkey with state visits of Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Senegalese haven't known who the Turks are let alone Turkey. They were thinking Turks as Arabs. Since Turks are also Muslim, people in Senegal make generalization by seeing Turks as Arab. I constantly try to explain this to them, but they cannot understand. Ottoman history is not taught that much [in Senegal]. Only those who know Turkey exclusively, know Turkey.<sup>379</sup>

In a similar way, S6's words also crystalized how little Turks are known among Senegalese:

If you ask Senegalese people who Turks are, they will say that Turks are Arabs. Yeah! They will say you Turks are Arab because they don't know the history of Turkey. They don't know the importance of Ottoman Empire in the rise of Islam. There is a lack of information about Turkey. We didn't have many interactions with Turks.

S9 thinks that Senegalese are normally acquainted more with France because of colonization and neo-colonization, but the efforts of Turkey in the last two decades have made Turkey better known better in Senegal. He commented:

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<sup>378</sup> Hala Senegal'dekiler aklında Türkiye bir Arap ülkesi olarak kalmış. Osmanlı mirasından dolayı Türkiye hala Arap bir ülke olarak sanılıyor ve Arap kültürü olduğu sanılıyor. Hatta Senegal'de bazı insanlar Türklerin Arapça konuştuklarını sanıyorlar. Ama birkaç senedir gelişti. Türkiye belki bunu fark etti ve başka bir politika izledi. Mesela [Afrikalı öğrenciler] Türkiye'de okuyup Senegal'e gelip iş sahibi oluyorlar. Bunun etkisi büyük çaplı değil ama bundan on yıl sonra etkisi daha büyük olacaktır. Ama bu algı değişiyor. Bunu Türkiye'de okuyan [Afrikalı] öğrencilere borçlu.

<sup>379</sup> Genelde Senegalliler Türkleri tanımıyorlardı ama 2000'den beri, Tayyip Erdoğan'ın gelmelerinin başlamasıyla beraber tanımaya başladılar. Bırakın Türk kültürünü Türkleri tanımıyorlardı ama tanımaya başladılar. Senegalliler Türkü bilmiyorlardı. Türkleri Arap olarak görüyorlardı. Araplar derlerdi. Müslüman olduklarından dolayı genelliyorlar. Ben her zaman açıklamaya çalışıyorum ama çoğu anlamıyor. Osmanlı tarihi çok okutulmuyor burada.

Our official language is French and we have a lot of French companies, Because of colonization, you may realize that a lot of things in Senegal are similar to French culture. But if you go over last ten or twenty years, you can say that Turkey's influence is increasing while French influence is decreasing because we already know French culture due to colonization.

Just as Turkey has attractive, pull characteristics for Senegalese, it has also a major drawback that might disturb Africans in general. Some interviewees stated that Turkish society has not yet ready or not had enough experience yet to admit foreigners into its society. S4, for instance, touched upon this issue succinctly:

Turkey is a comfortable place for me to practice my religion freely. But, when we look into the issue from a different vantage point, we see that policies for foreigners are still embryonic. On the other hand, France has more experience in its affairs with foreigners. When I came Turkey, I frequently faced the question if I was a foreigner, but I don't think that a foreigner faces this sort of questioning frequently in France. It seems that those [Africans] living in France are luckier in the sense of not being faced oftentimes with this type of question. Here in Turkey, establishing relations with foreigners is still in its infancy. I take this as normal. In terms of religion, I would like to stay here, but if I wanted to live without sparking the curiosity of others, I could go France.<sup>380</sup>

Words of S6 identified the same problem, but one can make out from his words that Turkish society was improving in this regard after Turkey's opening to Africa and developing its relations with African countries:

Here in Turkey, you have also problems. Integration of African people to society is problematic. In France, African people are integrated because there are many African people living in France. The society is ready... It is not the same for Turkey because twenty years ago, Turkey was a closed country. There were less contact with African countries. This is a big problem when you want to live here. It can be a disadvantage for African people.

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<sup>380</sup> Türkiye dinimi yaşamam için rahat bir yer. Müslüman bir ülke ve kendi dinimi rahatça yaşayabilirim. Başka bir açıdan bakacak olursak, Türkiye'de yabancılara karşı olan politikalar daha taze ama Fransa'nın yabancılarla ilişkilerinde daha fazla tecrübesi var. Türkiye'ye geldiğimde sen yabancı mısın sorusuyla sık karşılaştım ama Fransa'da bir yabancının bu soruyla sıkça karşılaşacağını sanmıyorum. Görünen o ki, orda yaşayanlar bu sorulara maruz kalmamak açısından daha şanslılar. Burada yabancılarla ilişki kurma hala daha taze. Ben bunu normal karşılıyorum. Din açısından kalmak isterim ama hiç kimsenin dikkatini çekmeden yaşamak istiyorsam belki Fransa'ya giderim.

### 5.2.3. Comparing Power and Credibility of the Two Countries

The interviewees were asked about their opinion on whether France or Turkey was the more powerful country in international relations. The responses do not allow a straightforward picture to be built. While some compare these two countries' power in global politics, others voiced their opinions as to how much power each country had in West Africa. As interviewer, I strove to elicit their ideas on perceptions of the power of these two countries in the region rather than the power these two countries wield there.

The participants generally stated that France was a more powerful country in international relations than Turkey. This is reality speaking for itself because France has more weight in international platforms and has a solid place among the great traditional powers. Besides, in economic, and military terms France overrides Turkey. Another dimension is that France was a colonial empire. It follows from this that France is seen as a materially more powerful country than Turkey, for better or worse.

However, in some respects Turkey's power and superiority to France cannot be overlooked such as population, production capacity of some industrial sectors, and so on. These features of Turkey, for example, were noted in the words of S5:

Why France is powerful is clear; France has brought its resources from Africa. Of course, France as a member of the EU, and as an actor possessing nuclear weapons is more powerful [than Turkey]. Turkey has a larger population than that of France; in this sense I see Turkey more powerful. France maybe a more powerful country in many respects, but if we leave the reality aside, people in Senegal see Turkey more powerful in many areas.<sup>381</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> Fransa'nın neden güçlü oldukları belli. Fransa kaynaklarını Afrika'dan getirdi. Avrupa Birliğine üye bir ülke olarak ve nükleer silaha sahip olan bir ülke olarak tabii ki Fransa güçlü. Nüfus olarak Türkiye Fransa'dan daha kalabalık bir nüfusa sahip. O bakımdan Türkiye'yi daha güçlü görüyorum. Belki bazı boyutlarda Fransa daha güçlü olabilir. Ama realiteyi bir kenara bırakacak olursak pek çok konuda Senegal'deki halk Türkiye'yi güçlü olarak düşünüyor.

As stands out in the statement of S5, a quick glance may suggest that France is way more powerful than Turkey in many respects. But a deeper consideration of more complex notions of power based on immaterial sources says reveals that the picture is more complex. One may agree with this to a point, and go on to say that there are invisible power relations based on hard resources. However, one should not forget that no matter how much hard resources a country has, power is not a potential per se; it is the might to cause others to act in the direction you want. Certainly, manifestations of power require a catalyst, but the first spark does not necessarily have to be based on hard resources such as those possessed by France in this case.

This dimension of the subject matter was rhetorically clarified in the words of S3:

For me, power is an invisible hand; it is that one doesn't know how powerful one is. Not knowing how powerful France is makes France powerful. For instance, the USA is powerful because we envisage it like that. The USA was defeated in Vietnam because there was not such an envisagement of the USA in the minds of Vietnamese. A powerful country, or a formation, lies in the minds of people. To illustrate, what France has today in Senegal [a complete commitment to France], was once in place in Mali as well. France had the power to control half of Mali. However, France had left Mali by the time this image of France [being almighty] vanished in the minds of Malians. Since then, France has not been able to show its power, to make its power actual. There is a difference between *being powerful* and *having power*. This is my own idea. If you want to be powerful, you are supposed to cause someone to do something. If you can't, then you have power, but you are not powerful.<sup>382</sup> [Emphasis added]

France is losing power in Africa. Some believe that France is dependent on its former African colonies even today as much as its former colonies are dependent on France.

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<sup>382</sup> Benim açında güç gizli eldir. Senin ne kadar güçlü olduğunu bilmemesi. Fransa belki çok güçlü belki de değil. Fransa'nın ne kadar güçlü olduğunu bilmememiz onu güçlü yapar. Mesela Amerika da onu o şekilde [güçlü olarak] tasavvur ettiğimiz için güçlüdür. O tasavvur Vietnam'da olmadığı için yenilmiş. . . Güçlü bir ülke ya da oluşum inşaların zihni varlığında yatıyor. Örneğin Senegal'de var olan her şey Mali'de vardı. Fransa Malinin yarısını kontrol ediyordu. O güç Malilerin zihninde bittikten sonra Fransa Mali'den çıktı. Artık gücünü gösteremiyor. Hayata indiremiyor. Bunlar güç ama güç sahibi olmakla güçlü olmak arasında fark vardır. Bu benim kendi görüşüm. Şu an güçlü olabilmeniz için birine bir şey yaptırabilmeniz gerekir. Ona ulaşmadıktan sonra elindeki güçtür ama sen güçlüsün demek değildir.

That is to say, France is standing still in international relations and protect its interests, partly by using the bargaining chip vis-à-vis other state actors thanks to having been a colonial power in the region. This is because one can conclude that France cannot afford to be “France” as it was traditionally known in the international arena today without the Francophone African countries. This point was illustrated by S6:

An important part of French economic performance comes from French enterprises in Africa. If France loses its attractiveness in Africa, it will lose its markets and its influence in Africa. Africa is an important part of the economy of France. Turkey is emerging despite its latest economic problems.

S7 cherished a hope for Turkey by referring to the size of its population and Erdogan’s discourse in international relations:

If we look at the global system, France is more powerful due to its veto power on the UNSC. But over the course of last decade, Turkey’s voice is heard better. The leaders of Turkey are active. Erdogan is the most influential leader in the world with regard to his groundbreaking actions for changing discourse and systems. If Turkey joins the EU, it would be more powerful than France in the organization. Turkey is mightier in terms of population and resources. Africans have come to realize that France has been exploiting their resources. Now it seems that France is more powerful, but it will not last as such in future; especially if Muslims show solidarity with each other.<sup>383</sup>

The participants consistently agreed that Turkey’s rising presence in West Africa and visibility, such as growing the number of its diplomatic representations, echo in the minds of Senegalese that Turkey is a powerful country whose outreach is high. It is apparent that one cannot expect to garner support and build a positive mental image for oneself without being visible. Thus, it would be erroneous to assume that Turkey

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<sup>383</sup> Dünya çapındaki sisteme bakarsak Fransa’nın veto hakkının var olması vs. nedeniyle Fransa daha güçlü ama bu on yıl içinde Türkiye’nin sesi daha çok duyuluyor. Türkiye’nin liderleri aktif. Sistemi ve söylemi değiştiren eylemleri açısından dünya çapındaki en etkili lider Erdoğan. Türkiye Avrupa Birliğine girse birkaç yıl sonra Fransa’dan daha güçlü olur. Gerek nüfus olarak gerekse de kaynak. Afrikalılar Fransa’nın kendi kaynaklarını sömürdüğünü anlamaya başladılar. . . Şu anda Fransa daha güçlü görünüyor ama ilerde daha güçlü olmayacak özellikle de Müslümanlar bir araya gelirlirse.

is perceived as a powerful country in West Africa, seeing Turkey's belated interactions with countries of the region. Nevertheless, it is also a logical error to conclude that Turkey has no chance of becoming a powerful actor in the region. Things have been changing in recent decades owing to the efforts of Turkish governments on the continent. The changing dynamics in relations between Turkey and African countries are summed up in the words of the research participants. For instance, S6 stated:

Turkey gains influence in Africa. Turkey has more cooperation with Africa. Turkey has forty something diplomatic missions in Africa. There are more Turkish enterprises in Africa [than before]. Turkey is attractive because Turkey doesn't have a colonial history in Africa. Also, Turkey is more attractive and the leadership of Erdogan can make Turkey one of the great powers. The role of Erdogan in the Russia-Ukraine issue brought diplomatic leadership to Turkey. Turkey is not at the level of France, but France is in decline and Turkey is emerging.

