



**A NEWCOMER TO THE POLES: EXAMINING TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY  
AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL**

***Kutuplarda Yeni Bir Ülke: Türk Dış Politikası'nın Küresel Düzeyde İncelenmesi***

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper examines at what level Turkish foreign policy of late years is being implemented. It aims to delineate that contrary to the regional level policy in the first decade of the 2000s, a differentiated foreign policy is being pursued at the global level aiming to increase Turkish marine research activities at the two poles. Getting involved in science diplomacy in recent years, Turkey plans to strengthen its power capacity and evaluate it at the global level. Thus, in this paper, it is concluded that Turkey's involvement in both the Arctic and Antarctic signifies that its foreign policy target is no more limited to regional dynamics. Significant paces in the two poles could be best understood via its foreign policy at the global level. Moreover, Turkey's involvement in science diplomacy in parallel with polar engagement strengthens its power capacity on behalf of the global level. Consequently, it is asserted that Turkish foreign policy has been in transition from regional to global standards.

**ÖZ**

Bu çalışmada Türk Dış Politikası'nın son yıllarda hangi düzeyde yürütüldüğü irdelenmektedir. Makale, 2000'li yılların ilk dönemlerinden farklı olarak, son yıllarda Türkiye'nin kutuplarda deniz araştırma kapasitesini arttırmayı hedef edinen, küresel düzeyde farklılaştırılmış bir dış politika izlediğini ortaya çıkarmayı amaç edinmektedir. Türkiye, son yıllarda bilim diplomasisi ile ilgili çalışmalar da yürüterek güç kapasitesini arttırmayı ve bunu küresel bir düzeyde yürütmeyi planlamaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu makale, Arktik bölgesine ve Antarktika'ya yönelik yaptığı çalışmalar sayesinde Türkiye'nin bölgesel dinamiklerle sınırlı olmayan bir dış politika yürüttüğü şeklinde bir değerlendirme ile nihayete erdirilmektedir. Zira, kutuplarda atılan önemli adımlar ancak küresel düzeyde bir dış politika ile açıklanabilir. Ayrıca, kutup çalışmalarına paralel bir şekilde Türkiye'nin bilim diplomasisi ile ilgili yaptığı çalışmalar da devletin güç kapasitesini küresel düzeyde arttırmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, Türk dış politikasının bölgeselden küresele doğru bir dönüşüm geçirdiği düşünülmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler**

Türk dış politikası, Arktik, Antarktika, bilim diplomasisi, deniz araştırmaları

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## 1. Introduction

How Turkish foreign policy in recent years could be delineated? At what level it is being implemented, regionally or globally? How distinguishing factors in Turkish foreign policy enable to provide a change of the adopted instruments so far? This article aims to fill the existing gap in the literature regarding Turkish foreign policy that evaluates it merely through regional dynamics. By doing so, it is aimed to procure a distinctive approach to Turkish foreign policy.

Many scholars argue that Turkish foreign policy under the Justice and Development Party's (JDP) rule signifies a considerable change. However, for some, it is a continuation of the former rule before the JDP comes to power. As mentioned below, whereas some refer to multilateralism, active globalization, diplomacy, soft power instruments, and activism once framing Turkish foreign policy, others utilize ideological and identical concepts such as *neo-Ottomanism*, *Kemalism*, *Pax-Ottomanica*, *Pro-Sunni*, or *Pro-European*. While reexamining it, many scholars facilitate particular temporal fragmentations within Turkish foreign policy. Different from the previous ones, in this paper, I plan to reevaluate it through a trans-regional representation that provides a holistic approach.

