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Meliha Benli Altunışık

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Turkey as an ‘Emerging Donor’ and the Arab Uprisings

MELIHA BENLİ ALTUNIŞIK

Middle East Technical University, Üniversiteler Mahallesi, Ankara, Turkey

ABSTRACT *The Justice and Development Party (AKP) government, which came to power in 2002, has increasingly been using aid as an instrument of foreign policy, including in the Arab world. This increased with the Arab uprisings and has peaked with the ongoing civil war in Syria, reaching \$2 billion in 2012. Despite substantial changes in the amount and geographical coverage of aid after the ‘Arab Spring’, there are also substantive continuities in Turkey’s aid policy. The AKP has been focused on security and stability, and on consolidating power among new regimes. The direction of aid has thus followed that of regional foreign policy, and the government’s interests have been given an ideational framing through notions of historical and cultural affinity and responsibility.*

Introduction

Turkey’s foreign aid policies towards the Arab world have been influenced by two developments in its external relations of the last decade. The first is the transformation of Turkey’s policies towards the Arab world, and its increased engagement with the region at large. The second is Turkey’s growing emphasis on international aid in its external relations. The Arab uprisings that erupted at the end of 2010 linked these two trends for Turkey and created a sense of urgency on the issue of regional foreign aid. Turkey began providing assistance to countries in which the uprisings led to a change in political leadership. Although these patterns have emerged only recently, with respect to patterns and content of aid a sense of continuity is detectable. This paper aims to discuss the motivations, the actors, the nature and the evolution of Turkey’s foreign aid policy towards the Arab world, as well as the impact of the so-called ‘Arab Spring’. First, the relationship between foreign aid and foreign policy is explored with particular emphasis on the framing and implementation of the Justice and Development Party (AKP)’s regional foreign policy. Next, the evolution of Turkey’s aid policy in the Arab world is analysed; and changes and continuities before and after the Arab uprisings are discussed. Finally, the reasons behind these continuities in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings are debated. In this study, ‘foreign aid’ refers

Correspondence Address: Meliha Benli Altunışık, Middle East Technical University, Üniversiteler Mahallesi, Dumlupınar Bulvarı, No. 1, 06800 Çankaya, Ankara, Turkey. Email: maltunis@metu.edu.tr

to official development assistance and humanitarian aid, thus following the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee's (OECD-DAC) definition.¹ Military aid, which remains very difficult to document, will only be referred to occasionally.

Turkey as an 'Emerging Donor'²

Turkey is a relative newcomer to the foreign aid scene. The first significant development occurred in the mid-1980s when it sent \$10 million in food aid to drought-stricken countries in the Sahel region (Kulaklıkaya & Aybey, 2009: 263).³ The history of Turkey's foreign aid in the Arab world is even more recent. It began in the 1990s with limited bilateral and multilateral assistance to the Palestinian Authority in support of the peace process. A real increase in assistance to the region, however, came in parallel with the general expansion of aid in the 2000s.

The history of the transformation of the state aid organization, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), is itself testimony to Turkey's emergent donor status as well as to how aid has been linked to foreign policy. The agency was established in 1992, in affiliation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to provide assistance to the so-called Turkic republics that had become independent after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The first TİKA programme Coordination Office (PCO) was established in Turkmenistan, to be followed by six others in that geographical zone. Soon TİKA activities were also directed to the Balkans, a region experiencing a period of instability following the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Turkey's involvement in these regions was based on its interest in an orderly transition and the restoration of stability, as well as on a shared identity and history. This coupling of interest and identity has continued to be an important discursive principle of Turkey's aid policy.

Since its establishment TİKA has gone through some institutional changes. With the purported aim of making the agency more efficient and flexible, TİKA was transferred under the Prime Ministry in 1999. In 2001, it was put under one of the state ministries, a change mainly due to coalition politics.⁴ Since the coming to power of the AKP in 2002, TİKA's activities have expanded considerably. The number of PCOs increased from 12 in 2002 to 25 in 2011 and 33 in 2012.⁵ The amount of development aid, in the meantime, rose from \$85 million in 2002 to \$1.3 billion in 2011 and to \$2.5 billion in 2012, distributed among more than 100 recipient countries (TİKA, 2011: 5; 2012a: 8). Although Turkey's contributions to international aid are still limited compared to those of the major OECD-DAC donors,⁶ it led non-DAC members in 2011 and 2012 (OECD, 2013).⁷ Thus, in recent years Turkey has made the transition from the status of aid recipient country to that of a more significant donor.⁸ TİKA's geographical coverage has expanded considerably in the 2000s, where in addition to the Central Asian and Balkan countries, several countries in the Middle East, Africa and Asia have become the recipients of Turkey's development and humanitarian aid.

An important characteristic of Turkey's emergence as a donor country is the proliferation of actors involved in aid, both state and NGOs, in the 2000s. Among state actors the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and TİKA stand out as major players,

coordinating the political and technical aspects of foreign aid, respectively. There are, however, several other state institutions that become part of the process by providing expertise, or by developing and implementing specific projects. In addition to the involvement of several ministries, including Interior, Development and Justice, in 2009 the General Directorate of Emergency Management (AFAD) was established under the Prime Ministry. Due to proliferation of actors, there emerged a need to co-ordinate their activities, as well as to establish an effective system of reporting. By a 2005 Prime Ministerial decree, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was charged with setting major policy decisions and made responsible for the political co-ordination of foreign aid, while TİKA, which is under a State Ministry, was charged with the technical co-ordination of Turkish development assistance and the duty of reporting to the OECD.⁹ Despite these efforts, however, the aid community in Turkey accepts that there are still problems of coordination.¹⁰

In addition to problems of institutional coordination, Turkey's foreign aid policy also faces problems of measuring aid effectiveness. To start with, 'the lack of pre-deployment assessment' makes it difficult 'to judge whether the resources are directed to right targets' (Murphy & Sazak, 2012: 22). Thus, once assistance is decided upon, there seems to be no effective mechanism for monitoring and evaluating its impact. These problems of institutional capacity exist in the case of Turkey's aid to the Arab world as well. In addition, the impact of Turkey's aid at the local level in recipient countries has not been sufficiently analysed.