Two significant points are revealed in the words of S6. For one thing, he sees France as a declining powerful nation whereas Turkey is a rising, but not yet so powerful nation. Certainly, the term "power" here does not refer to their power in global politics, but rather it stands for these two countries' puissance in the region. Here, the subtext is that France is surely more powerful both in the region and in the world. However, that does not have to mean that France has absolute superiority. Powerfulness, and having influence in international relations, are not independent from the time and space where they are situated. The second noteworthy inference one can make from S6's words is that being a power holder is directly associated with the *modus operandi* of a state in its international relations. This is also a component of soft power, and contributes to image building. This image does not only come into existence in the minds of nations, but also in the minds of those having the reins of state apparatus, namely administrators.

S3 distinguished between the power of France and Turkey by stressing the latter's increasing power in the region:

The sources of France's and Turkey's power are different. What is Turkey's source of power? The first is public diplomacy, and the second, Turkey is soft power. Turkish charities and foundations are now more commonplace in Senegal... We as Senegalese purchase so few things from France in terms of basic consumption goods. To exemplify, textile products and basic provisions come from Turkey. Many things are procured from Turkey. Indeed, this is the soft power of Turkey.... Relations between the ambassador of Senegal in Ankara and Turkish government are good. Likewise, relations between the Turkish ambassador in Dakar and Senegalese government are also good. In this regard, Turkey is powerful in Senegal.<sup>384</sup>

#### **5.2.4. The Impact of (Neo)colonization on Perceptions**

The interviewees' ideas about whether Turkey or France is more credible in the eyes of Senegalese are dichotomized. Confidence in France seems to be rather instinctive for them. On the other hand, putting their trust in Turkey is a contingency that has emerged rather late because of Turkey's belated inroads into Africa, and because of that Senegalese have familiarized themselves with Turkey and the Turkish people somewhat late. As it is highlighted by the interviewees, after being recognized, Senegalese have come to know that there are similarities between their own culture and Turkish culture in the sense of sharing the same religion and having the same ethical and human values. On the other hand, France is a colonial power and today maintains its dominance on Francophone African countries. Confidence in France is thus a kind of "forced choice" instead of a voluntary one. That is why the respectability of France in Senegal is lower compared to respect for Turkey. This point was well illustrated by S2:

It is hard to answer the question who Africa [Senegal] trusts. Africa [Senegal] has not its own preference. Our administrators cannot say that we can establish relations based on trust. Our relations with France are so

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<sup>384</sup> Fransa'nın güç kaynağı ile Türkiye'nin güç kaynağı farklı. Türkiye'nin güç kaynağı nedir? Birincisi halk diplomasisi, ikinci olarak Türkiye'nin kullandığı yumuşak güç var: Dernekler, STK'lar Senegal'de çok yayılmaya başladı . . . Senegal olarak Fransa'dan halkın ihtiyacı anlamında alacağımız şey çok az. Mesela tekstil malzemeleri, gıda vs. hep Türkiye'den geliyor. Çoğu şey Türkiye'den tedarik ediliyor. Bu Türkiye'nin yumuşak gücü aslında... Buradaki Senegal büyükelçisiyle Ankara'nın arası çok iyi. Buna şahidim. Bir de Senegal'deki Türkiye büyük elçisiyle Senegal'deki yönetim arasındaki ilişkiler iyi. Türkiye bu açıdan güçlü Senegal'de.



strong, but this is not our own choice. This is the power of France [on us]. We are obliged to trust France. That's why our relations with France are like that.... If Senegal says 'I don't trust France', there would be a political conflict or coup at that exact moment. If we had power, and own will, we would be able to establish relations serving our interests. But the people [in Senegal] have ties of affection with Turkey because we share the same religion and have similar cultures.<sup>385</sup>

Another participant, S4, stated the importance of religion as a catalyst for developing trust between the two nations. That is, sharing the same religious beliefs brings each society closer and brings about sympathy. As he said:

Senegalese sympathize a lot with a white Muslim. We have such a conception that every white is Christian, but each and every white Muslim is Arab. When, you tell Senegalese that Turks are not Arab, we feel closer to them because much as we are not Arab, we are Muslim. Likewise, Turks are also Muslim even if they are not Arab. In this sense, Senegalese try to form closer relations with Turks.<sup>386</sup>

Looking carefully, one can capture subtleties in the above excerpt. For one thing, describing religion through elements of skin color and races demonstrates the nefarious impact of colonization on the research participant, and may be the case with many like him. The thing here is not to suggest that they have an inferiority complex, but such a dichotomy as being a white or black person seems to have penetrated the mental image and categories of some Senegalese. Identifying Muslimness with skin color can be explained as such and is unhealthy. Yet, there is also an upside in this line of thinking. That is, perceiving Turks as lucky people due to the mixture of their

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<sup>385</sup> Afrika'nın kendi tercihi yok. Buna güveniyorum; bununla ilişki kurayım şeklinde ya da buna güvenmiyorum bununla ilişki kurmayayım diyemez. Bizim yetkililerimiz böyle diyemiyorlar. Fransa ile ilişkimiz çok güçlü ama bu bizim seçimimiz değil. Bu Fransa'nın gücü. Biz mecbur kaldığımız bir ortamdayız. O yüzden bizim ilişkimiz böyle oldu. Senegal dese ki ben Fransa'ya güvenmiyorum, o anda siyasi bir çatışma bir darbe olabilir. Kendi irademiz ve kendi gücümüz olsaydı bizim kendi çıkarımıza göre bir ilişki kuruyor olabilirdik. Ama halk olarak bizim Türkiye ile bağımız, kültürümüz veya dinimiz bakımından bize kalan bir şeydir.

<sup>386</sup> Senegalliler beyaz bir Müslümana çok sempati duyarlar. Bizim şöyle bir algımız var: Her beyaz, Hristiyan'dır; ama her beyaz Müslüman ise Arap'tır. Şimdi Türkler Arap değildir dediğinizde Türklerle daha yakın hissetmeye başlıyoruz. Çünkü biz Arap olmadığımız halde Müslümanız ve Türkler de Arap olmadıkları halde Müslümanlar; Senegalliler Türklerle yakından bir ilişki kurmaya çalışırlar o açıdan.

Muslim identity and whiteness means that all whites do not necessarily bear a resemblance to the cruel French commanders of the past. This mentality would bring about positive approach to Western societies.

S3 referred to the colonial past of France as the key reason for it not being trusted by Senegalese:

Now, Turkey is way superior to France in terms of credibility. France carries its part as a hunchback, and it cannot get rid of this. I believe that Senegal already has an interest in Turkey in terms of military, economics, and development. High-level delegations pay visits to Turkey in the areas of counter terrorism, commerce, and municipal services, etc. This means that there is confidence in Turkey in Senegal, and this is sustainable unless something goes wrong. France is a victim of its past. Even though the elites of Senegal feel a closeness to France, in general France is seen a colonialist power there [in Senegal].<sup>387</sup>

As seen from this excerpt, Senegal trusts Turkey so much that it seeks assistance on issues falling under the framework of state sovereignty.

Another interviewee, S6, reproached France for its persistent wrongdoings in Africa by referring to “neocolonialism”. He said, “We know that they want to continue colonialism instead of cooperation. They don’t want win-win cooperation. They just want our resources; to benefit from them and go. But with Turkey we can have a win-win partnership.”

Interviewee S9 also drew the same conclusion in response to a question enquiring about the credibility of the two countries in the eyes of Senegalese:

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<sup>387</sup> Güvenilirlik açısından şu anda Türkiye Fransa’nın çok üzerinde. Fransa’nın geçmişi kambur gibi sırtında ve kurtulamıyor bundan. Zaten askeri, ekonomi, kalkınma vs. alanlarda Senegal’in Türkiye’de bir arayışları olduğunu biliyorum. Terörle mücadelede, ticaretle, belediyeceilikte yüksek düzey komiteler delegasyonlar geliyor Türkiye’ye. Bu şu demek Türkiye’nin bir güvenilirliği var ve aksilik olmazsa bu sürdürülebilir bir şey. Fransa geçmişinin kurbanı. Her ne kadar Senegallilerin elit kısmı Senegal’e yakın olsa da Fransa’ya bir sömürgeci ülke olarak bakılıyor orada.

France just wants to come and take our resources and bring them to its country. Comparing relations between Senegal and Turkey on the one hand, and relations between Senegal and France on the other hand, people would prefer relations between Turkey and Senegal. They would say that we can move on with Turkey with a win-win mentality; they would also say that Turkey does not have a colonial history. Turks are Muslim so they will not harm our Muslim brothers.

These comments underscore that Turkey's lack of a colonial past on the continent, its efforts to base its relations with African states on a win-win approach, and not least being a Muslim country, all bring lead to Turkey being viewed with more trust than France is.

Another finding from the responses of the interviewees is that perceptions of Senegalese today are anti-France not only due to its colonial past, but also a nascent awareness among Senegalese that France has exploited their country through colonization. Capturing the fine line between being colonized and having awareness of being colonized as well as distinguishing between them are of utmost significance to understand the perceptions Senegalese have of France today.

Normally, one would automatically think of the adverse connotations of colonialism. At first glance, colonialization is detrimental to those who are colonized; nonetheless, how colonization is perceived by the colonized is related to what value the colonized load on this concept and colonial affairs. It may be case that what the colonized make out of colonization may be manipulated by the colonizer by associating notions of colonization with civilization and order. This is the worst part of colonization: colonizing minds.

It is safe to suggest that colonization is not only about material exploitation, but it is also about colonizing minds by sketching colonialism through some euphemistic discourses. France has done exactly this: it colonized the lands of Africans as well as their worlds of thought, their sentiments, and their perceptions. France has gone to great lengths to consolidate its presence in Africa and overtake its colonialist European

counterparts. The colonialization that France has tried to achieve was a deep and radical one. That is why it is unlikely it will be totally extirpated for many years.

The feedback received from the interviewees indicates that the minds of Senegalese are slowly but surely being “decolonized”. This has not been achieved fully, and a considerable number of Senegalese have no idea that they have been colonized. These persons are generally among the elderly because they are confronted with the colonial encroachments of France and because the influence of France is still fresh in their minds, so for them it is harder to adapt to changes in the ideational worlds of Senegalese against France. They somehow feel unable to move to fight against France. Yet when it comes to the youth, they are more agile and have more familiarity with the history of France. This is partially because of the fact that they have way more technological literacy compared to the elderly.

