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İSTANBUL POLİTİKALAR MERKEZİ
SABANCI ÜNİVERSİTESİ KAMPUSU
ISTANBUL POLICY CENTER
AT SABANCI UNIVERSITY

WORKSHOP REPORT

TURKEY'S ENGAGEMENT IN AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT

PINAR AKPINAR

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Pınar Akpınar is scholar at the Conflict Resolution and Mediation Program of Istanbul Policy Center.

About Istanbul Policy Center

Istanbul Policy Center is an independent policy research institute with global outreach. Our mission is to foster academic research in social sciences and its application to policy making. We are firmly committed to providing decision makers, opinion leaders, academics, and the general public with innovative and objective analyses in key domestic and foreign policy issues. IPC has expertise in a wide range of areas, including—but not exhaustive to—Turkey-EU-U.S. relations, education, climate change, current trends of political and social transformation in Turkey, as well as the impact of civil society and local governance on this metamorphosis.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The workshop *Turkey's Engagement in Africa's Development* could not be realized without the help of the Istanbul Policy Center (IPC) at Sabancı University team, especially Coordinator of the Conflict Resolution and Mediation Program Bülent Aras and Director Fuat Keyman. The active involvement and financial support of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), particularly President Serdar Çam, as well as experts Selahattin Cansız and Celalettin Gungenci should also be acknowledged.

Furthermore, the generous hospitality and guidance of the personnel of the Turkish Embassy in Kampala, especially Ambassador H.E. Ayşe Sedef Yavuzalp should be acknowledged. Special thanks also go to Makerere University, especially Haji Abdu Katende, Lecturer, Department of Religion and Peace Studies and Former Head, Department of Religion and Peace Studies for their unprecedented hospitality, organizational capacity and academic input during the workshop.

The contributions of the panel chairs, panelists, discussants and participants of the workshop, particularly the professors and students of Makerere University were precious. This report was realized with their exceptional contribution.

WORKSHOP PROGRAM

Venue: Makerere University, Kampala
Date: September 14, 2015

09:00-10:20 Session 1 – Opening Remarks

Chair: Abasi Kiyimba, Deputy Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Makerere University

Paddy Musana, Chair, Department of Religion and Peace Studies, Makerere University

Patrick Mangeni, Dean, School of Liberal and Performing Arts, Makerere University

Edward Kirumira, Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Makerere University

Selahattin Cansız, Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency

John Dumba Sentamu, Vice Chancellor, Makerere University

H.E. Ayşe Sedef Yavuzalp, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to Uganda

Tea Break

11:00-12:45 Session 2 – Turkey's Development Perspectives for Africa

Chair: Haji Abdu Katende, Lecturer, Department of Religion and Peace Studies and Former Head, Department of Religion and Peace Studies, Makerere University

Onur Sazak, Research and Academic Affairs Manager, Istanbul Policy Center - "The Shifting Axes of International Aid: Are Traditional Donors from Mars, Emerging Powers from Venus?"

Bülent Aras, Coordinator, Conflict Resolution and Mediation Program, Istanbul Policy Center and Professor of International Relations, Sabancı University - "Medical Humanitarianism of Turkey's NGOs: The Uganda Case"

Edward Kirumira, Principal College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Makerere University - Discussant's Remarks

Open Discussion

Lunch Break

14:00-16:30 Session 3 – Turkey and Africa's Peacebuilding Initiatives

Chair: Dr. Vene Mbabazi, Lecturer, Department of Religion and Peace Studies, Makerere University

Pınar Akpınar, Scholar, Conflict Resolution and Mediation Program, Istanbul Policy Center - "The Role of Humanitarian NGOs in Turkey's Peacebuilding and Africa Experience"

Auveen Woods, Research Associate, Conflict Resolution and Mediation Program, Istanbul Policy Center - "Turkey's Approach to Peacebuilding: Implications for Peace and Conflict"

Karungi Charlotte, Lecturer, Department of History and Archeology, Makerere University - Discussant's Remarks

Open Discussion

Helen Nkabala, Coordinator, Peace and Conflict Studies Programme and Lecturer, Makerere University – Implications for Future Collaborations and Closing Remarks

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

Turkey has been playing an active role in Africa in recent years with its official actors, businesses and humanitarian non-governmental organizations (HNGOs). While there were 12 Turkish embassies in the continent in 2009, as of 2015 the number has reached 39. Turkish Airlines, Turkey's flag carrier, currently has direct flights into 28 countries in Africa. The increasing political, economic and social relations between Turkey and Africa necessitate a need for further academic work.