In spite of this, aid officials claim nearly all resources reach those in need, and that in comparison with the major donors Turkey does so at low cost.¹¹ TİKA and relevant state institutions deploy their own personnel on projects. Thus the absence of high consultancy fees 'allow monies to remain project focused' (Murphy & Sazak, 2012:14). On the other hand, this brings its own limitations as to existing levels of expertise, particularly since 'preparation tends to be focused on the coordination of administrative details rather than personnel training' (Murphy & Sazak, 2012:14).

Finally, emerging donor countries like Turkey 'seem reluctant to be seen as reproducing traditional donor-recipient hierarchies' (Rowlands, 2008: 2). Especially in the case of aid from Turkey to the Arab world, where concerns over the appearance of domination – especially among local elites – seem to be more pronounced, aid efforts have been couched in a discourse that emphasizes mutual benefits and highlights the fact that Turkey itself has been an aid-receiving country.¹² In order to minimize such problems Turkey's aid bureaucracy has decided on a strategy of aid on demand. This, however, creates other problems as it makes it very difficult to develop strategies to guide aid policy.

Foreign Aid as Foreign Policy

Since the end of the Cold War Turkey's emergence as an aid donor country has been closely linked to its foreign policy. With massive changes in the post-Soviet space, as well as in the Balkans, Turkey's foreign policy aimed to contribute to stability and transformation in these regions, as well as to re-establish ties in geographies with

which it had historical, cultural and religious commonalities (Kardaş, 2013: 2–3). In addition, from the beginning Turkey also saw itself as a conveyor belt for diffusing the norms of the Western world – of which Turkey perceived itself as a part – to these newly transforming countries. Thus, the aim was ‘to assist the newly independent countries in their efforts to align with the market economy as well as with global politics’, meaning especially with Western institutions like North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) (Kulaklıkaya & Aybey, 2009: 263). This involved sharing its experiences and expertise in the fields of politics, economics and security. Such characteristics of Turkey’s foreign aid carried over as its aid efforts expanded, including into the Middle East, which became a recipient in the 2000s. There as well, policy has been closely related to political and strategic concerns, and to Ankara’s broader political ambitions in the region. In addition, development and humanitarian assistance began to be considered as part of Turkey’s soft power in the Arab world and as a tool of its acceptance in the region.

Turkey’s emergence as a donor in the Arab world, in fact, coincided with its increasing political engagement with the region. The AKP, which has held a majority government since 2002, made the Middle East a priority region in its foreign policy. Turkey’s ‘turn’ towards the Middle East deepened especially in the second half of the 2000s, as stagnation in Turkey–EU relations caused disillusionment. The result has been a deeper involvement with the Middle East than at any time in Turkey’s republican history. This involvement has mostly taken the form of political and economic engagement, with an emphasis on the use of soft power. It has become an active mediator in regional conflicts (e.g. Israel and Syria), cultivated beneficial trade relations and eased visa restrictions for many Arab countries (e.g. Syria pre-2011).

Behind the foreign policy of the AKP government has mainly been the ideas of Professor Ahmet Davutoğlu, who first served as Chief Advisor to the Prime Minister (2003–09) and has been the foreign minister since 2009. From his perspective Turkey’s historical and cultural identity and its geography have imposed on it a sense of responsibility towards the region. Involvement in the political developments of neighbouring states is part of what Davutoğlu has described as Turkey’s ‘strategic depth’ (2001), and its own prosperity and security is also linked to the welfare and stability of the Middle East. Thus, the AKP’s foreign policy is seen to implicate its material interests, including its aspirations for a leadership role in the region and the expansion of its strategic and economic interests. These aspirations have been channelled through a discourse of moral responsibility, especially toward fellow Muslims and peoples of the former Ottoman geography. These mutually reinforcing tenets have ultimately served to enhance Turkey’s interests (Fisher Onar, 2011). Development and humanitarian aid as policy tools had the capacity to advance both objectives at the same time.

The new understanding of Turkey’s foreign policy was directly reflected in the transformation of TİKA and its policies. In an interview Davutoğlu summed up the importance of TİKA for his vision of Turkey’s foreign policy: ‘strong and effective organization was needed in the broad political and historical geography in which Turkey operates and TİKA successfully fills this gap. TİKA has given a huge boost

to Turkish foreign policy'.¹³ As İpek (2013) has argued, Davutoğlu's ideas have resonated throughout TİKA, not only at the level of management but in the aid bureaucracy as a whole. Thus, especially after the mid-2000s, the ideational linkages between Turkey's new foreign policy discourse and TİKA activities have been made amply clear (İpek 2013: 10).

The series of uprisings in the Arab world that began in Tunisia in December 2010 have put Turkey's regional foreign policy aspirations to the test. After a brief hesitation Turkey was relatively quick to declare its support for the various opposition movements, and has remained the most consistent actor to that end. This has positioned it to establish relations with new elites as they emerged, and to potentially benefit from the transformations in the region, allowing it to retain its extant political, strategic and economic interests. As will be explained below, this assistance to new regimes, as well as its support of the opposition in Syria, have become important components of Turkey's foreign policy. Davutoğlu (2013) began to use the concept of 'humanitarian diplomacy' to justify Turkey's response to the Arab uprisings, in particular to fend off criticisms against its involvement in the Syrian crisis. The government has tried to develop an approach that blends interests with values rooted in humanitarian concerns (Onis, 2012). Foreign aid has thus become more tightly knit than ever with foreign policy, the former being used to justify the latter.