Worth noting is that change or continuity discourses regarding Turkish foreign policy are beyond the scope of this paper. Yet, discourse analysis about tracing Turkish foreign policy -especially ideological and identical ones- is given to indicate that it has been only limited to regional dynamics so far. Lots of arguments represent solely territorial dynamics. However, recent developments in Turkish foreign policy demonstrate the engagement of the state at the global level, unlike the regional one. Accordingly, in this paper, I exemplify two intriguing variables -Turkey's engagement in polar issues and active participation in science diplomacy- to support my argument. Firstly, discourse analysis regarding Turkish foreign policy in the first decade of the 2000s is indicated. Secondly, Turkey's considerable initiatives in both the Arctic and the Antarctic are mentioned. Then its engagement in science diplomacy is given to ensure that new Turkish foreign policy is being implemented at the global level.

## 2. Turkish Foreign Policy in the early 2000s: Proactive but at Regional Level

Thanks to its physical presence both in Europe and Asia, Turkey is not only influenced by international politics in south-eastern Europe, the eastern Mediterranean, Transcaucasia, and the Middle East but also a policy-shaping role has given within the designated areas (Hale 2000: 7). Strategically located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Turkey is looked at as a rising Eurasian power (Erşen 2014: 184). Brzezinski devotes a special role to Turkey; '*an important geostrategic player and a geopolitical pivot*' (Brzezinski 1997: 124-135). Accordingly, as Turkey's geostrategic position is of utmost importance, tracing Turkish foreign policy of the early 2000s is essential within this section.

Since the fact that it has witnessed a considerable change, it is noteworthy to mention that Turkish foreign policy has been questioned in terms of scope, inducement, and aspect for decades. In this regard, it has been a common argument among scholars that traditional Turkish foreign policy is left behind. Instead, a re-oriented Turkish foreign policy has emerged owing to structural and contextual changes. Yet, outlining components of traditional foreign policy is required to trace new foreign policy instruments.

M. Aydın briefly summarizes traditional foreign policy through four issues; historical experience of the Ottoman state, Kemalist Revolution, and foundation of the republic, Western orientation, and suspicious behavior against great powers and foreign interests (Aydın 2000: 103-134). Especially after the Second World War, Turkish foreign policy was framed by two significant concepts; westernization and pursuing the status quo (Lami 2018: 35-56). Yet, as a common argument among scholars, it was the end of the Cold War that means a turning point for shifting some traditional instruments of Turkish foreign policy. For instance, traditional principles such as caution, ensuring territorial integrity, neutrality, and Westernization in the 1990s were replaced by '*assertive and multilateral activism*' (Sayarı 2000: 169-182). Increasing activism and tempo have been the main characters of Turkish foreign policy since the Justice and Development Party (JDP) came to power in 2002 (Tezgür et al 2014: 257).

Grasping transformation of foreign policy is closely linked to shifting power balance among domestic actors who have different world views (Müftüler-Baç 2011: 279-291). Thus, the assessment of recent changes in Turkish foreign policy could be understood well through the ideological perspectives of the ruling elites. For

instance, the Islamic identity of JDP's members has been so influential over the foreign policy choices (Tezgür et al 2014: 260). Here, then foreign minister of Turkey, Davutoğlu's '*Strategic Depth*' doctrine has considerably affected traditional Turkish foreign policy instruments, and mostly changed them.

In Turkey, JDP's coming to power indicates a considerable change in institutions, political elite, policymaking procedure, and the state ethos (Ataç 2018: 54). JPD has decisively implemented *pro-European* policies throughout the first three years (Cop et al 2015: 1). Thus, this term could be delineated as '*the Golden Age of Europeanization*' (Öniş et al 2009: 13). Whereas *pro-European* policies were central to the JDP's government since 2007 the ruling elites have been inclined to engage in the Middle East (Tezgür et al 2014: 257). Consequently, a new term of '*loose Europeanization*' has inaugurated (Öniş et al 2009: 13).

