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# The Impact of Somalia-Turkey Cooperation on Advancement of Somali International Political Representation

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**Abstract-** Somalia's issues in politics, the economy and the military have painted a negative picture to the rest of the world as a failed state making it miss out a lot on international trade and political participation. However, Turkey has been a saving grace entering into a bilateral relationship with Somalia. The study was on the impact of Somalia-Turkey cooperation on advancement of Somali international political representation. It was important to examine the significance of Somalia-Turkey political cooperation on advancement of Somali international political representation, also the ramifications of the Somalia-Turkey bilateral trade cooperation on the advancement of Somali international political representation. Finally, the consequences of Somalia-Turkey military cooperation on advancement of Somali international political representation. The target population was purely obtained from the Turkish embassy, Mogadishu, Somalia. The research design was a case study that utilized a mixed methodology. The qualitative data came from the face to face interviews and document reviews while the quantitative data came from the questionnaires offered based on the Likert Scales that were added. The findings indicated that Turkey positively assisted in Somalia's international representation.

**Index Terms-** Cooperation, Advancement, Bilateral, International, Political, Representation

## I. INTRODUCTION

It was important to see how much bilateral relationships between states globally and regionally benefited each country's international political stances. A few examples were given such as below to help set pace for the Somali-Turkey cooperation on international political representation.

### 1.1 Background of Study

Globally, Canada and Mexico have been in a bilateral relationship that has seen them both be inclusive of the NAFTA, a regional bloc that has promoted free trade in their engagements (Santa-Cruz, 2012). the bilateral trade between Canada and

Mexico is influential to their successes yet the USA has not only resources and financial rewards to offer the two states but a security concern with Mexico when criminals escape to the latter, (Clarkson, 2008).

Russia on its part has recently been on the offensive against Ukraine and part of that has been due to the fact that Ukraine has been closely working with the West including the USA and the UK, causing a military threat to Russia, (Metre, Gienger & Kuehnast, 2015). The military positioning of Ukraine aligning itself to the West has among other reasons caused Russia to wage war against Ukraine. The Russian-Ukrainian conflict is a global example of how much military cooperation between states may lead to a military disturbance from another state that may feel threatened.

Regionally, South Africa has had a strong political relationship with Kenya because Kenya was a strong supporter of the fight against apartheid in South Africa prior to South African independence, (Adebajo, 2007). Through South Africa's political relationship with Kenya, it has also found support to interact with other East African states like Tanzania and Uganda, (Barber, 2005). The bilateral relationship between Nigeria and the UK has been based on oil that Nigeria produces and exports alongside the allowance of British investments into Nigerian oil distribution (Nuamah, 2003). There has been a lack of accountability on the part of Britain that has shaken the continuous collaboration between the two states, (Nuamah, 2003). The political cooperation between Nigeria and Britain has been one of suspicion that Western countries not just Britain have been trying to exploit the local oil plants in Nigeria in the name of foreign investment.

Locally, Somalia went through a long devastating period of famine in 2011 which led to the death of 250,000 people dead. This was what triggered Turkey's interests into Somalia (Asiedu, 2017). Turkey not only has a military base in Somalia, but also has set up an embassy and contributed to the infrastructural development of the country, (Asiedu, 2017). Somalia has been battling negative name-calling from the West due to terrorism, civil war and weak governance (Sucuoglu & Stearns, 2016). It has become hard for Somalia to achieve economic prosperity marred

by all these allegations, some of which are true. There has been a need to forge economic alliances with developed countries to have strength in bargaining in international relations. According to Erdogan, the president of Turkey, as espoused by Ipek (2014), Somalia proved to be the most willing to welcome foreign investments as opposed to other African countries that Turkey approached for bilateral relations.

