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## Turkey's Strategic Economic Relations with Africa: Trends and Challenges

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**Turkey's Strategic Economic Relations with Africa:  
Trends and Challenges**

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**Abstract.** The Ottoman Empire had extensive economic relations with Africa which provides the structural frameworks for the speedy acceleration of economic partnership and trade interactions between Africa and modern Turkey. This study seeks to examine the structural relevance, challenges and prospects of Turkey's economic relations and interest in Africa from the traditional period of Ottoman Empire to the contemporary era of competitive interdependence. From a broad perspective, trade interactions between Turkey was driven but the values of economic pluralism and less of colonialist tendencies. Therefore, the greatest challenge that tacitly limits the geometric expansion of trade is the shift in perception of Africa as a hub for disease, economic stagnation, waste and wars. This form of stereotype is a direct input of neo-colonial propaganda adopted by the Western media to keep at bay competitive investors from Africa. So, Africa with an economic growth rate of over 5% offers Turkey new horizon for economic diversification. The consistent use of soft power by Turkey has brought new image and perception of Turkey as a credible economic partner with pragmatic approach promote symbiotic trade relations devoid of the manipulative devices of free market syndrome that benefits only the West at the detriment of Africa. Africa sees Turkey as an economic partner that will assist the continent to intensify the industrialization of its economic base in line with the global economic configuration. Therefore, Turkey-Africa economic partnership and trade volume is likely to expand in future because Turkey's opening to Africa has created new markets and investment potential that will increase Africa's participation in global economy and enhance Turkey's role as a major player in the politics of resource allocation in the international economic system.

**Keywords.** Economic partnership, Soft power, Turkey, Africa, Development.

**JEL.** F10, F16, F50, F62.

## 1. Introduction

The Ottoman Empire had considerable economic relations with Africa which provided the exclusive structure for the speedy acceleration of mutual economic partnership and trade relations between Africa and modern Turkey. The Ottomans emerged with some strength in African economic system when it controlled the lands of Egypt in 1518 before strategically expanding its economic tentacles deep into the interior of Africa. The Egyptian districts became strategically and economically important part of the Ottoman Empire because of its large population, fertile arable lands and trade links into Europe, Africa and Middle

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East as well as provided the sublime Porte which gave the Ottomans strategic control of the Nile valley and the East Mediterranean.

Ottoman economic relation with Egypt was a proactive trade strategy which opened up in roads to the economy of other African states, particularly North Africa and sub-Saharan states. In North Africa, the Ottomans had trade relations with Libya, Tunisia, Egypt and Algeria. The Ottomans also played a strategic economic role in sub-Saharan Africa. Such states as Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia etc had trade relations with the Ottomans. In Northern sub-Saharan, the Ottomans maintained economic relations and alliance with the Kanem Bornu Empire which was located in today's Northern Nigeria, Niger and Chad. The Kanem Bornu imported military equipment from the Ottoman Empire while exporting solid minerals (Hazar, 2000:109-110).

However, the Ottoman Empire operated an open economic system in its trade relations with Africa, which offered great economic benefits to both trading blocs. The Ottoman-Africa economic relation took the form of an economic community characterized by freedom of movement for both citizens and goods. Traders exploited and benefited greatly from the Ottoman monopoly of land routes. Goods such as gold and silk were exported to Africa from the east, as well as manufacturers from Europe while gold and animal skins were exported from Africa. Also, the Ottoman tolerance of Christian and Jewish population stimulated tremendous economic activities and alliances. Similarly, the establishment of the first mosque in Lagos in 1894 prompted the Ottoman Empire to send emissary to Lagos which not only established new religious links but opened up new economic collaboration and trade relations with today's Nigeria (Hazar, 2000:110).

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the Ottoman-Africa economic relations began to decline because of the influx of European products and capitalist mode of production which outweighed the Ottoman traditional economic system based on conservative feudalism and pastoralist mode of production. The gap between Ottoman feudalism and European capitalism triggered off economic reforms and transformation not only in the Ottoman Empire but also in its African states. With these reforms the European began to play strategic role in African economy and trade at the expense of the Ottomans.

The Ottoman Empire economic hegemony and trade influence in Africa began to disintegrate in late 19<sup>th</sup> century and was tacitly replaced with European trade model and values. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Egypt adopted capitalist ideals, values and technology from Europe and this led to tremendous improvement in agricultural productivity and increased economic activities in Africa. The resultant effect was the ultimate financial and economic dominance of African economy by France, Portugal and Britain, leading to the Institutionalization of colonialism. In addition, the economic dominance of Syria, Egypt and Lebanon by the French and British powers constituted one of the decisive factors that reduced Ottoman economic control and influence in Africa. By the time of the First World War, the collapse of Ottoman economic hegemony in Africa was completed and their former African provinces emerged as modern states, often under a European colonial umbrella and became the peripheral states of Western capitalist powers.