Turkey's Official Aid to the Arab World: What Has Been the Impact of the Arab Uprisings?

Prior to the Arab uprisings the bulk of Turkey's official aid in the Arab world went to Palestine, Iraq and Lebanon, although Syria and Yemen also entered the picture to some extent.

Palestinians have been recipients of both humanitarian assistance and development aid since the 1990s¹⁴ and the first TİKA field office in the Arab world was opened in Ramallah in May 2005. These moves were consistent with Turkey's foreign policy towards Palestinians especially since the 1960s. Turkey had recognized the PLO early on and allowed it to open an office in Ankara in 1975. In 1988, it became one of the first countries to recognize the Palestinian state declared in exile. It also supported the peace process that was initiated with the end of the Cold War. Traditionally, Turkey's foreign policy has considered resolution of the Palestinian problem as a key to stability in the region. In addition, widespread public support of Palestinians among the Turkish public has generally translated into support from the government as well. Involvement in the Palestinian issue, however, deepened especially with the collapse of the peace process in 2000, at a time when relations with Israel were still productive. From the mid-2000s, Turkey–Israel relations became much more problematic, and Turkey was critical of the US and EU boycott of Hamas after its electoral victory in 2006. The ruling AKP invited Hamas leader Khaled Mashal to Turkey and subsequently increased aid to Gaza. Aid increased substantially after the Gaza War in 2008–09 (See Table 1), but the percentage of aid from the general aid budget increased especially in the last two

Table 1. Turkey's bilateral development assistance to the Arab world, 2007–12 (million \$)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	TOTAL
Algeria	0.18	0.19	0.22	0.51	0.49		1.59
Egypt	0.72	0.95	0.91	1.30	3.51	503.2	510.59
Iraq	46.68	47.68	51.33	39.31	27.83	19,39	184.54
Jordan	1.1	1.4	0.93	1.75	1.58		6.76
Lebanon	1.08	25.69	11.53	26.82	7.06		72.18
Libya	–	1.71	0.91	1.01	53.11	3.10	59.84
Morocco	0.38	0.49	0.49	0.45	0.75		2.56
Oman	0.02	0.02	0.17	0.06	–		0.27
Palestine	14.22	20.18	48.20	27.83	25.92	51.23	187.58
Syria	5.69	4.11	4.62	9.52	162.03	1019.93	1205.9
Tunisia	0.56	1.29	0.70	0.34	0.49	60.39	63.77
Yemen	0.08	0.44	1.24	6.01	0.45	4.52	12.74
TOTAL	70.71	104.15	121.25	105.91	283.22	1662.48	

Source: Compiled from TİKA, Türkiye Kalkınma Yardımları Raporları (Turkey development assistance reports).

years, from 3.31 per cent in 2010 to 9 per cent and 15.59 per cent in 2011 and 2012 respectively (TİKA, 2012b: 231).

The substance of Turkey's aid to Palestinians has consisted of humanitarian assistance and capacity-building activities. Education, health, water and sanitation have been the most important areas of focus, along with agriculture, infrastructure and construction. For instance, in 2012 education and health constituted 39.93 and 33.65 per cent respectively of the total aid to Palestinians, whereas water and sanitation comprised 19.35 per cent (See Table 2). Palestinian bureaucrats have also been involved in training activities in Turkey. After the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and TİKA supported an initiative by the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges to revitalize the Erez Industrial Zone in Gaza (Fidan & Nurdun, 2008: 107).¹⁵ Turkey's aid to Palestinians traditionally has been unilateral, although in the last two years, parallel to a general increase in aid, its contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine (UNRWA) has also increased.¹⁶

If aid to Palestinians was a first for Turkey in the Middle East, aid to Iraq, especially after the 2003 war (See Table 1) marked a turning point. Instability in neighbouring Iraq since the early 1990s has been seen as posing direct security challenges for Turkey. Thus, aid has been focused on efforts to promote a smooth transition of power and the restoration of stability. Concerned about the possible impact of Iraq's disintegration on its own Kurdish question, Turkey became involved in the consolidation of the new regime following the US invasion. One significant effort to that end was the bringing together of American officials and Iraq's Sunni leaders to ensure Sunni participation in the 2005 elections (Aras, 2009). Much of the humanitarian assistance has been provided by the Turkish Red Crescent. Development aid, on the other hand, has been provided by TİKA and has focused on agriculture, and on financing infrastructure and construction projects.

Table 2. Sectoral distribution of development aid (%) 2012

	Education	Health	Water & Hygiene	Administrative & Civil Infrastructure	Other Social Infrastructure and Services	Economic Infrastructure and Services	Production	Multiple Sectors
Egypt	18.43	–	–	10.19	60.98	–	–	10.40
Lebanon	–	1.49	65.96	2.35	30.20	–	–	–
Libya	8.18	23.32	–	4.87	8.42	53.11	2.08	–
Palestinian Territories	39.93	33.65	19.35	2.55	3.40	–	1.10	0.01
Tunisia	–	0.53	–	98.31	0.28	0.20	0.60	–
Yemen	7.23	86.37	–	1.22	–	2.47	0.71	–

Source: Compiled from *TIKA 2012 Faaliyet Raporu* (TIKA activity report), Available at <http://store.tika.gov.tr/yayinlar/faaliyet-raporlari/faaliyet-raporu-2012.pdf>

Note: Bold is used to attract attention to the highest figures.