During the second term of JDP began in 2007, Turkish foreign policy has been evaluated as a '*shift of axis*' which means a direction from Westernization to Easternization (Öniş, 2011). Throughout this term, alliances with regional powers have been prioritized in light of Islamic identity and ideological commitments (Çağatay: 2009). Accordingly, many scholars evaluate the then Turkish foreign policy through '*re-Islamization*' and '*Middle Easternization*' concepts. (Bilgin et al 2011; Balcı et al 2008; Yalvaç: 2014). This term has been conceptualized as '*neo-Ottomanism*' which means building a new national identity consisting of historical, cultural, and religious connections with the former Ottoman territories (Yavuz 2016: 443). In other words, in the second term of JPD, the ruling elites sought for building a '*Pax-Ottomanica*' aiming to restore Ottoman-like multiculturalism within the national borders (Furlanetto 2015: 176). Here, it seems that the Ottoman State has been an 'asset' instead of being a 'burden' (Yanık 2016: 470).

Emphasis on the Ottoman State within Turkish foreign policy in the 2000s was predominantly started with the 'strategic depth' vision of Ahmet Davutoğlu -then foreign minister of Turkey. The vision encapsulates 'soft power, multilateralism, active globalization, civilisationalist realism, and zero problems with neighbors' which have been influential for foreign policy (Lami 2018: 35). Reexamining traditional geopolitical theories on behalf of Turkey, Davutoğlu's views were treated as a manifesto of JDP's foreign policy vision (Erşen 2014: 188). Davutoğlu's views indicate a paradigm shift that enables Turkey to be a proactive, trustworthy, and great actor in the region (Ataç 2018: 52). The aforementioned vision devotes special attention to 'soft power and 'the historical legacy of the Ottoman Empire' to strengthen its presence, particularly in the Middle East (Meral et al 2010: 80). In this context, the Middle East could be taken into consideration as a 'lebensraum' for Turkey (Özkan: 2014). As a part of this vision, during the first decade of the new millennium, the ruling elites of Turkish foreign policy have commenced cooperative mechanisms under the mediating role of Turkey particularly on conflicting issues in the region. Accordingly, peace and appeasement in the Middle East are utilized as diplomatic instruments. Moreover, as a mediator, Turkey has played a significant role in negotiations between Israel and Syria, and on Iran's nuclear program in 2009 (Tezgür et al 2014: 257). In doing so, Turkey has been seeking for being a central power in the Middle East.

Davutoğlu's vision was so idealistic that it could not resist realist state behavior in the Middle East. Along with the Arab Spring, this idealism had to be reevaluated since it was broken down, especially with the Syrian Crisis. Instead, within the post-Davutoğlu era, 'hard power, strategic security alliances, regaining friends, and proactive moral realism' preferred once implementing foreign policy (Lami 2018: 35). It seems that Turkey has been going back to prioritize conventional security concerns under the presidency of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (Oğuzlu 2020: 135). Since then, new Turkish foreign policy is seeking strategic autonomy through 'assertive diplomacy and the use of military force projection' (Haugom 2019: 216).

The aim of this section is not to interrogate whether Turkish foreign policy has been witnessing a change or continuity. Rather, it aims to unfold that in the first decade of the JDP's ruling, Turkey's overall international orientation has remained steady. Turkey still is delineated as no more than a regional power. However, in tandem with Turkey's desire to implement foreign policy beyond the national borders, especially engagement in polar issues enable it to pursue its foreign policy at the global level. Below, how Turkey has taken initiatives for pursuing its foreign policy globally, is indicated.

### **3. Beyond the Borders: Turkey's Involvement in the Poles as Showing Global Politics Standards**

Unlike in the early 2000s, Turkish foreign policy could be evaluated at the global level. Here, the main preamble of this argument is hidden in the fact that the policy perception of Turkish decision-makers is not limited only to national borders anymore. This analogy could be best bolstered up via Turkey's recognition as

one of the rising powers in world politics (Tank, 2012: 1). As a prolongation of this status, Turkey artily attempts to enhance its power capacity both on land and at the seas. In this paper, Turkey's increasing maritime activities in recent years are of priority to mention reclaiming that its foreign policy is being implemented at the global level and it ought to be depicted beyond the traditional regional power structure.