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire led to the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. The emergence of modern Turkey reduced Turkey-Africa economic relations to the lowest level because the Ottoman economic legacy in Africa was strategically wiped off by the Western values of colonialism and capitalism. But Africa and modern Turkey believed that the European modernization approach is the most viable path to economic development. Africa and Turkey was separated by their interpretation of Western classical liberalism

and vigorously pursued Western oriented development policies. Therefore Africa and Turkey lost sight of each other. The quest to modernize triggered off a new form struggle among Africa and Turkey to establish economic alliance with the West.

But during the Cold War years, Turkey-African economic relation was strategically renewed. Turkey started to attach greater economic importance to Africa. With the decolonization process in Africa in the late 1950s and early 1960s Turkey recognized all the newly independent countries and established both diplomatic and economic relations with these states (Hazar, 2000:109-110). Due to Turkey's effort to diversify its economic relations in Africa, the Turgut Ozal regime, after decades of economic interaction, became the first Turkish prime minister to grant foreign aid to Africa in 1985 and this opened up new horizon of economic partnership with modern African states (Akçay, 2012:89). This helped to reduce the level indifference initially shown by most Turkish economic observers who saw economic partnership with Africa as a waste of time, energy and resources. As a result of the Ozal economic strategy, trade and economic relations with Africa increased in a geometric proportion and the declaration of 2005 as the "Year of Africa". In 1998, the African Action Plan was adopted which was aimed at opening up Turkey's economy to Africa as well as to create a new and united image of Africa in Turkish society.

This study seeks to give a historical analysis of Ottoman Empire economic and trade relations in Africa in order to provide the conceptual framework for understanding the strategic trade posture of modern Turkey in strengthening the economic development reforms in Africa. In the course of the analysis, attempt will be made to identify the economic indicators that have stimulated increased trade exchanges and economic partnership. Also, the linkage effects of such partnership towards the development of Africa economy and the advancement of Turkey's strategic position as a global emerging economic power will be given considerable analytical insight in this study.

## 2. The Contextual Analysis of Turkey-Africa Economic Relations: The Ottoman Experience

Ottoman Empire had relatively strong economic relations with Africa due to the fact that African states such as Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Algeria were integral provinces of the empire. These Ottoman provinces were strategically situated amidst trading networks that linked the Mediterranean World, the Islamic world and the rich kingdoms of Africa. It involves long distance trade and movement of goods, in which the patterns of trade with Africa were driven by the forces of demand and supply.

However, the Ottoman Empire was an Agrarian economy based on the economic values and structure of feudalism. Though it had a large mass of arable land, but the inflow of capital was at its minimal level. Majority of the population earned their living from small family business holdings while the empire derives its revenue either directly or indirectly from taxation or through custom duties or exports (Inalcik & Quataert, 1994:271-314).

So, in its consistent quest to increase its revenue base, influence the pattern of the Mediterranean trade routes, and increase its economic power, the Ottoman Empire took hold of the major sea ports of Tripoli, Tunis, Algeria and Tangier. The covert reason behind the annexation of the Magharo ports was to control international shipping network and water ways as well as the patterns of international exports and imports.

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The Ottoman Empire provided the economic structures or functional frameworks for effective economic integration of the Mediterranean economy, the Islamic trade blocs and the Saharan trade networks. Such economic integration led to the establishment of a functional custom union that consisted of vast areas extending from Balkan Peninsula to the Middle East and North Africa. The Balkans were integrated into the Ottoman economic union from 1361-1481, the Arabs in 1570s and the North Africans in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

Within the Ottoman economic bloc, different regions in Africa were oriented differently in relations to trade and trading partners in such a manner that allows the economy of those regions to develop in different ways and directions. The economy of Egypt was remarkably developed and stood out as the richest province of the Ottoman Empire. This was as a result of the regular annual flooding of the Nile which provided renewed top soil to its agricultural fields and water for its irrigation. The agriculture output was tremendously high and contributed to the economic development of the Ottoman Empire. That's why the Egyptian economy benefited greatly from the economic integration efforts of the Ottoman Empire.

However, with the vast benefits of economic integration networks, the Ottoman Empire ran a self-reliant inter provincial economy under the direct control of the Ottoman state. The rationale behind state regulation of economic activities of the provinces within the Ottoman Empire was to ensure effective allocation of values and to lessen the incidence of exploitation, poverty and corruption. The resources were judiciously allocated to meet the demands of the army, the needs of the Sultan palace and the expectations of the numerous population of the empire which was more than 22 million people as at the end of 11<sup>th</sup> Century (Inalcik & Quataert, 1994: 474-519). The state controls of economic activities were carried out under the supervision of state officials, rural communities as well as through cooperative organizations and guilds.

The authoritative allocation of values within the Ottoman economic system was to ensure an enduring trade relation, intensive flow of goods and migration of professionals. The essence was to promote inter regional economic relations necessary to sustain the gains of neo-functional economic integration. For this reason, there existed large custom zones and moderate custom policies to encourage private economic initiative for the strengthening of intra and inter-regional trade activities as well as the transfer and exchange of all kinds of technical know-how, economic values and experiences within the Ottoman economic system.