Turkey also trained Iraqi bureaucrats and members of the political parties, especially in the early years of the post-Saddam era (Murphy & Sazak, 2012: 8). Over the years, as Iraq began to resume its oil production, Turkey decreased its aid. In the meantime Iraq, especially the Kurdistan Regional Government, has become one of Turkey's biggest trading partners, with an FDI reaching \$94 million in 2012.¹⁷

Lebanon was another important recipient of aid in the pre-Arab uprisings period. Here again stability was the motivating concern, and aid has taken the form of financing several construction projects, including hospitals and schools as well as water and sanitation infrastructure (See Table 2). Humanitarian aid to Lebanon increased especially after the 2006 war. The value of humanitarian aid in 2006–07 exceeded \$250 million¹⁸ but decreased in subsequent years, totalling approximately \$70 million in official aid from 2007 to 2011. As in Iraq, Turkey, together with Qatar, was also involved in the mediation of political crises in Lebanon. While one such effort was successful in 2008 when mediation helped resolve the presidential crisis, another attempted intervention failed to avert the 2011 governmental crisis. Turkey also joined the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL II) after the 2006 Lebanon War, contributing a frigate and an engineering construction company, which was pulled out in September 2013.

In sum, prior to the Arab uprisings, Turkey targeted its aid in the Arab world on countries in crisis with the aim of contributing to reconciliation and stability. This policy was based on the belief that stability in the Middle East was in its interest not only because it would lower its own security threat but because it would be good for Turkey's image abroad, and would enhance its political and economic presence in the region. Part of this aid also targeted specific communities. For instance, in Lebanon aid was also sent to Turkmen communities through projects aiming to better their living conditions and to strengthen their ties with Turkey (Orhan, 2009). Similarly, Turkey also specifically extended humanitarian and development aid to Turkmens in Iraq¹⁹ and Syria.²⁰

The impact the 'Arab Spring' has had on Turkey's aid policy towards the Arab world can be discussed in terms of both changes and continuities. There have been some changes: First of all, Turkey's aid was redirected towards Arab uprising countries, particularly Syria but also Egypt and Tunisia, which meant that major recipients like Lebanon and Iraq saw their aid decreased. Furthermore, the cost of aid to Egypt and Tunisia, and especially to Syria, has caused the overall aid budget to be increased fivefold, and by 2012 the Middle East region had become the number one recipient of aid from Turkey (TİKA, 2012a: 92). Finally, Tunisia and Egypt, which Turkey had more limited relations with in the pre-uprising era, became major recipients. Turkey had a vested interest in these 'more amicable' regimes in Tunisia and Egypt succeeding and used aid to achieve that aim, although relations with Egypt soured again following Turkey's criticism of the coup against the Morsi government.

Despite these changes, however, the main thrust of Turkey's foreign aid in the Arab world has remained unchanged: it has tended to focus on crisis situations and to be stability- and security-oriented. This is very much in line with the overall thrust of Turkey's aid politics; since its emergence as a donor, its aid has largely been geared

towards what the OECD characterizes as 'fragile states', particularly among its neighbours. In 2011, states-in-conflict were the recipients of 66 per cent of Turkey's aid (Göle 2013: 2).

Nor has there been a major change in the content of foreign aid Turkey has extended since the Arab uprisings. The bulk continues to come in the form of humanitarian aid, as well as civil infrastructure reconstruction, basic services provision, health care and educational support, and best practices consultancy.

The uprisings in the Arab world, with their demands for more accountable government, inevitably brought the issue of foreign aid as a tool of socio-political transformation to the fore. However, I would argue that the AKP government's position on the so-called 'democracy promotion agenda' has been quite ambiguous. This is all the more surprising as in its early years in power the AKP was an explicit advocate of political and economic reform in the region, at least at the discursive level. Taking this position was useful from the standpoint that the party could brand itself as a democratizing force in domestic and international politics; in the post-9/11 international context too, this allowed the party to be seen as a force for 'moderate Islamism', which was thought to be a possible panacea to radicalism, as well as evidence that 'Islam is compatible with democracy'. Thus, the AKP government, particularly through 2007, emphasized the 'need for democratization' in its foreign policy approach to the Middle East. Prime Minister Erdoğan and then-Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül, in speeches delivered to both Western and regional audiences, stressed this compatibility, the importance of good governance, respect for human rights and integration with the rest of the international community. Within this context, Turkey joined the G-8's Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMENA), through which it became a partner – with Italy and Yemen – in the Democracy Assistance Dialogue (DAD) programme, which was purportedly designed to integrate civil society concerns into governmental discussions on reform. Turkey's focus within the programme was the issue of gender, and a Turkish think tank, TESEV, organized several meetings with regional participation on the issue.²¹ The initiative did not, however, produce concrete results.

After 2007, in parallel with its deepening economic and political relations with regional regimes of power, the AKP government stopped making explicit reference to 'democratization' in its rhetoric directed at Arab states. Instead, officials claimed to subscribe to a strategy of gradual transformation through long-term political and economic engagement.²² During these years, young diplomats,²³ other bureaucrats, journalists and academics from the region were invited to Turkey for training programmes, where they were hosted for long periods of time to observe the workings of their Turkish counterparts and to attend lectures. Finally, Turkey's economic bureaucracy and business associations played an important role in engaging the Arab world economically and transferring their experience. The undersecretariat for foreign trade worked with its counterparts in Arab countries, particularly Egypt, Syria and Iraq, on the implementation of bilateral economic agreements. The government argued that by sharing its experience of transition to a free market economy, coupled with increased interpersonal and intercommunity contact, as through the lifting of restrictive visa requirements, etc., Turkey was

paving the way for a gradual transformation away from authoritarianism in these countries.

