



## The Effects of Soft Power in Türkiye-Africa Relations on Economy and Foreign Trade: The Case of Somalia

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines Türkiye's use of soft power in its relations with Africa, with a particular focus on Somalia. The research establishes a theoretical foundation by analyzing the concepts of power, soft power, and hard power within the relevant literature. In this context, the role and impact of soft power in foreign policy is evaluated in terms of foreign policy strategies. Somalia's geographical, economic, and social structures are analyzed to understand the application of soft power strategies in this context. The study also addresses Somalia's political history, from the colonial period to the present, to assess the relevance of soft power in post-conflict reconstruction. Türkiye's overall foreign policy towards Africa is examined, with special attention to its unique approach in Somalia. This approach, which integrates soft power with elements of smart power, is highlighted as a significant factor in Türkiye's success. Türkiye's non-colonial history and responsiveness to local needs have been key to its achievements in Somalia. The findings reveal that Türkiye's development aid, educational initiatives, and diplomatic efforts have led to substantial economic, social, and commercial gains, surpassing the outcomes of other international actors. Türkiye's tailored strategies strengthen its bilateral relations with Somalia and provide a model for effective foreign policy in similar contexts. The study employs an interdisciplinary methodology, drawing on data from international organizations and official documents.

**Keywords:** Soft Power, Türkiye's Foreign Policy, Political Economy, Foreign Trade

## Türkiye-Afrika İlişkilerinde Yumuşak Gücün Ekonomi ve Dış Ticaret Üzerindeki Etkileri: Somali Örneği

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### ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'nin Afrika ile ilişkilerinde yumuşak güç kullanımının etkilerini Somali özelinde analiz etmektedir. Araştırma, güç, yumuşak güç ve sert güç kavramlarını, ilgili literatür çerçevesinde teorik bir temel oluşturarak ele almaktadır. Bu bağlamda, yumuşak gücün dış siyasetteki rolü ve etkisi, dış politika stratejileri açısından değerlendirilmiştir. Somali'nin coğrafi, ekonomik ve toplumsal yapısı ise, yumuşak güç stratejilerinin bu bağlamda nasıl şekillendiğini anlamak için ayrıntılı bir şekilde incelenmiştir. Somali'nin sömürgecilik döneminden günümüze uzanan siyasi tarihi de çalışmanın bir diğer önemli bileşenidir. Bu tarihsel analiz, yumuşak güç kavramının Somali gibi çatışma sonrası yeniden yapılanma sürecinde olan ülkelerdeki uygulanabilirliğini değerlendirmek için bir zemin sunmaktadır. Çalışma, Türkiye'nin Afrika kıtasına yönelik genel dış politikasını kapsamlı bir şekilde incelemekte ve Somali ile ilişkilerde bu politikanın özgün yansımalarını irdelemektedir. Özellikle Türkiye'nin yumuşak gücü, akıllı güç unsurlarıyla birleştiren yaklaşımına vurgu yapılmaktadır. Türkiye'nin sömürgeci geçmişe sahip olmaması ve yerel ihtiyaçlara duyarlılık göstermesi, Somali'de elde ettiği başarıda kritik bir rol oynamıştır. Araştırma bulguları, Türkiye'nin kalkınma yardımları, eğitim projeleri ve diplomatik girişimlerinin, diğer uluslararası aktörlerin sınırlı başarılarının aksine Somali'de anlamlı ekonomik, sosyal ve ticari kazanımlara yol açtığını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Türkiye'nin geliştirdiği kendine özgü stratejiler, Somali ile ilişkileri güçlendirmekle kalmayıp, benzer bağlamlarda etkili dış politika uygulamaları için bir model sunmaktadır. Çalışmada, uluslararası kuruluşlardan ve resmi belgelerden elde edilen verilerle desteklenen disiplinlerarası bir metodolojik çerçeve benimsenmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Yumuşak Güç, Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası, Siyasi İktisat, Dış Ticaret

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## Introduction

The concept of power in political science and international relations has evolved significantly, transitioning from the traditional focus on military and economic might to the increasing importance of soft power. This form of influence encompasses cultural diplomacy, political values, and foreign policies that resonate globally. In recent years, Türkiye has strategically harnessed soft power in its foreign policy, particularly towards Africa, with notable emphasis on Somalia.

Somalia, characterized by its strategic geographical location, rich yet untapped economic resources, and complex socio-political history, presents an important case for examining the interplay of soft power and foreign policy. Understanding Somalia's journey from a colonially exploited nation to its current state provides essential insights into its potential for economic and foreign trade development. Furthermore, Somalia's prolonged internal conflicts and its subsequent stabilization efforts underscore the importance of international partnerships and soft power in fostering sustainable growth and security.

Türkiye's foreign policy towards Africa, and Somalia specifically, reflects a nuanced blend of humanitarian aid, economic cooperation, and diplomatic engagement. This approach aligns with Türkiye's broader geopolitical ambitions and its efforts to establish a significant presence on the African continent. The convergence of Türkiye's strategic interests with Somalia's developmental needs highlights the multifaceted nature of their bilateral relationship.

In this article, the effects of Türkiye's soft power on its economic and foreign trade relations with Somalia will be explored. The article seeks to evaluate the impact of Türkiye's soft power on its economic and foreign trade engagements with Somalia. By delving into the interconnectedness of political history, socio-economic structures, and strategic diplomacy, a comprehensive understanding of the Türkiye-Somalia relationship will be achieved. This analysis aims to contribute to the broader discourse on international relations and development, highlighting the significance of soft power in fostering sustainable economic and diplomatic ties.

This study employs a comprehensive literature review and data analysis approach to evaluate the impact of Türkiye's soft power on its economic and foreign trade relations with Somalia. In this context, the aim of the study is to answer the following questions:

- How has Türkiye's use of soft power influenced its economic and foreign trade relations with Somalia?
- What specific strategies have been employed by Türkiye to implement soft power in Somalia, and how effective have they been?
- In what ways has Türkiye leveraged its non-colonial history and responsiveness to local needs to achieve success in Somalia?
- What are the differences between Türkiye's foreign policy approach in Somalia and other international actors?

The literature from both Turkish and African sources was meticulously reviewed to provide a robust theoretical foundation. Economic and quantitative data were sourced from international organizations such as the World Bank and official institutions from Türkiye and Somalia. Additionally, political documents and decisions were analyzed using publications from international bodies like the UN and the respective governmental institutions of Türkiye and Somalia. The examination of international agreements further enriched the analysis, offering insights into the diplomatic and strategic frameworks that underpin Türkiye-Somalia relations.

## Theoretical Framework: Concept of Power and Soft Power

The concept of power is defined in different ways in scientific studies as well as in daily life. In defining the concept, various features may come to the fore depending on the perspective of the person defining it. However, in order to provide a starting point for the concept of power, which is an important part of political science and international relations, and to give an idea of what kind of areas the subject can cover by creating at least a certain basis, it would be useful to include the realist writer Hans J. Morgenthau's approach to the concept of power.

According to Morgenthau, power is defined as a psychological relationship between those who wield it and those upon whom it is exercised. In this sense, the person wielding power (A) exerts control over the actions of the person (B) by creating an impact on B. (Morgenthau, 1985: 33). A similar approach to power was also adopted by Bertrand Russell. Defining power as "the production of intended effects", Russell emphasized the aspect of power as a concept that affects a human being or any entity other than a human being. (Russell, 1986: 19).