The main product exchanged between the various regions in the Ottoman times shows an extensive variety of economic goods. The Ottoman Empire imported coffee, rice, sugar, beans, linen, flax, safflower, ammonia, hides and wheat from Egypt. In return, the Turks from Anatolia and other Balkan provinces of the empire exported goods such as fabrics, furs, tobacco, iron, arms, timber, soap, raw silk and dried fruits into North Africa particularly Egypt.

Similarly, the Fez produced in Tunisia were exported and worn all across the empire. Also, silk cloth from Bursa, Tokat, Amasya and other Anatolia cities were traded in Africa and other Ottoman provinces alongside goods such as skins from Kenya, mohair from Ankara, tanned leather from Kayseri, copper from Tokat and Hazel nuts, dried fruit and ceramic tiles from Kutalia (Sahin, 2009:81-155). In addition, goods from Central Balkan provinces such as wine, metals, horseshoes, bee wax and woollen clothing as well as muskets, arms and ironwork from Western Balkans particularly Albania and Bosnia were exported to North Africa and through the sub-Saharan trade routes exported to Borno Empire in West and Central Africa.

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However, not only there were inter-regional free movement of goods, the Turkish Ottomans encouraged high degree of labour mobility and migration of professionals as well as promoted economic values of direct investment. Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries many craftsmen, journeymen, apprentices and entrepreneurs migrated seasonally from the central part of the Ottoman Balkans to North Africa and vice versa. They benefited from very large and unlimited market which the vast territories and population of the Ottoman Empire provided. Particularly, entrepreneurs involved in the manufacturing of woollen clothes called “abaci” benefited the most because of the rural male population in the empire. Many Turkish entrepreneurs such as Izmirli, Bursali, Amasiali, Kaiserli, Tokali, Samli, Haleplietc who were registered as guild business professionals were clearly outstanding in the marketing of woollen cloths and in the development of not only the Turkish economy but also in the advancement of the economy of Africa (Judith & Stacey, 2005:327-328).

Remarkably, the Turkish Ottoman encouraged and promoted the economic ideals of foreign direct investment in Africa and the Balkan provinces. Misoir Company owned by Ivan Madjarov and Donacho Palaveev from the central Balkans was outstanding in foreign direct investment. The company produced and exported woollen clothing, woollen socks and slippers from Salonica, Serres and Bursa in Central Balkan to Africa particularly Egypt. The textile commodities were transported by land to Galipoli, then by sea to Alexandria and either by boat along the Nile River or by train to interior of North Africa. To advance the frontiers of foreign direct investment, Misoir Company established an office in the Ottoman capital, a workshop in Chorapchi Han, a wholesale shop in Halil Han and a branch in Alexandria. Because of the high investment flows recorded within this period, the economy of the Ottoman Turkish and it's African states prospered greatly in the late 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s (Inalcik & Quataert, 1994:271-314).

In the late 1860s, the economy of the Ottoman Empire began to decline because of the inflow of modern European products into Ottoman markets which triggered competition. The competition was in favour of the Europeans, whose economy had become highly industrialized because of the introduction of capitalist mode of production and values that brought about rapid industrial revolution. While the economy of the Ottoman Empire remained stagnant because of its reliance on obsolete mode of production that characterized the operations of its feudal economy. However in order to sustain and regain its global economic power and prestige, the Ottomans embarked on new economic reforms to transform its feudal economy to a capitalist industrial economy. The Turkish Ottoman overwhelmed by the quality of European products and technology, introduced economic reform policy of modernization that was conceptually based on the principles of classical liberalism.

The reform policy of classical liberalism led to the enactment of the 1838 Commercial that liberalized the Turkish economy in line with European model of modernization. The Commercial Code reform policy opened up the economy of the empire to European investors. State monopolies or public companies were abolished while preferential economic privileges were given to European investors. In the course of the privatization process of state monopoly companies, some ventures were successful but many were wasteful and insufficient. Therefore, the implementation of the 1838 ‘Commercial Code’ sealed the fate of Turkish Ottoman’s economic reform experiment and resulted to foreign control and domination of most Ottoman commercial activities and industries by European firms.



The hard-line modernization reform policies of the Ottoman Empire led to the breakup of the feudal structures and the liberalization of its commerce, industries, and institutions of government, communication, tax system, education and the army. All these reforms policies cost money and were capital intensive. For this reason, the Turkish Ottomans transferred resources from non-governmental institutions and to central authority of the Empire. The resultant economic hardship of the reforms created streams of opposition, resistance and revolution. In the bid to suppress this opposition, the Ottoman government began to borrow heavily from European financial institutions from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Eventually in 1875, the Ottoman international debt grew unmanageably and the empire could not pay its debts; and in 1881 had to accept some degree of European financial control and fiscal regulation of its economy.

The tensions caused by the radical economic reforms provoked criticism which culminated in military revolts and violet civil insurgences that brought about the collapse of the Ottoman economy. With its eventual disintegration and demise in 1922, the Turkish Ottoman's role as a major economic power declined. In its place stood the Republic of Turkey that has to contend with the quest for industrialization in order to reposition the Turkish economy to regain its lost glory as a global actor and major player in the politics of African economy.