Somalia has been a victim of war within its borders and due to the threat of terrorism, has also been threatened by global political sidelining. The Al Shabaab, plus the global community referring to Somalia as a failed state have made it desperate for a semblance of respect from the international community. This has inspired its need to politically and economically integrate the would-be friendly global states to help in the promotion of its national interests. Turkey is yet another major global state after the United Arab Emirates to help try drive Somalia into world recognition as a safe place politically, economically and socially (Addow, 2015). It is due to the negative international attention that Somalia has had that there is a need for the country to seek a positive political representation from its cooperation with Turkey. This would carry other benefits such as: business and military growth.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Somalia has been labeled as a failed state for many years now. It has been marred by civil wars, poor governmental institutions and a lack of focus on national growth which have been ongoing issues, (Horseed Media, 2015). Due to a negative international image, Somalia has experienced tough economic and political times that have not been helped much by the cases of civil wars and vibrant terrorism emanating from the Al-Shabaab group for long (Julia, 2012). Political cooperation has been a fleeting dream that Somalia has wished for with the West and other global states more so after the failure in trying to work with the United Arab Emirates (Andrew, 2014). The entrance of Turkey into the Horn of Africa for political relations with Somalia has been a very welcome venture given that Turkey has a good reputation as a state and is widely respected by the UN (Akgun & Mehmet, 2010). There is political hope that the relationship with Turkey will aid in Somalia's acceptance in the international community as a political and trading partner. There have been challenges in working with Somalia in bilateral agreements due to its corrupt history in the leadership and political instability that may drive away and destabilize foreign investments (Daniel, 2012). Such ramifications have been a major cause for Somalia to update its foreign policy to a semblance of integrity that inspires Turkey to be a long term political and economic partner state. Consequences of the Somali-Turkey military cooperation have bordered on the reactions of the global powerful states that have had an interest in military establishments across the Horn of Africa and the placing of political and economic sanctions against Somalia due to conflicting interests (Melvin, 2019). The UN, African Union and the USA all have a vested military interest in the Horn of Africa (Rossiter & Cannon, 2019) and Turkey's position creates a base of conflict with them. Therefore, this research will seek to determine the influence of Somalia's relationship with Turkey on the advancement of its international political representation.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Critical Theory was proposed by Max Horkheimer in the year 1937 in his essay, "*Traditional and Critical Theory*", (Karin, 2015). It bears arguments that inspire underdeveloped states to free themselves from the developed states and capitalism that has been used to suppress them in politics and the economy, (McGlinchey, Walters, & Scheinflug, 2017). For example, many developed states give loans to underdeveloped states in order to control their economies and resources. This is a political effort known as, emancipation which in everyday grammar means, "*To free something or someone*", (Jenny, 2006).

### 2.1 The Significance of the Somalia-Turkey Political Cooperation on the Advancement of Somali International Political Representation

Various scholars have weighed in on the influence of political cooperation, the implications of bilateral relationship and the consequences of military cooperation on the political international advancement of a state.

The politics of the day is made up of national, regional and international tenets that shape the nature of political identities for states as they interact (Gullo, 2012). Since the AK Party, (Justice and Development Party) came to power in 2002, Turkey has increased its business investments in Africa and as of 2019 it had already invested 22 Billion USD in Africa (Akpinar, 2013). Somalia has had the chance to benefit from Turkish foreign investment that has gone a long way to help grow Somali's nationalism through infrastructural development and political proliferation (Abdirahman, 2011).

In the process of political cooperation with Turkey, Somalia has enjoyed a significant growth in healthcare, construction works, transportation and education (Hasimi, 2014). Hasimi continues that, besides the infrastructure, Turkey has helped improve peace and security to the country in an effort to make Somalia a more politically and socially stable country on top of its economic agenda.

Through the political cooperation, foreign policy has developed mutually between Somali and Turkey to feature a proactive approach towards development that has seen a great improvement in the economy of Somalia (Sucuoglu, & Stearns, 2016).

### 2.2. The Ramifications of the Somalia-Turkey Bilateral Cooperation on the Advancement of Somali International Political Representation

In the guise of bilateral trade, Turkey has realized that Somalia has been sidelined by the West due to terrorism related issues and that the IMF and many other global partners that are pro USA and UK (Gullo, 2014). In this, it has easily worked its way to Somalia and managed to set up itself as a business partner but in essences having ulterior motives, (Akpinar, 2013). Turkey has managed to use the bilateral trade relations with Somalia to exploit the valuable resources in Somalia including cheap labour to further its own national interests (Daniel, 2012). This has been done in various ways such as, the offering of low pay jobs and the invitation of Turkish MNEs to operate in Somalia (Ahmed, 2021). Perhaps a major consequence in the bilateral trade between Turkey and Somalia has been in the ever increasing exports of Turkish goods to Somalia, (Sucuoglu & Stearns, 2016). The two scholars,

further hold that, among the most exported products from Turkey to Somalia include: Wheat flour, pasta, other oatmeal and raw iron bars. This has greatly increased the GDP of Turkey at the expense of the also seemingly growing GDP of Somalia (Siradag, 2013). In short, Somalia has been given the short end of the bilateral trade.