Following the exemplary attempts to define power, it is also necessary to address its role in the international system. Fundamentally, power is at the forefront of the driving forces in the international system composed of various nation-states. In this regard, each national system possesses different amounts of power and can utilize this power through various sub-systems. The differences in power distribution allow stronger nations to attract weaker ones (McClelland, 2017: 38).

From this perspective, when examining the elements of national power, these include geography, natural resources, population, economic development, industrial capacity, technology, military capability, ideology, leadership, organizational capability, the quality of government, national character, morale, and diplomacy (Stoica, 2021: 147). The interaction of these elements and their role in determining national policies increases the complexity of national power and shapes the domestic and foreign policy decisions of nations.

However, the concept of power encompasses a wide spectrum that extends beyond factors influencing national strength, encompassing the strategies employed in international relations. Within this framework, the concepts of hard power and soft power come to the forefront. Hard power entails coercion and compulsion, typically emphasized in realist perspectives, primarily through military capabilities and pressure tactics. It is fundamentally rooted in military resources, combat readiness, and the deterrent effect created by the potential for conflict with opposing states (Mallinckrodt, 2019: 1). Soft power, on the other hand, was put forward by Nye and with a more liberal perspective than realism.

Nye defines soft power as the ability to influence others to achieve desired outcomes through attraction rather than coercion and retribution (Nye, 2008: 94). The definition of power based on cooperation, which emerged in 1990, has become an integral part of the concept of soft power today (Ohnesorge, 2020: 37). There are three sources of a country's soft power. These are: the culture, political values and foreign policy of the country in question (Nye, 2004: 11). For this reason, Ferguson (2009), argued that real power is more than just the military or the money spent on the military, and that the countries of the world should not forget the unquantifiable (in fact, unquantifiable in terms of tangible tools such as the number of tanks or airplanes) but perhaps the most important elements of power.

Although it has been noted above that soft power cannot be measured like tangible instruments, advances in data processing technology have made it possible to assess the soft power of countries in certain respects. Among these are politics, economy, social and cultural elements, diplomacy, and international relations. A brief look at each element is as follows: (Changhe, 2013: 551-552).

I. Politics: This includes the protection of human rights, the sense of happiness among citizens, a responsible democratic system, equality and effectiveness in government actions, institutional flexibility in resource mobilization, the level of the rule of law, the corruption index, and the government's capacity to address public damages.

II. Economy: This involves the number of corporate brands, the quality of products and the likelihood of purchasing foreign products, the recognition level of the business model, the contribution rate to the global economy, reliable and reputable rating agencies, a healthy financial system, the number of corporate brands, the openness of the economic system, and the innovation capability of economic organization.

III. Social and Cultural Elements: This includes the number of exports of books, magazines, and films, social mobility, attractiveness as a tourist destination, tolerance for racial and religious differences, the impact level of popular culture, the number of international students, inclusiveness towards different cultures, the internationalization degree of the native language, the number of international NGOs and international media.

IV. Diplomacy and International Relations: This covers the extent of foreign aid, effectiveness in solving global public issues, general national image, the emphasis on social responsibility of multinational companies in other countries, the low frequency of using military power to achieve goals, leadership in designing international institutions, effectiveness in setting agendas, and providing public goods such as ideas, prosperity, and security for other countries.

Of course, it is not possible for a country to have a fully developed soft power in terms of all the elements mentioned above (Changhe, 2013: 551-553). For example, a country may have a responsible democratic system and an economic structure that contributes to the world economy, but it may not be where it wants to be in terms of film exports or the social responsibility of multinational corporations. Therefore, it is possible for a country to increase its soft power influence to the desired level by supporting its weakness in one area with its strength in another. As stated in the following sections of the study, Türkiye pursues its Somali foreign policy based on these aspects, especially since it has more advantages in certain areas. A preliminary analysis suggests that Türkiye's comparative advantages within the specified domains are particularly evident in development assistance, military capabilities, and the assumption of leadership roles within international organizations—each of which aligns with diplomatic and international relations frameworks. Additionally, its socio-cultural influence, notably rooted in religious values, represents a distinct strategic asset. However, a critical area for strategic development lies in advancing the global dissemination and institutionalization of the Turkish language.

## **Somalia**

This section examines two main aspects within the context of Somalia. The first subsection addresses the country's geographical and economic significance, as well as briefly touching upon its social structure. Understanding these factors will shed light on the reasons behind interest in Somalia and provide insights into Türkiye's soft power advantages in its relations with Somalia. The second subsection delves into Somalia's political history, highlighting political challenges

and complexities in foreign relations. This will contribute to a comprehensive understanding of both the social and political structures, laying the groundwork for evaluating the use of soft power.

### ***Geographical, Economic and Social Structure of Somalia***

Located in East Africa, also known as the Horn of Africa, Somalia shares borders with Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya. The Horn of Africa gets its name from the horn-shaped land formation that extends towards the Indian Ocean at the continent's easternmost point, south of the Arabian Peninsula. Positioned on the primary shipping route for oil transport from the Persian Gulf to Europe and the United States, the Horn of Africa is one of the world's strategically significant regions. Additionally, the region is rich in untapped natural resources, including oil, gold, salt, hydroelectric power, and natural gas. (Horn of Africa, 2024).

In the part of the region where the Somali basin is located, according to seismic surveys conducted in 2020, it is estimated that the basin as a whole has approximately 30 billion barrels of offshore hydrocarbon reserves, with additional reserves onshore (UCL News, 2023). Regarding reserves, some estimates remain uncertain largely due to the significant impact of the country's political history, as will be discussed in more detail below. The unstable political environment and security framework in Somalia have prevented the full identification of many resources (Bamberger & Skovsted, 2016: 4). However, when the aforementioned research is taken into account, Somalia ranks 11th with Kazakhstan in terms of reserves in the world with this potential (World Population Review, 2024).

According to 2022 data, Somalia has a population of 17.597.511 people. (The World Bank, 2024a). With a GDP of \$10.42 billion (The World Bank, 2024b) the country's social structure is based on tribes. Tribes are basically composed of six main tribes and their sub-tribes. The six main tribes are: Darod, Hawiye, Digil, Rahanweyn, Dir, Isaq (Lewis, 1988: 221). All of these tribes trace their origins to the Hashemite family, the family of the Prophet Muhammad, and therefore embrace Islam, the faith of their ancestors (Mukhtar, 2003: 2). Although these tribes share a common origin, rivalry between tribes and sub-clans puts pressure on the living conditions of the Somali people (Metz, 1993). These tribes that have embraced Islam are mostly Sunni (Lewis, 2008: 1-2).

### ***Political History of Somalia***

Although Somalia has a history spanning thousands of years, since the political structure of today's Somalia is heavily influenced by the imperial powers' division of the country from the 19th century onwards, this section will cover the period from that date to the present day. Accordingly, a look at the outlook of 19th century Somalia reveals that the country was divided by four powers. Three of these powers were from the European Continent (Great Britain, France and Italy) and one was from the African Continent (Somalia's neighboring Ethiopia) (Abdullahi, 2017). As a result, the Somali people were divided into five regions: the French-controlled northwest, British-controlled northern-central, Italian-controlled south, Ethiopian-controlled Ogaden, and Kenya's Northern Frontier District, all represented on the five-star flag of the Somali Republic established in 1960 (Lewis, 2008: 29; Samatar, 1993: 3).