The workshop entitled, *Turkey's Engagement in Africa's Development* was a timely event conducted on September 14, 2015 at Makerere University, Kampala to exchange ideas on the topic. It was organized by Istanbul Policy Center at Sabancı University, School of Liberal and Performing Arts at Makerere University and Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency. The idea of a workshop first came up during a visit to the Department of Religion and Peace Studies at Makerere University by Bülent Aras, Coordinator, Conflict Resolution and Mediation Program, Istanbul Policy Center and Professor of International Relations, Sabancı University and Pınar Akpınar, Scholar, Conflict Resolution and Mediation Program, Istanbul Policy Center, on January 26, 2015.

The workshop aimed to investigate Turkey's role in Africa with a particular focus on its humanitarian role and peacebuilding. Four panels were convened focusing on Turkey's medical humanitarianism in Uganda, Turkey as an emerging donor, its approach to peacebuilding and the engagement of HNGOs in Turkey's peacebuilding. This report aims to lay out an outline of the workshop.

MEDICAL HUMANITARIANISM OF TURKEY'S NGOS: THE CASE OF UGANDA

International HNGOs operate in a plural environment working to extend aid to developing countries. Recent literature on emerging humanitarianism unveils the roles of new actors in this plural setting, which is depicted by additional capacity and opportunities in the international humanitarian scene. These roles can, in some cases, complicate humanitarian interventions. When considering the earlier generations of the HNGOs, however, the development of new roles are not necessarily problematic. Despite some controversy on the roles of the new HNGOs in the world of humanitarianism, they are likely to remain and expand their activities in developing countries for humanitarian and development purposes.

In his presentation entitled 'Medical Humanitarianism of Turkey's NGOs: The Case of Uganda', Aras drew attention to the role of Turkey's humanitarian non-governmental organizations (HNGOs) as agents of medical humanitarianism with a specific focus on their work in Uganda. He underlined that in this humanitarian theater, Turkey's HNGOs expanded the scope and geography of their aid activities in the last decade. Some notable Turkish HNGOs that deliver medical relief are Turkish Red Crescent, Doctors Worldwide, IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation, Alliance of International Doctors and Yardım Eli Foundation. These HNGOs have humanitarian interventions in Africa, developing corners of Asia and in a number of countries in the Balkans, Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asia. On the content of their operations, they also have a widespread range of aid activities from education to health, and from emergency relief to poverty reduction.

Among wide range of activities, HNGOs provide health aid organized in a structure of health humanitarianism. In this realm, HNGOs proved themselves capable to deliver health services for secluded and hard-to-reach geographies. Their operations reach poor and vulnerable communities in man-made or natural disaster areas and exemplify their ability to provide necessary health interventions. HNGO roles compensated the failure and inability of states and international organizations of health to provide the delivery of health intervention in a visible sense in the developing world.

Aras also spoke about the research he conducted with Akpınar on medical humanitarianism of Turkey's HNGOs. He underlined that the reason why they chose Uganda as a case study is that there is a concentration of health activities of Turkey's HNGOs in this country. Although there are only a number of specialized HNGOs in health sector, Turkey's HNGOs provide health aid to developing countries. They have a wider sense of health aid including humanitarian interventions to improve quality of life and the environment for better care of human health. He noted that they interviewed Turkey's HNGOs in Istanbul and Ankara, and their partner NGOs in Uganda.

Aras and Akpınar found in their research that Turkey's medical humanitarianism aims to preserve certain degree of autonomy from national health systems and is more prone to cooperate with local NGOs. They rely on local NGOs for project identification and implementation, though they also directly involve in both of these processes. Second, their approach, health interventions and problems on the ground put them into category of mainstream humanitarianism. Despite their claim of difference and some receptive audiences in recipient communities, Turkish HNGOs are more likely to converge with mainstream line of humanitarianism in future.