The Arab uprisings upset this claim when demands for rapid transformation were combined with the effects of instability, and, in the case of Syria, a civil war. In formulating its response, the AKP government prioritized stability, very much like extra-regional actors including the US and the EU. In contrast, however, the AKP was less concerned with the early elections as Islamist parties, now part of the political process, were expected to become the main beneficiaries. Thus, the government's second aim, after security, was to support an early election process and to help the Muslim Brotherhood parties that came to power.²⁴ Aid then targeted areas such as police force training and resolution of economic problems. As the simultaneous aims were to help new elites consolidate power and to assist with stable transitions of power, aid was granted to states rather than to civil society.

After the toppling of Ben Ali, Turkey's relations with Tunisia expanded; Ankara got involved in Tunisia's post-election political transformation process. It began training Tunisian police and gendarmerie forces in 2013. In addition, 34 four-wheel drives, 40 standard pick-up trucks, 60 minibuses, five buses, 30 police cars and 100 police motorcycles were delivered to the Tunisian Ministry of Interior as part of a project 'to modernize the Tunisian police force'. In another major project, TİKA, which also opened an office in Tunisia in 2012, began to help municipalities boost the quality of their services. To that end, a total of 32 garbage trucks, 30 street sweeping vehicles and 50 earthmovers were distributed to the 24 municipalities.²⁵ The two countries signed an agreement during the World Economic Forum being held in Turkey, wherein Turkey agreed to give Tunisia \$100 million in aid to help it overcome its social and economic difficulties. The deal also included a \$400 million low-interest loan (Ben Bouazza, 2012). To further cooperation in different fields, the two countries also signed a cooperation agreement for development and technical assistance in October 2012 calling for cooperation in the areas of agriculture, food, water resources, infrastructure, energy, tourism, education and scientific research. In 2012, about 90 per cent of Turkey's aid to Tunisia was geared towards administrative and civil infrastructure (TİKA, 2012a: 293).

Egypt also became a recipient of Turkey's bilateral aid. Turkey promised to provide a \$2 billion budget support package, both to finance infrastructure projects and to contribute to its foreign currency reserves; half of this was provided in September 2012 when a loan deal was signed between the two countries.²⁶ There were also attempts to share experiences with the new Egyptian political actors. An interesting example was the invitation of 51 young people from Egypt by the AKP to travel around Turkey to observe preparations for the June 2011 parliamentary elections. Young opposition leaders from the Muslim Brotherhood, *al-Wasat* and the April 6 Movement visited Turkey, met with President Gül, followed Erdoğan's election rallies, and visited with the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP).²⁷ Similarly, meetings have been convened for the purposes of sharing experience in fields ranging from the cultivation of small-scale entrepreneurship to writing a constitution, which is ironic as Turkey itself has been unsuccessful in writing a new constitution to replace the one drafted after its

1980 military coup. In 2012, 60.98 per cent of Turkey's aid to Egypt went to social infrastructure and services; education came second with 18.43 per cent (See Table 2). The AKP government was quite supportive of President Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood in general, extending political, economic and technical assistance to ensure its success. Thus, the overthrow of Morsi by the military in July 2013 was a major blow to Turkey's policy towards Egypt. The AKP government's unwavering support of Morsi and its criticism of the military's intervention led to a crisis that not only stopped the flow of aid to Egypt but also seriously endangered Turkey's trade and investment, which had increased considerably until then.²⁸

In the case of Libya, its fragmented structure and politics, and the weakness of its institutions, led to an emphasis on state-building activities for the long run but also humanitarian relief immediately following the uprisings. Turkey sent 3.196 tonnes of humanitarian aid and eight tonnes of medicine, hundreds of wounded were brought to Turkey to receive treatment and the Turkish Red Crescent set up a tent city in *Al-Keish* to help those who had fled their homes due to the clashes (TİKA, 2011). After the new regime came to power, the Turkish National Police trained 800 Libyan Police Academy cadets in Istanbul.²⁹ A delegation from Libya came to Turkey's Ministry of Justice for training on the establishment of judicial institutions and constitution writing. Training was also provided towards the cultivation of small-scale entrepreneurship. In all, 53.11 per cent of Turkey's official aid to Libya in 2012 went to economic infrastructure and services, while 23.32 per cent was geared towards the health sector (See Table 2). Before the uprising, Libya was an important economic partner for Turkey and an especially significant market for Turkey's construction firms. After the toppling of Gaddafi one of the major aims of Turkey's policy vis-à-vis Libya was to protect these economic interests. The numbers demonstrate that Turkey was successful in these efforts: exports to Libya in 2012 totalled more than \$2 billion, up 186.2 per cent (\$748 million) from 2011. As of today Turkish firms hold 544 project contracts in Libya with a total value of \$27.7 billion.³⁰

Aid to Yemen increased, albeit modestly, after the uprising there. As the country was hobbled by an economic and humanitarian crisis, the bulk of Turkey's aid has been sent in the form of food and medical supplies. In 2012, 86 per cent of aid was geared towards health (See Table 2). TİKA, which opened a co-ordination office in Sana'a in June 2012, has been actively co-ordinating aid in health, education and transportation projects. Turkey has begun planning for a hospital and has provided scholarships for Yemeni medical students to study in Turkey. On 15–21 December 2012 a team of 33 Turkish doctors with different medical specializations was also deployed to several major hospitals in the capital city (Nasser, 2012). In 2013, the government covered the costs of medical treatment for 100 Yemenis in Turkey.³¹ It also contributed to a multilateral effort and pledged \$100 million in aid. In the meantime, Yemen became a significant market for Turkish contractors. As of May 2013, Turkish contractors were managing 14 projects with a total value of \$1.5 billion.³²