By the Second World War, it can be stated that the country was divided into two parts under the control of Italy and Britain (Urbano, 2017: 30). In 1941, Britain took control and initially proposed the creation of a unified Somali state under UN auspices and British administration, but this proposal was rejected and the Somali nation was again divided (Lewis, 2008: 32). In 1949, the UN General Assembly decided that the Italian part of Somalia should become a sovereign state by 1960, whereupon Britain ceded the territory to Italy in 1950 for ten years of administration (Jaenen, 1957: 152).

As a result of the decision taken by the UN, the two separate Somalis were united with a constitution in 1960 and the independent Somali Republic was established (Aizawa, 2020: 81-82). In April 1960, the leaders of the two regions met in Mogadishu and agreed to establish a unitary state. Accordingly, an elected president would be the head of state, a 123-member parliament representing the two regions and composed of elected officials would be established, and a prime minister responsible to the National Assembly would be appointed. Following these agreed decisions, the two regions were united on July 1, 1960 (Samatar, 1993: 26).

Following the unification, Adan Abdulle Osman of the Hawiye Tribe was elected interim president of the state and Dr. Shermarke of the Darod Tribe was appointed prime minister (Lewis, 2008: 33). From this point of view, it can be considered that the situation for Somalia has entered a positive process after decades of foreign interventions, wars, insurgencies, etc., but Somalia still has many problems to solve. Among the most fundamental problems, it can be said that the economy and the division in society are the main ones.

In Somalia, which was struggling with these problems, the situation reached a different dimension when it came to the elections in 1969. These elections took place under the criticism of nepotism and corruption, especially by the military. In October 1969, Shermarke's assassination by one of his bodyguards was the last straw for the military and General Siad Barre formed the Supreme Revolutionary Council and took over the government and became the new president of the state (Metz, 1993).

Following the coup, the constitution adopted by popular vote in 1961 was suspended and civilian laws were repealed (Ingiriis, 2016: 65). General Barre launched the Ogaden War against Ethiopia in 1977, 8 years after taking over in 1969, which resulted in approximately 650,000 people becoming refugees (Metz, 1993). The war ended in Somalia's

military defeat (Ododa, 1985: 285). When the defeat was compounded by the increasingly corrupt and repressive policies of the administration, the 1980s became a difficult period for Somalia (Compagnon, 1992: 8). This led to armed groups based on tribal structures using Ethiopia as their base after 1980 (Abdullahi, 2017: 170). It is clear that these and other opposition groups would put pressure on the administration and threaten the integrity of the state.

In Somalia, the expected happened and various opposition groups intensified their war against the national army in the last three years of the Barre regime. In this process, different regions of the country were captured by opposition groups and the regime was overthrown (Metz, 1993). However, this victory marked the beginning of a complete disintegration in the country. Because all the opposition groups were made up of people fighting for their own interests and acting on a tribal basis (Mukhtar, 2003: 5). The disintegration continued when Somaliland in the north unilaterally withdrew from the unification agreement and declared itself an independent state (Abdullahi, 2017: 155).

Nearly a decade of disintegration was halted by peace talks in neighboring Djibouti. In 2000, these talks resulted in a power-sharing agreement and a national constitution that will take Somalia through a three-year interim period. Members of parliament and a civilian government were elected in August 2000, and in October, members of the parliament and government established in Djibouti returned to Somalia (Turner, 2008: 1127). Named the Transitional National Government, this structure raised hopes briefly, but its dominance by Mogadishu-based tribes prevented it from effectively serving as a government of national unity (Menkhaus, 2007: 359).

In the 2010s, there were developments that strengthened the revived hopes from 2000. Hasan Sheikh Mohamud taking over from Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed in 2012 marked the end of Somalia's prolonged political transition (Bryden, 2013: 3). Today, Somalia is in the process of state-building, but internal political strife and inter-clan conflicts threaten the country's security and slow down the state-building process (United Nations Security Council, 2023).

These dynamics of Somalia —marked by persistent internal divisions and security vulnerabilities—underscore the unique environment in which Türkiye's soft power operates. Türkiye's emphasis on humanitarian diplomacy, infrastructure development, and cultural solidarity aligns strategically with Somalia's reconstruction needs, positioning its soft power as a critical enabler of bilateral economic and foreign trade cooperation. By contextualizing Somalia's institutional fragility, this analysis illuminates how Türkiye's non-coercive tools of engagement (e.g., development aid, religious-cultural affinity) gain heightened salience in post-conflict settings, thereby establishing the rationale for examining this case within broader debates on soft power efficacy.

## **Türkiye-Somalia Relations and the Use of Soft Power**

In the 21st century (especially since 2010), there has been a notable increase in Türkiye's relations with Somalia, indicating an evolutionary process in bilateral ties. This process is closely related to factors such as changes in Turkish foreign policy paradigms, shifts in the global political landscape, and Türkiye's recalibration of its relations with the African continent. Therefore, a more accurate understanding of the evolving ties between Türkiye and Somalia necessitates a preliminary examination of transformative changes in Türkiye's strategic considerations towards Africa and its broader goals in Turkish foreign policy.

### ***Turkish Foreign Policy and Africa***

Since its establishment, Turkish foreign policy has embraced Westernization as a fundamental principle. Westernization in Türkiye is summarized as the effort to attain contemporary Western standards and values both structurally within the state and socially. The country's founder, Atatürk, articulated this goal as achieving "the level of contemporary civilization" (Gözen, 2009: 46).

Adopting a Western-oriented foreign policy as a result of its goal of Westernization, Türkiye has distanced itself from neighboring regions and geographies that could be considered close to it, such as Africa, as a result of this policy (Oğurlu, 2017: 49). Westernization, increasingly important for Türkiye during the Cold War era when it keenly felt the threat of the USSR, strengthened its position as a crucial means to ensure its security (Asa & Güder, 2024: 156) occasionally leading Türkiye to adopt a more Western-oriented stance.

This stance became visible in Türkiye following a change in power in 1950. While Türkiye's traditional Western-oriented foreign policy continued, there was a deviation from the balance-seeking and status quo elements that traditionally accompanied Westernization. During this period, there was insufficient consideration given to the balance between East and West and within the Western bloc, with a focus primarily on loyalty and dependence on the U.S. This situation led to a lack of monitoring developments in other international relations issues and constrained foreign policy actions. (Oran, 2001: 498).

During the Democrat Party era, which coincided with the decolonization period when African countries declared their independence, Türkiye chose to recognize countries closer to the Atlantic bloc rather than the bloc led by the USSR. Accordingly, Türkiye's relations with African countries remained limited to mere recognitions, failing to establish lasting bilateral relationships. Moreover, in UN General Assemblies concerning African issues, Türkiye either abstained



or sided with Western powers. This foreign policy stance resulted in loss of credibility and trust among African states, leading to potential future repercussions (Donelli, 2021: 45-47).

After 1960, significant strains occurred in Türkiye's relations with the United States. Türkiye's previously Western-centric foreign policy, particularly with the US, was shaken by a letter from President Johnson to Turkish Prime Minister İsmet İnönü. The 1966 Johnson Letter (Johnson & İnönü, 1966: 387)—which cautioned Türkiye against military action in Cyprus, citing NATO vulnerabilities to Soviet intervention—marked a turning point in Türkiye-U.S. relations, exposing flaws in Türkiye's Western-centric foreign policy. This strain intensified during the 1965 UNGA Cyprus vote (United Nations General Assembly, 1965), where widespread African support for Greece isolated Türkiye, prompting a strategic reassessment of its diplomatic priorities (UN General Assembly, 1965).