THE SHIFTING AXES OF INTERNATIONAL AID: ARE TRADITIONAL DONORS FROM MARS, EMERGING POWERS FROM VENUS?

A comparative approach to aid practices by global northern and global southern actors yields stark differences in terms of both methods and effectiveness. While global northern actors (also known as "traditional donors") take a more rational-choice oriented view on aid, global southern entities (also known as "emerging donors") employ a structural-functionalist approach. In this regard, compared to traditional actors, which demonstrate a more calculated and strategized perspective on aid commitments, emerging actors tend to act upon universal norms and principles, such as ending human suffering and restoring human dignity. Furthermore, cultural links, sociological similarities, shared identities and experiences play a more robust role in an emerging actor's engagement with a beneficiary than in a traditional donor.

In his presentation entitled 'The Shifting Axes of International Aid: Are Traditional Donors from Mars, Emerging Powers from Venus?' Onur Sazak, IPC Research and Academic Affairs Manager summarized the key differentiating factors within the approaches of traditional donors and emerging actors to global aid giving and its effectiveness. Especially since cataclysmic world events such as 9/11, the 2008 financial crisis, and the recent Arab upheavals, these differences have become more noticeable with diminishing traditional donor engagement, and increased participation from emerging actors in peaceful resolution of entrenched global catastrophes.

The recent trend suggests that traditional actors are becoming increasingly introverted to avoid certain security risks attached to aid delivery and averting projects that do not directly serve their national interests. Emerging actors, on the other hand, acting upon the construct of restoring human dignity and end human suffering, are more prone to taking these risks and operating in high-risk environments. Sazak thus argues that each behavior has substantive impact on the effectiveness of aid.

Sazak has particularly considered these variables from the perspective of Turkish humanitarian assistance. An important distinction regarding Turkey's peace operations—even when it is compared among other emerging actors—is absolute unconditionality of Turkish aid, as well as its implementation through a bilateral framework. The bilateral framework's chief driving characteristics are emphasis given to local ownership and addressing the direct requests of beneficiaries without relying on any third-party intermediaries. Sazak elaborated that this approach in fact was at the heart of Turkish engagement in Uganda, driven by the needs and demands of the beneficiaries, without attaching any interests and conditions.

TURKEY'S APPROACH TO PEACEBUILDING: IMPLICATIONS FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT

Turkey has been involved in a number of conflicted countries in which its activities could have positive or negative implications on domestic dynamics. There are no public policy documents outlining how Turkey conceives or peacebuilding (or reconstruction as it is termed in relations to East Africa). In her presentation entitled 'Turkey's Approach to Peacebuilding: Implications for Peace and Conflict', Auveen Woods, Research Associate at IPC, spoke about her take on Turkish peacebuilding. Her ongoing research on the topic based on a list of Turkey's international activities, statements from political leaders and interviews with bureaucrats indicates that Turkish peacebuilding is a two-fold process encompassing both statebuilding and peacemaking within society. Reflecting a structural approach to peacebuilding, Turkish officials emphasize the centrality of good governance, strong responsive institutions and rule of law for building an effective state and therefore a stable and peaceful society.

Activities related to these goals by officials include infrastructure projects, technical assistance and capacity building programs for state institutions and personnel. Structural peacebuilding such as this that focuses on the state and service provision must also be accompanied by an inclusive peacemaking process at all levels. Turkish officials feel that this is only possible through national ownership of goals and culturally-sensitive engagement with all stakeholders, including civil society, professional associations and women. This is particularly important with regard to responsive political institutions and inclusive economic development that Turkish officials believe is essential for a peaceful society. Activities associated with societal peacebuilding include education programs, religious and cultural activities and inclusive economic partnerships and support of which Turkish companies are often featured.[1]

Woods also argued that Turkey's concept of peacebuilding has evolved from its traditional hard security approach. There are several potential impacts of these activities on target countries. As such, the way these activities are implemented is often more important than the activities themselves. If Turkey is directly engaging with communities, for example in Somalia, then it has a higher potential to be aware of conflict dynamics and avoid them. If Turkey builds a road in a conflicted area of Uganda, for example, without consulting locals then that could negatively affect peace. There is a lot that other actors could learn from Turkey's approach but there are equally some things for Turkey to improve upon.