Turkey has had many products exported to Somalia but quite noticeably has not exported much of services that would help the Somalis mutually benefit in the bilateral trade (Rossiter & Cannon, 2019). At the end of the day, Turkey has been using Somalia to advance its economic agenda back in the European Union while using soft power to get its way into Somalia (Melvin, 2019).

As regards international political representation, which has been what Somalia has been expecting Turkey to help with, Somalia is losing out on making trade with Turkey's biggest business partners (Ipek, 2014). Turkey's greatest export partners as of 2019, included: Germany, Somalia, UK and Iraq (OEC, 2021). By the same business research platform, Somalia hardly had the opportunity to ride on the advantages it could have had being in a bilateral relationship with Turkey. It made exports to none of these countries based on its international cooperation with Turkey.

### *2.3 The Consequences of Somalia-Turkey Military Cooperation on the Advancement of Somalia's International Political Representation*

Turkey's military cooperation with Somalia raises issues with any other state that has vested military interests in the Horn of Africa but none more so than the conflicting interests with the USA and the UK (Melvin, 2019). Since China's interests lay more on trade and control of foreign markets against the West, military interests are more of a national interest of the West (Benjamin, 2007).

Turkey got closer to Africa by joining the IGAD in 2008 (Daniel, 2012). This brought it closer to the EAC and ECOWAS giving it an opportunity to work with Kenya, Tanzania, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Somalia (Siradag, 2013). Turkey decided to invest its military position in Mogadishu, Somalia on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 (Asiedu, 2017). What Turkey failed to account for was the opposition in foreign policy that it would have to face from states that had earlier invested military capacities in Somalia such as, the USA, the UK, the UAE and France. Mostly, the UK and the US had the most done in Somalia as regards the military, helping to

fend off the Al-Shabaab and strengthen maritime and land security across Somalia (Rossiter & Cannon, 2019).

The USA and the UK planned to annex Somalia as a strategic military point in their Western military battle stands and also in a fierce competition with China (Benjamin, 2007). Turkey on the other hand planned to have an oversight over more in Somalia than just a military base but it would further acclaim a position to train the Somali army into a better military movement (Brittany, 2014).

### III. METHODOLOGY

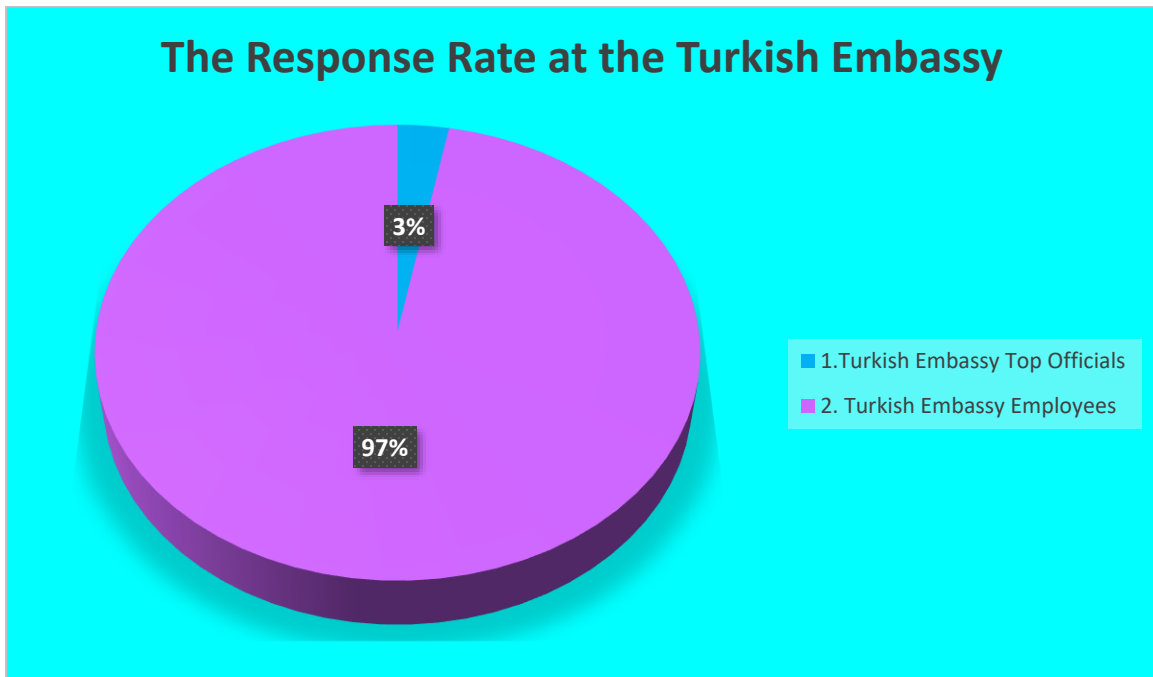
The study utilized a mixed methodology due to the collection of data from multiple tools. These included; questionnaires, face to face interviews and document reviews. Document reviews and face to face interviews offered qualitative data whereas, questionnaires offered quantitative data.

