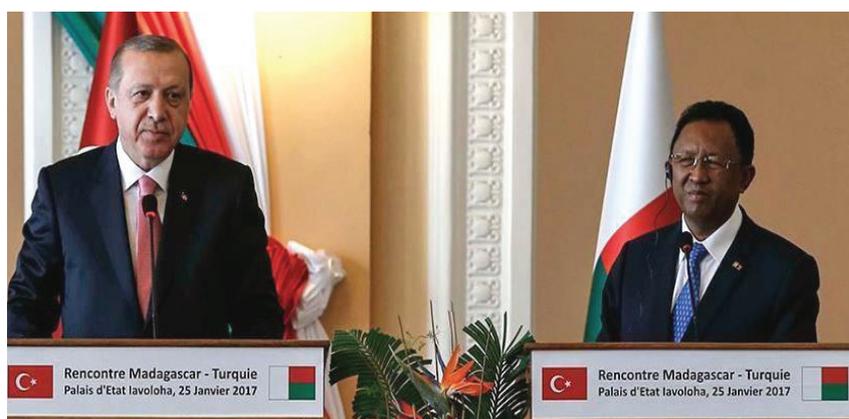


The 2016 Failed Coup in Turkey

What Is the Impact on Turkish-African Relations?



Benjamin AUGÉ

June 2018

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Ifri

27 rue de la Procession 75740 Paris Cedex 15 – FRANCE

Tel. : +33 (0)1 40 61 60 00 – Fax : +33 (0)1 40 61 60 60

Email: accueil@ifri.org

Website: ifri.org

Author

Benjamin Augé, a Research Fellow at IFRI's Energy and sub-Saharan African Centres, has a PhD in geography from the French Institute of Geopolitics (University Paris 8) and is also Editor-in-Chief of the newsletter *Africa Energy Intelligence* (Groupe Indigo Publications). He lectures on the geopolitics of oil and gas in Africa at the University of Nouakchott in Mauritania and is also a lecturer at Clingendael, the Dutch diplomatic academy.

His research focuses on governance in the oil, gas, and electric sectors in African states. Benjamin Augé is particularly interested in conflicts between different stakeholders (local, national and international) for the control of oil, as well as border disputes related to oil and gas fields. His recent research focuses more specifically on relations between the Persian Gulf countries and Africa. In addition to Nigeria, Angola, Gabon and the Republic of Congo, he also studies new and future hydrocarbon-producing countries, such as Mauritania, Senegal, Uganda, Ghana, Mozambique and Tanzania.

Abstract

The July 2016 failed coup against President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's government not only resulted in a dramatic upheaval in Turkey, it also had a significant impact on the structure of its international relations and its networks of influence abroad. The way this coup affected the political actors who shaped Turkish policy in Africa highlights the extent to which Fethullah Gülen's movement – accused by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of having organised the coup- shaped those relations up to 2016. Today, Turkish diplomacy in Africa is undergoing a process of reconstruction, as it dismantles functional networks, and supports the new actors championed by Ankara. The destruction of what has been patiently established for 20 years and the creation of new channels of influence is a challenging task for Turkish diplomats and politicians who multiply their visits to Africa. In some countries, Turkish diplomacy sometimes faces difficulties in removing the Gülenist networks, as some are closely linked to high-ranking local leaders.

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Introduction

Relations between Turkey and Africa changed dramatically mainly because of the increase in Turkish funding linked to the economic expansion in the 2009-2016 period. Indeed, since its last slowdown in 2009, Turkey has experienced an annual average growth rate of 7.7%¹ in its gross domestic product (GDP) until 2016,² the year of the failed coup during which Turkey's growth rate fell to 2.9%³. These additional resources have enabled Turkey to extend its diplomatic network more quickly. Indeed, Turkey is currently the sixth largest country in the world regarding the number of diplomats (nearly 1,800) and missions around the world (236 consulates, embassies and UN or African Union⁴ type permanent missions).

Although Africa had a poor relationship with Turkish diplomacy up to the early 2000s, the continent is now among the key priorities. 47 missions are spread across the continent, including 27 that opened between 2009 and 2014.⁵ Similarly, there are now 34 African embassies based in Ankara and almost as many consulates in Istanbul.

Turkey highlights its shared history with Africa to justify the recent intensification in diplomatic relations with the continent. It tries to distinguish itself from former colonizing countries through selective rhetoric. On its website, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides a very subjective interpretation of the centuries of diplomatic relations between Africa and the Ottoman Empire and, since 1923 with the Republic of Turkey. According to official Turkish history, the Ottoman Empire (from the 13th century to 1923) prevented the colonization of North Africa and parts of East Africa for hundreds of years⁶. Such a perspective shows that the Ottoman presence can in no way be associated with a form of colonization. In the 16th century, still according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website,

1. The average gross national product (GNP) was calculated based on OECD data, available at: www.oecd-ilibrary.org.

2. The country's GNP rose from US \$ 200 billion in 2001 to US \$ 950 billion in 2013. For two years, the GNP has contracted slightly to reach US \$ 857 billion in 2016. See the data on the World Bank's website, available at: <https://donnees.banquemondiale.org>.

3. M. Khan, "Turkish GDP Growth Rebounds Strongly at 3.5%", *Financial Times*, 31 March 2017, available at: www.ft.com.

4. Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website, available at: www.mfa.gov.tr.

5. Including Angola, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Cameroon, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Uganda, Zambia and Sudan.