For a couple of years, Turkey pursues its foreign policy unexpectedly at the seas. Even it is looked like real naval power (Ataman: 2019). The fact that significant developments -especially in the Eastern Mediterranean- obliges it to enhance its naval power capacity. Additionally, opportunities and challenges revealed by climate change in both poles have enabled Turkey to strengthen its marine activities as a rising power. With awareness of this, the first significant pace of Turkish decision-makers was to adopt a national marine research strategy document (TUDAS) in 2014 (TUDAS: 2014). The document is of vital importance for indicating Turkey's aims to have an international voice on marine research activities in light of its national interests (TUDAS: 2014). Furthermore, it is crucial to include non-traditional security challenges such as climate change, environmental protection, sustainable development, and energy (TUDAS: 2014) which globally affect the world. Nevertheless, the sweet spot of the document is that it refers to promoting marine research activities even beyond the national waters, such as the Arctic and Antarctica.

In light of the aforementioned TUDAS document, Turkey implemented its first significant venture in the Eastern Mediterranean by signing an agreement with Libya's UN-recognized government about defining exclusive economic zones (The Official Gazette December 24, 2019). Since the region has been strategically important through its prominent hydrocarbons -oil and natural gas- in recent years, Turkey desires to consolidate its presence in the region.

If energy-dependency -especially natural gas- and the strategically important position of Turkey is taken into consideration, recent gas explorations in the Eastern Mediterranean are of utmost importance. The fact that the first hydrocarbon explorations are dated to the 1960s, nevertheless considerable findings regarding the resources have been revealed in the 2000s. Concerning the United States Geological Survey (USGS) estimates that in the Eastern Mediterranean, 122,378 billion cubic feet of undiscovered gas and 1,689 million barrels of undiscovered oil are estimated to be beneath the sea (USGS: 2010). So far, a considerable amount of gas discoveries has been revealed in the areas Tamar (Israel), Leviathan (Israel), Aphrodite (Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus), and Zohr (Egypt), respectively (Ellinas, Roberts, and Tzimitras, 2016: 6). These developments have fairly triggered disputes regarding maritime delimitation among coastal states. One of the coastal states, before the maritime boundary delimitation with Libya, Turkey started its drilling activities in the region in 2017 by addressing its drilling ships to the region for potential hydrocarbon discoveries (Başeren, 2013: 253-306). By doing so, Turkey aims to strengthen its policy-shaping role both politically and legally.

Thanks to the agreement, Turkey seeks for strengthening its position in the region by indicating that it can't be ignored in the Eastern Mediterranean. Additionally, the agreement is fairly a pre-emptive maneuver against potential agreements regarding maritime boundaries between Greece-Egypt and the Greece-Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus (Yaycı 2020: 36). Consequently, the agreement points to the beginning of a more comprehensive Turkish foreign policy which is scraped beyond its maritime borders.

More importantly, the Turkish approach to polar politics is another significant variable to evaluate its foreign policy at the global level. As is known, polar politics is becoming a dominant asset of global politics. Especially as a global threat, climate change has been facilitating the internationalization of polar politics because of both challenges and opportunities existing within the related areas. For instance, economic opportunities have been appealing to states to get a share of the Arctic pie. This argument reveals the reasons behind the engagement of the states in polar politics. A newcomer but assertive player in circumpolar issues, Turkey's position is getting more robust through its significant initiatives. According to some scholars Turkey is artily proceeding to be a polar power thanks to its recent initiatives in both poles (Depledge, Kennedy-Pipe, and Bilgiç: 2020). Even it is late to polar issues, it has covered a lot of ground more than expected. After substantial paces in Antarctica, Turkey has indicated its interests in the Arctic as well.