These phenomena are well illustrated in the words of S3, who is worth quoting at length:

Being a colonial power is a disadvantage for France, but there is a nuance here. France does not call colonialism “colonialism”; they don’t call it “exploitation”. What is this? This means reconstruction/development [for France]. We actually did not exploit/colonize you; what we did is reconstruction. I have learnt that colonization is actually exploitation as late as starting to study in Turkey. Most people in Senegal don’t know that they are actually being exploited by France. France deceives you, and make you believe that you are not deceived... Getting Senegalese to think that France has exploited us is more than enough for now. This would be a huge gain. But we couldn’t achieve this yet. What Turkey plays wrong is this. Turkey comes and says to Africans that France has colonized/exploited you. As a response, Africans ask how France has exploited them. Africans have not a corresponding figure in their minds yet for this. But they will have. Turkey should use another door to enter Africa. This door is soft power. In fact, it has already been using this gate.... France’s historical commonalities with us bring it an advantage. But how? France gains advantage by thrusting good sides of history forward, and by whitewashing the bad sides of the past. However, this is not solely about the past. French companies are deep seated in Senegal.

Automobile brands, oil companies etc. have been in France for so long. They provide an advantage for France alongside its history.<sup>388</sup>

What one may conclude from this long excerpt is that even if getting rid of France's domineering image in their minds does not grant Senegal a full sovereignty vis-à-vis France, this move would be a change-maker for the fate of Senegal and for other former French colonies in the region. It would narrow France's area of maneuver on the continent. What this would create is hard to predict, but if the minds of people in Francophone Africa are liberated, this would presumably result in France's increasing use of force to subdue states in the region.

That French is their official language, and one cannot raise higher in the ranks of officialdom without knowledge of French in Senegal is told to be reproached by Senegalese. Another set of criticisms revolve around the lack of national monetary independence (i.e., being a part of the Franc zone in Africa). Even the state organizations of Francophone African counties have been structured on the basis of the constitutional pattern of France; that is, there are obvious similarities between the governmental and bureaucratic structures of Francophone African countries and France.

Another research participant, S4 touched upon how Senegalese perceptions of France have changed drastically from past to present: "In the past, there was an admiration

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<sup>388</sup> Fransa'nın sömürgeci ülke olması dezavantaj ama burada çok ince bir nokta var. Şimdi Fransızlar sömürgeciliğe sömürgecilik demezler "colonization" derler. Bu ne demek? İmar demek. Biz aslında sizi sömürmedik. İmar ettik. Ben kolonizasyonun sömürgecilik demek olduğunu Türkiye'de öğrendim. Oradaki çoğu insan sömürüldüğünü bilmiyor. Neden? Çünkü, Fransızlar sizi kandırıyor ve sizi kandırılmadığınıza inandırıyor. . . Sadece Fransa'nın bizi sömürdüğünün farkındalığını yaratalım yeter bize. Bu büyük bir kazanç. Ama hala bunu başaramadık. Türkiye'nin Yanlış oynadığı şey bu. Gelip Afrikalılara diyor ki Fransa sizi sömürdü. Afrikalılar da diyor ki nasıl sömürdü bizi? Afrikalıların zihninden şimdilik böyle bir karşılık yok. Ama olacak. Türkiye'nin başka bir kapıdan girmesi lazım. Zaten o kapıdan giriyor. Yumuşak güç . . . Fransa'nın bizimle bir geçmişinin olması ona avantaj sağlıyor. Ama nasıl geçmişin güzel yanlarını söyleyerek ve kötü yanlarını saklayarak avantaj sağlıyor. Ama sadece geçmişle alakalı değil. Fransa'nın şirketleri de köklü. Arabaların markaları, petrol şirketleri çok eskiden beri Senegal'deler. Onlar da bu geçmişle beraber Fransa'ya avantaj sağlıyor.

for the white man. But this kind of perception is no longer in place. Now, a Frenchman is seen someone just like me. We struggle to prevent such things happening again.”<sup>389</sup>

Neo-colonialism is in place in Senegal, as S7 stated:

Preparing the ground first, France granted us independence to the extent that we could govern ourselves in 1960. France did not let our resources go to us... Western powers thought that they could not rule over those territories [West Africa]; that’s why they let us govern ourselves. They thought that they would leave self-governance to us, but also that even if we are Africans, they could place a French mentality in our minds.<sup>390</sup>

Furthermore, France did not want its former colonies in Africa, including Senegal, to cooperate with new partners. The diversification of Senegal’s international relations was/is strongly discouraged by France. France is also critical of African countries’ solidarity efforts among themselves in order to wield its power on them with a strong hand (“divide and rule”). For this reason, it is against the establishment of a new economic zone apart from Franc zone in West Africa.

Anti-French sentiment is more prevalent among the young than among the elderly. One of the interviewees reported that the reason for this is the lack of technological literacy among the elderly. Yet, there is a more fundamental reason, detailed by interviewee:

For the younger generations, Turkey is advantageous compared with France. For older people, France is more favorable in general because older people don’t know about Turkey much, but they do know France, and because we got our independence in 1960. A lot of people, especially young people, know that relations between Senegal and France are not on a win-win basis. That is why they reject this sort of partnership.

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<sup>389</sup> Önceden beyaz insana bir sempati ve hayranlıkla bakılırdı ama şu anda o olgu yok. Bir Fransız kişiye normal benim gibi bir kişi gibi bakılır. Onların yaptıklarınının aynısının tekrarlanmaması için çabalıyoruz.

<sup>390</sup> Fransa alt yapıları hazırlayıp 1960’ta sadece kendimizi yönetecek kadar bize bağımsızlık verdi. Kaynaklarımızı bize bırakmadı . . . Batılılar biz Artık bu toprakları yönetememeğiz dediler. O yüzden biz yönetimi onlara bırakalım ama Afrikalı olsalar bile kafalarına Fransız bir akıl yerleştirelim. Bu şekilde oldu. Onların yetiştirdikleri insanlar gelip yardım ettiler.

It is important to note that the older generations are less open to novelties. This is somehow to do with opting for the safe option; yet, the safe option is not necessarily the best one. For the young generations, in contrast, Turkey is a safe country to place their trust in, and seeing all the things France has done to them with neocolonialism, makes Turkey the best option for them. Certainly, Turkey's rising soft power through its public diplomacy initiatives has been influential in the younger generations' looking to Turkey.

### **5.2.5. Future Projections**

Under this subheading, the participants' viewpoints regarding Turkey's and France's current courses of action will be analyzed. Recommendations for Turkey and France in their future endeavors will then be assessed.

All the interviewees were of the same mind that if France maintains its neocolonial policies and practices in Africa, it will bring an end to its role on the continent. They underline that governments and nations have little patience left to deal with France's overbearing and domineering attitude. Unfair relations with France are at the expense of not only Francophone African countries, but also of France itself. S5 reports, "If France continues its exploitation, it will harm itself because we don't have anything to lose; we have already got stuck."<sup>391</sup>

France seeks to ensure the status quo in the region at all costs. Stability better serves the interests of France in its former African colonies. Even though it does not want to see its former colonies in Africa as failed states, France also does not want a complete prosperity and flourishing of Francophone African states. This is because of the fact that France seeks to protect its authority in the region and make those former colonies be and feel dependent on it. This is one of the numerous motivations behind France's launching of military interventions in the Sahel region. The mutual desire of the research participants was that France terminate its policy of provisional restorations

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<sup>391</sup> Fransa sömürmeye devam ederse kendisi kaybeder. Çünkü bizim kaybedecek artık bir şeyimiz yok.

and conducting superficial aid initiatives in Senegal and other West African states. Instead, they ask for fundamental reforms, reinstating fragile aspects of state structures and letting these countries govern themselves. Otherwise, France's fate, and perceptions of France, will be negative. On that note, S2 stated:

France doesn't want the complete collapse of its former colonies. It wants a certain level of peace, but also poverty in these countries. In other words, it wants that these countries to always need France. For instance, Malian society has run counter to French troops in Mali. France got out of Mali, but made agreements with neighboring countries to prevent the complete collapse of Mali. If Mali collapses, the gold and cotton coming from Mali will be cut. The same is also true for Senegal. If Senegal loses, France will also lose. It [Senegal] should be poor, but it should also have a certain amount of peace and power.<sup>392</sup>

A point frequently articulated by the interviewees was that France builds inequity into its relations with Francophone African countries. That is, France does not treat them fairly in the domains of trade and commerce and thus disregards a win-win possibility. This cannot be sustained forever; the interviewees invariably pointed out that Africans cannot put up with such treatment indefinitely. For instance, S7 stated, "Our relations with France continue in such a way that France exploits us. But, if there was win-win, it would be okay. For instance, French companies are active in Turkey, but they act on the basis of a win-win principle."<sup>393</sup> He went on to say that:

The relations cannot be based on a win-win norm as France has been dominating us for so long. The relations can be only in this way [not based

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<sup>392</sup> Fransa Afrika'daki eski sömürge ülkelerin tamamen çökmesini istemiyor. Bu ülkelerde belli bir seviyede barış olsun ama fakir de olsunlar. Yani Fransa'ya ihtiyaçları daima olsun. Mesela halk Mali'de Fransız askerlerine karşı çıktı. Ama çekildikten sonra Mali çökmesin diye Mali civarındaki ülkelerle anlaşma yaptı. Çökerse Mali'den gelen altın ve pamuk kesilir. Senegal için de aynı şey geçerli. Senegal çökerse Fransa kaybeder. Fakir olsun ama belli bir seviyeye kadar barış ve gücü olsun.

<sup>393</sup> Fransa'yla ilişkilerimiz Fransa'nın bizi sömürmesi şeklinde devam ediyor. Ama kazan-kazan olsaydı. Bir şey olmazdı. Mesela Fransa şirketleri Türkiye'de de aktif ama kazan-kazan şeklinde hareket ediyorlar.



upon win-win]. However, as long as we continue to advance in education; we have more engineers, this dependency will end slowly but surely.”<sup>394</sup>

One can deduct from the statement of S7 that the principle of win-win is what is desired by Senegalese in their relations with France. Yet his second statement seemed to reveal a sense of helplessness. That is to say, even if equality and equity were characteristics demanded in their affairs with France, that France would act along with win-win lines is quite unlikely in reality because of the sense of ownership and tutelage stemming from its colonial history. That is why the mental image of Senegalese, in effect, comes across as pessimist with reference to respond of him. S9 also drew attention to the same point and predicted that the attitude of France towards Senegal, and other Francophone African countries alike, is not sustainable and is bound to fall apart: “The most important thing is to try to achieve win-win relations. If France wants a good image in the eyes of Africans, it has to change its policies in Africa. It has to act on a win-win basis.”

Now that the predictions of the interviewees on France’s future on the continent have been reported and evaluated, recommendations for Turkey’s long-term presence in the region can be discussed. S1 highlighted that confidence in Russia in military terms is high in Senegal thanks to its absence of a colonial history in Africa. Likewise, Turkey also does not have a colonial background on the continent. However, confidence in Turkey with regard to military relations is not that high since Turkey does not use its full military potential. Turkey would gain more popularity in Senegal if it improved its military relations with Senegal.

Being able to preserve its sovereignty and national survival, which are of utmost importance for a state, are possible provided that there is a regular army and a sufficient amount of quality military equipment. As a matter of fact, when asked to describe what it means to be powerful in international relations, two prime themes coming to the

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<sup>394</sup> Fransa çok erken yerleştiği için kazan-kazan şeklinde olmaz. Böyle olur. Ama biz eğitimlerimizde ilerlediğimiz sürece, bizim mühendislerimiz ne kadar fazla olursa bu bağımlılık da yavaş yavaş koparılacak.

minds of the general public in any state are military power and economic power. For this reason, it is natural that the interviewees, consciously or unconsciously, identified having confidence in a country with military assistance.