### **3. The Geographical Edge of Modern Turkey-Africa Economic Relations**

There are two geographical conceptions of Africa in Ottoman Empire that influenced and shaped the economic image and identity of Africa by modern Turkey. This conception was shaped by historical developments from Ottoman times which divided Africa into North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. North Africa was regarded as the core economic activities in Africa while the sub-Saharan Africa is seen as the periphery economic allies that needed to be explored economically. Turkey has strong economic relations with North African states because of their long history of economic relations with the Ottomans. North Africa provides the linkage base for the diversification of Turkish economy and trade potentials not only in Africa but also in the Middle East. This gives Turkey a wide economic range and market for its industrial products and services.

On the other hand, sub-Saharan Africa from the geographical perspective model was seen by both the Ottomans and the modern Turkish policy markets as a faraway land; full of problems, hunger, diseases and civil wars. The sub-Saharan Africa because of this negative perception was strategically neglected in the areas of economic partnership by modern Turkish policy makers. The persistent negative image of sub-Saharan was changed by the AKP government when the Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan visited Ethiopia and South Africa in 2005 (Ozkan & Akgun, 2010). This diplomatic exchange provided the needed penetrative linkages factor for the development of economic relations with sub-Saharan African states as well as the direct in flow of Turkish investment and industrial goods.

Therefore, the economic strategy of Turkey in Africa is aimed at raising its status from that of a traditional ally of North Africa to that of an active and constructive player in the economy of sub-Saharan African states. This strategic economic orientation was prompted partly by the European Council's rejection of Turkey's application of join the European Union in 1999. So, sub-Saharan Africa with an economic growth of over 5% a year, offered Turkey new prospects for economic development and expansion while its traditional Ottoman economic

relations with North Africa tends to reinforce its strategic economic influence in Africa.

For this reason, Turkey designated 2005 as “Year of Africa”, in order to strategically bridge the geographical gap between North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa in the delineation of its economic and trade relations in Africa. For the express purpose of adopting a holistic approach in Africa, Turkey hosted a Summit of the World’s least Developed Countries; thirty-three of them are in Africa. Also, the first Turkey-Africa cooperation summit in Istanbul which included bilateral economic meetings with forty-two African countries marked another advance in bridging the geo-economic gap between Turkey’s relations with North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.

The synthesis of North and sub-Saharan Africa in modern Turkey’s holistic economic approach paid off when fifty-one of fifty-three African countries supported Turkey to secure a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. Therefore modern Turkey’s strategic economic approach is aimed at bridging the geographical gap between North sub-Saharan Africa created by the Ottomans, which had given high economic priority to North Africa over the sub-Saharan states. The bridging of the gap gives Turkey a holistic approach in its economic partnership with Africa rather than dealing with Africa as two distinct economic entities. This new holistic approach is more constructive and result-oriented and has helped in expanding Turkey’s economic frontiers and investment in Africa.

#### **4. Conceptualization of Turkey-Africa Economic Relations in the New World Order**

The new world order is inspired and influenced by the values and prospects of globalization which is seen as the highest state of capitalism that triggers off a new process of global integration of economics and politics. The strategic onus of globalization is to tactically promote free trade, free market economy, free flow of capital and trappings of cheaper foreign labour aimed at reducing the role of state in stimulating economic activities while at the same time transferring such responsibility to non-state actors.

This new frame of world order triggers off new scramble for capital and markets in the international economic system. Such scramble for new markets and the quest for capital accumulation have stimulated strategic changes in foreign policy postures of nations. The essence of these structural changes is to attract foreign investors, influence foreign finance capital and control the flow of expected benefits. Therefore, in response to the structural challenges of globalization and in its renewed quest to redefine the world view centred on economic struggles, Turkey adopted a holistic as well as a multi-dimensional approach in its foreign policy relations.

The holistic aspect of Ozal foreign policy relations defines globalization by way of economic context of production and consumption. The Ozal approach towards Africa displayed both a structuralist and opportunist character that sees the economy as the principal component of its foreign political relations with developing countries. During the Ozal period, the first foreign aid was made to Africa. Turkey projected and embraced a pragmatic economic diplomacy that increased the flow of aids to Africa. In 1985 in line with the UN initiative, Turkey sent food aid, which worth USD 10 million to Sub-Saharan Africa because of drought disaster in the region (Akçay, 2012:89).

In addition, Turkey adopted multi-dimensional approach to strengthen the Ozal holistic approach of economic diplomacy. This approach analyses the political



context of globalization and insists on increasing the degree of state power and decision making in world politics and economy. The AK Party uses this approach to implement a proactive and dynamic foreign policy relation with Africa rather than being appendages to its relations with the West. On this basis, Turkey unwind its foreign policy framework and posture towards Africa by way of an institutional economic partnership necessary for increasing its national power in order to play a more active role in international politics. In this context, this study will give an analytical insight of Turkey's economic diplomacy in order to understand the contemporary Turkey-African economic relations as well as the political relations that have been developed from institutionalization of its economic partnership with Africa.