Due to the aforementioned circumstances, Türkiye realized the need to revise its policies towards Africa. Until the post-1960 period, Türkiye pursued a foreign policy that was limited to the West, but due to the developments that took place, Türkiye realized that it had become isolated in foreign policy and had to pursue a multifaceted foreign policy (Oğurlu, 2018: 67).

Türkiye, prompted by the need to adjust its foreign policy, initially turned its attention to Africa to garner support from nations, particularly in UN votes starting with the Cyprus issue. Previously neglected during a Western-centric foreign policy phase, African countries, susceptible to Greek influence, remembered Türkiye's inadequate support during their independence movements and consequently voted against Türkiye. This realization underscored the significance of African nations, collectively holding substantial voting power, during periods of isolation for Türkiye. Consequently, Türkiye intensified efforts to acknowledge the sovereignty of African countries and initiated the establishment of diplomatic missions in newly independent states (Karaoğlan, 2018: 48-49). These attempts were not successful enough and the majority of these countries either voted against Türkiye or preferred to abstain during the Cyprus vote at the UN (United Nations General Assembly, 1965).

The end of the Cold War also contributed to the process of change in foreign policy. After the dissolution of the USSR in the 1990s, the perception of the Soviet threat in foreign policy disappeared and Türkiye sought to develop a more comprehensive policy towards the African continent, which offered new opportunities for Türkiye (Asa and Güder, 2024). In the post-1990 period, Türkiye no longer saw Africa as a distant and problematic continent and started to institutionalize the concept of relative autonomy that it had attempted to implement in the 1960s (Oğurlu, 2018).

By 1998, the change in the view of Africa had reached a different stage. Recognizing that relations with Africa were inadequate, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs began to discuss an opening to Africa with Turkish ambassadors in Africa, NGO representatives and the private sector (Wheeler, 2011). During these years, another significant change was the appointment of İsmail Cem to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As will be discussed later, as seen in the example of Ahmet Davutoğlu in Türkiye, the personal views of foreign ministers bring about important changes in Türkiye's external perception and policies. Assuming office in 1997, Cem argued that Türkiye should leverage new regional balances to its advantage. According to this perspective, Türkiye should not only strengthen its relations with Europe, but also enhance its relations with other regions to become a prominent state (Donelli, 2021: 61).

The views of the Foreign Minister of the period, as discussed above as a different stage in Türkiye-Africa relations, led to the emergence of The Action Plan for Opening up to Africa. With this plan, Türkiye aimed to enhance its economic, political, and cultural relations with Africa (Özkan, 2010: 534). In this process, it was recommended to utilize all elements of Türkiye's soft power such as scholarships, political contacts, cultural contacts, technical assistance and image building (Wheeler, 2011).

The full implementation of the action plan was realized in 2005. This year was declared as the Year of Africa in Türkiye and relations with countries in the African continent, ranging from political and commercial relations to humanitarian aid, became the focus of foreign policy (Asa and Güder, 2024: 156). With the Year of Africa, Türkiye gained observer status in the African Union. In 2008, Türkiye was declared a strategic partner (Özkan, 2010). In 2008, Türkiye-Africa relations were not only elevated in status within the African Union, but a Türkiye-Africa cooperation summit was organized in Türkiye under the theme "Solidarity and Partnership for a Common Future" (Wheeler, 2011: 48). The foreign policy focusing on Africa yielded its first international fruit when Türkiye became a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the 2009-2010 term. Türkiye was elected with 151 votes, supported by African countries (United Nations, 2008).

In Türkiye, a shift in the understanding of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as exemplified by İsmail Cem, and especially with the appointment of Ahmet Davutoğlu in 2009, led to the formulation of a foreign policy approach known as "Strategic Depth," detailed in Davutoğlu's work of the same name. According to this approach, it is deemed unacceptable for a regional power like Türkiye to ignore developments in Africa and neglect such a resource-rich continent. Failing to engage with African issues is seen as creating a vulnerability that could leave Türkiye isolated in international forums like the UN (Davutoğlu, 2001). The negative outcome at the UN on the Cyprus problem and the positive outcome at the UN Security Council support this view. Therefore, Türkiye's interest in African countries has increasingly grown within its regional/global power aspirations. One of the most significant examples of this interest is Somalia.

### **Turkish Foreign Policy and Somalia: Soft Power Initiatives**

Türkiye's foreign policy towards Somalia has progressed in parallel with Türkiye's foreign policy towards Africa, and relations have continuously evolved as a result of the strengthening tendencies towards a more active role in foreign policy, first with The Action Plan for Opening up to Africa and then with a change of power in Türkiye. In this context, when Türkiye's Somalia policy is analyzed, it will be seen that this policy is shaped around the main framework of using soft power and contributing to state-building, as will be discussed in detail below.

As demonstrated by Somalia's political history, it is evident that the state has been in a state of failure. Therefore, among the most prudent policies Türkiye can implement are directing soft power elements towards Somalia, which holds a memory of exploitation and foreign intervention, and contributing to state-building, which can be considered a component of soft power, to lay the foundation for strong long-term relations.

State-building is defined as a process that involves the construction of new government institutions and the strengthening of existing ones. This process has many aspects, including political, economic, social, etc., and aims to stabilize fragile states, provide basic services and promote development (Fukuyama, 2004; Wesley, 2008: 369-373). However, a challenge for states contributing to state-building is the potential for discrepancies between local realities and Western-style state models. This issue is particularly prominent in countries like Somalia. Consequently, it has also become a consideration for Türkiye, which pursues a policy focused on state-building in Somalia. As reported in the development aid reports of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, which is actively operating in Somalia, Türkiye has adopted a policy of considering the demands of the countries receiving aid and being sensitive to local nuances (Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, 2019).

The relations, which remained underdeveloped due to Türkiye's general foreign policy approach (based on Westernism), gained some momentum after Somalia gained independence and Türkiye opened an embassy in Mogadishu in 1979 (Uysal, 2017: 90). In 1984, Türkiye's contribution of 10 million dollars to the East African region during the famine through the Organization of Islamic Conference revived the relations between the two countries. However, this revitalized relationship could not continue for a long time, and Türkiye had to close its embassy in Somalia in 1991 due to the collapse of the state system in Somalia and the civil unrest that occurred (Abdulle and Gurpinar, 2019: 54).

Although the embassy in Somalia was closed, Türkiye continued to contribute to the region in the field of security. In 1993, UNOSOM II, was launched in Somalia to create a safe environment for humanitarian aid, restore stability and order, ensure disarmament and reconciliation in an environment of ongoing conflict between various groups. From April 1993 to January 1994, the UN operation was commanded by Lieutenant General Çevik Bir of the Turkish Armed Forces. (United Nations, 2003). As can be seen, because the action plan that emerged in 1998 was not yet accepted and foreign policy was primarily focused on the West, relations did not develop comprehensively, according to a certain plan, or to the current extent. Nonetheless, a consistent feature in Türkiye-Somalia relations has been the positive approaches, humanitarian aid, and policies contributing to state-building efforts, which persisted in the memories of both countries until the 2000s. This continuity has prepared a suitable ground for Türkiye's use of soft power in Somalia.