Even further, hard power comes first for the man in the street. That is why, no matter how powerful and credible in the eyes of Senegalese students, Turkey must search for a way to consolidate its military relations with Francophone African countries. Failing that, the soft power it has implemented on the continent will bring it no more than sympathy and trust in the region. It may sound unrealistic, but what Senegal and Mali are engaging in is a quest to obtain real independence; they look forward to getting out of France's orbit.

Certainly, total liberation is unlikely. By and large, they are also very well aware of this. Yet, what they seek, at the least, is to leave France's self-declared sphere of influence. They yearn for new perspectives in their international relations, new partnerships, new cooperation, and so on. In this context, the diversification of relations, especially in the military field, matters greatly for their national survival. S2 held that Turkey should compete with other powers in West Africa by increasing its visibility in West Africa's military affair:

For instance, Turkey's military cooperation with Senegal is limited. Turkey is active in this regard in Somali, but not in Senegal. The USA, France, and Russia's cooperation with Senegal in military terms is higher. We cannot see Turkey in Senegal on this score. Turkey should rival these powers limitlessly.<sup>395</sup>

Another matter that the participants zoomed in on was the significance and expedience of Turkey's public diplomacy and image promotion activities on the continent. Without effective policies, getting Francophone Africans to be more familiar with Turks and Turkish culture is extremely unlikely. To exemplify, S2 underlined the

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<sup>395</sup> Mesela Türkiye'nin ve Afrika'yla askeri iş birliği çok sınırlı. Somali'yle var ama Fransa, Amerika ve Rusya'nın ekonomik ve özellikle de askeri olarak iş birliği daha yüksek. Türkiye'yi bu konularda Senegal'de hiç göremiyoruz. Yani sınırsız bir biçimde Türkiye bu güçlerle rekabete girmeli.

multiplicity of actors struggling to get an upper hand in the region and continent. He believes that Turkey should be a formidable competitor in this rivalry to make its impact known to the political elites and publics in the region. What also matters is that Turkey should take action and carry its projections for West Africa into effect. Failing to realize its activities in the field would result in nothing.

Some of the interviewees indicated the significance of the activities of NGOs and charities acting on behalf of Turkey in the region. The actions and discourses of these non-governmental bodies could serve the interests of Turkey in its effort to scale up its image on the continent, yet if they act recklessly and do not lend an ear to what locals think, this opportunity may be squandered. For S4:

There is something about charities and organizations [coming from Turkey to Senegal]. They bring hardships to the forefront to get more funds. But if they go distant rural areas and make news about the unfavorable conditions of local people in a sensational way to secure funds, you [Turkey] will lose. France comes to us with gun, but the media is also power. [When you do that] we think that they [Turks] belittle us and try to gain on us by making counterfeit [exaggerated] news. I suggest that you should be very careful about this.<sup>396</sup>

With this statement, S4 does not imply that the activities of NGOs and charities coming from Turkey are seen with dissatisfaction and distaste in the region. Turkey's public diplomacy engagements, particularly aid activities, in the region matter a lot for both Turkey and West African countries, including Senegal. However, the way these non-governmental actors act may target the *amour-propre* of indigenous people in the region (in Senegal) and seems to be about getting attention and sparking the curiosity of international society or, specifically, Turkish society, despite the fact that such poverty and misery cannot be generalized to the whole country or region. Be that as it may, this is a sensitive issue concerning dignity and pride; introducing the life of

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<sup>396</sup> Gelen vakıf veya derneklerin şöyle bir durumları var: Oradaki sıkıntıları daha fazla ön plana çıkarıyorlar ki fon sağlayabilsin. Uzak bir köye gidip de oradaki görüntüleri sansasyonel bir şekilde haber yaparak fon sağlamaya çalışırlarsa oralarda çok şey kaybedersiniz. Fransa silahla geldi bize ama medya da bir güçtür. Biz şunu düşüneceğiz Bunlar bizi çok küçümsetiyorlar ve bu haberleri sahte yaparak üzerimizden bir şeyler yapmaya çalışıyorlar. Bu konuda çok dikkat etmenizi tavsiye ediyorum.

people and their conditions inconsiderately, without taking the thoughts and feelings of that nation into account, could wipe out the intended benefits of those endeavors.

One interviewee highlighted the problem of technology transfer to Senegal. She held that instead of transferring technical materials and Turkish staff to Senegal for the development of Senegal, providing Senegalese staff with the requisite know-how is expected of Turkey. If Turkey seeks to eradicate the dominance of France in the region and emancipate Francophone West Africans, it should spearhead fundamental changes in the region by breaking the dependence of West Africans on France as much as possible by offering them knowledge about technical duties in construction, business, commerce, and so on. As S8 put it:

As Senegalese, we have raw materials we need. They [Turks] should teach us how to assemble something. We have already our own engineers and everything. They [Turks] should come and tell us how to create a piece or car etc. but not to come with an already assembled car and to go back so that we pay them double. They bring their own engineer. But we have our engineer. Majority of them study in Turkey and France and all around the world...Even they may choose Senegalese people studying in Turkey.

In the same vein, another interviewee complained about the reluctance of Turkish businesspeople to employ Senegalese professionals in their enterprises. He says that Senegalese are mostly employed as translators in Turkish enterprises in Senegal. This harms the image of Turkey in the minds of those who have the skills to work as white-collar personnel in Turkish companies operating in Senegal. Even those that received their education at Turkish universities in the management or engineering departments can be ignored by some Turkish businesspeople. This peculiarity was referenced by S3:

There is a Turkey represented in Senegal by Turkish businessmen. There is problem here. What is the problem? They act like companies coming from India or France. This harms Turkey. For instance, a Canadian company operating in Senegal treats its [Senegalese] employees graduating from universities in Canada as Canadian. Turkish businessmen, on the other hand, use Senegalese only as translators. They don't want to benefit from you as a Senegalese having competences acquired from

studying in Turkey. Senegalese cannot stand out at a Turkish firm or factory [in Senegal]. I think that Turkey should regulate this and draw a framework.<sup>397</sup>

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<sup>397</sup> Tüccarlar ve iş adamlarının Türkiye'si var. İşte burada sıkıntı var. Buradaki sıkıntı nedir? [Türk iş adamları] Hindistan'dan gelen tüccarlar ve Fransa'dan gelen şirketler gibi davranıyorlar. Bu Türkiye'ye zarar veriyor. Mesela Kanadalı bir şirket Kanada'dan mezun olan birini Senegal'de çalıştırırken bir Kanadalı gibi davranıyor. Ücretini veriyor falan. Türkiye'nin iş adamları ise Senegallileri sadece tercüman olarak kullanıyor...

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION**

This chapter concludes the thesis by summing up the major points covered in the study and summarizing its main findings with respect to the research aims and questions. Thereafter, the theoretical and practical significance of the study will be laid out. The chapter ends with some remarks on future opportunities for Turkey and France to build their relations with West Africa as well as probable issue areas and questions for future research.

The study has given a detailed account of relations between Turkey and West Africa, on the one hand, and relations between France and West Africa, on the other, in relation to soft power and public diplomacy. The whole narrative up to Chapter Five served as a groundwork for the research findings chapter, namely the empirical chapter.

This study aimed to explore perceptions of Malian and Senegalese students studying in Turkey of Turkey and France in various respects, setting forth from empirical findings and a theoretical discussion to consider how the soft power strategies, more tangibly the public diplomacy overtures, of Turkey and France reverberated in the population of the study. Notwithstanding it being a case study, this does not necessarily mean that a sample group's views on the issue have no relevance to the wider Malian and Senegalese students' standpoints. The objective of the study has not been to make broad generalizations, but to make inferences that may depict Turkey's and France's image in the region. Briefly, based on the interview feedback and the literature review, what kind of image do Turkey and France have in West Africa? This piece of work has attempted to show that being a traditional power in West Africa does not

necessarily grant France superiority in the region over Turkey, belated but rising power there.

Drawing conclusions from the empirical findings and the literature review, this study suggests that there is a rising positive attitude towards Turkey in both Mali and Senegal whereas there is a declining trend in perceptions of France. That is, as the interviewees underscored, France is not seen as a trustworthy and credible partner of the region in contrast to Turkey. It appears that positive image of Turkey has risen after it has become more visible in the region. However, the same does not hold true for France. Perhaps, because it was already very well known in the region due to its colonial past, students pointed out distaste felt in their countries of France's interests and aims in West Africa. On the other hand, Turkey's clean record in the region has, led to it being well received among the competing powers in Africa.

As for familiarity with Turkish and French cultures, it is evident that historically, culturally, and intellectually France is well known in Mali and Senegal. This is an inevitable corollary of Turkey's belated efforts to expand into Africa. The feedback from the interviews shows, however, that having enjoyed intimate relations with the continent thanks to its colonial background has not necessarily resulted in more sympathy for and trust in France. Turkey, in this regard, appears to be overtaking France and is a candidate to be a change maker in West Africa.

In fact, this once again proves contextual and relational character of soft power in international relations. In this case, that students are constantly put stress on France's colonial background and Turkey's belatedness in rising on the continent proves contextual, and elusive character of soft power. Furthermore, that soft power is not equal to soft resources, which is a proposition consistently showed up over the course of theoretical framework of the thesis, comes to the fore with empirical findings of the research. If having a colonial past/historical commonality is assumed and accepted as a "soft resource" that potentially yields familiarity, France has this soft resource, but, as research findings indicate, it lacks concretized soft power in Mali and Senegal on

the basis of this resource. The reason for this is that soft resources are not always transformed into soft power as the latter requires prudent action and wisely crafted policies. In this case, France fails to reap the benefits of this “soft resource”, namely being widely known there thanks to its entrenched historical ties with the region. On the other side, despite lacking such historical heritage (soft resource) in West Africa, based on the empirical research findings, there is a positive outlook of Turkey in Mali and Senegal. This might be because of the fact that even if it lacks a historical background in the region, and is a “late comer”, the policies Turkey follows result in a likelihood of a bright future for Turkey in Mali and Senegal. Again, this theoretically demonstrates that no matter how much Turkey lacks *soft resource* of “historical heritage”, favorable outcomes for Turkey in the region in mid or long terms are still within reach.

Considering the responses of the research participants, sympathy for and prestige ascribed to Turkey indicate that Turkey’s public diplomacy ventures, alongside its soft power building efforts, are coming to fruition. As far as the interviewees are concerned, religious affiliations play an important role in local perceptions of Turkey in Mali and Senegal; attraction to Turkey is at least partly derived from the Islamic identity of its society.

Sharing a common memory, and cultural peculiarities are a significant parameter while thinking about relations between public diplomacy applying state and receiving one. Here, one might be under the impression that France is potentially, by far ahead of Turkey in respect to soft power production in Mali and Senegal. However, the equation is not that forthright. Even if those two former French colonies have historical contingencies and cultural commonalities with France and that renowned discourses of *La Mission Civilisatrice* as well as *La Francophonie* still have a place in French foreign policy towards the continent, Turkey’s Islamic identity along with some cultural commonalities with Malians and Senegalese encompassing ethics and etiquette have considerable impact on feeling closeness to Turkey on the part of Malians and Senegalese. Correspondingly, this proximity would bring out that Turkey



has as much soft power in the region as France if one take stock of *Listening* component of public diplomacy.

At this juncture, another point comes into the picture: theoretically, public diplomacy and image building efforts of a state in another country bear fruits as long as the cultural assets of public diplomacy implementing state have meanings in the eyes of subject states' public. In this study, majority of the interviewees asserted that they did not find French culture of interest. They also spoke for their societies and highlighted that unlike Turkish culture, culture of France among Malian and Senegalese societies -especially among youngsters- is unrequited. This attests that French soft power production in the region is in jeopardy whereas positivity looms large on the horizon for Turkey.