Turkey expects to “*become one of the pioneering countries in the world in terms of polar sciences*” while revealing its first, comprehensive polar policy called the “National Polar Science Program” (NPSP: 2018-2022). According to the 4-year program available for the years 2018-2022, Turkey aims to secure its presence on the continent by constructing a permanent research base and it seeks for strengthening its position in polar

sciences (NPSP: 2018-2022). Additionally, membership of the Arctic Council is referred to within the relevant program that points it has robust initiatives in the north as well.

### **3.1. Significant Expeditions in Antarctica:**

As known, Antarctica is ruled by the treaty signed in 1959 after the pioneering comprehensive research program on the continent called the International Geophysical Year (IGY) was implemented in the region in 1957-1958. Twelve countries are committed to the treaty acknowledging that they will utilize the continent only for peaceful purposes (Antarctic Treaty System, 2021). Setting military activities aside in the continent, the treaty is open to all UN member states -now has 54 parties and 29 consultative parties. By the time of progress, the treaty has evolved into a broad regime -the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS)- consists of the treaty itself, other significant agreements, and considerable organizations contributing during the decision-making process (Antarctic Treaty System, 2021). With relevance to the Antarctic Treaty System, some significant issues are underlined to cope with such as scientific cooperation, protection of the Antarctic environment, conservation of plants and animals, logistic cooperation, and communications and safety (Antarctic Treaty System, 2021). Since the ecosystem of the continent is changing because of climate change and getting more delicate, the aforesaid issues require common combat of states. Thus, in the light of these issues, it could be noted that the ATS has been vital for the beginning of science diplomacy in world politics.

One of the latecomers to the poles, Turkey has begun to take significant ventures in Antarctica. Ratifying the treaty in 1995 Turkey is among non-consultative countries. Since then, Turkish scientists have been managing considerable scientific expeditions on the continent. Nevertheless, the last couple of years have been more encouraging for Turkey to expand its research capacity on polar issues through institutional structures. Firstly, a polar research center was founded in 2014 by academics of İstanbul Technical University (The Official Gazette: January 17, 2015). The relevant research center aims to operate scientific activities to provide expertise for Turkey to be a part of the Antarctic regime at the state level (The Official Gazette: January 17, 2015).

After a memorandum of understanding in 2015 (MoU) signed by Turkish and Ukrainian representatives to establish scientific cooperation on polar research, a fruitful Antarctic expedition was managed by 13 Turkish scientists jointly with Ukrainian scientists in 2016 (Turkish Marine Research Foundation). After attending the 39th of Antarctic Consultative Meeting in 2016 (Antarctic Treaty System, 2021). Turkey has submitted its application for the membership of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR). Then, Turkey has nationally started its first expedition to Antarctica in 2017 and the following years, it has managed four expeditions more that show it will have robust interests in the continent by conducting its presence. Within the same year, the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty was ratified by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (The Official Gazette March 8, 2017). As a prolongation of these interests, in 2019 Turkey founded a polar research institute -under the auspices of its significant Scientific and Technological Research Council (TÜBİTAK)- called KARE to coordinate its movements under a single unit (TÜBİTAK, 2021). Lastly, it is noteworthy to mention that Turkey's attempts to construct a permanent research base on Horseshoe Island have been welcomed during the consultative meetings.

### **3.2. Turkey's Direction to the Arctic**

Unlike Antarctica, the Arctic -the region inside of the Arctic Circle (66°34' N)- consists of an ocean surrounded by the lands. It has eight Arctic states. The region has been a focal point because of its quick ice melting caused by climate change. As a fact, it is more affected by global warming if compared to the other regions. Thus, it is clear that Arctic politics will fairly have a butterfly effect on world politics.