6. See Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website, available at: www.mfa.gov.tr.

the Zanzibar archipelago was for example protected from invasions by the Ottoman army. In the same vein, Africa greatly admired the war for independence carried out by the Ottoman Empire against the European powers (Greece, Armenia, France, Italy and Great Britain) between 1919 and 1921, as well as the rebuilding of the state by Atatürk. According to Turkish diplomats, the Ottoman Empire, which had a strong presence in North Africa, enabled the construction of infrastructure, bridges, mosques, schools, without ever imposing its own culture and changing the population's customs. Thus, according to such views, Turkey aims at highlighting its close historical ties with Africa, without ever being associated with an occupying force. As such, Turkey sets itself apart from the late 19th century and 20th-century Western colonization (France, Great Britain, Portugal, Spain and Germany). It is true that the inclusion of particularly the current Maghreb in the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century was also the result of negotiations between the local elites and the Empire to take advantage of a larger trading area. Traders from the Maghreb benefited from this extended area. The Ottoman conquest was not only achieved with weapons, the local elites were also able to govern their territory, even if this was done under the Empire's authority.⁷

Since the first Ifri paper on the relations between Turkey and Africa four years ago,⁸ Turkish policy has evolved. Certainly, these relations have been overturned since the failed coup in July 2016, which aimed at removing President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his party- the AKP (Party of Justice and Development), in power since 2002. Following the 2016 coup, Turkey seems to have entered a new phase.

We shall first return to the proactive policy towards Africa since 2008 when Turkey became a strategic partner of the African Union. This proactive African policy is a result of the work the Turkish authorities initiated a decade earlier when an "action plan"⁹ was adopted to help its private sector prosper in Africa *through* increased political support (opening embassies, state visits and signature of economic and cultural partnerships). While trade with the European Union stagnated, as with other countries that are geographically closer such as Ukraine or Russia, Turkey had to find new opportunities to increase its growth. For almost 20 years now, Africa has been considered by the Turkish political class and businessmen as a favourable continent for the expansion of their companies. The Turkish

7. On this subject, see N. Lafi, "L'Empire ottoman en Afrique: perspectives d'histoire critique", *Les Cahiers de l'Histoire*, No. 128, 2015.

8. G. Angey, "La recomposition de la politique étrangère turque en Afrique subsaharienne. Entre diplomatie publique et acteurs privés", *Notes de l'Ifri*, Ifri, March 2014, available at: www.ifri.org.

9. O. Mbabia, "Ankara en Afrique : stratégies d'expansion", *Outre-Terre*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 2011, pp. 107-119.

government also regards Africa as a reservoir of crucial votes that can have an impact in international organizations like the United Nations (UN). In 2009-2010, it was partly through the votes of African countries (51 out of 53) that Turkey became a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Some figures show the success of the Turkish-African strategy. In 2015, Turkish-African trade accounted for US \$ 17.5 billion, or an increase of 258% compared to 2003. This is a very encouraging development for Turkey, especially as exports have increased six-fold while imports have only doubled. Turkey invested US \$ 6 billion in Africa in 2015, as opposed to US \$100 million in 2003.¹⁰ However, Africa must be set in the overall perspective of Turkish trade. In 2016, out of the top 20 Turkish economic partners in terms of export, only Egypt (petroleum products and steels) and Algeria (steel and textiles) came from Africa. The combined share of these two countries in exports has certainly increased, but remains modest, rising from 1.9% in 2007 to 3.1% in 2016.¹¹ Throughout this increase, only Egypt has gained market share while Algeria has stagnated. Regarding imports, no African country is among Turkey's top 20 clients.

This paper will analyze the organization of the Turkish system in Africa, with regards to its architects, politicians, and diplomats postings on the continent. We will also focus on the current upheavals of economic actors and employers' groups, which generally serve the country's economic policy abroad and particularly in Africa, in the context of the fall of the Turkish imam, Fethullah Gülen¹² and Gülenist networks. Finally, we will come back to the consequences of the 15th July 2016 failed coup in Turkey through educational co-operation with Africa. The attempted coup, during which more than 270 people were killed, and nearly stripped the President and ex-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's power, resulted in an acceleration of the "war" against the preacher Fethullah Gülen's network. This is demonstrated by not only the fight against the employer's organization Tuskon, which is closely linked to Gülen's movement but also by the fight against the network of schools that the preacher has established in Africa since the 1990s. For two years, the Turkish government has been trying, with

10. The figures in this paragraph came from the *Turkey Africa Economic and Business Forum* website in November 2016, available at: www.turkeyafricaforum.org.

11. All the economic statistics in this paragraph came from the Turkish Statistical Institute's official website, available at: www.turkstat.gov.tr.

12. The latter, based in Pennsylvania since the 1990s, founded a movement, "Hizmet" (service) in the 1970s, whose goal is to spread its ideas in Turkey and throughout the Turkish diaspora. Advocating religious tolerance and education, it is accused of having gradually implemented a strategy to control the Turkish state, by infiltrating major government Ministries in Turkey *via* civil servants who were members up until the coup of 2016. It also managed many schools in Turkey and throughout the world, as well as its business networks.

varying degrees of success, to take control of schools controlled by Gülen's network on the African continent, a movement which is now qualified as "FETÖ" – Fetullahçı Terör Örgütü'nün – (Fetullahçı Terror Organisation). The closing or transfer of these schools to Turkey is one of the main reasons for the recent increase in the visits of Turkish leaders to Africa. The latter are mobilising themselves to block any political and economic influence and the spread of the Gülen movement's ideas. These schools are the principal vehicles for the dynamism of Fethullah Gülen's followers' business networks and are consequently particularly targeted.

Besides the use of scientific literature and the press, this paper is based on a series of interviews conducted between February and April 2018 with Turkish diplomats in several embassies in Africa and with civil servants from the Turkish Ministry of Education.

The Turkish government's involvement and the development of employers' networks in Africa during the decade 2008-2018

Diplomacy is involved alongside the private sector

For Turkey, the special relationship with the continent is symbolised by the nomination of Ankara as a “strategic partner”¹³ of the African Union in January 2008.¹⁴ This status has only been attributed to six other countries: Japan (1993), China (2000), South Korea (2006), India (2008), Australia (2010) and the United States (2010) and three areas: the Arab countries (1977), the European Union (2000) and South America (2006). The signing of this partnership was followed by the organization of the first Turkish-African summit in August 2008 in Istanbul and that of Malabo in November 2014. The next one should be organized in Turkey in 2019. Moreover, in 2008 Turkey was elected as the 25th non-African member of the African Development Bank (AfDB). Turkey decided at the same time to open multiple offices of TIKA¹⁵ offices a co-operation agency in Africa, which is part of its *soft power* strategy. The latter, created in 1992, currently has about 20 missions on the continent.¹⁶ According to the 2014 report (the last available), below are the percentages of funds committed by TIKA, arranged

13. Turkey had already obtained observer status with the African Union in 2003 when the AKP came to power in Turkey.

14. Turkey had already carried out many projects with the African Union. For example, it financed the organization of forums where the 55 members of the institution were invited, as well as Turkish specialists and businessmen in specific areas like agriculture or education. It has also financed the African Union directly and it has recently donated a million dollars. Source: Turkish diplomat posted in Africa.