### **4. The Posture and Dynamics of Modern Turkey-Africa Economic Relations**

Throughout history, Africa had been the invasion area of colonialists and neo-colonialists due to its geographical location and natural resources. Following geographical discoveries and industrial revolution, the continent was considered a manpower and raw material source for the capitalist states of Europe. Unlike Europe, Turkey did not have a history of colonial domination in Africa but a history of wholesome economic relations with Africa. During the Ottoman era, Turkey allowed African nations some measure of economic freedom to preserve African economic values, identities and systems. This traditional linkage with Africa provided the structural mechanism that influences the development of modern economic interaction and partnership with African states in this new era of globalization.

Therefore, in order to understand Turkey-Africa contemporary economic relations, it is pertinent to look at Turkey's historical relations with Africa. The geo-economic image about Africa in Turkey is that Africa is divided into two distinct regions namely North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. This division has been shaped by historical developments, particularly the Ottoman legacy which provided the mechanism that directs Turkey's economic policies toward Africa. In this context, North Africa is seen as a traditional economically of Turkey because of its historical link with the Ottoman Empire, while Sub-Saharan Africa is seen as a distant geographical economic region associated with poverty, hunger, epidemics and civil war. This negative perception perpetrated by Western colonialism has not only become a stereotype that repels Turkish investments in Sub-Saharan Africa , but also retards trade negotiations and establishment of viable economic partnership initiatives with other African states.

Although Turkey's negative perception of African economy persisted during the Cold War era, important steps have been taken to refute such perception after the Cold War. The post-Cold War period marked the beginning of functional economic diversification in Turkish foreign policy objective tailored after the strategic doctrine of Neo-Ottomanism. So, with methodological attraction Turkey extended its economic tentacles to the Western world especially the United States and European Union. But when faced with the task of rectifying its membership of the European Union, Turkey began to send emissaries to Africa in order to explore opportunities for economic and commercial cooperation. Thus, a comprehensive and global plan involving Turkey's economic relations with Africa was developed to legitimate Turkey's status as an axis state with pivoted influence in African politics and economy.

However, Africa with economic growth rate of 5% a year offers a new prospect for economic development, which prompted Turkey to redefine its international

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identity from that of an ally of the West to that of an active and constructive player in African economy. In 1998, Turkey's foreign policy took a new dimension by deepening its economic ties with African countries based on a new policy framework known as "Opening to African Policy". In 2008, Abdullah Gul presided over the first summit on Turkish-African Economic Cooperation in Istanbul. The Summit brought together representatives from fifty different African countries to discuss the qualitative expansion of Turkish-African economic relations (Aydın, 2003:1-5). Thus, the qualitative expansion of Turkey-African relations is not only based on economic and trade objectives but also incorporates a comprehensive approach aimed at the development of African economy through technical assistance in fields of agricultural development, irrigation, energy, education and humanitarian aid.

However, to develop a comprehensive economic relation with Africa, Turkey adopted the "African Action Plan" during the 1993 Economic Summit which was aimed at advancing its technical and scientific cooperation with Africa as well as developing a new form of economic partnership devoid of imperialistic exploitation and domination. Therefore, in its bid to reinforce the doctrine of equal partnership in its economic relations with African nations, Turkey was confirmed a strategic economic partner by the African Union in 2008. The African Union quest to develop viable economic partnership with Turkey was complemented by the '2008 Istanbul Declaration on Turkey-African Partnership' whose strategic intent was to promote economic cooperation, establish permanent cooperation mechanism, ensure intergovernmental cooperation and solidarity for a common future as well as advancing the course of trade, investment, transportation, rural development and water resources management.

The new economic partnership with Africa is reflected in trade statistics. Trade between Turkey and Africa has increased geometrically since 2002 when Turkey steadily began to do business with Africa. In Ethiopia and Sudan, Turkish investors focus on infrastructure and building projects; in South Africa their areas of investment covers textiles and food processing while in Senegal and Nigeria their areas of interest are in banking and furniture respectively. Since 2005, Turkey's trade with Africa has been on the rise in recent years. Trade volume with Sub-Saharan Africa was 742 million US dollars in 2000; \$3 billion in 2005, \$5.5 billion in 2008, \$4.88 billion in 2009, \$4 billion in 2010 and \$7.5 billion in 2011. Similarly, Turkey's foreign trade volume with the whole Africa was \$9 billion in 2005, \$15.87 billion in 2009, \$14.1 billion in 2010, \$17.1 billion in 2011 and by 2012 exceeded 17 billion (Hazar, 2000:109-110) and (Ozkan & Akgun, 2010:539-540). Also, Turkey's trade volume with South Africa amounted to \$242 million in 2000; \$1.9 billion in 2009 while in 2010 exports and imports was about \$349 million and \$889 million respectively (Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013).

Similarly, bilateral trade between Nigeria and Turkey in 2002, including imports and exports was over \$1.5 billion. According to Mohammed Abubakar, the bilateral trade between Nigeria and Turkey quadrupled between 2004 and 2011 reaching \$1.5 billion in 2012. On the other hand Turkey's goods imports to Nigeria went up by 11.4 percent in 2011 with top categories being iron and steel, electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, manufacture of metals, non-metallic minerals, articles of apparel and clothing accessories estimated at \$136 million, \$54 million, \$36 million, \$26 million and \$25.4 million respectively.