In the 2000s, the scope of Türkiye-Somalia relations advanced one step further, and Türkiye initiated a phase of first intensifying its participation in international processes and then leading the process. It is possible to state that a transition to such a phase will increase as the understanding of strategic depth, which comes to the fore in both the action plan and foreign policy, increases its impact and Türkiye's desire to become a regional/global power. When the issue is evaluated in this context, the most prominent example of the relations of the 2000s is Türkiye's contribution to the Djibouti Peace Process.

The Djibouti Peace Process aimed to end armed conflicts in Somalia by facilitating a peace agreement between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) in 2008, with the involvement of neighboring Djibouti. As a result, an agreement was reached on the establishment of a 550-member parliament encompassing both organizations. Additionally, the deployment of a stabilization force in Somalia and the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from the country were decided. Consequently, the ARS and the former TFG were integrated to form a new government (African Union Mission in Somalia, 2024; McGhie, 2010, 20).

In 2008-2009, Türkiye initially emerged as a contributing actor in the process. By 2010, it assumed the role of a host by organizing a Somali Conference in Istanbul, a continuation of the Djibouti Process, signaling its increasing focus on Somalia. Analyzing the content of the conference reveals that the UN, Türkiye, and the international community were determined to work with the TFG to break the cycle of violence and lawlessness in Somalia and build a peaceful nation. Additionally, it was emphasized that establishing, training, equipping, and supporting professional security forces were essential for achieving long-term stability in Somalia (United Nations Political Office for Somalia, 2010).

Already in 2009, before this conference, Türkiye started to support the piracy problem in Somalia with the naval elements of the Turkish Armed Forces. This support continues in 2024. While providing this support, Türkiye stated in its official statement that it was fighting piracy within the UN system and that the role it played on a regional scale was reinforced with this support, (Official Gazette of the Republic of Türkiye, 2010) emphasizing its desire to become a regional power. With the decisions taken in 2010 and 2012, this process was developed to lead to a more comprehensive

and professional Somali army in the future, thus bringing its contribution to state building to the fore (Official Gazette of the Republic of Türkiye, 2011; Official Gazette of the Republic of Türkiye, 2012).

Security cooperation between Türkiye and Somalia resulted in the opening of a military facility in the capital Mogadishu in 2017. The military facility in Mogadishu was opened for the training of the Somali army and has been described as Türkiye's largest military base abroad. However, Türkiye stated that this was a training camp, not a military base, and consciously used a naming that was in line with global trends (Rossiter & Cannon, 2019: 167-169). For this research and from Türkiye's perspective, it would be accurate to interpret that the choice of this approach stems from Türkiye's emphasis on soft power elements, as outlined in its Africa Action Plan, and its desire not to be remembered as a colonial power in Africa like Western powers (Official Gazette of the Republic of Türkiye, 2018).

Türkiye's inclusion of military and other security institutions in its foreign policy to contribute to state-building in Somalia demonstrates the use of these traditionally hard power elements within the framework of smart power. As defined, smart power involves combining hard and soft power elements to achieve intended outcomes more effectively and efficiently. In addition to the capacity to integrate these two elements, the success of smart power also requires a thorough understanding of the characteristics of the target region. (Wilson III, 2008: 115). As mentioned above when referring to the reports of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, the fact that Türkiye clearly states through an official institution that it carries out its activities by being aware of these regional sensitivities shows that a conscious policy has been adopted regarding smart power.

Another dimension of soft power-oriented Türkiye-Somalia relations is that Türkiye draws the attention of the international community to Somalia. In this context, the speech made by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Türkiye at the UN General Assembly in 2011 is noteworthy. Another importance of this date is that it is a milestone in the process when Türkiye-Somalia relations reached their most intense level. In his speech, the Turkish Prime Minister called for urgent action to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Somalia and build a Somalia where peace and stability are achieved (United Nations News, 2011). In addition, in a circular published by the Prime Ministry in this regard, public attention was drawn within Türkiye and citizens were invited to donate for Somalia. (Official Gazette of the Republic of Türkiye, 2011).

The steps taken in this direction have increased the trust of Somali and other communities in the continent towards Türkiye. Türkiye has played a significant role in mediating between Somalia and Somaliland, which declared independence during Somalia's disintegration. In 2013, at the request of both parties, the presidents of Somalia and Somaliland met in Ankara under the auspices of the President of Türkiye (Abdullah Gül). The meeting concluded with the Ankara Communiqué (Somaliland Government, 2013). The Ankara Communiqué, finalized during the meeting, exemplifies the efficacy of Türkiye's soft power-driven diplomacy in its evolving role as a mediator between Somalia and Somaliland. Key provisions of the agreement—resolving bilateral disputes, sustaining intergovernmental dialogue, facilitating international assistance to Somaliland, and enhancing counterterrorism cooperation—demonstrate Türkiye's capacity to leverage non-coercive strategies in fostering multilateral consensus. These outcomes underscore how Türkiye's soft power mechanisms, centered on conflict resolution and institutional collaboration, advance regional stability while aligning with broader objectives of humanitarian engagement and security coordination.

Türkiye, adopting a multifaceted policy (smart power, soft power, etc.) in resolving Somalia's issues and achieving stability, has been among the leading countries providing aid to Somalia through various organizations. Development assistance through TİKA, religious contributions through the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation (TDV), and substantial contributions to education through Türkiye Scholarships provided by YTB have been significant. Among these organizations, TİKA (Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency) can be noted for its most effective role.

TİKA stated that it was established within the framework of Türkiye's international development cooperation activities in order to carry out sustainable projects and activities that will support the economic, social and human development processes of the countries and carry the common historical and cultural heritage into the future (Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, 2024a) The amount of aid provided by TİKA to Somalia is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Development assistance provided by TİKA  
Çizelge 1. TİKA tarafından sağlanan kalkınma yardımı

Year	Development Assistance Amount (Million \$)	Somalia's Ranking Among the Countries to which Türkiye Provides the Most Development Assistance
2015	314,8	2.
2016	59,63	2.
2017	60,6	2.
2018	29,1	5.
2019	28,21	6.
2020	25,98	6.
2021	51,80	2.

Source: Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, 2024b



As evident from Table 1, Somalia ranks prominently among the countries receiving the highest development assistance from Türkiye. Typically ranking second, Somalia is surpassed by Syria, Türkiye's neighboring country grappling with issues such as internal conflict and terrorism. In this regard, it is understandable that resources allocated to a country like Syria, which faces numerous challenges including millions of refugees and internal turmoil posing threats to Türkiye such as terrorism, would rank first. However, what is noteworthy here is Somalia following closely after a country like Syria, which shares a border with Türkiye and poses significant challenges necessitating serious Turkish engagement. This situation is crucial for understanding Somalia's position in Türkiye's foreign policy.

According to data from the Ministry of National Planning of the Federal Republic of Somalia, Türkiye consistently ranks among the top three contributors of aid to Somalia. However, upon reviewing the list, it is typically populated by international actors such as the United Nations, the European Union, and the World Bank, hence at the nation-state level, Türkiye is observed to rank first in this regard (Federal Republic of Somalia The Ministry of National Planning, 2021: 17).

Apart from TİKA, another institution operating for soft power purposes is the Türkiye Religious Foundation (TDV). TDV is a religious organization that aims to strengthen ties with countries with common historical and religious ties. The institution that organizes social, cultural and religious activities both in Türkiye and outside Türkiye (Abdurrahim, 2022) has a significant advantage in Türkiye-Somalia relations in terms of soft power. As mentioned above, the majority of Somali society belongs to the Sunni sect of Islam. A similar situation is valid in Türkiye, where believers in Islam constitute more than 90% of the population, while the majority of these people belong to the Sunni sect (Directorate of Religious Affairs, 2014). As a result, unlike Western countries, Türkiye has an important facilitating factor in terms of using soft power in terms of values such as common religious belief.