Having a colonial background has benefited and still benefits France in its relations with the continent. However, as one of the interviewees underscored, everything has an end, and France is close to losing its hegemony in the region. The period in which France promoted its colonial or postcolonial presence on the continent under the guise of a "civilizing mission" is coming to an end. Therefore, it is only a superficial analysis which would reveal that having a colonial background and being a neocolonial power gives France an unchallenged authority in the region. The deeper reality is not as straightforward. Being a traditional power in the region does not necessarily put France ahead of other emerging powers on the continent, as the sentiments of this research's participants revealed.

Interviewees associated Turkey with respect and prestige, albeit as a late-comer to the continent. On the whole, there is no direct correlation between Turkey's belatedness to open to Africa in its foreign policy and securing a positive perception. Having strong ties with the continent for longer would be better for Turkey-Africa relations, yet, not having this history does not diminish the prospect of strong relations in the future. For one thing, as opposed to France, an absence of a colonial past in Africa, coupled with the Muslim identity of Turks, led the interviewees to think highly of Turkey and be

more than willing to see Turkey as a benevolent rising power observing the principle of “win-win” on the continent. The case is the opposite for France, where a colonial past and a post-colonial (or neo-colonial) meddling in the domestic and foreign affairs of Mali and Senegal have created an enforced relationship of dependency.

As was stated in the theoretical chapter, public diplomacy cannot be a substitute for bad policies. That is, states cannot compensate for bad policies with public diplomacy activities in countries where they conduct these activities. Making things right solely by leaning on public diplomacy is misleading and unrealistic. Thus, France’s public diplomacy activities in Mali and Senegal would not be more than a series of abortive attempts as long as it does not rectify its unfavorable policies in the region. On the other hand, Turkey does not have such a discrepancy between its public diplomacy rationale and what it does on the continent.

Another point this study has considered is whether Turkey has a promising future on the continent despite being a relatively new power there. The answer to this question, as the research findings suggest, is affirmative, not least in western parts of Africa where there is a rivalry between France and other powers. Accordingly, some recommendations were made for Turkey to obtain a stronger foothold in West Africa. The research findings also indicate that being a colonial power is not necessarily an advantage for France to build an attractive image of itself in West Africa. In effect, having a colonial past could have been an advantage for France; however, the findings suggest that France has recklessly frittered this opportunity away by pursuing an overbearing policy. From another angle, despite its colonial background, France would have been well received if it had ceased to act with a colonial mindset. Today, what taints the reputation and credibility of France is its persistence in maintaining its colonial policies in a new form, yet with much the same mentality as the past. Altering the perceptions in its favor is extremely unlikely for France unless it eschews its neocolonial policies, meddling in the domestic politics and foreign affairs of Francophone countries in the region, preventing them from using their sovereignty freely, and disregarding the demands and sensitivities of West African people.

The findings conclude that France is expected to take some actions as well as to observe certain rules in its international relations with the region. First off, France is expected to terminate its neocolonial policies towards the continent and avoid hindering the political, economic, and social freedoms of Francophone West African nations. In the second place, France is also expected to contribute to the development of Francophone West African countries and to the emancipation of Francophone societies in Africa.

Turkey, on the other hand, does not suffer from the legacy of a colonial past in its relations with the continent. On that note, the pathway to a successful relationship is to secure respect and prestige through its soft power in the region. The expectations from Turkey, as the interviews underlined, are mostly centered on nuances in its *modus operandi* in the region. Turkey's enhanced military and economic cooperation with Francophone African countries as well as gearing its public diplomacy activities in the right way, are highly recommended from the research findings.

Evidently, being a relative unknown among the societies of the region, Turkey's chance of cultivating positive perceptions there start from a low level. The activities of Turkey in Francophone countries of West Africa rest on key areas, especially on areas where Africans have problems, such as education, domestic production, industry, and the provision of military equipment. Focusing on these key areas and finding long-term solutions to problems of Africans, instead of providing short-term, ephemeral relief, would benefit Turkey tremendously and lead to it becoming more prominent as a newly emerging power vis-à-vis the traditional power France as well as other emerging competitors on the continent such as China and Russia.

This thesis is an explanatory study based upon "how" and "why" questions. It thus entailed the meticulous retrieval and evaluation of data. The end product, namely this thesis, is a modest contribution to both theory and practice. It is a contribution to theory in that the research demonstrates the significance of the "listening" aspect of public

diplomacy, as laid out by Nicholas Cull, by acknowledging the feedback of target populations in the measurement process of soft power. The research unveiled Turkey's consolidated soft power in the region thanks to its Muslim identity in the eyes of the target population as well as its humanitarian relief endeavors. Having looked at the responses of the interviewees, the answer as to whether Turkey exerts soft power in the region is "Yes", but as the data underscores, it is not enough. The corollary question of whether Turkey's soft power overrides that of France in its former colonial zone in West Africa remains open to debate. In immaterial terms, no foreign power in the region is a match for Turkey due to its humanitarian character, taking heed of ethical standards and its Islamic identity.

One of the significant points worthy of assessment is relation *between* soft power and military might, on the one hand, *and* Turkey's military-wise visibility in the region, on the other. As was discussed in theoretical framework of the thesis, some point out that soft power is not independent from hard power, or at least hard resources. They even think that soft power is already situated in the concept of hard power. The point here is that, a country, to a certain extent, has to have hard resources to transform them into soft power. In fact, during the interviews, words of a considerable number of participants validate this sort of reasoning. Importance of Turkey's military visibility by extension of its military technologies to the region was attributed importance by interviewees. Accordingly, there is an overlap between what theory points out and what interviewees recounted. Hence, Turkey is expected to make its military presence felt better in Mali and Senegal in order to have a high opinion of Malians and Senegalese; thereby, to secure a promising future in the region.

Even though there is an impermeable dependency relation of Francophone African states with France, Russia's military weight in the region causes France to feel uneasy. China is the foremost credit provider and trade partner of Africa. Given these facts, believing that Turkey will soon become the most significant power in the region is naïve and unrealistic. However, what Turkey has been doing for the last two decades is a harbinger of what is to come in the future. Opening diplomatic representations and

extending humanitarian aid to relieve poverty on the continent as well as inaugurating schools and businesses, undertaking infrastructure works, enhancing student exchange have all served the harmonious development of its relations with continental powers and increased Turkey's visibility. These are demonstrations of Turkey's eagerness to widen its opening to the continent and of its sustainable and long terms projects further along the road.

Turkey has to be given credit for its determination to open to the continent. One of the prime objectives of this thesis is to disprove the notion that Turkey, as a late-comer to the continent, is bound to fail in its strivings to develop relations with Africa and fail to compete with other powers. Quite the contrary, Turkey has more chances as the interviewees incessantly accentuated that their countries are open to Turkey and Turks; Turkey, depending on its future efforts, has a promising future in Mali and Senegal. In furtherance of Turkey's chances of rising as a benevolent power there, looking into a public survey materialized by AFR Barometer is insightful. The research investigates perception of foreign powers' political and economic influences among Senegalese in 2021. According to the survey majority of citizens think that political and economic influences of the USA and China on Senegal is positive. On the contrary, majority of Senegalese perceive influence of France on their country negatively. Results of the survey demonstrate that 57% of surveyed citizens are critical of France.<sup>398</sup> This suggests that Turkey has a room for maneuver in Senegal, for instance, to further improve its activities and image in that country.

In conclusion, I would like to unveil some possible future research topics related to the subject matter of this thesis to further develop scholarly work in this field. Limitations and structural restrictions on Turkey making inroads into West Africa could be a discussion for future studies. Identifying ways to make a freer and more independent West Africa also deserves further research. How former French colonies in the region

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<sup>398</sup> AFR Barometer, *Les Sénégalais jugent positive l'influence économique et politique de la Chine et des Etats-Unis et pointent du doigt celle de la France*, Afrobarometer (2021), [https://www.afrobarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/comm\\_de\\_presse-senegalais\\_apprecient\\_influence\\_chinoise\\_americaine-afrobarometer-28mai21.pdf](https://www.afrobarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/comm_de_presse-senegalais_apprecient_influence_chinoise_americaine-afrobarometer-28mai21.pdf).

can forge relations with each other without being subject to restrictions coming from France, and what might Turkey's future moves be that bring it superiority and dissipate the authority of the former main colonizer -France- in the region might also be questions future studies could seek answers to.

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## APPENDICES

### A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ  
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



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Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

20 HAZİRAN 2022

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Prof.Dr. Hüseyin BAĞCI

Danışmanlığımı yürüttüğünüz Zekeriya DALAR'ın "Perception of Turkey and France in West Africa: Cases of Mali and Senegal" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay 0371-ODTÜİAEK-2022 protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

Prof. Dr. Mine MISIRLISOY  
Başkan

Doç. Dr. İ.Semih AKÇOMAK  
Üye

Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ  
Üye

Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Şerife SEVİNÇ  
Üye

Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Murat Perit ÇAKIR  
Üye

Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Süreyya ÖZCAN KABASAKAL  
Üye

Dr. Öğretim Üyesi A. Emre TURGUT  
Üye

## **B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

- 1- What has made you study in Turkey rather than in France seeing all the benefits France has to offer and your Francophone background?
- 2- Do you see scholarship opportunities Turkey offering to Senegalese/Malian students sufficient enough to study in Turkey? What do you think when you compare education opportunities Turkey provides with those of France?
- 3- If you had to choose between France and Turkey, where would you like to live? Why?
- 4- Do you feel yourself closer to Turkish or French culture? Is there any role of religious affinity on your judgement?
- 5- How do you define power in global politics and do you think Turkey is a powerful country in comparison to France who is the traditional power in minds of West Africans?
- 6- To what extent culture and history of Turkey and France is known in your country among the general public and the elite as well by comparison with France? Which country your folks are more familiar to?
- 7- Do you think that either France or Turkey has superiority over one another when it comes to credibility and prestige they are holding in the eyes of both elite and general public in your homeland?
- 8- How do you think that colonial background of France has influence on perception of France in Francophone Africa, in special your homeland? Is it an advantage or a disadvantage for France? Could Turkey, which has not colonial history in the continent, be considered sincere in its new initiatives in your country?
- 9- What kind of policies France would follow sweep its advantages, if any, gained by its historical commonalities in the continent away? What would be intelligent policies Turkey might follow to earn respect and gain prestige in West Africa as newly emerging power in the continent?

### C. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKEÖZET

Bu alıřma Trkiye ve Fransa'nın Batı Afrika'da nasıl algılandıklarının araştırılması zerine kurgulanmıřtır. Bu sorundan hareketle ve Mali ile Senegal lkelerinden yola ıkılarak Trkiye ve Fransa'nın blgedeki kamu diplomasi faaliyetlerinin etkinlięi ile yumuřak glerinin derecesi araştırılmaya alıřılmıřtır. alıřmanın temel amacı ise Fransa'nın Batı Afrika'da geleneksel bir g olmasının, blgede ykselen bir g olan Trkiye'ye stnlk saęlaması n kabuln sorgulamak ve hatalı olduęunu kanıtlamak řeklinde dir.

