

ARTICLE

# Turkish press climate crisis coverage (2018–2019): elements of disconnect in discourses and the representation of solutions

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## Abstract

Recent studies have shown that the media in developing countries recognizes the anthropogenic impact on climate change, while ignoring the mitigation and adaptation responsibilities of national political actors. This article addresses the discursive motives underlying the disconnect between the impact of climate change and the responsibility of those in positions of political power. This study analyzes Turkish news articles and columns on climate change published in three newspapers with different political orientations between June 2018 and January 2020, a period during which the school strike movement and other local uprisings and debates began. It claims that news related to national climate policy largely omits or obscures references to the anthropogenic causes of climate change, to the degree that the political responsibility of tackling it remains unaddressed and absolves readers and politicians from taking action. The article also aims to underline the impact of political parallelism in terms of the print media's approach to the government's neoliberal economic policy and its duty to tackle climate change. Finally, it argues that these approaches generate specific types of environmental discourses which are embodied in newspapers' conceptions of nature, their solutions to climate change, and the actors of those solutions proposed by newspapers.

**Keywords:** Climate change; Turkish press; environmental discourses; problem-solving actors; political responsibility

## Introduction

The media plays a crucial role in explaining the outcome of climate science to both decision-makers and lay people alike (Schäfer and Schlichting 2014). Attracting public attention to climate change (hereafter CC) is dependent on the media's agenda and how the news frames the issue, with an intention to mobilize the public to take action or not (McDonald 2009). This study attempts to reveal the characteristics of discourses that may promote or impede the mobilization process through an analysis of CC coverage in three newspapers with different political stances.

Building on inferences from other studies on developing countries (Billet 2010), this article argues that the CC discourses of widely read newspapers consistently fail to connect the causes of CC and the responsibilities of political actors at the domestic level, especially in news related to national climate policy. Research shows that the press in developing countries generally refers to global scientific facts and political events when covering CC (Shanahan 2009). Conversely to many industrialized countries, views on climate science in developing countries, including Turkey (Uzelgün and Castro 2015), are not deemed controversial (Mercado 2012). However, the connection between global scientific facts and political obligations at the national level receives scant attention in the news (Billet 2010).

In line with the political and media elite, 71 percent of Turkish society believe that CC is the main cause of extreme weather events seen in the country in recent years, while 55 percent believe that the government is not taking the necessary steps to address the problem (Doğru et al. 2019). However, there are no studies or polls that inquire whether people in Turkey understand the anthropogenic causes of CC, the political responsibilities involved, and whether the media affects their perception of CC.

In other words, although politicians and journalists in developing countries recognize the anthropogenic causes of CC, they can conceal the contribution of their own states by attributing them to the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of industrialized countries. Moreover, they identify industrialized countries as being principally liable in order to mask their own responsibility, sometimes by using a purely nationalistic framing, as in the case of India (Billet 2010). These types of nationalist narratives attempt to present countries as socially homogenous, and they obscure the differences between the industrial elite, emitters of GHG, and the most vulnerable groups in society (Young 2003, 62).

Anthropogenic causes are not often presented in the news, resulting in a skewed perception of who and which industries are contributing to CC and hindering their accountability. Researchers examine the frequency of the news media's representation of the causes of CC against the frequency of their representation of the consequences. However, this approach does not consider or examine the discourse(s) that produces a disconnect between the consequences of CC and the accountability of the economic and political actors who promote activities that increase GHG emissions.

This study subsequently focuses on the media's representation of the solutions to CC and the choices of prominent actors in this process who encourage or discourage taking action on the issue (Spence and Pidgeon 2010). In this sense, highlighting some solutions and problem-solving actors while ignoring others depends on newspapers' political orientations and on the positions they occupy within the media industry. The close ties between the mainstream media and the energy sector are influential factors in leading newspapers designate solutions and actors that fit the government's neoliberal developmental economic policy.

In this article, an analysis is conducted of the CC coverage of three newspapers: one supporting the ruling party (Justice and Development Party—*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*—AKP), one that is pro-opposition (Republican People's Party—*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*—CHP), and one mainstream newspaper that addresses the audiences of both parties. To be more precise, this study questions the motives behind disconnects in the news, such as the representation of anthropogenic impacts,

geographic elements, and the timeline of CC's impact in relation to different public issues (e.g. agriculture, biodiversity, drought). Anthropogenic impact is defined as the GHG emissions stemming mostly from the fossil fuel industry. In this sense, studying the representation of anthropogenic impacts elucidates the discourses and the positions of newspapers vis-à-vis the government's economic policy.

Moreover, this study argues that recognizing some political actors as perpetrators and others as problem solvers of CC (global/national politicians, activists) or promoting specific types of solutions (such as sustainability) are significantly determined by newspapers' conceptions of nature and the economy in relation to specific types of environmental discourses (Dryzek 1997). Therefore, after an examination of the literature on the Turkish media's CC discourse and an analysis of discourse studies, this article will cover climate politics in the country by referencing the viewpoints of different social actors to whom the selected newspapers frequently refer. Before evaluating the results, this study will delineate the media structure and approaches of selected newspapers on CC.