In addition goods exports from Nigeria to Turkey also went up by 36.5 percent with the top five categories being gas \$672.9 million, petroleum products \$672.9 million, oil seeds and oleaginous fruits \$ 881.9 million and dressed fur skins at \$11.1 million. Also, in the area of contracting and consultancy services, Nigeria

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remains an emerging market for Turkish contractors. Turkish firms are executing eleven projects in Nigeria valued at \$64.1 million and a foreign direct investment stock that worth \$96.2 million in 2012 (Maureen, 2013).

However, base on the above trade statistics, Nigeria with a population of over 160 million stands out as Turkey's fifth largest trade partner in Africa and second among the Sub Saharan countries. Also Nigeria is the forty-seventh largest supplier of imported goods to Turkey in 2012 (Eberechi, 2013). So, to sustain and advance the frequency of trade and investment flows, Nigeria and Turkey signed a number of bilateral trade agreements, including Agreement on Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation (1986), Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (2011).

Therefore, for the express purpose of increasing the velocity of bilateral economic and trade relations, four Joint Economic and Commission meetings were held which resulted in the establishment of Turkish-Nigerian Business Council in 2011 as well as the set-up of Turkey-Nigeria Chamber of Commerce in 1998. With these rate of regularity in the progression of bilateral trade agreements and business councils between both countries, Bulent Ferik argues that the trade volume sandwiched between Nigeria and Turkey is expected to rise from \$1.3 billion to \$2 billion by the end of 2013 (Roseline, 2012: 25).

Similarly, Mustafa Server subscribes to the views of Ferik that the trade volume between Nigeria and Turkey will increase tremendously because of the speed in the ratification of trade agreements. He still went further to argue that Turkey with an \$800 billion economy and ranked eighteenth in the world will contribute \$390 billion; while Nigeria a rising economy in the world will also contribute the balance of \$179 million of the projected trade volume of the two nations (Crusoe, 2013:34). This expected rise in trade volume will strategically help Nigeria to achieve its goal of becoming one of the top twenty economies of the world by the year 2020. It will also assist Turkey to actualize its trade projection of rising to the top ten economies of the world by the year 2023.

However, the new Africa-Turkey economic partnership with Nigeria is not only of great benefit to African nations but provides the framework for the export of Turkish products into Africa as well as the import of raw materials at cheap rate from Africa. Turkish products such as furniture, electrical devices, textile, construction materials, iron and steel, processed food and machinery tools are exported to Africa. More than four hundred small and medium Turkish enterprises have a foot hold in Africa, with an investment portfolio of over \$500 million in 2010 while about 21% of Turkish construction companies were in Africa between 1997 and 2000. In addition, Turkey imports about 600,000 barrels of crude oil per day from Somalia while the Turkish Airline is active in twenty-two African countries (Brooks, 2011:26).

Therefore, it is apparent that Turkey's economic interest in Africa is to bring an innovative dimension to overcome transportation and air transport problems between turkey and Africa in order to facilitate and strengthen viable trade relations towards self-reliant economic development. To this end, Turkish airlines launched new fights from Istanbul to various destinations in Africa. In 2006, it opened new lines from Istanbul to Khartoum, Addis Ababa, and Lagos; in 2007, Johannesburg and Cape Town, in 2009, Nairobi, Dakar, in 2010 Darussalam, Entebbe, Accra and in 2012 Mogadishu.

Traditionally, Turkish Airlines has always had flights between Turkey and Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt respectively. So in its urge to develop a new process of economic ties with Africa, Turkey displays a unique form of determination to set up equal and constructive trade relations on the basis of mutual

reciprocate in line with its foreign objective. For this reason, Erdogan affirms that the primary goal of Turkey's economic partnership with Africa is not to exploit the continents goldmines or natural resources but to nurture a new relation of friendship and cooperation that provides necessary frameworks for the transfer of resources and technology from Turkey to Africa and vice versa.

The essence of the cooperation is to promote self-reliant economic development. Consequently, Turkey established Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) in Addis Ababa in 2005 and later in Khartoum and Dakar in 2006 and 2007 respectively to support development projects in Africa. In 2008, in cooperating with Turkish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, TIKA started the African Agricultural Development Programme in over thirteen Africa countries with the sole aim of strengthening agricultural development in Africa.

Also, Turkey gives direct economic support to Africa's development through its business associations such as the Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and industrialists (TUSKON), Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB), The Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (MUSIAD) and The Turkish Exporters Assembly (TIM). The sole goal of these business associations is to establish strong economic relations with African states, provide new opportunities for joint investment and economic cooperation as well as to organize business meetings of Africans in Turkey and encourage Turkish investors to invest in Africa, thereby promoting the tenets of economic reciprocity.

Based on the above analysis, Turkey-Africa relations is more of an economic gain to both actors rather than as a means of acquiring political power, prestige and influence. Turkey benefits by creating investment and employment for its citizens in Africa, thereby reducing the economic pressures at home. Also, Turkey gets wavers from African states to import furniture, electronics, building materials and other products for Turkish schools, organisations and institutes in Africa. They use their construction companies to build and equip such establishments.