Even though the region was an arena of geopolitical confrontation during the Cold War, just after the Murmansk Speech of Gorbachev which has been a milestone to transform the region on behalf of international cooperation (Gorbachev 1987: 23-31), the Arctic has witnessed a multivariate inter-state relation. The climate change consequences unveiled many prominent outcomes. On the one hand, easier access to natural resources and increasing accessibility of opening Northern shipping lanes have prompted all the Arctic and non-Arctic states -especially the energy-hungry Asian states- to engage in the Arctic region. On the other hand, maritime disputes have been emerging among the littoral Arctic states. In the light of this complexity, it could be deduced

that the Arctic is a mixture of complex and multifaceted global issues of our century (Blunden 2009: 137). Nevertheless, unlike common narratives regarding the region referring to a ‘gold rush’ (Borgerson: 2008), a new military frontier’ (Honderich: 1987), ‘scramble for the Arctic’ (Sale et al: 2009), a new Cold War’ (Huebert 2019: 75-78), it has been a region of peace and stability so far. This deduction has fairly come from the fact that on the contrary to competition, cooperation has been commonly chosen so far (Overland et al 2015: 47).

The Arctic region is getting more appealing because of the ice melting. By courtesy of this quick physical transformation, economic interests including commercial shipping, natural resource extraction, and cruise tourism are expected to be revealed (Young 2012: 391). The region has come to the fore of world politics because of its prominent hydrocarbons and new navigable polar routes. Approximately the world’s 13 percent of undiscovered oil and 30 percent of undiscovered natural gas are expected to lie in the Arctic (USGS: 2008). Additionally, considerable amounts of natural gas liquids are estimated (USGS: 2008). Thus, the region is crucial for the regional or non-regional states, especially for the energy-dependent ones.

Another appealing opportunity revealed in the Arctic is that the region will host two significant Northern shipping routes -the Northern Sea Route (NSR) and the Northwest Passage (NWP)- integrating Asia to Europe and America that is crucial for sea-borne trade. The secret of these routes comes from the fact that both provide shorter distances if compared to the traditional routes via the Suez Canal, Panama Canal, and Malacca Strait. To illustrate, the first commercial voyage of two German Beluga ships has been managed between Asia and Europe along the NSR which saved nearly 3,000 nautical miles and 200 tons of fuel per ship whereas the same journey is 11,000 nautical miles via the Suez Canal (Beluga Shipping Masters, 2009). Even though both routes are accessible now only for summer months -nearly 5 months a year- because of climate change both are expected to be ice-free in the long run. Thus, economic gains provided by these routes are triggering states to get involved in the region. Especially China, India, Japan, Korea, and Singapore as Asian observers of the Arctic Council (AC) are devoting a special interest to the development of the regarding routes.

Focusing on particular points in the Arctic, the Arctic Council (AC) consists of the member states, permanent participants, working groups, and observers (Arctic Council, 2021). It has provided three binding agreements regarding search and rescue activities, oil pollution prevention, and enhancing scientific cooperation that transforms it into a policy-making body in the region. Since the Council brings substantial players under a common ground, it has been a substantial instrument to enable cooperation so far. Thus, any player who expects to involve in the Arctic should attempt to be a part of this crucial body.

Observer status within the Council is open to every actor who is committed to its regulations. Here, observers have some considerable liabilities. Accordingly, acceptance of objectives of the Council within the Ottawa Declaration, recognizing member states’ sovereign rights, abiding by the legislative bodies, especially the Law of the Sea, considering values, identities, and interests of the indigenous peoples and other residents, showing political and financial desire to make contributions to the relevant key actors of the Council, showing their interests and expertise concerning Arctic issues, and indicating a concrete interest and ability to strengthen the work of the Council are main criteria to apply for observer status (Arctic Council, 2021).

The significance of the observer status in the Arctic Council comes from the fact that under this status, observers have the priority to observe the work of the Council and make contributions such as proposing projects, providing financial support, making statements, and stating their opinions on the Arctic issues under discussion (Arctic Council, 2021). This prominent role has been triggering non-Arctic states and organizations to be observers under the aegis of the Council.