15. Since 2011, TIKA has been headed by Serdar Çam, who between 2002 and 2009 was Chief of Staff of the current president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, when he was Prime Minister.

16. In Algeria, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Egypt, Republic of Guinea, Kenya, Libya, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan and South Sudan, Tunisia and Tanzania.

by country in Africa (they are not all detailed) and the sectors in which they are used:

Country where TIKA is located	Investment and aid sectors (in % from most important to least important)	Percentages of funds invested in the country out of the total budget in 2014
Algeria	Cultural centre, mosque renovation, Turkish department at the University of Algiers	0.74
Ethiopia	Social and healthcare infrastructure, education	0.74 (instead of 2.31 in 2009)
Kenya	Healthcare, civilian and administrative infrastructure	1.06
Niger	Healthcare, pumping and water transport	1.26 (twice as much as in 2009)
Senegal	Healthcare, social infrastructure and services, education, Islamic centre	1.1
Somalia	Healthcare, administrative and civilian infrastructure, education	4.24
Sudan	Social infrastructure and services, healthcare, education	3.72 (X5 since 2009)
Tunisia	Administrative and civilian infrastructure	0.34, compared with 11 in 2013 or a sharp decline

Source: Turkish Development Assistance. From Turkey to The World, Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, 2014.

When examining the 2014 funds spent by TIKA, Africa is still evidently lagging behind compared to some countries like Palestine (16.57%), Afghanistan (12.80%) or even Bosnia-Herzegovina (7.31%). Although the importance of Africa should not be over-estimated in Turkish policy, it must be stressed that involvement on the continent has increased at an extremely rapid pace. In 2014, TIKA's total co-operation budget for Africa was US \$ 44.2 million and accounted for 23% of TIKA's total budget.

Obviously, TIKA is not the only way for Turkey to extend its co-operation. Development aid - budgetary support and project funding – can also be granted directly *through* different Turkish ministries. The 2014 total cost for the co-operation with Africa amounted to US \$ 383.3 million – out of a total of US \$ 3.5 billion. However, this amount was halved in 2015 reaching US \$ 183.4 million (falling behind Europe), while the total co-operation budget increased that same year to US \$ 3.84 billion. An overwhelming part of development aid for Africa in 2014 was distributed to one country: Somalia (US \$ 314.8 million), leaving Sudan (US \$ 22 million) far behind.¹⁷

What does this new Turkish economic policy stipulate? The Turkish government is involved at the highest level in strengthening ties with Africa. Although the first efforts had been made before the AKP came to power in 2002, mainly *through* the Minister of Foreign Affairs Ismail Cem (1997-2002), it was much more at the instigation of his successors from the AKP, Abdullah Gül (2003-2007), Ali Babacan (2007-2009), Ahmet Davutoğlu (2009-2014) and finally Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu (2015 to date) that this relationship was established. Ahmet Davutoğlu has a unique profile in the AKP's diplomacy. An academic and then successively diplomatic advisor to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2014 and then Prime Minister until 2016, he is one of the theorists behind Turkey's international relations since the AKP came to power. For this reason, he is pushing his country to trade more with Africa. According to him, Africa must play a role in the new dynamics of Turkish diplomacy – in the same way as other regions that are not in Turkey's immediate vicinity. Although Africa is not and will not be an absolute priority, such as the relationship with the European Union, this continent must now be an integral part of a conquering Turkey to influence world affairs.¹⁸

Turkish politicians have increased their visits to Africa. The last African tour by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in February 2018 (Algeria, Mauritania, Mali and Senegal) shortly followed that of December 2017

17. The figures in this paragraph came from the *Turkish Development Assistance Report 2015*, Ankara, available at: www.tika.gov.tr.

18. B. Aras, "The Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy", *Insight Turkey*, Summer 2009, pp. 127-142.

(Tunisia, Sudan and Chad). These last two trips represent a continuation of a long series of visits organized in the past ten years for the various AKP leaders.¹⁹ Abdullah Gül went to Kenya and Tanzania (2009), to Congo and Cameroon (2010), Nigeria (2011), Gabon (2011) and Ghana (2011), while Prime Minister Erdoğan and the Minister of Economy Çağlayan accompanied large delegations of Turkish businessmen to several African countries, such as Somalia and South Africa (2011), followed by Gabon, Senegal and Niger in 2013. The accession of the AKP to power promoted this rush towards Africa. Indeed, before Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, no Prime Minister had undertaken a trip to sub-Saharan Africa. In 2005, Erdoğan made his first trip to the continent visiting South Africa and Ethiopia. Then in 2007, he was the guest of honor at the African Union summit, further accelerating the strategy of political, educational and economic investments in Africa.

To understand how the Turkish government structures itself to have more influence on African affairs, one needs to focus on the profile of the ambassadors posted on the continent, as they play a key role in the system. Almost all of them are career diplomats and not politicians or businessmen, unlike many emerging countries promoting an African policy. Finally, the vast majority of them are not specialists of the continent and are ambassadors in Africa for the first time. This is due to the lack of a Turkish tradition of diplomacy in Africa – apart from the Maghreb and Ethiopia.²⁰ Turkish ambassadors in Africa are also noteworthy for having rarely previously been ambassadors.²¹

Let us take some examples of economic, demographic and political power in key African countries. Firstly, there is Hakan Çakıl, who has been the ambassador in Nigeria since 2015, and has previously held most of his posts abroad in the Middle East (Lebanon and Kuwait) before becoming Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's special advisor on the highly sensitive Cypriot matter. Then, Elif Çomoğlu Ülgen, the ambassador to South Africa since 2017, has spent 24 years in the diplomatic service, during which she was mainly posted to Islamabad or Dubai before becoming the Deputy Director General for Research at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The ambassador to Algeria, Mehmet Poroy, was posted to Brussels, Rome and Nicosia before joining Algiers in 2015. In his presentation on the embassy

19. B. Gonultas, "Turkey, Chad Vow to "Stand Together" against Terrorism", *Agence Anadolu*, 26 December 2017, available at: aa.com.tr.