Another institution active in the field of education is the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB). YTB has provided scholarships to thousands of Somali students under the Türkiye Scholarships program (Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities, 2019). As this support given to education reveals, the support given by Türkiye to students who will form the educated workforce in various institutions of Somalia is another example of a policy approach that contributes to state building and is based on soft power.

Türkiye's foreign policy towards Somalia focuses on state building and development aid using soft power and smart power elements. Türkiye has tried to strengthen Somalia's infrastructure and increase social welfare by providing comprehensive humanitarian aid and development projects to Somalia. This policy is not only limited to humanitarian aid and development projects, but also includes diplomatic and security cooperation. As will be discussed in the next section, this approach has produced positive results in the economic field and, in the Türkiye-Somalia example, has enabled important developments in terms of economy and foreign trade.

### **Economic and Foreign Trade Implications of Türkiye-Somalia Relations**

One of the most significant developments is the management of Mogadishu Port and Aden Abdulle Airport by Turkish companies through concession agreements, facilitated in part by Türkiye's advantages in soft power, particularly in the areas of development aid, diplomacy and religious and cultural values. The management of these ports by Turkish companies, which constitute 80% of the Somali Federal Government's revenues (Rossiter & Cannon, 2019: 172) demonstrates the economic success of Türkiye-Somalia relations shaped around soft power. In 2013, concession agreements were signed stipulating that the airport would be managed for 20 years by the Turkish company named "Favori", and the Mogadishu Port by "Albayrak". The agreement includes provisions for the modernization and development of the ports, (Stearns & Sucuoglu, 2017: 4) linked to Türkiye's state-building efforts in Somalia.

In the first version of the agreement (2013), it was stated that the Turkish company Favori would receive 50% of the revenues from the airport, and the remaining 50% would be received by the Somali Government. Similarly, it was agreed that 55% of the revenues from the port would be transferred to the Somali government and 45% to the Turkish company named Albayrak (Stearns and Sucuoglu, 2017: 4). However, with later changes, the port-related rates have changed. According to the 2022 annual financial statements of the Somali Government, 62.17% of the fees collected will be paid to the government, and the remaining 37.83% will belong to Albayrak (Office of the Auditor General of the Federal Government of Somalia, 2023).

It can be said that with the contribution of the agreement, the Somali government will benefit from the revenues and the port and airport will be provided with a more modern structure as a part of the construction of the country. On the other hand, it is possible to say that this situation is a successful foreign policy approach for Türkiye. As can be inferred from the agreements mentioned, the fact that the country's most important sources of income are managed by Turkish companies, with the permission of the Somali government, reveals the economic success achieved for Türkiye.

Another economic result based on soft power policy was realized in the field of foreign trade. In Chart 1 and Chart 2 below, Türkiye's export data by years are shown in terms of both exports to all countries and exports to Somalia.

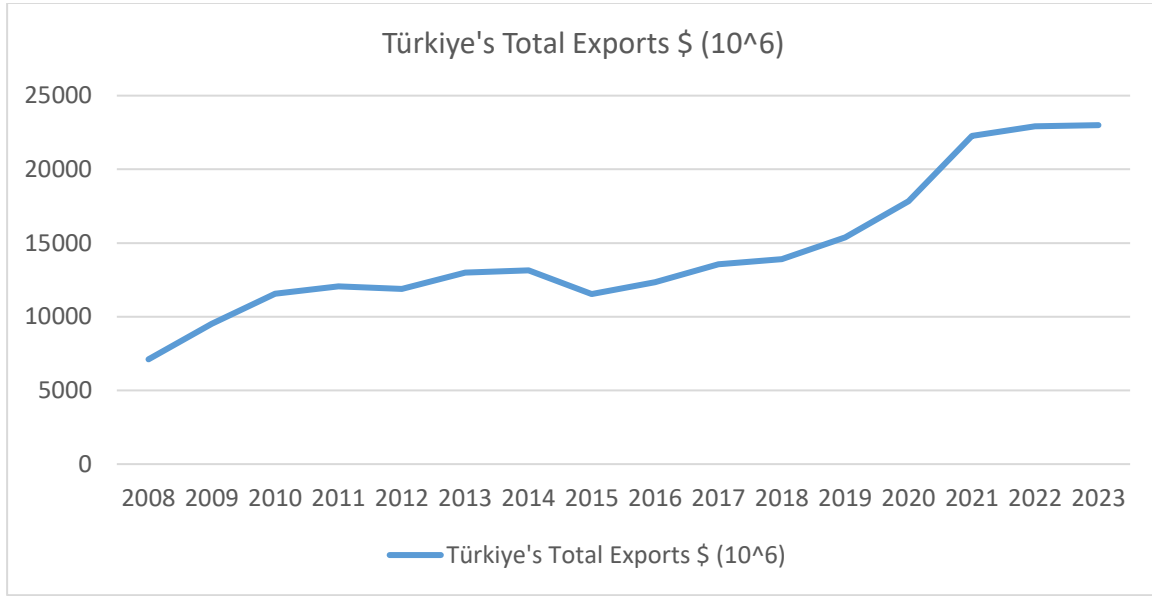


Figure 1. Türkiye's total exports by years  
Resim 1. Yıllara göre Türkiye'nin toplam ihracatı

Source: Türkiye Exporters Assembly, 2024

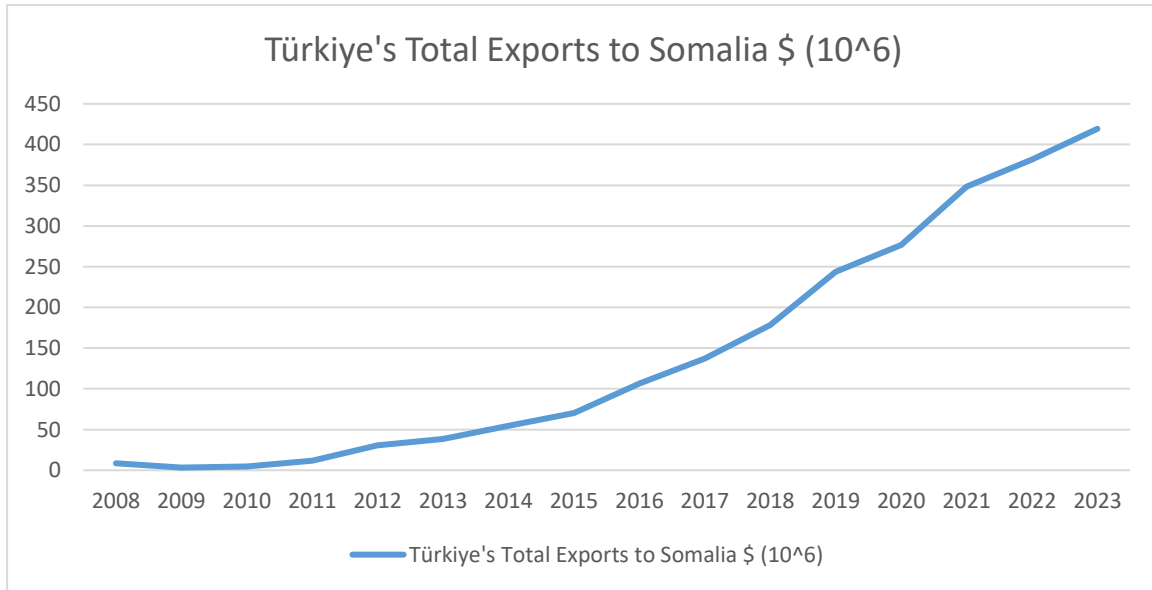


Chart 2. Türkiye's total exports to Somalia by years  
Resim 2. Yıllara göre Türkiye'nin Somali'ye toplam ihracatı