Therefore, for African states to benefit from the doctrine of mutual reciprocity that guides its relation with Turkey, Africa should direct Turkish investments towards the processing of its raw materials in order to add value to African goods and enhance its potential as global actor. This measure will create employment for Africans in Africa, reduce exploitation of Africa's natural resources and lessen the degree of trade imbalance in this era of global neo-economic liberalism where states and non-state actors struggle to control and influence the flow of international finance capital.

### **5. The Soft Power Strategies used by Turkey to Strengthen Economic Relations with Africa**

People in Africa have a positive view towards Ottoman empire and modern Turkey because of the systematic and logical application of soft power to attract positive response from Africans, and this attractions not only led to diplomatic acquiescence but to pragmatic economic partnership involving the penetration of massive Turkish investments and manufactures into African markets- Turkey increasing economic presence in Africa can be explained by dividing Turkey's soft power relations with Africa into three historical periods. The first period covers the Ottoman Empire's soft power relation with Africa. The years from 1923-1985 can be seen as the second period where Turkish penetrative soft power strategies to attract economic dominance of African economy was at the lowest level, if existing at all. Starting from 1985 the third period began, which marked a remarkable strategic use of soft power by Turkey to compete with United States, Britain,

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France and China for security comparative advantage, domination of African markets and control of the raw material resource base.

With regard to the first period, Ottoman empire made considerable use of soft power to strategically and economically control the Nile valley, east Mediterranean and north African states such as Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria as well as maintaining penetrative linkage with sub-Saharan African states as Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Niger, Chad, and northern Nigeria (Hazar, 2000:109-110). The strategies of Ottoman's soft power include the use of religious secularism as a symbol to control the inflow of goods from Africa to Europe, attracting the cooperation of Moslems and Christians. A strong bridge was built between Moslems and other religions which provided the Ottoman's the needed mutual coexistence and independence for the promotion of friendly trade relations making it one of the most powerful economic actors in the world. Another, soft power strategy used by Ottoman Empire to strengthen its trade hegemony in Africa was its commitment in preventing European colonial incursions into Africa.

This strategy aroused the emotions and interest of Africans toward the Ottomans, given the Ottomans strategic monopoly of African trade because of its perceived role in promoting the identity and independence of African states free from European imperialism. To this extent, Africans saw the Ottomans as dependable economically while Europe was seen as economic vampires whose interest was to devour the identity of Africans and its raw material resources. However, with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and simultaneous rise of a new Turkish nation in 1922, the second phase of Turkey's soft power politics in Africa began from 1923 to 1985 the Turkey's soft power was at its receding tide because Turkey and Africa was faced with onerous challenges of nation building aimed at establishing new state structures and independence from European imperialism. The soft power of the new Turkey was directed at securing economic relations with Europe through the use of religious secularism to attract Europe investments and penetrate European markets.

However, as Turkey's soft power was diminishing in Africa; American soft power was at its increase. The Americans were in a broad campaign to convince Africans of the attractiveness of its capitalist system and democratic values free from the negative consequences of European colonialism while American broadcasting into Turkey created a negative image of sub-Saharan as a region of violent wars, disease, famine, and economic woes. This soft power of America made the new Turkey to regard any form of investment in sub-Saharan Africa as a waste of time, energy and resources, leading to American strategic control of African economy. The new African states see America as a model of attraction, while Turkey was seen as a distant country, lost in the shelves of African-Ottoman history.

However, Turkey during the decolonization process in Africa, tried to rekindle the flame of its self-power by recognizing the sovereignty of all newly independent countries through the establishment of a resident embassies in number of them. The strategic objective of this soft power approach was to present itself to Africa as defender of national sovereignty and a vanguard against imperialism, so as to secure a penetrative linkage to participate in the allocation of economic values in Africa. But this form of Turkey's soft power outcomes was cowed by the superior soft power of china and America which had become a source of attraction, driving the economy of Africa because of their increasing roles as global super powers. That seem appealing to Africa states. This hegemonic influence of America and china's soft power brought about a strategic reduction of Turkey's soft power



influence in Africa leading to reduced presence of turkey in African economy and trade relations from 1923 to 1985.

However, after the demise of Soviet Union and the collapse of the communist system, the attractiveness and outcomes of Africa and china's soft power began to recede because of the negative consequences of the implementation of western neo-liberal reforms in the transformation of African economy and development pattern. The emulation of neo-liberal western economic ideology has brought massive unemployment, underemployment, poverty and corruption which provided the structural basis for the sudden rise of violence civil insurgencies and revolution in contemporary African nation worsening the dilapidated economic crisis. Similarly the low quality of Chinese products further impoverishes the African peoples who pay more to obtain goods of low value and durability. This conditions triggers renewed quest for new and dependable economic partners in Africa. Therefore in 1985 the new Turkey policy makers identified this challenging and depressive economic situation in Africa and renewed it soft power under the strategic instrument of neo-Ottomanism. This marks the third epoch of turkey's soft power policies in Africa.