The descriptive case study was favoured because, the study looked at a real life case, which was, the cooperation between Somalia and Turkey and also, no variables were changed in the course of the study, (Aggarwal & Ranganathan, 2019). The Turkish Embassy was chosen because, the institution featured a rich source of information to answer the research questions posed.

Since the study featured different respondents with varying characteristics, the most appropriate sampling technique was the stratified random sampling approach, (Kumar, 2005). The respondents were placed in clusters based on the characteristics of their ranks. The top officials from the Turkish Embassy, purposively selected to be 3 top officials. The employees at the Turkish Embassy purposively selected to be 97 employees distributed across the departments of political affairs, business and commerce and military defense. Therefore, the clusters to be added will be: 3 top officials + 97 employees = 100 respondents. The qualitative data was analyzed using descriptive explanations while the quantitative data was analyzed by the use of Excel and later on represented in tables, pie-charts and figures.

### IV. FINDINGS

The figure 4.1 below shows that, there were more Turkish Embassy employees in the study than the top management. There was a 100 percent response rate in the study which helped to solidify the findings made.



**Figure 4.1: The Response Rate.**  
**Source: Author, (2022).**

**4.1 The Significance of the Somalia-Turkey Political Cooperation on the Advancement of Somalia’s International Political Representation**

The respondents answered as shown in the table 4.3 below. It was observed that, most participants agreed that, “To a

great extent, Turkey would help Somalia’s international representation” through their bilateral relationship. Many identified that, through being allies with Turkey, Somalia would make more allies from among Turkey’s allies.

**Table 4.1: To Show the Impact of the Somalia-Turkey Political Cooperation on the Advancement of Somalia’s International Political Representation**

Measure Variable	Response Number (Level of Agreeability-Agree)	Response Number (Level of Agreeability-Strongly Agree)	Percentage
Acquiring new international political allies from Turkey’s political partners.	30	17	47
The integration of new policies that would aid Somalia advance internationally.	25	10	35
The development of national infrastructure.	7	11	18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100</b>

**4.4.2 The Ramifications of the Somalia-Turkey Bilateral Trade Cooperation on the Advancement of Somalia’s International Political Representation**