20. Turkey opened its embassy in Ethiopia almost 100 years ago.

21. We found very few exceptions to this rule. However, we can mention the Turkish ambassador to Cameroon, Hüsnü Murat Ülkü, previously in the same post in Burkina Faso. Turkish diplomatic history in Africa is still too recent for a generation of specialized diplomats on this continent to be established.

website, Poroy explains that he is in the process of expanding the embassy's premises, as the volume of business deals with Algeria is increasing very rapidly.²² In Angola, Turkey also sent a career diplomat, Ahmet İhsan Kızıltan, who for the first time was posted as an ambassador (he had in the past held former postings at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization – NATO and Washington). Similarly, Deniz Eke, the ambassador to Kenya, who returned to the Ministry in 1992, has never held a position at this level before. Likewise, the Ambassador to Ethiopia, Fatih Ulusoy, who returned to the Ministry in 1996, had previously been the number two in the embassy in London. The ambassadors who have the task of starting a Turkish mission in an African country are often ambassadors for the first time. This is the case for Volkan Türç Vural, the first ambassador from 2014 to 2017 to be posted in Madagascar. He is a graduate of Sciences Po Lyon and has held different roles, including that of spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Prior to his appointment in Antananarivo, he was the first Turkish consul in Bordeaux. The ambassador to Mauritania since 2015, Mehmet Bilir, had also never been an ambassador before, as he was until his current appointment the Consul General in Lyon. Since the 2016 coup, Turkish ambassadors in African countries have been working with new teams as almost all embassies have seen the departure of the diplomats accused of following the Gülenist movement.

The dramatic changes in the employers' associations in Africa since the blacklisting of Fethullah Gülen

While the trade volume between Turkey and Africa was only US \$ 2.9 billion in 2002, it reached US \$ 17.5 billion in 2015.²³ The trade balance, however, remains in deficit for Africa. Most of Turkey's African clients are mainly in the Maghreb. In 2016, Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya accounted represented three-quarters of Turkish exports with respectively US \$ 2.7 billion, \$ 1.4 billion, \$ 1.7 billion, \$ 910 million and \$ 906 million. Turkey's other African partners are very far behind regarding export volumes: Sudan, South Africa and Ethiopia barely reach US \$ 400 million and a francophone country, like Chad, only reaches US \$ 18 million. As for Nigeria, the most populated country on the continent with the largest economy, Turkey managed to export US \$ 241 million worth of goods and services in 2016. Regarding to imports, South Africa sells much more to

22. M. Poroy, "Message de l'ambassadeur turc à Alger", Embassy of Turkey in Algiers, available at: algiers.emb.mfa.gov.tr.

23. Data from the Turkish Statistic Institute, available at: www.turkstat.gov.tr.

Turkey than it buys from it. With US \$ 1.58 billion worth of imports, the trade balance is favorable with South Africa at more than US \$ 600 million. However, South Africa remains an exception. If we examine Turkey's export figures from its largest African clients, they remain in deficit. Morocco, with its exports to Turkey worth US \$ 918 million, is in a deficit of nearly US \$ 500 million. The deficit is even higher for Algeria, reaching US \$ 1.2 billion and for Egypt \$ 1.3 billion. For almost all the other African countries, the balance remains in deficit.

The Turkish government has set the target of US \$ 100 billion worth of trade for 2023, marking the Republic of Turkey's centenary. It is highly likely that this target will not be achieved, as it is too ambitious. Indeed, the channels created to foster trade with Africa are, since the 2016 failed coup, being entirely restructured as all the attention is focused on eliminating the Gülenist networks.

Although an important share of Turkish business in Africa is carried out *via* large state-owned companies such as Turkish Airlines (44 destinations in Africa) or diverse conglomerates like Koç (the largest Turkish group, founded in 1926, and involved in energy, insurance, banking, with subsidiaries in Algeria, Egypt and South Africa), Sabancı (cement, energy, banking, telecommunications, textiles, etc.), and Doğan or Doğuş (banking, construction, tourism), SMEs are increasingly acquiring influence and market share due to the Turkish politicians who support them.

The Turkish government's economic strategy towards Africa has largely been supported by the employers' associations. Two of them were particularly active. Firstly, Tuskon (Türkiye İşadamları ve Sanayiciler Konfederasyonu – Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists), founded in 2005, was close affiliated to the Gülenist movement.²⁴ The other organization is Müsiad (Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği – Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association), which represents the Islamic employers' association and is a reliable partner to the AKP government. Müsiad was founded in 1990 with the aim of representing provincial SMEs as opposed to other organizations working with large industrial groups in Istanbul. By promoting a certain religious and political conservatism, Müsiad also sets its own social and cultural vision. The larger Turkish historical groups based in Istanbul are more often represented by Tüsiad (Türk Sanayicileri ve İş İnsanları Derneği – Turkish Industry and Business Association), an organization deemed more secular but that is also less emphasized by the current government.