Source: Türkiye Exporters Assembly, 2024

When examining the above graphs, according to data from the Türkiye Exporters Assembly, the annual total exports of Türkiye from the base year of 2008 to 2023 increased by 223.45%. In contrast, when examining the annual total exports to Somalia, the percentage increase amounted to approximately 4772%. This demonstrates that Türkiye's soft power policy, intensifying its relations with Somalia and progressing in its foreign policy based on soft power, has resulted in a significant economic gain. Additionally, comparing the two graphs, despite fluctuations in Türkiye's total exports in various years, exports to Somalia have shown a continuous increase, especially since 2011, considered a turning point in Türkiye-Somalia relations when Somalia was brought into the international agenda by Türkiye.

The most current economic topic of discussion concerns Türkiye's use of its navy, which combines elements of both soft power and state-building contributions, alongside aspects of hard power within the framework of smart power. Particularly noteworthy is the "Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement" signed between Türkiye and Somalia in 2024 (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of National Defence, 2024). The agreement, signed by the defense ministers of both countries but not yet approved by the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (TBMM) although approved

by the Somali cabinet, authorizes Türkiye for a period of 10 years to construct, train, equip the Somali Navy, and ensure the security of its territorial waters. The Somali Prime Minister stated that this agreement would bring an end to terrorism, piracy, and illegal fishing (Soylu, 2024).

In addition to the security aspects of the agreement, Türkiye's commitment to receive 30% of revenues from Somalia's exclusive economic zone over a 10-year period, along with its responsibility to equip the Somali Navy alongside its construction (Martin, 2024) highlights Türkiye's economic gains. Moreover, considering the process of enhancing the capabilities of the Somali Navy, the agreement contributes not only economically but also to state-building in Somalia's future, a practice frequently observed in Türkiye's foreign policy. This situation has been confirmed by Somali Prime Minister Mahamud, emphasizing that after 10 years of cooperation, Somalia will achieve a sufficient naval force to protect its own waters (Demirtaş, 2024).

When examining the details of the agreement, Somalia's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) stands out. The EEZ, as defined in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, has significant implications for the management and preservation of marine resources. According to the agreement, the coastal state has the authority to use, develop, manage, and protect resources in the region, extract resources such as oil, gas, and minerals found on the seabed and subsoil, and also make decisions regarding fisheries. Given that approximately 90% of the world's underwater hydrocarbon reserves are located within EEZ zones, and the most valuable fishing grounds are also found in these areas (Kullenberg, 1999: 849-850), the economic aspect of the agreement becomes even more noteworthy when considering Somalia's seas as one of the richest hydrocarbon areas globally.

What further enhances this prominence, and in a sense lays the groundwork for aspects of the 2024 agreement, is another significant agreement signed in 2023 titled "Agreement on Cooperation in Energy and Mining". Approved in 2023, this agreement stipulates that the parties will collaborate in sharing experiences in the energy sector, and in exploring, extracting, and marketing hydrocarbon resources (Official Gazette of the Republic of Türkiye, 2023). Considering Türkiye's increasing focus on hydrocarbon exploration in the seas, including its growing fleet of seventh-generation drilling ships (TRT News, 2024) both agreements hold significant potential for Türkiye-Somalia economic relations. It is important to highlight that, during the course of this study, certain developments have emerged that further substantiate the study's argument concerning the aforementioned potentials. Notably, Türkiye has secured exclusive rights for hydrocarbon exploration and production over an area of 5,000 square kilometers. In this context, the Turkish research vessel *Oruç Reis* was deployed to Somalia to undertake hydrocarbon exploration activities (Yüksel & Kazancı, 2024).

The second interesting aspect of the Somali EEZ, apart from its hydrocarbon potential, is its potential in terms of fishing income. It is highly likely that significant gains will be achieved through fishing in Somalia, which has the longest coastline in continental Africa with a length of over 3300 kilometers, a large EEZ and productive marine ecosystems. However, even a quarter of this potential has not been reached yet (International Trade Administration, 2024).

When considering the decision taken in 2018 titled "Memorandum of Understanding on Fisheries and Artisanal Fisheries between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Federal Republic of Somalia" Türkiye has a significant advantage in accessing the potential in Somalia. According to the agreement, the relevant ministry in Somalia will grant Turkish vessels permission and privileges for fishing activities in Somali waters (Official Gazette of Türkiye, 2018). When the framework agreement adopted at the ministerial level in 2024 is included, it is clear that the activities of Turkish fishermen will be carried out even more advantageously in the Somali seas, where the Turkish Naval Forces provide security.

Economically, in addition to the potentials in hydrocarbon and fisheries, another area with potential under the framework agreement is the construction and equipping of military ships and navies. Considering the Somali Prime Minister's statement about Somalia achieving the capability to protect its own waters within 10 years, and also Türkiye's capabilities in military ship construction, electronics for ships, weapon systems, sensors, radars, etc., it can be stated that this issue will also provide significant commercial gains from a military perspective. In this sense, the optimal intersection point where the limited resources of the Somali economy intersect with Türkiye's close relations and production capabilities is "offshore patrol vessels".

Offshore Patrol Vessels operate to fulfill tasks such as fisheries protection, drug interdiction, humanitarian aid, firefighting, search and rescue, migration control, environmental protection (Lundquist, 2008: 15), intervention with suspicious vessels, combating smuggling, and safeguarding critical maritime infrastructure (Ljulj et. al., 2022: 3). When considering the piracy problem in Somali waters and other security issues such as terrorism, if Somalia is determined to secure its own waters, it will need ships like OPVs for achieving this goal. Additionally, as mentioned above, considering Somalia's limited economic resources, acquiring and maintaining larger or more expensive ships would further strain the Somali economy in terms of procurement and operational costs.

Therefore, scientific studies recommend OPVs, especially hybrid OPVs, for countries with limited economic resources. Hybrid OPVs can serve as OPVs during peacetime and can be converted into more expensive ships like corvettes when needed, which are not simultaneously affordable for such countries that cannot fulfill various types of ships (OPVs, corvettes, frigates) (Ljulj et. al., 2022: 1). In this regard, there is a need for an OPV that will both fulfill Somalia's goal of combating piracy at sea and ensuring maritime security, as well as be cost-effective.

Somalia's OPV requirement therefore poses the possibility of being a potential trade subject for Türkiye. OPVs produced by Türkiye can be the subject of an important military trade between Türkiye and Somalia, as they have the above-mentioned features as an OPV for combating piracy and can easily be converted into corvettes when needed. According to the information provided by the Turkish Naval Forces, OPVs produced by Türkiye are built with features that will ensure maritime safety in a cost-effective manner, as well as more advanced capabilities with an approach called "fitted but not with" (Özbek, 2023). Therefore, due to their ability to be converted into corvettes in emergencies, OPVs classified as hybrid OPVs can provide capabilities to ensure maritime security for countries with limited economic resources. This recommended optimal point suggests that Türkiye has a high probability of achieving significant gains over decades through the sale, maintenance, and modernization of OPVs, as well as the supply of ammunition. Considering the framework agreement and Türkiye-Somalia relations, there is a significant potential for gains.