Bu tezdeki temel soru kıtada yeni yeni ykselen bir g olarak Trkiye'nin ve eskiden beri varlık gsteren geleneksel bir g olarak Fransa'nın yumuřak glerinin ve kamu diplomasisi faaliyetlerinin, Trkiye'de lisansst ęrenim gre Mali ve Senegalli ęrencilerin perspektifinden bu iki lkede nasıl algılandıęı zerinedir. Bu soruya cevap bulmak nemlidir; zira, lkelerin kamu diplomasisi faaliyetlerinin, bu faaliyetlerin yneltildięi lkelerde nasıl algılandıęına iliřkin alıřmalar yok denecek kadar azdır. yle ki Trkiye ve Fransa'nın blgede yrttkleri politikalara iliřkin alıřmalar yapılmıř olsa da bu politikalar doęrultusunda yrtlen faaliyetlerinin nasıl algılandıęına ve nasıl reaksiyonlar alındıęı, yani kamu diplomasisinin *listening* bileřeni gz ardı edilmektedir. Oysa ki yumuřak gc artırıcı politikaların etkinlięinin llmesi ve gerekli nlemlerin alınması yahut politikaların daha da geliřtirilmesi karřı taraftan alınan dntlerin deęerlendirilmesiyle doęru orantılıdır. Bu anlamda brokratlara olduęu kadar akademisyenlere de grev dřmektedir. Dolayısıyla, bu alıřmada hem teoriye hem de diplomasi pratiklerine mtevazı bir katkı sunulması mit edilmektedir.

Aıktır ki yumuřak g “yumuřak” kaynaklara sahip olmaktan fazlasını ifade etmektedir. Yumuřak g kaynakları sadece yumuřak gc uygulamaya koymak ve yumuřak g zerine bina edilmiř olumlu bir imaj yaratmak iin birer enstrman ve/ya katalizr niteliğindedirler. Bu anlamda, dil, kltr, din, tarihsel miras, siyasal kltr,



dış politika projeksiyonları yumuşak güç mekanizmasının sadece dışlileri hüviyetindedirler.

Tez boyunca yukarıda belirtilen ana araştırma sorusuna ek olarak yardımcı sorulara da cevaplar aranmaktadır. Şüphesiz ki bu sorular da Türkiye ve Fransa'nın Mali ve Senegal'de nasıl bir imaja sahip olduklarının anlaşılmasına yardım edecek niteliktedirler: Türkiye ve Fransa'nın yumuşak güçleri kıtada nasıl farklılaşmaktadır? Türkiye ve Fransa kıtada araştırmaya konu olan ülkelerde ne derece bilinmektedir? Bu iki ülkeden hangisi daha güvenilir ve prestij sahibi görülmektedir? Mali ve Senegal halkları bu iki ülkeden hangisine karşı daha fazla sempati besliyorlar? Fransa'nın sömürgeci bir geçmişe sahip olması bugün insanların Fransa'ya bakış açılarını etkilemekte midir? Etkilemekteyse nasıl? Sömürgeci bir geçmişe sahip olması Fransa'ya bugün bölgeyle ilişkilerinde avantaj sağlamakta mıdır? Kıtada sömürgeci bir geçmişe sahip olmaması bugün Türkiye için kıtaya olan ilişkilerinde ve oradaki insanların Türkiye'ye bakış açısının şekillenmesinde bir avantaj teşkil ediyor mu? Türkiye'nin kıtanın geleceğinde nerede konumlanıyor? Fransa'nın kıtada otoritesini ve güvenilirliğini kaybetmesi öngörülebilir mi?

Tez giriş ve sonuç bölümleri dahil olmak üzere toplam altı bölümden oluşmaktadır. Birinci bölümde tezin konusundan, tezin ana ve yardımcı araştırma sorularından bahsedilmektedir. Bu bölümde tezin neyi amaçladığı anlatılmakta, literatürdeki eksikliklerden bahsedilmekte, çalışmanın teorik ve pratik anlamda sağlayacağı katkıların altı çizilmekte, çalışmanın metodolojisi ve genel yapısı hakkında okuyucuya genel bir bilgilendirme yapılmaktadır. İkinci bölüm tezin teorik çerçevesini anlatmaktadır. Yumuşak güç ve onun pratik bir uzantısı olan kamu diplomasisinin tarihsel evrimleri, trendleri, temel anlatıları bu bölümün konusunu oluşturmaktadır. Üçüncü bölümde ise Türkiye'nin kıtadaki varlığı ve kıta ülkeleriyle ilişkilerini geliştirme süreci anlatılmaktadır. Dördüncü bölüm Fransa-Afrika ilişkilerini masaya yatırmakta ve Fransa'nın kıtadaki kolonyal faaliyetleri ile bugünkü kolonyal mirası ekseninde konuyu ele almaktadır. Beşinci bölüm ise tezin belki de en önemli kısmı

olan ampirik verilere ve bunlardan yola çıkılarak yapılan yorumlamalara yer vermektedir. Son bölümde tezin geneline ilişkin bir özet yer almaktadır.

Algı arařtırmaları Uluslararası İliřkiler disiplininde henüz hak ettiđi yere ulařamamıřtır. Bu konuda yapılan alıřmalar da azdır. Öyle ki Uluslararası İliřkiler disiplini içerisinde devlet dıřı aktörlerin uluslararası sistemin birer parçası oldukları kabulü dahi gecikmiřken, tabiidir ki algı gibi psikoloji biliminden ödün alınan bir kavramın Uluslararası İliřkiler çevrelerince kolayca kabul görmesi biraz güçtür. Dolayısıyla bu alana ilişkin alıřmalar gecikmiř ve yeteri kadar da verilmemiřtir. Sonuç itibariyle, bu kavramsal çereve içerisinde yapılacak alıřmalar disiplinin geliřmesi ve ona yeni bir soluk kazandırılması adına önem arz etmektedir. Bu alıřma da böyle bir kaygının ürünüdür.

Tezin ikinci bölümü alıřmanın teorik çerevesini kamu diplomasisi ve yumuřak gü kavramları etrafında çizmektedir. Bu iki kavram birbirinden ayrıřtırılmaz. Zira kamu diplomasisi yumuřak gücün hayata geçirilmesi için önemli bir enstrümanken, yumuřak gü kamu diplomasisinin düşünsel arka planını oluřturmaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu iki kavramın aynı yapının farklı parçaları olduklarını söylemekte beis yoktur. Yumuřak gü bu yapının kaidesini oluřtururken, yapının daha belirgin olan gövde kısmı ise kamu diplomasisi olarak deđerlendirilebilir. Bu anlamda yumuřak gü daha soyut, daha az görünür ama temel teřkil eden bir unsurdur. Kamu diplomasisi ancak yumuřak gü tabanında anlamlandırılabilir. Zira, devletler yumuřak güçlerini, kamu diplomasisi aracılıđıyla yabancı haklara hitap edip, onların gönüllerine ve akıllarına etki ederek hayata geçirebilirler. Kısacası kamu diplomasisi yumuřak güce göre daha ölçülebilir ve daha somut bir kavram ve yumuřak gü inřa etme abalarının somut bir görüngüsüdür. Birbirlerinin tamamlayıcıları olmaları bakımından giriş bölümünde bu iki kavram ekseninde teorik çerevenin oluřturulması uygun görülmüřtür. Burada yumuřak gücün içeriđi, evrimi kamu diplomasisiyle olan iliřkileri incelenmiřtir. Öte yandan, kamu diplomasisinin ortaya çıkıřı, terimde meydana gelen güncellemeler de bu bölümün konusunu oluřturmaktadır.

Yumuşak güç her ne kadar uluslararası ilişkiler disiplinine bugünkü anlamıyla Joseph Nye tarafından 1990’da kazandırılmış olsa da terimin uluslararası ilişkiler literatürüne girişi daha eskiye gider. Örneğin, Hans Morgenthau ulusal gücü dokuz prensibe dayandırmıştır ve bunların içerisinde aslından bugün yumuşak güç kavramı etrafında değerlendirilebilecek olan ulusal karakter, ulusal ahlak, nitelikli diplomasi ve nitelikli hükümet gibi prensipler de vardır. Keza, uluslararası ilişkiler disiplininin önemli realist teorisyenlerinden E. H. Carr da siyasi amaçlara ulaşmada askeri ve ekonomik gücün olduğu kadar düşünce üzerindeki gücün de önemli olduğunu vurgulamıştır.

Sert güçle kıyaslandığında yumuşak gücün bulunduğu bağlamdan etkilenmesi daha belirgindir. Sert güç ise içerisinde bulunulan bağlamdan yumuşak güce kıyasla daha az etkilenmektedir. Sert güç daha çok, materyal kaynakların efektif kullanımı üzerinden okunabilecek bir süreçtir. Bu anlamda, sert gücün “sert kaynaklara” bağımlılığının daha çok olduğu fakat yumuşak gücün daha bağlamsal olduğu ifade edilebilir. Yumuşak güçte, potansiyel kaynakların beklentiler, algılar, öngörülerden hareketle kullanılarak diğer aktörleri davranmaya sevk edecek irade oluşum süreçlerine soyut bir müdahaleden söz edilebilir. Yumuşak güç baskı mekanizmasıyla açıklanamaz. O, hedef alınan ülkenin tercih ve davranışlarının yumuşak güç uygulayan ülkenin de menfaatine olacak şekilde gerçekleşmesi için hedef ülkenin davranış ve tercihlerini etkileyen motivasyonu, güdüyü pasif olarak etkileme sürecidir. Yumuşak gücün uygulanması aşamasında genellikle hedef devletin halkının sempatisini ve güvenini kazanmak ön plandadır. Tam bu noktada ise zaten bir yumuşak güç uygulama enstrümanı olan kamu diplomasisi devreye girmektedir.

En genel şekliyle kamu diplomasisi devletlerin, yabancı halklarla onların düşüncelerini ve bakış açılarını şekillendirmek için iletişime geçmesi sürecidir. Ayrıca bu süreç, bakış açılarını ve düşünceleri kamu diplomasisi uygulayan ülke menfaatine şekillendirdikten sonra yabancı halkların kendi hükümetlerini etkileyerek ilgili hükümetlerin kamu diplomasisini uygulayan ülke menfaatlerine uygun şekilde düşünmeye ve hareket etmeye başlamasını içermektedir. Bugün kamu diplomasisi faaliyetleri sadece devletler tarafından değil, devletlerin desteğini alan devlet dışı

aktörler tarafından da gerçekleştirilmektedir. Bununla beraber, teknolojinin sağladığı yeni iletişim olanaklarına paralel olarak, kamu diplomasisi faaliyetlerinin eskiye nazaran etkinliğinin arttığını gözlemlemek mümkündür.

Devletlerin bugünkü kavramsallaştırmayla kamu diplomasisi olarak nitelendirilebilecek faaliyetleri eskiden de bulunuyorsa da bu pratiklerin uluslararası ilişkiler disiplininde kavramsallaştırılması 1960'ların ortasında ABD'de gerçekleşmiştir. Tuft Üniversitesi'nde Fletcher School of Law'ın dekanı Edmund Gullion bu terimi literatüre kazandırmıştır. Soğuk savaş sonrasında daha liberal ve daha çok aktörlü dünyasında bu terimin önemi ve devletler ile devlet dışı aktörlerin kamu diplomasisi faaliyetlerinde bir ivmelenme olmuştur.