One of the non-Arctic states expects to be an observer, Turkey has firstly applied for the observer status in 2015, nevertheless, the final decision has not been announced yet by the Council (National Polar Science Program: 2018-2022). So far, Turkish scientists have managed considerable research activities in the Arctic but Turkey decisively desires to pursue its scientific activities as a recognized observer state in the region. In fact, its relationships with the Arctic states are beyond scientific research. To illustrate, Turkey serves its technological capacity to construct some types of vessels for the Arctic coastal states. So far, 45 state-of-the-art vessels -mostly fishing vessels, offshore support vessels, and passenger’s vessels- have been ordered and the demand has been increasing since 2015 (Başaran 2019: 79-82). Consequently, the desired observer status will surely provide Turkey to improve its scientific and technological capacity and to observe the recent scientific, political, and economic developments in the region.

By granting observer status in the Council, Turkey will firstly have a close cooperative relationship with the Arctic states. Secondly, it will witness recent developments in the region. Especially, economic opportunities existing in the region -energy resources and precious metals, fishing, commercial shipping, and tourism- are appealing. Turkey may benefit from prominent hydrocarbons extracted in the region via its partnership with Russia. Since it imports about 55% of its natural gas from Russia, new explorations and exploitation of gas in the Arctic will fairly affect the existing trade balance among them. Likewise, since two polar routes are getting more accessible, in the long run increasing transits along the Northern Sea Route may reveal implications for Russian ships transiting through the Turkish straits. Thus, the more Russia utilizes polar routes for intercontinental commercial shipping, the less it will opt for passing through the regarding straits. This could indirectly affect Turkey's position of providing a strategic corridor for the transition of energy resources from Asia to Europe. Aware of these implications Turkey plans to observe the improvements regarding the polar trade routes.

Aiming to be observer in the AC, Turkey seeks to extend scientific research capabilities in the Arctic as well. This has motivated Turkey to manage its first Arctic expedition in Svalbard, in 2019. By doing so, Turkey will strengthen its desire to be an observer. These ventures could delineate Turkey's intention to attend science diplomacy that will enable it to strengthen its international orientation (Depledge, Kennedy-Pipe, and Bilgiç: 2020).

#### **4. Turkey's Engagement in Science Diplomacy**

Another significant variable enabling Turkish foreign policy to be implemented at the global level is its engagement in science diplomacy. As a non-traditional aspect of diplomacy, science diplomacy is delineated as benefiting scientific cooperation for constructing bridges and providing cooperative mechanisms among international actors since there might be no other possibility of engaging officially (Science Diplomacy for France Report, 2013: 3).

Why science diplomacy is needed? Worth noting is that for decades the world has been witnessing global challenges such as climate change, migration, drought, poverty, etc. The fact that global challenges require global action because of their cross-border impacts which high costs ought to be tolerated. They also require scientific cooperation to handle the multiplex problems since they have scientific dimensions (Flink and Schreiterer, 2010: p. 665). Accordingly, science diplomacy has been crucial in handling significant global challenges. For instance, both in the Arctic and Antarctic, thanks to science diplomacy considerable solutions have been provided. Here, science diplomacy is needed especially on issues like climate change mitigation, fishing regulation outside of national jurisdictions, and transboundary resources.

The effective role of science diplomacy may be explicitly seen on global commons as well. For instance, Antarctica as a global common is a crucial place where science diplomacy is required as governance structure in the region needs science-based multilateral approaches. That is why the region is only open to scientific research activities.