1 Auveen Woods and Onur Sazak, "Turkey's Approach to Peacebuilding", Policy Brief, 2016, forthcoming.

THE ROLE OF HUMANITARIAN NGOS IN TURKEY'S PEACEBUILDING AND THE AFRICA EXPERIENCE

The Turkish model of humanitarianism consists of two levels that include the state and the HNGOs. Turkish HNGOs have been active internationally since the 1980s as a result of Turkish people's response to several conflicts taking place in Turkey's neighborhood. In recent years, these HNGOs have expanded their areas of operation and reached out to distant communities. Africa has been one of those regions where Turkish HNGOs are now active on many areas.[2]

Some of the countries where they are active in the continent include Somalia, Uganda, Rwanda, Gambia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. Among these, Somalia has been a particularly popular destination in recent years as a result of Turkey's increasing interest in the country after the 2011 East Africa Drought. Former Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan's visit to Somalia during the famine as the first non-African leader to visit the country in twenty years rapidly brought it to headlines both in Turkey and in the international media. The visit also coincided with Ramadan, the holy month of fasting for the Muslim world, which enabled people with religious sensitivities in Turkey to build empathy with their Somali counterparts. As a result, there was a massive flow of aid into Somalia.

While HNGOs such as IHH has been in Africa for almost two decades, a majority of Turkish HNGOs are newcomers in the continent. The activities of Turkish HNGOs in the continent mainly concentrate on emergency assistance, medical humanitarianism, infrastructure and capacity building through various educational programs. Among these, particularly health and education stand out as benchmarks of Turkish HNGOs. Turkish HNGOs provide several healthcare initiatives among which cataract surgeries play an important role particularly in the Africa example. These surgeries are important in increasing the visibility of these HNGOs while providing rapid and mass scale services.

Education is the other benchmark which consists of providing trainings and scholarships in Turkey, opening schools and training centers in Africa and improving the conditions of the already existing educational institutions. African students in Turkey are generally satisfied about the quality of education and the scholarships provided.

As also underlined by Akpınar, despite the fact that the Turkish state is supportive of their involvement, HNGOs operate independently and rely on private donations. Their civilian identity enables them to operate much more flexible than the state. The fact that they are involved more on the grassroots also increases Turkey's visibility on the ground. Overall, there is a growing role for HNGOs in Turkey's humanitarian diplomacy.

2 For more on the role of HNGOs in Turkey's peacebuilding please see, Bülent Aras and Pınar Akpınar, "The Role of Humanitarian NGOs in Turkey's Peacebuilding", International Peacekeeping, 22:3, 2015, 230-247.

CONCLUSION

The workshop 'Turkey's Engagement in Africa's Development' focused on Turkey's role in peacebuilding and development of Africa. It concluded that despite its brief engagement, Turkey's engagement is expanding rapidly in Africa with its official and civilian tracks. The fact that Turkey operates on various levels and both through official and civilian channels is seen as positive traits of Turkish engagement. Overall, Turkey's role in the development and peacebuilding of Africa is regarded a welcome development.

The participants of the workshop made the following recommendations for Turkey:

- Turkey should deepen its knowledge of Africa in order to secure a sustainable engagement in the continent.
- A comprehensive assessment should be made before delivering projects to ensure efficiency and reach out to a wider set of people in need.
- Turkey should diversify its target areas and extend beyond in and around capital cities.
- Education stands out as one of the most successful areas of Turkish engagement. As regards, Turkey should continue and expand its capacity building activities in Africa.
- There should be more academic interaction between Turkish and African professors and students. Exchange programs, field trips and joint events should be encouraged and supported by the Turkish government.

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ISBN: 978-605-9178-31-0