24. G. Angey, "La recomposition de la politique étrangère turque en Afrique subsaharienne. Entre diplomatie publique et acteurs privés", *op. cit.*

Müsiad was mainly at the forefront of the marches after the July 2016 coup to defend President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan²⁵ and with its 11,000 members, present in 86 cities and 65 foreign countries, Müsiad significantly contributed to helping the President regain control of the country. According to the organization, only a few of its members, close to the Gülenists Brotherhood have been dismissed, designating Müsiad as a fortress that cannot be infiltrated.²⁶

Each of these organizations represents different companies with unique backgrounds, both economically and politically. Erdoğan's government first used the three organizations and then gradually moved away from Tüsiad in 2007, when Abdullah Gül was elected president, replacing Ahmet Necdet Sezer, a political figure known for his devotion to Kemalism and advocate of religious neutrality. Additionally, Tüsiad has taken a stand against some of Erdoğan's decisions and has, in return, been "punished" with many tax inspections targeting its members.²⁷ As for Tuskon, its influence declined as the relationship between the preacher Fethullah Gülen and the AKP government worsened. Several events have crystallised the degradation of the relationship between Tuskon and the Turkish government. The relations between Tuskon and the AKP deteriorated when Gülen's organisation intensified its criticism against the Turkish government regarding its repression of the May 2013 protests against the government in Istanbul's Gezi Park. During these events, following the forceful intervention of the police, six people were killed, and several hundred were injured. The transcript of telephone tapping published in the media in December 2013, which implicated Erdoğan's relatives, including his son who was suspected of corruption and money laundering, further worsened the relationship between the AKP and Gülen. As the Magistrates and police officers are considered by the AKP close to Gülen, they would have apparently leaked those recordings in order to weaken the ruling party. This action might have been carried out in response to the AKP's hunt for pro-Gülenists, who are known to be primarily involved in the civil service and the judiciary. The dissolution of the Gülen's movement was completed after July 2016 as it was accused of plotting the coup. The leaders of Tuskon and the 187-member companies were then accused of belonging to a terrorist organization. The president of Tuskon, Rizanur Meral, fled abroad and an executive order

25. D. Yankaya-Péan, "Étude des reconfigurations patronales de la dérive autoritaire en Turquie entre contestation, domination et crise", *Mouvements*, Vol. 90, No. 2, 2017, pp. 38-47.

26. N. Gülsoy, "Turquie: l'association MUSIAD se félicite de la faible présence de FETO en son sein", *Agence Anadolu*, 6 June 2017, available at: www.aa.com.tr.

27. D. Yankaya-Péan, "Étude des reconfigurations patronales de la dérive autoritaire en Turquie entre contestation, domination et crise", *op. cit.*

forced the closure of 196 local associations related to Tuskon. At the end of 2017, 31 of Tuskon's leaders were still in prison.²⁸

Tuskon was founded by seven regional business associations in 2005, one of whose primary objective was to increase trade with developing regions, including Africa. Tuskon represented, before being sidelined by the Turkish government, more than 30,000 companies. Following the opinion of Ahmet Davutoğlu – the AKP's most influential thinker in international relations-, Tuskon was at the start of the new African policy in the mid-2000s in charge of increasing economic exchanges with Africa, while other employers' associations specialized in different geographical regions.²⁹ Tuskon organized with the participation of 20 African ministers the Turkey-Africa Foreign Trade Bridge in May 2006 in Istanbul. The 2nd Turkey-Africa Trade Bridge in May 2007 brought in 25 ministers and representatives of 43 countries. This forum was followed by the 3rd Turkey-Africa Trade Bridge in May 2008, during which the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ali Babacan, was a guest, as well as Abdullah Gül who came to visit the exhibition. Two large-scale "Turkey-Africa Summits" were also held in 2009 and 2016 in Istanbul.

Tuskon's power also lies in its capacity to found and support associations in African capitals to facilitate "business". During Turkish politicians' visits to Africa, it was almost always Tuskon who organized meetings with local businessmen (the case of Gül in 2009 in Kenya and Tanzania) until the end of the 2000s, the start of tensions between Gülen and Erdoğan.

Since Tuskon was ostracized, Müsiad has strengthened its position in Africa. It is now considered the Turkish government's and the AKP's most favorable association for developing business abroad. It had 7,500 members in 2013 and 11,000 in 2016.³⁰ In 2016 Müsiad opened offices in South Africa and Sudan and has agents in Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Niger and Senegal. The AKP government legitimizes this association as it perceives it as a union of "devoted Muslim entrepreneurs with an Islamic view of work ethic, that they regard as a sign of distinction vis-à-vis other economic actors, especially the major employers of Müsiad, considered as too Westernized and profitable".³¹ Ministers went to their events and encouraged them to come and invest in Africa. This was the case for Davutoğlu who at the time was the Minister of

28. Y. Ege, M. Kimaci and M. Aydoğyan, "Business Network on Trial for Links to Turkish Coup", Agence Anadolu, 23 October 2017, available at: www.aa.com.tr.

29. This is the case for Tüsiad (The Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association) for Europe or Müsiad (The Independent Industrialists and Businessman's Association) for the Persian Gulf region. A. Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007. Transcript of a CNN Turk Program", *Insight Turkey*, 2 January 2008, p. 77-96.

30. According to its website, available at: www.musiad.org.tr.

31. D. Yankaya-Péan, "Introduction", *La Nouvelle Bourgeoisie islamique : le modèle turc*, op. cit.

Foreign Affairs and was thus, the guest of honor at a Müsiad summit in February 2013³² as well as Erdoğan in June 2017. The delegations of Müsiad are increasingly coming to Africa in order to counterbalance Tuskon's role: Tunisia (June 2013), Côte d'Ivoire (March 2014), Democratic Republic of Congo (December 2017). Müsiad is currently run by Abdurrahman Kaan, one of the directors of the agri-food business, Kaanlar (cheese and olives). The importance of religion and political Islam is crucial for Kaan. During a trip to Qatar on 15th and 16th January 2018, where he was attending the Qatar-Turkey Economic Forum, the Müsiad leader visited the Muslim Brotherhood's imam and key preacher, Youssef Al-Qardaoui. The latter is banned from travelling to the United States, United Kingdom and France because of his extreme positions on society and Islam. Stripped of his Egyptian nationality, he was granted political asylum in Qatar, and has now become a citizen. For many years, he has also presented a well-known religious program on Qatari state television, Al-Jazeera.