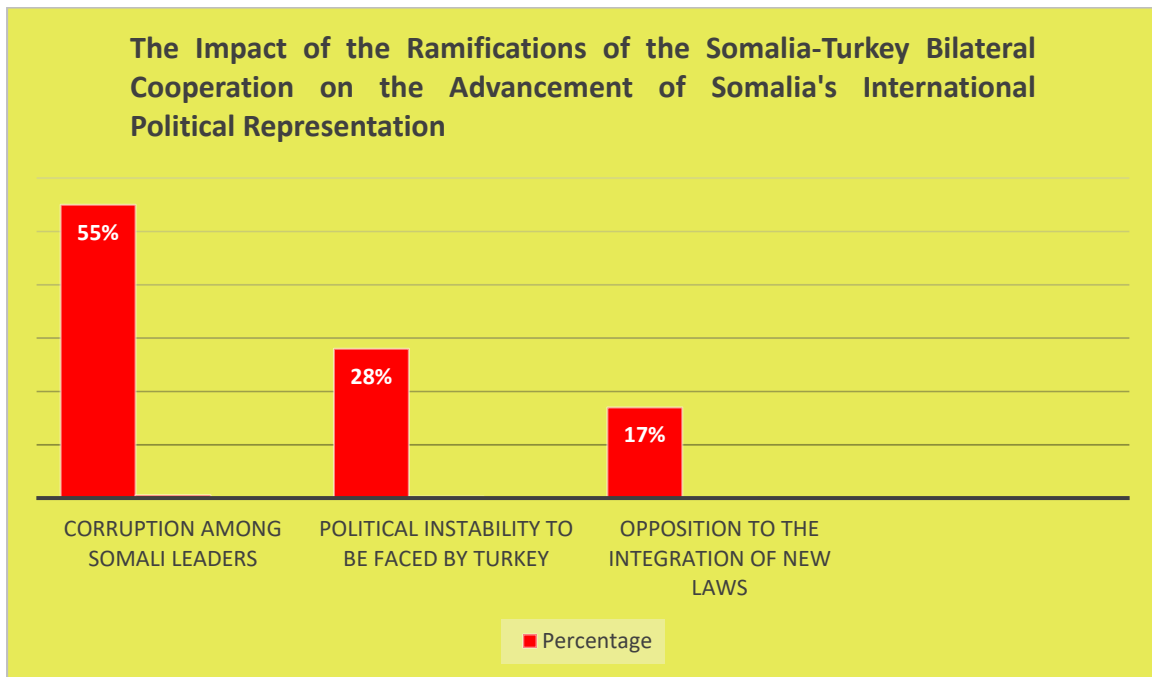


Figure 4.2: To show the impact of the ramifications of the Somalia-Turkey bilateral cooperation on the advancement of Somalia’s international political representation.

Source: Author, (2022).

The figure 4.3 above shows that, corruption would be a hindrance towards Turkey and Somalia having a successful bilateral relationship more so coming from Somalia’s political leadership. Personal interests would cause this corruption to exist. The Turkish investments would have to consider political instability as a threat to successful bilateral relationship and some among the Somali political class would be opposed to the integration of new policies based on Turkish principles. They would want to maintain Somalia’s sense of sovereignty.

**4.4.3 The Consequences of Somalia-Turkey Military Cooperation on the Advancement of Somalia’s International Political Representation**

It was evident that, most respondents thought that, there would be a conflict of interests between Turkey and the US and the UK, which view Somalia as a failed state with terrorist activities and hostile political environment. There would also be the issue of Turkey taking advantage of Somalia to elevate its own position rather than that of Somalia.

**Table 4.2: The Consequences of Somalia-Turkey Military Cooperation on the Advancement of Somalia’s International Political Representation**

Measure Variable	Response Number (Level of Agreeability-Agree)	Response Number (Level of Agreeability-Strongly Agree)	Percentage of
Conflicting interests with the US and the UK.	26	20	46
Manipulation of Somalia’s military interests by Turkey.	16	14	30
The making of enemies from anti-Turkish states	17	7	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100</b>

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The Somalia-Turkey political cooperation was a strategic political move that would benefit Somalia immensely by introducing Somalia to the allies of Turkey globally. In turn, this would make Somalia appear stable enough to be involved in international affairs with global states and thus creating a chance for international political representation. The ramifications of the Somalia-Turkey bilateral trade cooperation were based on poor government will from both sides including corruption issues and a fear of exploitation of resources by Turkey against Somalia. However, there still was a big chance for successful bilateral trade between the two countries that would place Somalia at a better position internationally. The consequences of the Somalia-Turkey military cooperation may have served to draw Western opposition especially after the negativity that has been associated with Somalia but, there were reasonable and mutual benefits to be realized through Somalia and Turkey working together in a military capacity. This would even place Somalia in the good pages of the NATO of which Turkey has been a member.

### 5.1 Recommendations

It is advisable that Somalia continues its pursuit of the political cooperation in which it has engaged with Turkey as it promises infrastructural development, a backup plan in case of Western sanctions and a renewal of the national image globally after much denting from the Western media houses that report negatively on Somalia.

Somalia must encourage a dedicated government will to take the country to the next level and put the interests of the state ahead of those of conflicting personal interests during the bilateral trade with Turkey.

With Turkey assisting Somalia to keep the maritime territory safe and also the inland, it helps create political and social stability that attracts global investors to Somalia. This may work out very well for Somalia in the long run and thus a good reason to maintain the military association with Turkey.

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