The Arctic region is also well-suited to indicate how science diplomacy is needed more than ever. Even not a global common, the Arctic region requires science diplomacy since the fact that the region's landscape has been changing owing to climate change consequences. Here, it is unquestionable that science diplomacy is a crucial dimension for climate change negotiations among stakeholders. Accordingly, within the region, scientific cooperation is preferred by the stakeholders to tackle climate change. Furthermore, it is unique to exemplify the inclusion of science in foreign policy objectives. Thanks to science diplomacy, so far, considerable initiatives have been managed. To illustrate, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was founded in 1998 to provide scientific knowledge for tackling climate change (IPCC, 1998). Or, the Paris Agreement, a legally binding international treaty on climate change, was adopted in 2015 as a prominent output of science diplomacy. Additionally, the organization of the Science Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) could be taken into consideration as a prominent tool of science diplomacy.

Today, science diplomacy is of utmost importance for states to implement their foreign policies. Especially global powers have been devoting a special role to science diplomacy in recent years. The reasonable motivation behind this attempt predominantly adheres to its evaluation as being one of the soft power instruments (Zewail: 2010). Additionally, three prominent reasons may be given to indicate why states prefer to engage in science diplomacy; seeking national power or influence, providing information for decision-

makers to support policies, and enhancing relations both bilaterally and multilaterally (Turekian: 2012). Through science diplomacy, a state could build alliances, have influence, and integrate with the other key players.

Discovering significant improvements in science diplomacy, Turkey has been one of the ambitious states to react. Within the last two decades, Turkey has been seeking to increase its capacity for science. For instance, TÜBİTAK and TÜBA are two substantial institutions that both were devoted a special role to providing collaborative relations with the other actors in science diplomacy. Considerable scientific research projects are sponsored by the abovementioned institutions that it indicates how they are crucial for attaching science diplomacy into foreign policy instruments. Furthermore, substantial contributions during the consultative meetings of the Antarctic Treaty motivate Turkey to activate its science diplomacy paces (Available at <https://www.ats.aq/devAS/Meetings/DocDatabase?lang=e>).

Turkey has managed considerable expeditions to the Antarctic so far. Additionally, it is expecting to grant the observation within the AC. Consequently, it has been implementing its foreign policy beyond the national borders, at the global level. In the light of these developments, Turkey targets to project influence via providing support for cross-border issues as potential polar power.

## **5. Conclusion**

Turkish foreign policy has been in transition for decades. Attempting to analyze this transition, scholars have been in dilemma for decades while evaluating it through change or continuity. Apart from this debate, it is asserted that so far, there has been a unilateral, one-sided approach to Turkish foreign policy that is examined solely by regional dynamics. This unidirectional assessment has been the main motivation of policymakers as well. Even though it has been fragmented via ideological dealings and identical values especially in the early 2000s by the JDP, its narrowed scope has stayed the same. Still, its definition has been limited merely to regional dynamics. Thus, by indicating the existing literature gap in Turkish foreign policy, I aim to articulate that, unlike the traditional aspect of Turkish foreign policy or proactive policies implemented during the Davutoğlu era, Turkish foreign policy could be best traced at the global level since the formers have been bounded by regional scope. To support my argument, I give two significant variables.

Firstly, Turkey has strengthened its marine research capacity in recent years. Even, it has widened by cross-border relations. In this context, Turkey's engagement in polar issues is of utmost importance to mention. On the one hand, even it is a newcomer to the poles, Turkey has managed five significant expeditions to Antarctica. Besides, it is aiming to devote special attention to the Arctic after managing its first expedition in Svalbard, in 2019. Moreover, it has applied to be an observer within the Arctic Council. Thus, it expects to be among the stakeholders in the region that will help strengthen its international orientation.

Secondly, Turkey's engagement in the poles also indicates its desire to utilize science diplomacy as a tool of foreign policy. Through science diplomacy which has importance for a state to express national power or influence, Turkey might enhance its power capacity and convey it to global standards. Furthermore, it will have the possibility to show that its foreign policy standards are no more related to solely regional dynamics. On the contrary, it will have the preference to implement its foreign policy at the global level. Consequently, this paper seeks for contributing to the literature regarding Turkish foreign policy since it requires a comprehensive understanding.



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