Turkey's increasing soft power in Africa globalization can be explained by the geometric rise in turkey's economic growth as the 17<sup>th</sup> most developed economy in the world which serves as an emulative variable that attracts the interest of policy makers in Africa. Turkey's economic engagement in African countries is considered much more pragmatic and in consistent with the priorities and expectations of many African countries. Therefore, Turkey's increasing role as a global economic power seems appealing and this drives a desire to tie African economies more closely to Turkey's economy. Ever since the designation of 2005 as the "Year of Africa" and the adoption of Africa action plan in 1988, turkey has made a systemic effort to expand and give greater profile to its soft power policies in Africa. The covert and overt strategies of Turkey's soft power include:

### *5.1. Humanitarian Aid*

Humanitarian aids as a viable tool of soft power was first used in Africa by the new Turkey state in 1985, when Turgut Ozal sent food aid to sub-Saharan Africa worth USD 10 million because of drought disaster (Akçay, 2012:89). Ever since, aid has been one of the stronger elements of Turkey's soft power policy in general and its Africa policy in particular. As part of its soft power strategy in Africa, the Turkish aid agency, the Cooperation and Development Administration of Turkey (TIKA) operates three offices located in Addis Ababa, Khartoum and Dakar as part of Turkey's development aid to Africa, in order to create in Africans a positive view towards Turkey.

TIKA was initially established to help the transition of states in Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Balkans. But after 2003 it was strategically transformed into a soft power agency expanding its areas of global operation, influence and power. One of the regions its strategic influence has covered is Africa because of the innate quest to shape the structural allocation of African resources and the operations of African markets through the direct impact its humanitarian aids.

### *5.2. Trade Partnership*

Trade partnerships and bilateral agreement are remarkable features of Turkey's soft power resources aimed at influencing the outcomes of trade negotiations and policies in Africa. To this effect, in 2008 Turkey was able to increase its soft power and strategically become a partner to African Union and Economic Community of West African States as well as to strengthen its relations with African Development Bank and Intergovernmental Authority on Development in East Africa (Ozkan & Akgün, 2010:525-546). On the subject of accelerating its soft power relations in



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Africa, The Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEIK) established business councils in Ethiopia, Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Morocco, South Africa, Sudan and Tunisia to increase trade activities in Africa.

The outcome of Turkey's soft power shows a tremendous increase in Turkey's total trade volume in Africa from 5.4 billion dollars in 2003 to over 17 billion dollars in 2013 (Hazar, 2000:109-110). This attracted the interest of other economic players in Africa, particularly France. France saw Turkey as a potential economic actor that will help tacitly to curtail the rising influence of China in Africa. Therefore, in 2010 France announced its interest to team up with Turkey for joint European trade missions in Africa to counter the growing soft power influence of China that is strategically tying African economy more closely to its economy (Ozay & Akgun, 2010) France sees Turkey as an ally to contain the spread of Chinese-led infrastructural projects, investment and the positive collaborative impression of China in the minds of Africa people.

Moreso, Turkey's increasing role as a global economic player seem appealing and this drives the desire of African states to increase trade relations with Turkey especially in drilling, construction and agriculture. Turkey's agricultural sector turns out to be a symbol of attraction and interest among African states facing food crisis and perennial droughts. For this reason, Turkey-Africa bilateral trade cooperation always seek to utilize and reproduce Turkish agricultural expertise and technology in Africa which has proved valuable in raising food under adverse conditions. And so, Africa sees a more pragmatic and systematic effort to reduce the sudden incidence of food crisis, which stimulated the quest for a more sustainable trade partnership with Turkey.

Therefore, Turkey's soft power relations in Africa does not carry the manipulative free market neo-liberal policy aimed always at securing the best trade deals and pay-offs at all cost, at the destructive detriment of African economy. Rather Turkey's soft power policy options concentrate on developing reciprocal initiatives to bring about genuine change in African economy and the standard of living of its people.

### 6. Conclusion

Turkey's economic relations with modern African states is a product of a chronological account of past trade relations and activities created by the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman economic relations with Egypt were a proactive trade strategy that opened up new links to the economy of other African states in North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. With the reemergence of modern Turkey in African economy after the Cold War, the traditional trade links established with North Africa was strategically extended to cover Southern, Central and West African states and their respective economic integration networks and regional organizations. Africa-Turkey strategic economic relations were firmed up by Turkey's domestic transformation aimed at diversifying its trade agreements with Africa in line with changes in the global political economy power configuration.

This explains Turkey's increasing use of soft power strategies which drives a desire to tie Africa's economy more closely to Turkey's economy. The content of Turkey's soft power ranges from agriculture, humanitarian assistance to academic, professional and cultural exchange. Therefore, Turkey's opening to Africa has gained more importance in terms of opening up new markets as a way of reducing its dependence on traditional European and Russian trading partners. By opening up to Africa, Turkey has come to understand that in a rapidly changing global economy that strategic economic calculations and planning is a multidimensional tool to increase its status as a global economic player. In a broader perspective,

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Turkey's economic involvement in Africa is likely to increase in the near future, but Africa need to create a viable industrial base in order to gain symbiotic pay-offs and increase its relevance in global economy.

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