Müsiad is also supported by several newly-established organizations. Notably, the Turkish-African Business Association (TABA) established in 2012, which was only intended to help Turkish businessmen on the African continent. It is primarily aimed at young entrepreneurs and its director Fatih Akbulut, born in 1982; runs the events company Caya Events. To be as efficient as possible, the TABA's Board of Directors is principally made up of specialists of geographical areas or of the main languages spoken in Africa. One of its members Muhammed Adil deals primarily with helping to acquire markets in the Maghreb, using Nezih Taha Akbulut (also a manager at Caya Events) as the main point of contact in Arab countries. Yunus Saraçlar, who studied in Quebec, focuses on French-speaking African countries in TABA. Nuno Mendes Santos, who previously studied in Lisbon and works for the World Bank, is the point of contact for the Portuguese-speaking African countries. The first Kenyan ambassador to Ankara, Kiema Kilonzo, who has been in function since 2014, is also a member of the Board of Directors. TABA's objective is to put Turkish businessmen in contact with African partners *through* organising events and conferences.

The company, Africa Turkey Trade Center (ATTC) based in Konya in central Turkey also supports Müsiad's African strategy. Similarly to TABA, its objective is to put Turkish businessmen in contact with African partners. It has several offices in Africa, for example in Nigeria, Henry Erimodafe who is the Executive Director of the UBS bank in Lagos, is also the ATTC's Vice-

32. "Minister Urges Turkish Businessmen to Invest in Middle East, North Africa", *BBC Monitoring Europe*, 18 February 2013.

President. In the last ten years, these profit-making Turkish organisations working exclusively in Africa have significantly increased.

Political and economic investment in unstable and neglected countries

Turkey's involvement in high-security risk countries, where a certain political vacuum is tangible, is perpetual in Africa. Turkey was one of the first states to recognize the Republic of South Sudan on the 12th July 2011, the day after its independence. Turkey also set up an embassy there in 2012, which is currently lead by the former ambassador to Albania, Hasan Sevilir Aşan. Turkey, which has very good relations with Omar Al-Bashir in Sudan tried to facilitate mediation between Sudan and South Sudan albeit with mixed results.

Turkey has heavily invested in Somalia, and considers this partnership as a model for its African involvement. After sending military equipment to fight against piracy in 2009, Prime Minister Erdoğan declared during a visit in August 2011, that Turkey would reopen its embassy in 2011.³³ This visit was important for Somalis as it was the first non-African head of government to come since George Bush in 1993. It was followed by the visit of the Deputy Prime Minister, Bekir Bozdog in November 2011. In 2012, Turkish Airlines was also the first company outside of Africa to re-open a direct line to Mogadishu airport (now has four flights per week).³⁴ Furthermore, in May 2010 Turkey also organized a summit to tackle piracy in the Horn of Africa. An increase of fund-raising activities and donations for Somalia were organized by the Turkish Prime Minister's office with the valuable support of other Muslim countries belonging to the Organization of Islamic Co-operation. All together, they agreed upon US\$ 350 million, US\$ 150 million coming from Turkey alone³⁵. In June 2016 Ankara convinced its ally Qatar³⁶ to consider a joint co-operation, particularly to provide food to the Hiran province. Turkey was also committed to helping facilitate dialogue between Mogadishu and other autonomous territories such as Somaliland, by organizing meetings in Istanbul in July 2013 between Ahmed Mohamed Silanyo (the former Somaliland President) and Hassan Sheikh Mohamud

33. He returned to Mogadishu in January 2015 and then in May 2016.

34. D. Smith, "Turkish Airlines Starts Commercial Flights to Somalia", *The Guardian*, 6 March 2012, available at: www.theguardian.com.

35. "OIC Members Vows to Donate \$350 Million to Somalia", *Daily News Egypt*, 18 August 2011, available at: <https://nation.com.pk>.

36. Qatar and Turkey share a common vision on political Islam, hence their political support for groups advocating these same objectives. According to some Qatari diplomats, Qatar would also like to work in Africa with Turkey, but the two states have not yet managed to structure any concrete projects.

(the former Somali President). Other talks also included Puntland. The results were rather disappointing and the mediations were dropped. To Ankara's disappointment, Switzerland, supported by Sweden and Great Britain, is currently leading this dialogue.³⁷ Turkey also completely modernised and expanded Mogadishu airport, which was inaugurated in January 2015 in the presence of the Turkish President Erdoğan and his counterpart at the time, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. Since 2013, the airport's management has been awarded to a Turkish joint-venture Favori LLC. Finally, in September 2017, a Turkish military base was opened in Mogadishu, where around 200 Turkish instructors will be responsible for training 10,000 Somali soldiers. Once again, displaying a close bilateral cooperation.³⁸

37. La Lettre de l'Océan Indien, "SOMALIE/SOMALILAND : Ankara s'inquiète de sa mise à l'écart", *Africa Intelligence*, No. 1469, 2 March 2018, available at: www.africaintelligence.fr.

38. "Turkey Opens Military Training Base in Somalia Capital", *Associated Press International*, 30 September 2017.

The fight against the Gülenist schools by Erdoğan's government: successes and obstructions

Apart from the close relationship between the employers and the Gülenist network *via* Tuskon, schools were also particularly targeted by the Turkish government. The Gülenist schools are also part of Hizmet, of which specialists fail to understand its operational function.³⁹ One must keep in mind that most schools were established in African countries that did not yet have Turkish embassies.⁴⁰ The first schools connected with the Hizmet movement opened in Azerbaijan in 1991. Regarding Africa, schools were first established in Algeria and Morocco (1994), then Senegal (1996) and in Kenya,⁴¹ Tanzania and Nigeria in 1998. The network then expanded significantly in the 2000s. These schools are rather expensive (several thousand Euros per year), but offer a good level of education and very interesting grants to encourage poor students to become followers of Hizmet. Those students are later sent to Gülenist universities in Turkey. The good quality of education in these schools often attracts children from an elite background (businessmen and civil servants), which the Brotherhood uses to grow its business.