Günümüzde kamu diplomasisi üzerine daha çok düşünülmekte ve kavramın içeriğinin zenginleşmesine dair çalışmalar artmaktadır. Yeni yaklaşımlar kavramı daha da liberalleştirmektedir. Kamu diplomasisi pratiklerinin bir monologdan çok diyalog haline gelmesinin önemi üzerinde de durulmaktadır. Nicholas Cull, en iyi kamu diplomasisi pratiğinin karşı tarafa da kulak vermekten geçtiğini ifade etmektedir. Yeni yaklaşımlarla birlikte, hayata geçirilen kamu diplomasisi faaliyetlerinin karşı tarafta nasıl etkiler yarattığının, düşünceleri ve tutumları nasıl şekillendirdiğinin önemsenmesi onu propagandadan ayıran kilit özelliklerinden biri haline getirmiştir. Ayrıca, dinleme sürecinin etkin bir biçimde gerçekleştirilmesi muhatap olunan halkın ve devletin önemsendiğini göstermesi bakımından da kamu diplomasisi uygulayıcısı devlet tarafından bir kazanım ve meşruiyet zeminidir. Bu kazanç bir yana, ilgili faaliyetlerin sonuçları hakkında geri bildirim almak gerekli revizyon veya reformları gerçekleştirmesi için kamu diplomasisi uygulayan devlete fırsatlar kazandırmakta ve faaliyetlerinden doğacak riskleri en aza indirgemesine yardımcı olmaktadır.

Üçüncü bölüm Türkiye'nin kıtaya ilişkilerini geliştirme sürecinden ve kıtaya ilişkin politikalarından bahsetmektedir. Öncelikle, bölümde Türkiye'nin kıtaya ilişkilerinin tarihsel arka planına yer verilmiştir. Osmanlı imparatorluğunun kıtaya olan ilişkilerine çok kısaca değinilse de daha çok 20. yüzyıla odaklanılmıştır. Buna göre,

cumhuriyetin kurulmasından sonra Türk dış politikası uzun bir zaman Batı haricince diğer coğrafyaları ihmal etmiştir. Bu trendin nasıl değiştiği, Türk dış politikasının çeşitlenmesi ve zenginleşmesinde ne gibi dönüm noktalarının olduğu ve bu dönüm noktalarının Türk dış politikasının Batı ekseninden sıyrılıp çok boyutluluk kazanmasında nasıl bir etkiye sahip olduğu, Türkiye'nin Afrika'ya açılım planını kabul etmesinde nelerin rol oynadığı, bu açılım planının Türk dış politikasında ne gibi etkiler yarattığı, AKP hükümeti döneminde kıtaya ilişkilerin nasıl geliştiği, Türkiye'nin kıtada görünürlüğünün nasıl arttığı, Türkiye'nin kıtada uyguladığı kamu diplomasisi faaliyetlerinin neler olduğu, sivil toplum kuruluşlarının Türkiye'nin kıtada tanıtımındaki rollerinin neler olduğu gibi konular bu bölümün iskeletini oluşturmaktadır. Bu bölüm Türkiye'nin Mali ve Senegal ile ilişkilerinin genel seyrine dair bilgiler vererek sonuçlanmaktadır.

Türkiye'nin kıtaya iletişim kurması geç olmuştur. Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun kıtada hakimiyet kurduğu belli bölgelerde bugün Türkiye'nin nispeten tanınır olduğu söylenebilir. Öte taraftan Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun etkisinin ulaşmadığı Sahel ve Sahra altı Afrika bölgelerinde Türkiye'nin tanınan bir ülke olduğunu iddia etmek güçtür. Doğrusu, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kuruluşundan sonra Afrika ile ilişkiler tamamen kesilmiştir denilebilir. Yeni devlet kurulduktan sonra, anayasal yapısının tesis edilmesi ve güçlendirilmesi, iç işlerinde yaşanan sorunlar, Batılılaşma çabaları Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin Afrika başta olmak üzere diğer coğrafyalarla ilişkiler kurmasını aksatmıştır. Türk dış politikasındaki bu trend 1960'larda Kıbrıs sorununun baş göstermesine değin devam etmiştir. Kıbrıs meselesinde Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin Türkiye'den desteğini çekmesi ve tehditkâr bir dille kaleme alınmış Johnson mektubu Türkiye'yi uluslararası ilişkilerinde yalnızlığa düşme ve Sovyetler Birliği'ne karşı müttefiklerinden destek bulamama endişesiyle karşı karşıya bırakmıştır. Bu bağlamda Sovyetler Birliği ile bir yakınlaşma olduğu gibi diğer coğrafyalar da Türk dış politikasında yakın markaja alındı. Nitekim Afrika'nın Türk dış politikasında önem kazanması ilk olarak bu döneme rastlar. Bu önem 1990'larda kendini daha fazla belli eder ve nihayet 1998'de Afrika Açılım Planı'nın kabul edilmesiyle zirveye ulaşır. Özellikle AKP hükümetinin yönetime gelmesiyle beraber

kıtayla ilişkiler daha da hız kazanır ve Türk dış politikasında Afrika, bilinmez ve uzak bir coğrafya olmaktan çıkar. Türkiye 2005 yılında Afrika Birliği'nde gözlemci ülke statüsü kazanır ve aynı yıl Türkiye'de Afrika Yılı ilan edilir. Yine AKP döneminde kıtadaki diplomatik temsilciliklerin sayısı ve kamu diplomasisi faaliyetleri önemli oranda arttırılır.

Dördüncü bölüm Fransa'nın kıtayla ilişkilerini, orada yürüttüğü politikaları ve kolonyal tarihsel mirasını incelemektedir. Fransa'nın kıtadaki geçmiş kolonileriyle olan karşılıklı bağımlılık ilişkisinden söz edilmektedir. Ardından, Fransa'nın Jacques Chirac döneminden itibaren zaman zaman sekteye uğrasa da kıtaya karşı yürüttüğü politikalarındaki revizyonlardan bahsedilmektedir. Fransa'nın kıtada kolonyal mirassa sahip olmasının şu anda kendisine kıtada faaliyet gösteren diğer yabancı devletlere karşı bir avantaj sağlayıp sağlamadığı, Fransa'nın kolonyal bir güç olarak kıtadan çekilmesinin nasıl gerçekleştiği, Fransa'nın eski kolonileri üzerindeki baskısını azalmasında motivasyonunun ne olduğu, hangi alanlarda Fransa'nın kültürel olarak bölgede hakimiyet kurduğu, bu bölümde sorgulanmaktadır. Bu bölüm Fransa'nın Mali ve Senegal ile ilişkilerinin genel bir perspektifini vererek sona ermektedir.

Bugün, Fransa kıtada geleneksel bir güç olarak varlığını sürdürmektedir. Fransa diğer bazı Avrupalı devletlerle beraber kıtayı sömürgeleştiren ülkelerden biridir. Bu anlamda kıtadaki ağırlığı ve sahip olduğu ilişkiler ağının zenginliği tartışılmaz. Özellikle de Fransa'nın 20. yüzyılda kıtanın batısı ve kuzeybatısında siyasal ve ekonomik nüfuzunu korumak için mücadele vermiştir. Fransa *dekolonizasyon* dönemine değin sömürge imparatorluğunu korumak için büyük çaba sarf etmiştir.

Fransa hamiliğini yaptığı Afrika ülkeleri üzerindeki otoritesini korumak ve kıtadaki varlığını uluslararası toplum gözünde meşrulaştırmak için *medenileştirme misyonu* adında bir retorik benimsemiştir. Bu bağlamda, Fransa kıtadaki kolonyal faaliyetlerini hakimiyet kurduğu ülke halklarını modernleştirme ve Batılılaştırma kaygısıyla gerçekleştirdiğini ifade etmektedir. Bununla beraber, Fransa kıtaya özgürlük, eşitlik ve kardeşlik gibi Fransız devriminin verimlerini getirdiğini de ifade etmektedir. Ama

Fransa'nın en belirgin amacının sömürgeleştirdiği Afrika yerlilerinden bir Fransız yaratma amacının olduğu da itiraf edilmelidir.

Doğrusu, bugün Fransa'yı Fransa yapan kolonyal mirasıdır. Bugün de bu miras Fransa'nın uluslararası arenada kimliğinin oluşmasında etkilidir. Her ne kadar Fransa'nın sömürgecilik faaliyetleri *de-kolonizasyon* döneminden sonra eskiye oranla azalsa veya daha az belirginleşse de tamamen kaybolduğu söylenemez. Bugün Afrika'da eski Fransız sömürgesi ülkeler hala siyasal, ekonomik ve sosyal olarak Fransa'nın kontrolü altındadır. Bu ülkelerin kâğıt üzerinde bir bağımsızlıkları olsa da bu bağımsızlıkların fiili olarak kendisini ne kadar gösterdiği tartışmalıdır. Fransa ve eski kolonileri arasındaki bu ilişkiler uluslararası ilişkiler literatüründe *neo-kolonizasyon* olarak ifade edilmektedir. Mali ve Senegal gibi Batı Afrika'daki Fransızca konuşan diğer ülkelerin de Fransa'yla bağlarını tam olarak kestikleri söylenemez. Bu ülkeler ve Fransa arasındaki eşitsiz ilişkiler siyasi, askeri ve ekonomik anlaşmalarda sürmektedir. Esasında, Fransa ile ilişkilerin devam ettirilmesi Batı Afrika'nın Fransızca konuşan ülkeleri için seçenekten de öte bir zorunluluktur. Zira, bu ülkeler kendi kendilerine yetecek bir ekonomik yapıdan yoksundurlar ve iş birliği kurabilecekleri ülkeler Fransa tarafından sınırlandırılmaktadır.

Beşinci ve sonuçtan önceki ampirik bölümde ise Malili ve Senegalli öğrencilerle yapılan mülakatların sonuçları etraflıca değerlendirilmekte ve mülakatlardan alıntılara yer verilmektedir. Bu kısımda mülakata katılan adayların kimlik bilgileri deşifre edilmemiş, onun yerine kendilerine isimlerinin ülkelerinin ilk harfiyle başlayan kodlar atanmıştır. Bütün mülakatlarda ses kaydı alınarak adayların cevaplarının transkripsiyonu yapılmıştır. Adaylardan alınan cevaplardan yola çıkılarak tümevarım yöntemiyle Türkiye ve Fransa'nın ilk önce Mali ve Senegal'de sonra kabaca bölgedeki diğer Fransızca konuşan ülkelerde nasıl algılandığına ilişkin bir araştırma yapılmıştır. Araştırma bulgularının analizi sırasında tezin de teorik çerçevesini oluşturan kamu diplomasisi ve yumuşak güç paradigmalarından yararlanılmıştır. Bu bölümde araştırma bulguları iki kısım halinde tematik olarak okuyucuya sunulmaktadır. Her tematik kategorinin yeteri kadar veriye sahip olmasına önem verilmiştir. Bu temalar

beş ayrı alt başlık halinde aktarılmıştır: Türkiye’de öğrenci olmak; Türkiye ve Fransa ile bağlar; Türkiye’ye ve Fransa’ya duyulan güven; sömürgeciliğin bugünkü algılar üzerindeki etkisi; tahminler ve beklentiler. Bu tematik bölümler her ne kadar analizi kolaylaştırmak ve anlatıyı sistematikleştirmek için yapılmışsa da tematik başlıklar arasında örtüşmeler ve giriftler olabilir.