Finally, Syria has become one the largest recipients of Turkey's aid, largely because since the turmoil began in 2011 many Syrians have made use of its 'open door' policy to cross the border.³³ In April 2011, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, AFAD and the Turkish Red Crescent co-ordinated to enact the Syrian Crisis

Humanitarian Assistance Operation. The number of refugees residing in the camps set up through the operation had swelled to over 200,000 by September 2013, from 93,578 a year before.³⁴ Yet fewer than half of Syrians in Turkey are hosted in the 20 tent cities that have been built in Hatay, Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Kahramanmaraş Kahramanmara, Osmaniye, Adıyaman and Adana, or the five container cities in Kilis, Şanlıurfa, Malatya and Gaziantep.³⁵ Additional aid is also provided in the border areas. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), due to the soaring number of Syrian refugees Turkey has jumped from the 59th to the 10th biggest refugee-hosting country in a single year. In addition to AFAD, several government institutions, such as the Ministries of Education and Health, have become involved in order to help meet the needs of this swelling population. For instance, as of September 2013, 45,000 young people were being educated in Turkey, some of whom were attending Turkish universities without being charged tuition fees. Involvement in the Syrian crisis alone has made Turkey a major actor in worldwide humanitarian assistance; since 2012 it has become the fourth largest donor of humanitarian aid, after the US, the EU institutions and the UK. More tellingly, measured by percentage of Gross National Income (GNI), Turkey is the third largest donor, after Luxembourg (0.16 per cent) and Sweden (0.15 per cent), with 0.14 per cent.³⁶

A controversial aspect of aid to Syria has been the allegations that Turkey has been supplying weapons to those opposing the regime, either alone or in collusion with other countries, including the US. These allegations have been rejected by the government but have continued to surface in the national and international media. The controversy intensified when, in December 2013, a Turkish journalist reported United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database (UN COMTRADE) data that showed Turkey had sent 47 tons of weapons worth about \$1.5 billion to insurgents in Syria since June 2013 (Tanış, 2013).³⁷

Explaining Continuities in Turkey's Aid Policy since the Arab Uprisings

Turkey's aid to the Arab world was relatively new when the Arab uprisings began. The changes brought by the uprisings have brought about a dramatic increase in the amount of aid dispersed in the region, as well as an expanded geography of distribution to accommodate new countries like Egypt, Tunisia and Libya. Yet the nature of aid has remained largely unchanged. Turkey continues to focus on countries in crisis and in its humanitarian aid. It also continues to be motivated by security and stability concerns, which leads to an emphasis on capacity-building or economically driven aid projects. These same concerns over stability and regime consolidation have meant aid has primarily been granted to states.

Three perspectives can be identified to explain continuities in aid policies despite major changes in the recipient countries. The first perspective focuses on the donor's geopolitical and economic self-interest as the main motivation for foreign aid (Morgenthau, 1962; Alesina & Dollar, 2000) and thus explains continuities as a result of stability with respect to these interests. The second perspective, which focuses on institutional factors, describes continuities in foreign aid policies in

reference to bureaucratization (Atwood et al., 2008). Thus, bureaucratic rationality, behaviours such as risk aversion, and modes of operation may at times be curtailed in response to sudden changes; bureaucratization may thus compromise self-interest by failing to co-ordinate with foreign policy objectives. Finally, motivations and thus continuities can be explained in reference to the norms that govern aid politics. Here the literature generally refers to 'global norms', i.e. globally shared expectations or standards of appropriate behaviour about foreign aid (Lumsdaine, 1993; Khagram et al., 2002). Thus, normative forces such as humanitarianism, or those that emerged in the post-Cold War era as regards foreign aid, such as promoting good governance, protection of human rights, security sector reform, economic liberalism etc., affect the nature of states' foreign aid policies and thus assure continuity in the content of aid services.

Turkey's self-interest seems to play an important role in its aid policy. As explained above, foreign aid has been viewed as a useful tool of foreign policy priorities, such as establishing better relations with neighbouring countries, reinforcing its presence and influence in the region, and contributing to stability so as to secure itself. Conceptions of state interests account for continuities in aid policy after the Arab uprisings. As was the case prior to the transformations in the region, Turkey has continued to focus on conflict-affected countries. Syria, but also Yemen and Libya right after the intervention, are cases in point. Its security concerns have meant that the Palestinian territories have continued to be a main recipient of aid. The AKP government has also perceived the changes as an opportunity to establish better political and economic relations with these countries, especially those with which Turkey has had more limited relations. For instance, Tunisia emerged as a possible country with which to develop ties after the removal of Ben Ali. Describing these budding relations, Tunisian Investment and International Cooperation Minister Riadh Bettaieb said: 'There has also been a revolution in political and economic relations between Turkey and Tunisia' (Donat, 2013). In Egypt as well, the government aimed to develop a strategic partnership and more expansive economic ties; aid policies were part of this new strategy. Thus, Turkey tried to enhance its regional status, to gain ground against competitors, to expand economic ties and to contribute to stability in the region by developing close ties with emerging political actors, using foreign aid as a tool to do so. Finally, in terms of promoting its interests, Turkey's aid policy also has meaning beyond the Arab world: increasing foreign aid in general and contributing to Arab countries in transition in particular have been taken as signs of its rising international profile.