Since the July 2016 failed coup, the Turkish government decided to take back control of all the Gülenist schools worldwide, and particularly, in Africa. It did so through the state organisation, the Maarif Foundation, which was founded several weeks before the coup on 17th June 2016, under the leadership of the Turkish Ministry of Education. The Maarif Foundation's Board of Directors consists of three representatives appointed by Erdoğan, three others belonging to each ministry involved (Foreign Affairs, Education and Economy) and finally three figures selected by the Higher Educational Council. The Chairman of the Maarif Foundation, who

39. B. Balci, "Le *hizmet* de Fethullah Gülen. Quelle place dans l'islam en France et en Europe ?", *Études*, No. 6, 2015, pp. 19-31, available at: www.cairn.info.

40. E. Toguslu, "The Turbulence between Akp and Hizmet: The African Case", *The Hizmet Studies*, 1st June 2017, available at: www.hizmetstudies.org.

41. G. Angey-Sentuc, "Le mouvement musulman turc de Fethullah Gülen en Afrique subsaharienne : faire l'école au transnational", *Politique africaine*, Vol. 139, No. 3, 2015, pp. 23-42.

is a direct dependent of the Ministry of Education, is a professor known to be close to the AKP, Birol Akgün⁴² and is also Chairman of the Institute for Strategic Thinking⁴³ (SDE). One of the main reasons why these schools were transferred to the Maarif Foundation is that their leaders have encouraged or participated in the July 2016 coup. Implicitly, this means that countries refusing to transfer their schools run by Hizmet, would be considered Gülen's accomplices, whose actions have been qualified by the Turkish government in 2016 as terrorist activities. Hence, strong pressure is exerted on African leaders who do not wish to comply with the Turkish orders, for either nationalist reasons or because politicians are involved in the running of these schools as investors or simply as parents of pupils. In an interview given to the Turkish press agency, the Anadolu Agency in September 2017, one of the Executive Deputy Chairmen of the Maarif Foundation, the ambassador Hasan Yavuz⁴⁴ said that he had already visited 33 African countries since his appointment. He stated that 36 of the 54 African countries had schools linked to the Gülenist movement and that five of them had already transferred their schools to his Maarif Foundation. Countries that have or will agree to transfer their schools previously ran by Hizmet to the Turkish government will thus, follow the Turkish curriculum set by the Turkish Ministry of Education. As of 2017, the Maarif Foundation has tried to maintain the schools' academic reputation. However, this is a difficult task to conduct as a significant portion of Turkish employees needed to be replaced, leaving only local teachers. The Turkish government has disbursed significant resources so that the Maarif Foundation can be operational as soon as possible. The various Turkish ministries, particularly the Ministry of Education, are supposed to be involved in funding the acquisition of the schools as well as the teachers' salaries. Apart from the million Turkish lira (218,000 euros) the foundation received when it was founded, the Ministry of Education also provided significant sums in 2016 and 2017: on the

42. See the Maarif Foundation's website, available at: turkiyemaarif.org.

43. The other members of the Board of Directors have held important positions within the AKP. This is the case for Zekeriya Akcam, a former AKP deputy and ambassador to Indonesia, like Cahit Bağcı, an AKP deputy from 2007 to 2016 and the Advisor to the Prime Minister in 2016, or Selim Cerrah, AKP Deputy Chairman for the Ankara region and Advisor to the Minister of Sport, or even Aysen Gürcan, known for being the first female politician to have worn the veil (before the coming to power of the AKP, this used to be prohibited in the political class). Gürcan, who is very conservative on religious matters, was Minister of the Family in 2015 after having worked in Prime Minister Erdoğan's office from 2006 to 2011 as General Manager for Family and Social Research. Another of the Maarif directors is Abdulkadir Ozel, the AKP's Deputy Secretary General. Some members of the Board of Directors are civil servants, like Ahmet Emre Bilgili, the current Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Education or are professionals like Hasan Tasci (doctor).

44. Among other things, he was the first Turkish ambassador to Djibouti (2012-2015), speaks French and is mainly in charge of taking control of the all the schools in French-speaking African countries. He is constantly travelling in the area, either during presidential visits or directly for the Foundation.

3rd November 2016, it received 90 million liras (US \$ 26.2 million) and on the 3rd July 2017 another 241 million Turkish liras (US \$ 70.2 million)⁴⁵.

The first country to have agreed to transfer the Gülenist schools to the Turkish government was Somalia following the 16th July 2016 coup which is understandable given Turkey's connection with Mogadishu. The Republic of Guinea also rapidly transferred its nine schools with its 1,000 students to the Maarif Foundation. Such is also the case for eight schools in Nigeria (1,200 pupils) and several schools in the Republic of Congo, as well as in Chad, where schools belonging to the Gülen network were transferred to the Turkish government by the end of 2016. Morocco decided to close the schools affiliated to the movement and transfer all their students to other institutions (2,500 pupils)⁴⁶. Mauritania also closed its schools and the Maarif Foundation opened new ones in 2017, for the beginning of the school year⁴⁷. In some countries, the Turks have, however, been more successful. For example, in N'Djamena, the Gülenist movement has been declared a terrorist organisation. The Chadian authorities have even adopted the language used by President Erdoğan to describe the Gülenist movement's activities: Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü or Fetullah Terrorist Organization (FETO). During the visit of the Turkish president to Chad in December 2017, his Chadian counterpart Idriss Déby, declared during a press conference that, "our schools are no longer in the hands of terrorists, but of people of trust, and our children will continue to receive an education under good conditions."

In Senegal, due to the government's refusal to transfer the nine Gülen network schools (3,000 students), they were all forced to close.⁴⁸ It should be noted that these institutions have been established since 1998 and employed 500 people. In Mali, the Gülenist movement has been operating since 2002 *through* 17 "Horizon" secondary schools which amounted to 3,200 pupils and 400 employees. In 2017, the Maarif Foundation took control of all these establishments and renamed them "Turkish Maarif Schools in Mali." The Republican Guard was even required to enforce the establishment of the new staff in the 17 institutions at the beginning of the

45. "Turkey's Maarif Foundation: Erdogan's Trojan Horse", *Yerepouni-Armenian Independent News*, 6 September 2017.