### Literature review

In Turkey, the nationwide press first became interested in CC in 2005 as a result of the first environmental protests organized by Greenpeace against the Çan thermal power plant (Şahin 2014). It gained further prominence during the drought of 2007, coinciding with the worldwide broadcast of the documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* (Uzelgün and Castro 2015). Since the COP (Conference of Parties) 11 (2005), protests and campaigns staged by activist groups from Turkey, in solidarity with the global climate movement, have put pressure on big polluter countries, as well as on Turkey's government, to take action and adopt the Kyoto Protocol (Baykan 2019). These groups were influential in bringing CC into the mainstream, culminating in Turkey relenting and signing the Kyoto Protocol in August 2009.

In 2013, the Gezi Park protests echoed the global environmental justice movement and raised nationwide awareness of other urban development and rural energy projects which people throughout Turkey have struggled against (Özkaynak et al. 2015) to defend their living space (Erensü 2017). A year later, the tragic deaths of 301 miners in the Soma coal mining disaster came to epitomize the neoliberal developmentalist politics of the government and their close ties to extractivist companies (Adaman et al. 2018). After the adoption of the Paris Agreement at the UN Climate Summit in 2015, another protest attracted the attention of the media: in collaboration with the global climate movement led by the Initiative Against Fossil Fuels, local activists in Aliğa organized protests in 2016 with the slogan "Break free from fossil fuels" (Turhan et al. 2020).

Since the very first environmental protest against a gold mine in Bergama (Özen 2009) to the present nuclear program in Turkey (Ersoy and İşeri 2020), studies have analyzed the media's representation of the struggles against energy and mining projects. However, most of the studies focusing on the media's representation of CC generally cover the decade following the year 2000. For instance, over a 12-year span (2001–2013), CC coverage in four newspapers shows that, despite the proliferation of other political and economic issues, the space given to CC was still considerable (Şen 2013). Nonetheless, further research shows that due to Turkey's political context

and pressure on journalists from media managers and owners, they were not able to provide the same level of coverage of CC in the following decade (Şahin and Uzelgün 2016). Uzelgün and Castro's study (2015) analyzes the general elements of climate discourse in two mainstream newspapers from 2000 onwards, covering areas such as specific actors and the public issues that were most debated in relation to CC, and providing a comparison of the results in relation to the media representations of CC in other developing countries. Other studies analyze the media coverage of CC, comparing mainstream and alternative newspapers' representations of the facts as either a risk or threat (Günay et al. 2018).

Similar media or discourse analyses in the Turkish press have rarely drawn the attention of researchers following the publication of the IPCC's report (IPCC 2018), which stressed that limiting global warming to 1.5°C would avoid the disastrous impacts of a 2°C average global temperature rise. For instance, Uncu and Darouiche (2021) analyze 250 national and local Middle Eastern news sources from 14 countries, including Turkey, that focus on debates around the concept of "Anthropocene." However, as in newspapers, the concept is presented as a "geological epoch," without stressing its socioeconomic and political features, and there are only around 200 references to "Anthropocene" over a research period of two decades (Uncu and Darouiche 2021). Nevertheless, global climate movements such as Fridays for Future or Extinction Rebellion (XR) appeared in 2018, underlining the findings of the IPCC report and rapidly arousing the interest of students and youth in Turkey as well as the media. Other local environmental protests in 2019, such as that against a gold mine project by the Canadian firm Alamos Gold in the middle of the Ida Mountains, or the Canal İstanbul project, which threatens biodiversity in the Marmara Sea and would jeopardize the water resources of İstanbul, were covered extensively in the news, even though they have not been subject to media studies yet.

### Discourse analysis of climate news

The critical discourse analysis approach (Van Dijk 1987), when applied to media content, has the potential to explain the complex interactions that occur during environmental policy formulation processes (Harré et al. 1999). It helps researchers to realize how different social or political actors position themselves within the process and, in turn, how it serves to shape the discourse (Hajer and Versteeg 2005). Several studies have analyzed different countries newspapers' coverage of CC through critical discourse analysis (Boykoff 2008) or frame analysis (Han et al. 2017).

Along with the abovementioned study by Uzelgün and Castro (2015), this study was inspired by discourse analysis techniques used by Carvalho (2008) in her study on journalism. Carvalho's analysis is one of the few studies that adapts Dryzek's (1997) discourse types which are generally used to analyze the discourse of political actors and institutions in the media field. Dryzek (1997) categorizes environmental discourses into three main types: problem-solving, sustainability, and radical discourses. According to their definitions of the solution and problem-solver actors, these main discourse types branch into sub-categories such as administrative rationalism (promoting state and technical expertise), democratic pragmatism (democratic participation in policymaking), economic rationalism (prioritizing the market economy), sustainable development (economic growth and social justice),

ecological modernization (growth based on green technologies), green romanticism (change in human consciousness), and green rationalism (promoting systemic change).