In sum, in the post-Arab uprisings era Turkey's geopolitical and economic interests have faced challenges and at times have been undermined by developments on the ground, but its quest to consolidate and if possible enhance its presence and influence in the region has remained the same. Similarly, the AKP government has continued to believe these interests are best served through the coming to power of and rapid restoration of stability by the opposition forces with which it has formed relations. Syria proved to be a difficult case from the beginning, and after two years none of these objectives has been achieved. There, aid policy has focused on consolidating ties with opposition forces.

The bureaucratization perspective offers a more limited explanation for the case of continuity in Turkey's aid policies. Clearly the aid bureaucracy is relatively new and still in the process of institutionalization. Thus, it seems to generally follow the political elite and its framework for distributing aid based on a foreign policy vision. As explained above, the bureaucracy has internalized the ideas of the AKP government on foreign aid and its relationship to foreign policy objectives and priorities. Nevertheless, I would argue that the bureaucratization perspective still partly explains the continuities in Turkey's foreign aid policy. Especially TİKA, but also other government institutions already have built-in experience, which translates into their approach to certain types of projects. They may also be more inclined to accept such projects on the basis of this familiarity, which would partly explain similarities in development projects before and after the Arab uprisings.

Finally, continuing references to global foreign aid norms and humanitarian concerns partly account for continuities in the content of its assistance. Turkey has tried to frame and to justify its aid to the Arab world in the post-uprising era through value systems like 'ethical foreign policy' and 'humanitarian diplomacy' (Bayer and Keyman, 2012: 85). Particularly when criticized for its Syrian policy, the government responded by appealing to humanitarian sensitivities and recalling the importance of helping those in need, thus utilizing the humanitarian argument to silence its critics. Similar rhetoric has been used to enhance Turkey's positive image around the region in both the pre- and post-uprisings periods. In addition to using the discourse of basic global norms, Turkey has constructed a language of aid, particularly in the field of political and economic reform, which for better or worse is similar to the language of global normativity, as other articles in this special issue demonstrate.

However, in addition to references to 'global norms' in aid politics, the AKP government has also justified Turkey's aid policies in reference to identity based on Muslim solidarity and historical (read: Ottoman) responsibility. Thus, aid became yet another aspect of AKP foreign policy built on a 'new geopolitical imagination' rooted in 'notions of civilizational geopolitics' (Bilgin & Bilgiç, 2011). This set of Turkey-specific norms is shared by faith-based NGOs and has constituted an important element of continuity in aid policy since the Arab uprisings.

Conclusion

The 'Arab Spring' came at a time when Turkey was heavily engaged not only with the Arab world, but also in expanding its foreign aid footprint more generally. An immediate response by Ankara to the changes in the Arab world was to provide humanitarian and development aid to the affected countries. Humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees became the most important item in Turkey's foreign aid budget and has also been controversial due to allegations it provided military aid to the opposition. Similarly, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and to some extent Yemen became new recipients of Turkey's humanitarian and development aid. The nature of this aid has retained its earlier characteristics in the wake of the rapid change represented in the Arab uprisings. The reasons behind these continuities reveal that the character of aid

tends to be dictated by the interests of the donors, its institutions and its norms, rather than those of the recipients. Although human concerns may have an impact on foreign aid allocation, it is ultimately tied to political interests in the domestic and foreign policy realms.

Notes

1. Faith-based NGOs especially have become very active in foreign aid in recent years, yet they are outside the scope of this study.
2. The term 'emerging donors' refers to emerging economies that have started to become actors in the international aid system, in contrast to the more established donors that are members of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC).
3. Kulaklıkaya was the president of TİKA from 2007 to 2011 and Aybey worked as a technical assistance expert.
4. Interview with a TİKA official, 28 August 2013.
5. As of 2013 TİKA has offices in Senegal, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan (2), Yemen, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza, Israel (Jerusalem), Georgia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Ukraine (2), Mongolia, Kazakhstan (2), Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan (2), Pakistan, Myanmar, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, Serbia.
6. Turkey is a member of the OECD but not part of the OECD-DAC, although it reports to it. In 2012, among 27 OECD-DAC countries, 11 surpassed Turkey's official development aid of \$2,422 million: United States (25,607 million), Germany (8,584), United Kingdom (8,709), France (7,928), Japan (6,402), Australia (4,561), Canada (4,053), Netherlands (3,858), Sweden (3,638), Norway (3,523) and Switzerland (2,445) (OECD, 2013).
7. According to the OECD other non-DAC OECD countries' official development assistance for 2012 (in \$ million) was: 'Bulgaria 39.95; Chinese Taipei 304.50; Cyprus 25.08; Estonia 23.24; Hungary 118.38; Israel 171.15; Kuwait 149.16; Latvia 21.11; Liechtenstein 4.70; Lithuania 51.91; Malta 18.58; Romania 142.41; Russia 485.01; Saudi Arabia 1298.87; Thailand 16.90; UAE 1069.72' (OECD, 2013).
8. Similar to other emergent donor countries such as Brazil, China, India, South Africa and Venezuela, Turkey continues to receive development aid (Chandy, 2012).
9. Interview with a TİKA official, 28 August 2013.
10. Comments by a diplomat at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 15 February 2013.
11. Interview with a TİKA official, 28 August 2013.
12. Ibid.
13. Interview with FM Davutoğlu, *TİKA Dünyası*, No. 2, 2012, p. 20.
14. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the total amount of official aid since 1995, in kind and cash, provided to Palestine, bilaterally or through international organizations, is over \$30 million. Available at http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-political-relations-with-the-palestinian-national-authority.en.mfa (accessed 28 December 2013).
15. Fidan served as the head of TİKA from December 2003 to November 2007 when he was appointed as the chief advisor to the prime minister. Fidan currently serves as the head of the National Intelligence Organization. Nurdun has been working as a senior expert at TİKA.
16. Filippo Grandi, Commissioner-General of UNRWA, announced that countries such as Turkey and Brazil have substantially increased their contributions to the Agency, including through the provision of food aid. Statement by Filippo Grandi, Available at <http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/statement-filippo-grandi-commissioner-general-unrwa-fourth-committee> (accessed 29 December 2013).
17. Ministry of Economy website, Relations with Iraq, Available at <http://www.economy.gov.tr/index.cfm?sayfa=countriesandregions&country=IQ®ion=4> (accessed 29 December 2013).
18. Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, Available at http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye_nin_insanitaryadimlari.tr.mfa (accessed 28 December 2013).

19. Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, Available at http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye_nin_2005-yili-insani-yardimlari.tr.mfa and http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye_nin-2007-yili-insani-yardimlari-bugune-kadar_-tr.mfa (accessed 28 December 2013).
20. 'Syrian Turkmen Leader Praises Turkish Humanitarian Aid', *World Bulletin*, 16 January 2014, Available at <http://www.worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=127056> (accessed 23 January 2014).
21. TESEV *Dış Politika Programı*, Available at <http://www.tesev.org.tr/dis-politika-programi/Program/6.html>
22. Carothers and Young (2011) remind us that emergent donors typically make this 'claim to take advantage of friendly relations with other developing countries to advocate for democracy and human rights behind the scenes'. The counter-argument is that these engagements strengthen rather than weaken authoritarian regimes.
23. This five-week Young Diplomats Programme, in fact, preceded the AKP government. It was started by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1992 initially aiming to train young diplomats from former Soviet Republics and the Balkans, and later extended to other regions including the Middle East in 2004. By 2011, 707 foreign diplomats had participated in this programme.
24. In Egypt the AKP provided election advice to the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), the party of the Muslim Brotherhood, especially during the presidential elections, mainly 'to correct the image that the Muslim Brotherhood aims to monopolize political activity'. 'The Freedom and Justice Party seeks election advice from Turkey's ruling party', *Egypt Independent*, 18 November 2011, Available at <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/freedom-and-justice-party-seeks-election-advice-turkeys-ruling-party> (accessed 20 September 2013).
25. TİKA's Signature on the Giant Cooperation between Turkey and Tunisia, Available at <http://www.tika.gov.tr/en/haber/tikas-signature-on-the-giant-cooperation-between-turkey-and-tunisia/524> (accessed 15 September 2013).
26. 'Egypt signs \$1 bn loan deal with Turkey', *ahram online*, 30 September 2012, Available at <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/3/12/54361/Business/Economy/Egypt-signs-bn-loan-deal-with-Turkey-Report.aspx> (accessed 23 January 2014)
27. See, for instance, Demokrasi Seferi (Democracy Expedition), *Sabah*, 17 June 2011, Available at <http://www.sabah.com.tr/Gundem/2011/06/17/demokrasi-mesajini-misiridan-verecek> (accessed 29 December 2013) and 'Mısırlı Gençler CHP'de (Egyptian Youth at CHP)', *Zaman*, 7 June 2011, Available at http://www.zaman.com.tr/politika_misirli-gencler-chpde_1144070.html (accessed 29 December 2013).
28. Egypt became Turkey's largest goods export market in Africa by 2012. Turkish exports to Egypt that year were \$3.7 billion, increasing 33.3 per cent from 2011 (\$2.7 billion). Turkish FDI amounted to \$2 billion by that point. Turkish Ministry of Economy website, Relations with Egypt, Available at <http://www.economy.gov.tr/index.cfm?sayfa=countriesandregions&country=EG®ion=0> (accessed 29 December 2013).
29. Libyan PM to attend graduation for police trainees in Turkey, Today's Zaman, 17 February 2014, Available at <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-307364-libyan-pm-to-attend-graduation-for-police-trainees-in-turkey.html> (accessed 22 September 2014).
30. Ministry of Economy website, Relations with Libya, Available at <http://www.economy.gov.tr/index.cfm?sayfa=countriesandregions&country=LY®ion=0> (accessed 29 December 2013).
31. 'Turkey's help goes further yet', *Yemen Post*, 13 February 2013, Available at <http://yemenpost.net/Detail123456789.aspx?ID=3&SubID=6535> (accessed 18 June 2013).
32. Ministry of Economy website, Relations with Yemen, Available at <http://www.economy.gov.tr/index.cfm?sayfa=countriesandregions&country=YE®ion=4> (accessed 29 December 2013).
33. According to OECD-DAC, countries receiving refugees may only include them in their calculations of official development assistance during the first 12 months of their stay. Thus, development assistance figures will have to be adjusted soon.
34. As of mid-January 2014, there were 571,684 registered Syrian refugees in Turkey. That number was 500,000 four months earlier: Foreign Ministry, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 4 September 2013, Available at <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/number-of-syrian-refugees-in-turkey-passes-500000-mark->

- foreign-ministry.aspx?pageID=238&nid = 53868&NewsCatID = 338 (accessed 9 September 2013) and <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=224> (accessed 18 January 2014).
35. UNHCR, Registered Syrian Refugees in surrounding states triple in three months, Briefing Notes, 2 October 2012, Available at <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/search?page=search&docid = 506ac00c9&query = syrian%20refugees> (accessed 9 September 2013).
36. *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2013*, p. 4, Available at <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/report/4216> (accessed 9 September 2013).
37. UN comtrade statistics Available at <http://comtrade.un.org/db/dqBasicQueryResults.aspx?px=H4&cc = TOTAL&r = 792&p = 760&rg = 2&y = 2012&so = 8> (accessed 29 December 2013).

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