Beyond the potential Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) process, an examination of existing trade dynamics reveals that Türkiye has been exporting weapons, ammunition, and other military products to Somalia, as evidenced by data from the United Nations COMTRADE database. According to these records, Türkiye exported military products to Somalia valued at \$2.03 million in 2017, \$2.18 million in 2020, and \$3.12 million in 2021 (Trading Economics, 2025). Given this long-standing and steadily growing trade relationship, it is highly probable that military product sales will further expand following this agreement, potentially leading to larger-scale trade engagements.

The potential procurement of an OPV would not only represent an economic gain for Türkiye but also potentially yield indirect benefits for Somalia. Primarily, in an environment where maritime security is ensured and piracy is prevented, there would be an increased likelihood for local fishermen to benefit from Somalia's productive seas. This could lead to significant progress towards achieving the potential fishing capacity and an increase in security, thereby raising the prospects for foreign investors to invest in Somalia. Furthermore, enhanced maritime security would facilitate more effective implementation of privileges granted to Türkiye under the agreement, such as in fisheries and other sectors.

## Conclusion

This study has explored the intricate dynamics of Türkiye's engagement with Somalia through the lens of soft power diplomacy. By examining the historical context, economic interactions, and political strategies, it becomes evident that Türkiye's approach has been distinctive and fruitful compared to traditional Western interventions. The use of soft power, coupled with smart power strategies tailored to local needs and sensitivities, has played a pivotal role in Türkiye's success in Somalia. Unlike many international interventions, Türkiye's initiatives have focused on sustainable development aid rather than imposing external agendas, contributing to enhanced stability and economic growth in Somalia. The win-win policy followed by Türkiye in foreign policy has a significant impact on this situation. As shown in the Somali example, such a policy has made Türkiye one of the most effective actors in Somalia and brought it one step closer to its goal of becoming a regional power. This mutually beneficial relationship between Somalia and Türkiye has generated bilateral outcomes, yielding advantages for Somalia in terms of state-building, security, and modernization, while offering Türkiye benefits in expanding its foreign trade and extending its sphere of political influence. Türkiye's expanding political influence in Africa was further underscored by its intervention in the contentious Somaliland issue between Ethiopia and Somalia. On December 11, 2024, Ethiopia and Somalia, under Turkish auspices, signed the Ankara Declaration in Ankara. Both parties expressed satisfaction with Türkiye's support, reaffirming their mutual commitment to respecting each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. In light of heightened military tensions between Ethiopia and Somalia—stemming from Ethiopia's unilateral attempts to secure maritime access through Somaliland—Türkiye's emerging role as a regional mediator has facilitated constructive dialogue. Consequently, Ethiopia's maritime access initiatives were addressed in a manner that Somalia found acceptable, ultimately contributing to a peaceful resolution (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2024; Aguiar, 2024).

Furthermore, Türkiye's approach has leveraged its non-colonial history in Africa, positioning itself as a trusted partner capable of fostering genuine partnerships based on mutual respect and shared economic interests. This has not only bolstered Türkiye's economic ties with Somalia but has also paved the way for broader diplomatic influence across the region. The significant gains made in economic cooperation and foreign trade underscore the efficacy of Türkiye's soft power approach in achieving long-term strategic objectives in challenging environments. Moving forward, the findings of this study underscore the enduring relevance of soft power in modern international relations. By emphasizing sustainable development and tailored diplomatic strategies, Türkiye has exemplified the efficacy of soft power in fostering stability and economic growth in Somalia. Through non-coercive policies—such as development aid, humanitarian diplomacy, contributions to state-building, support for security challenges, and appeals for international assistance—Türkiye has strengthened its presence in Somalia and has also emerged as a potentially reliable partner for other African countries.

In this context, based on the findings of the study, it is necessary to highlight both the realized developments and those that are highly likely to occur according to the available data:

First and foremost, the historical trajectory of relations between the two countries, marked by positive memories, along with the impact of Türkiye's foreign policy, has led to significant gains in terms of foreign trade. Additionally, Somalia has become an important investment hub for Turkish firms, indicating the presence of further investment opportunities that could serve Türkiye's economic interests in the future. One key area where this growing economic engagement is particularly evident is the port sector (including the airport), which plays a crucial role in Somalia's economy. Turkish companies have achieved a notable presence in Somalia's ports, which constitute one of the country's primary sources of revenue. Alongside investment opportunities, the Turkish fisheries sector has also secured a favorable position in the Somali market.

Beyond firms' investments and the advantages gained in the fisheries sector, another potential foreign trade avenue has emerged as a result of Türkiye's foreign policy approach. Given the security cooperation agreements between Türkiye and Somalia (particularly the agreement signed in 2024) Türkiye, which possesses an advanced defense industry, is highly likely to increase its exports of defense industry products. As Somalia continues its state-building process and grapples with security challenges, it is evident that the country will have a sustained demand for defense industry products. In this regard, both the positive trajectory of Türkiye-Somalia relations and the cost-effectiveness of Türkiye's defense industry products (Sidhu, 2024) reinforce the argument that such products represent a more rational choice for a country like Somalia, which has limited economic resources.

Moreover, considering Türkiye's exclusive rights in hydrocarbon exploration and production in Somalia, the country's energy reserves highlight the potential for commercial activities in the energy sector to generate significant economic benefits for Türkiye.

### Katkı Oranları ve Çıkar Çatışması / Contribution Rates and Conflicts of Interest

<b>Etik Beyan</b>	Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur.	<b>Ethical Statement</b>	It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited
<b>Yazar Katkıları</b>	Çalışmanın Tasarlanması: GT (%51), TA (%49) Veri Toplanması: GT (%51), TA (%49) Veri Analizi: GT (%51), TA (%49) Makalenin Yazımı: GT (%51), TA (%49) Makale Gönderimi ve Revizyonu: GT (%51), TA (%49)	<b>Author Contributions</b>	Research Design: GT (51%), TA (49%) Data Collection: GT (51%), TA (49%) Data Analysis: GT (51%), TA (49%) Writing the Article: GT (51%), TA (49%) Article Submission and Revision: GT (51%), TA (49%)
<b>Etik Bildirim</b>	<a href="mailto:iibfdergi@cumhuriyet.edu.tr">iibfdergi@cumhuriyet.edu.tr</a>	<b>Complaints</b>	<a href="mailto:iibfdergi@cumhuriyet.edu.tr">iibfdergi@cumhuriyet.edu.tr</a>
<b>Çıkar Çatışması</b>	Çıkar çatışması beyan edilmemiştir.	<b>Conflicts of Interest</b>	The author(s) has no conflict of interest to declare.
<b>Finansman</b>	Bu araştırmayı desteklemek için dış fon kullanılmamıştır.	<b>Grant Support</b>	The author(s) acknowledge that they received no external funding in support of this research.
<b>Telif Hakkı &amp; Lisans</b>	Yazarlar dergide yayınlanan çalışmalarının telif hakkına sahiptirler ve çalışmaları <b>CC BY-NC 4.0</b> lisansı altında yayımlanmaktadır.	<b>Copyright &amp; License</b>	Authors publishing with the journal retain the copyright to their work licensed under the <b>CC BY-NC 4.0</b>

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