46. The Moroccan Ministry of Education justified its decision with a statement on 5 January 2017, emphasizing that, "the investigations [...] showed that they use the education sector to spread the ideology of this group and ideas contrary to the principles of the Moroccan educational and religious system." See A. Naimi, "Suite à leur fermeture, les écoles Gülen traduisent l'État en justice", *Huffpost Maghreb*, 18 January 2017, available at: www.huffpostmaghreb.com.

47. A. Sy, "Mauritanie: l'école Bourge El ilm du réseau Gülen ferme et change de nom", *Le Reflet*, 14 September 2017, available at: www.lereflet.net.

48. S. Fillion, "A Battle for Power in Turkey Faces Resistance in Senegal", *Hizmet Movement New Portal*, 8 December 2017, available at: hizmetnews.com.

2017 school year.⁴⁹ As previously mentioned, while Somalia stopped all cultural and educational activities related to the Gülen movement in September 2016, Somaliland had initially refused to comply with the Turkish orders.⁵⁰ This can be explained by Somaliland's constant discontent with Turkey's political and economic assistance in Somalia. At the request of successive leaders in Mogadishu, Turkey worked towards bringing all the regions of Somalia together into one homogeneous block, even though Somaliland considered itself independent since 1991. In February 2017, Angola decided to close the only secondary school "Colegio Esperanca Internacional (Coepsi)" administered by Hizmet, for reasons related to national security⁵¹. Likewise, in Madagascar, two Hizmet institutions: "La Lumière Internationale" secondary school and the "Ravinala Institute of Culture and Dialogue" cultural center could not reopen in September 2017, following President Erdoğan's visit in January 2017. Occasionally, even if the court decisions favor schools linked to Hizmet, such as in Niger, political decisions still assure that the schools are either closed or transferred.

Despite these successes – the massive transfers to the Maarif Foundation – or semi-successes – the closing of schools, some African countries are creating more problems for Turkish diplomacy. The case of Ethiopia is unique: even though the government of the former Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, strongly supported President Erdoğan during the 2016 coup, none of the six active schools has to date not yet been transferred to the Turkish government. The reason is: most of the schools were sold to private investors in order to avoid take-over by the Maarif Foundation. Additionally, the Ethiopian bureaucracy made the work of the Turkish authorities very difficult.

Another example in Africa, where the Turkish government is still struggling to take control of the Gülenist schools is Mozambique. In this country, the launch of the network of Turkish schools, Söğüt Turkish, controlled by the Hizmet movement was supported by the current Minister of Defence Atanasio Salvador Mtumuke, a close associate of President Filipe Nyusi. The latter has thus become an economic partner of all institutions opened in the country⁵². Up until now, pressure from Ankara to take control of these schools *via* the Maarif Foundation has not worked because of the

49. La Lettre du continent, "MALI/TURQUIE : Comment Erdoğan impose son diktat à Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta", *Africa Intelligence*, 17 December 2017, No. 766, available at: www.africaintelligence.fr.

50. La Lettre de l'Océan Indien, "SOMALIE/SOMALILAND : Ankara s'inquiète de sa mise à l'écart", *op. cit.*

51. "Angola Orders Gulen-Linked Turkish School to Close", *News24*, 15 February 2017, available at: www.news24.com.

52. Gulen Movement, "Mozambican Minister: "I Will Mention Success of Turkish Schools on Every Occasion"", *hizmetmovement.blogspot.qa*, available at: hizmetmovement.blogspot.qa.

powerful Mozambican Minister of Defense's influence.⁵³ Furthermore, President Filipe Nyusi's own son sent one of his sons to one of the Söğüt Turkish institutions.⁵⁴ One can, consequently, recognize the extent to which the Gülenist network managed to persuade some of the African elite, sometimes to a very high level, and how challenging it is to change the minds of certain leaders.

Obviously, all the situations described above are likely to favor the Turkish government because of the Maarif Foundation's activism and visits by high-ranking Turkish politicians to Africa.

53. La Lettre de l'Océan Indien, "MOZAMBIQUE : Erdoğan met le ministre de la Défense sous pression", *Africa Intelligence*, No. 1444, 10 February 2017.

54. "Mozambican President: I Will Continue to Support Turkish Schools", *Today's Zaman*, 5 June 2015.

Conclusion

Relations between Turkey and Africa have changed considerably since 2008 and the establishment of the strategic partnership with the African Union. Turkish diplomacy has become heavily involved on the continent, through the opening of embassies and the organization of many presidential and ministerial visits, which have led to an increase in trade. Non-state actors, like the employers' associations have also significantly supported the development of trade. However, the actors are changing. The preacher Fethullah Gülen's Hizmet had succeeded in establishing schools, as well as an employers' organization, Tuskon, benefiting from this educational network present in almost all African countries. The Turkish government's fight against this movement since 2013, and more exclusively since the failed 2016 coup, has forced the diplomatic corps to fully mobilize itself to either take over the schools, or close them and create new employers' networks. This has recently resulted in a dramatic upheaval in the actors responsible for the relationships between Turkey and most African countries. These actors, had taken about ten years to build and solidify themselves and are now leaderless. This re-organization is also a waste of time for Turkish diplomacy, which is slaving away to implement the purge of the Gülenist networks, that have managed to invest in Africa.

Now, the AKP government has directly taken control of the relationships with Africa and should, through the employers' association Müsiad, as well as the Ministry of Education's organization, the Maarif Foundation, be able to redeploy in Africa. Although some countries have not created any problems in this takeover of schools and the demise of well-established employers' networks, others – for nationalist reasons or when businessmen close to the government are involved in these networks – consider that the Turkish government is abusing its power. In any case, a new chapter of history is opening up between Turkey and Africa.

This relationship has so far been extremely favorable to Turkish interests – exports to Africa are much higher than imports. Turkish firms are benefiting from a position that is well suited for developing countries, particularly good quality products – deemed better than those from some Asian countries – at a much lower price than those from Europe.



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