Çalışma asıl olarak 1990’lardan günümüze kadarki sürece odaklanmaktadır. Türkiye ve Fransa’nın kıtadaki varlığının araştırma konusu yapılması özellikle tercih edilmiştir. Fransa Batı Afrika’da geleneksel bir güçken Türkiye’nin kıtada varlığını gösterme çabaları her ne kadar son yirmi senede aşama kaydetmişse de emekleme aşamasındadır. Bu bakımdan ilk bakışta Fransa’nın zaten kıtada Türkiye karşısında tartışmasız bir üstünlüğünün olduğu ön kabulüyle yaklaşılabilir fakat bu tür bir yaklaşım bilimsel şüpheciğe aykırıdır. Gerçekten Fransa’nın bölgede geleneksel bir güç olması ve bölge ülkelerinin çoğunluğunun eski Fransız sömürgeleri olmaları ve dahi hala Fransa’nın etki alanında bulunmaları, bölge ülkelerinin başka devletlere özellikle de bölgede henüz yeni yeni beliren bir güç olan Türkiye’ye karşı kayıtsız kalmaları ile doğrudan ilişkili midir? sorusundan hareket etmek önemlidir. Bu çalışma da böyle bir fikrin ürünüdür ve sonuçta Fransa’nın Batı Afrika’da geleneksel bir güç olmasının Türkiye’nin bölge ülkeleriyle ilişkilerini geliştirmesinde bir engel teşkil etmediği ortaya çıkmakla beraber, mülakat katılımcılarından alınan dönütler ve literatür araştırması doğrultusunda Türkiye’ye güven ve sempati duyulduğu ve/ya duyulmaya meyilli olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

Tezde zaman dilimi olarak 1990 sonrası incelenmesi de sebepsiz değildir. Yukarıda bahsedildiği gibi Türkiye’nin kıta ile ilişkilerini geliştirmesi geç hayata geçen bir fenomendir. Özellikle 1990’larda Türkiye’nin kıtaya ilişkilerini daha sistematik hale getirdiği söylenebilir. Bu durum 1998 senesinde Afrika Açılım Planı’nın kabul edilmesiyle birlikte zirveye ulaşmıştır ve daha sonra kıtaya ilişkiler artan bir tempoyla geliştirilmeye devam edilmiştir. 1990’ların sonları Fransa’nın da kıtaya ilişkilerinde revizyon girişimlerinde bulunduğu bir dönem olmuştur. 1998’de politika yapıcılar Fransa’nın kıtaya ilişkilerinin üç temel unsur üzerine oturtulmasını



kararlařtırmıřlardır: Siyasal krizleri çözümlenerek kıtada huzur ve sükûneti tesis etmek; Afrika ülkelerine ekonomilerini idare edebilmeleri için yardım etmek; kıtanın Anglofon etkilerden kurtulmasını sağlamak. Fransa'nın 1990'larda Afrika ile ilişkilerini revize etme kararları alması ve Türkiye'nin Afrika'yla ilişkilerini geliştirme çabası içerisinde girmesi 1990'ların çalışmanın araştırma sorularına cevap aramak için iyi bir başlangıç noktası olduğuna karar verilmiştir.

Çalışmada örnek olarak Mali ve Senegal'in tercih edilmesinin de gerekçeleri vardır. Öncelikle, bu ülkelerin ikisi de tezin odaklandığı bölge olan Batı Afrika'da yer alan, Fransızcanın resmi dil olduğu eski Fransa sömürgesi ülkelerdir. Aynı ayrı Mali ve Senegal örneklerinin tercih nedenleri değerlendirilecek olursa şunlar ifade edilebilir: Türkiye her ne kadar Mali ile ilişkiler kurmakta geç kalmış olsa da 2010'da başkent Bamako'da Türkiye Cumhuriyeti büyükelçiliğinin açılmasından bu yana ilişkiler siyasi ve ekonomik anlamda ivme kazanarak devam etmektedir. Nitekim, TİKA'nın ülkedeki faaliyetleri, iki ülke arasındaki artan ticaret hacmi ve Mali'de sayıları hızla artan Türk şirketlerinin faaliyetleri bunun en önemli göstergelerindedir. Fransa cephesinden bakılacak olursa, Mali'nin çalışmada vaka olarak seçilmesinin gerekçeleri Fransa'nın son on yıl içinde ülkedeki askeri müdahaleleri, ülkenin içişlerine karışması, Fransa'ya karşı ülkede artan karşıtlık ve güvensizlik şeklinde özetlenebilir. Öte yandan Mali'nin Fransa için stratejik olarak önemli olduğunu yinelemek gerekir.

Senegal de aynı şekilde Batı Afrika'da yer alıp ve resmi dili Fransızca olan eski Fransa sömürgesi ülkelerden biridir; bununla beraber Batı Afrika'nın uluslararası arenada en ön plana çıkan ülkelerindedir. Senegal'in örnek olarak seçilmesinin Türkiye ve Fransa açısından gerekçeleri ise şöyle özetlenebilir: Türkiye'nin Senegal'le ilişkileri Afrika'da pek çok ülkeyle ilişkilerine göre daha köklüdür. Öyle ki Türkiye Dakar'daki büyükelçiliğini 1962'de açmıştır. Türkiye'nin Senegal'e yönelik dış ticaret hacmi son yirmi yılda sürekli bir artış göstermektedir. Türkiye son senelerde Senegal'in tarımsal ve endüstriyel altyapısına katkı sağladığının ve Türk şirketlerinin Senegal'de yoğun bir şekilde yatırımlar yaptıklarının ve istihdam sağladıklarının altı çizilmelidir.

Bunlara ek olarak Senegal, Türkiye'nin bölgeye yönelik kamu diplomasisi faaliyetlerinde de kilit öneme sahiptir. Nitekim, TİKA Batı Afrika'daki ilk ofisini 2007'nin Nisan ayında Dakar'da açmıştır. İki ülke arasındaki ilişkilere hâkim olan pozitif hava üst düzey siyasi ziyaretlerle de perçinlenmektedir. Fransa bağlamında Senegal'in bir örnek ülke olarak tercih edilmesinin nedeniyse iki ülke arasındaki ilişkilerin geçmişten gelen çok yönlülüğünden ve kuvvetliliğinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Fransa Senegal'de büyük yatırımlar yapan ülkeler arasında baş sıralarda gelmektedir. Ayrıca, Senegal, Fransa'nın Sahel bölgesinde düzen ve güvenliği tesis etmesinde ülkede konuşlanan Fransız askeri üsleri nedeniyle merkez bir rol oynamaktadır.

Çalışma sonucunda Mali ve Senegal'de Türkiye'ye karşı yükselen bir sempatinin fakat Fransa'ya karşı bir ilgisizlik ve karşıtlığın olduğu mülakat katılımcılarının cevaplarıyla tespit edilmiştir. Fransa bu anlamda, Türkiye kadar güvenilir görülmemektedir. Özellikle Türkiye'nin kıtadaki görünürlüğünün artması ve faaliyetlerini hızlandırmasıyla beraber Türkiye'ye olan ilgi ve merakın artış gösterdiği gözlemlenmiştir. Öte taraftan bu durum Fransa için geçerli değildir. Nitekim, Fransa'nın bölgede bilinen ve geleneksel bir güç olması durumu söz konusudur. Bölgede, Fransa'nın otoritesine, baskısına ve daha da genel olarak neo kolonyal politikalarına bir karşıtlık söz konudur denilebilir. Türkiye'nin ise kıtada sabıkasının olmaması bölgede insanların güven ve sempatisini kazanmak açısından Türkiye'nin elini güçlendirdiği söylenebilir. Bu durum göstermektedir ki Türkiye'nin kıtada "geç gelen" olması kıtada sempati ve güven kazanması için bir engel teşkil etmemektedir. Aksine, halk Türkiye'yi tanıdıkça Türkiye'ye olan ilgi yavaş fakat sağlam biçimde artış göstermektedir. Türk toplumunun Müslüman kimliğinin de Türkiye'nin kıtada sömürgeci bir sabıkaya sahip olmaması kadar Mali ve Senegal'de memnuniyet yarattığı ifade edilebilir. Öte taraftan, itiraf etmek gerekir ki uzun yıllar Fransa'nın etkisi altında kalmış olan Mali ile Senegal'in kültürel açıdan Fransa ile daha fazla benzeşmeleri normaldir. Bu sebeple Mali ve Senegal'de Fransa'nın daha fazla tanınmaları anlaşılabilir. Burada üzerinde ısrarla durulması gereken konu şudur: Bu ülkelerin Fransız sömürgeciliği nedeniyle Fransa'ya bağlılıkları ve özellikle dil ekseninde benzeşmeleri bundan sonraki süreçte başta Türkiye olmak üzere diğer

devlet aktörlerin bölgede ağırlık kazanmayacakları ve bölge ülkeleriyle ilişkilerini ilerletemeyecekleri anlamlarına gelmemektedir.

Bugün Fransa'nın kolonyal mirasının ona fayda sağladığı muhakkaktır fakat mülakat katılımcılarından birinin ifade ettiği şekliyle bu faydanın ve Fransız hegemonyasının sona ermesi yakın gözükmemektedir. Fransa'nın *medenileştirme misyonu* paradigması Mali ve Senegal toplumları nezdinde geçerliliğini kaybetmekte ve aşağılayıcı bulunmaktadır. Bu anlamda bölgede yeni güçlerin yükselmeleri ve Fransızca konuşan Afrika ülkelerinin bu yeni güçlerle ilişkiler kurmalarının önü her geçen gün açılmaktadır. Ayrıca Fransa'nın bölgenin Fransızca konuşan ülkeleriyle ilişkilerini eşitsiz bir zeminde tesis etmemesi, kazan-kazan prensibine sadık kalmaması fakat Türkiye'nin bölge ülkeleriyle ilişkilerini hakça temeller üzerinde inşa ederek kazan-kazan prensibini gözetmesi Mali ve Senegal'de Türkiye'yi olumlu bir perspektiften görmelerini pekiştiriyor olduğu ifade edilebilir.

Mülakatlara katılan Malili ve Senegalli adaylar genel hatlarıyla Türkiye ve Fransa'nın da kıtadaki geleceğine ilişkin belli öngörülerde bulunmuşlardır. Fransa'nın neo-kolonyal politikalarından vazgeçmediği sürece bölgede prestij ve sempati kazanmasının olanaksız olduğu ve bu yaklaşım biçiminin Fransa'nın bölgedeki varlığı açısından sürdürülebilir olmadığı vurgulanmıştır. Öte yandan Türkiye'nin kıtadaki ve özel olarak da Fransızca konuşan Batı Afrika ülkelerindeki faaliyetlerini artırarak devam ettirmesi ve dahi eğitim ve askeriye gibi stratejik alanlara odaklanması halinde orta ve uzun vadede kıtada hak ettiği statüye kavuşacağı ve kıtanın uluslararası ilişkilerinde söz sahibi olacağı ifade edilmiştir.

Bu çalışma göstermiştir ki Türkiye bölgede yumuşak güce sahiptir fakat bu gücün bölgede Fransa'ninkini geçip geçmediği tartışmalıdır. Araştırma bulguları işaret etmektedir ki maddi olmayan parametreler çerçevesinde (din, insani dış politikası, etik değerlerin gözetilmesi) değerlendirildiğinde bölgede Türkiye'nin önünde olan başka bir devlet aktör bulunmamaktadır. Ama durum her ne kadar böyle de olsa Fransızca konuşan Batı Afrika ülkelerinin Fransa'yla olan koparılmaz tarihsel bağları nedeniyle

Fransa bölge ülkeleri için vazgeçilmez bir konumdadır. Öte taraftan, Rusya askeri anlamda bölgedeki etkinliğini her geçen gün artırmaktadır. Çin ise Afrika'nın en büyük kredi sağlayıcısı ve ticaret ortağıdır. Dolayısıyla Türkiye'nin bugün Afrika'da bu güçlerin çok önünde olduğu ve kıtanın iç dinamiklerinde söz sahibi olduğu söylenemez. Yine de Türkiye'nin son yirmi senede kıtada artan insani yardım faaliyetleri ve kıta ülkeleriyle siyasal ve ekonomik ilişkilerine ivme kazandırması göz önüne alınırsa Türkiye'nin kıtadaki geleceğinin parlak olduğu söylenebilir.

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