Dryzek's (1997, 16) concepts of "basic entities" and "assumptions about natural relationships" constitute the other pillar of his discourse theory; they become visible mainly through one's conception of nature-human relationships. Thus, Turkey's economic policies in relation to CC and the way in which newspapers relate the role of the fossil fuel industry, and industry in general, to the consequences of CC may allow for a better understanding of newspapers' environmental discourses. Therefore, it is necessary to describe the historical context in which environmental problems have emerged and how current national, environmental, and climate policies have been shaped.

### Turkey's climate policy

Turkey, as an industrializing country, was among the first signatories of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992, listed simultaneously under the Convention's Annex I, consisting of OECD members and Economies in Transition (EIT) countries, and Annex II, covering industrialized OECD countries required to provide financial resources to help developing countries carry out emissions reduction projects. Since then, removal from both of these annexes has been the key factor in determining Turkey's climate policy, with the justification that Turkey's per capita GHG emissions and GDP are lower than the averages of the European Union (EU) and OECD countries (Türkeş 2017). After the Sixth UN Climate Conference (COP) in 2000, Turkey switched its demand for removal to that of the "special circumstances" granted to ex-Soviet bloc countries with high GHG emissions, different from Annex I countries. This demand was accepted at the Climate Conference of 2001 and Turkey ratified the UNFCCC in 2004, a move reflective of its efforts to attain EU membership (Şahin 2014). Turkey also signed the Kyoto Protocol (2009), but without making any real commitments to mitigation. Prior to the COP-21 organized in Paris (2015), Turkey had taken steps to tackle the impacts of CC, chiefly by implementing the Law on Utilization of Renewable Energy Sources for the Purposes of Generating Electrical Energy in 2005 and developing a National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan in 2011 (Adaman and Arsel 2016).

Until recently, Turkey's unwillingness to mitigate and its ineligibility to receive funds for mitigation projects have been the driving force behind its climate policy's focus on adaptation towards CC (Turhan et al. 2016). When the Paris Agreement rendered invalid the distinction between developed and developing countries' responsibilities, Turkey's "special circumstance" status sequestered the country. In an arena where different state and non-state actors defend their countries' interests by creating common groups according to similarities or common problems, Turkey remains isolated (Cerit Mazlum 2017). Six years after signing the Paris Agreement, and shortly before receiving a US\$3.2 billion green climate fund (Reuters 27 October 2021), Turkey finally ratified the agreement in October 2021. In parallel, the Turkish cabinet approved a net zero target by 2053. Additionally, the country must renew its goals because even its pledge of "up to a 21 percent reduction in GHG emissions from the predicted Business-As-Usual level by 2030" (Republic

of Turkey 2015) is beyond the limit that the country can emit (Climate Action Tracker 2021). However, Turkey still generates a third of its electricity from burning coal and has one of the world's largest pending orders for new coal power plants (Lo and Farand 2021). This is in spite of an excess supply of electricity, and installation costs for renewables (e.g. solar photovoltaic) that are among the lowest in the world (Climate Action Tracker 2021).

Unfortunately, nor do the opposition parties have a consistent approach to CC policy, demonstrated through the percentages of questions asked (0.03 percent) and motions for parliamentary investigations (0.24 percent) relating to CC during the twenty-fourth legislative term (2011–15) (Algedik et al. 2016). Their low attendance at the legislative procedures for a bill postponing the installation of filters in 15 thermal power plants in 2019 (T24 25 November 2019) and their indifference to the Green Deal (*Yeşil Mutabakat*) Action Plan attest to the lack of an alternative climate policy or reliable mitigation plan to those of the Ministry of Trade (2021). Although the People's Democratic Party (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*—HDP) adopts language that is critical of economic activities destructive to the environment, it has not formulated solutions to tackle CC in its party program (HDP Party Program 2018). In the same vein, the CHP, the main opposition party, neither proposed ratification of the Paris Climate Agreement nor does it have a coherent energy strategy in its party program. When describing its energy strategy, the party prioritizes developing national energy sources, including coal and lignite, as well as renewables (CHP Party Program 2018). However, since the local elections held in 2019, CHP mayors have proposed and executed adaptation and mitigation projects in the metropolitan areas. For instance, in İstanbul, the 2020 budget for renewable energy almost doubled compared to that of 2019 (Yentürk 2020).

Notwithstanding the inaction of political actors, local branches of global climate movements, such as 350.org or the Global Action Group (*Küresel Eylem Grubu*—KEG), have organized several climate protests and campaigns since 2009 that brought together several organizations such as the Green Party and unions, among others. These groups, together with local grassroots movements (Şahin 2014, 62), could focus the public's attention against mine or coal power plant constructions. Since 2018, a third wave climate movement consisting of Extinction Rebellion and Fridays for Future have mobilized the youth of Turkey. The new generation of climate activists advocate for climate justice while pressuring the government, calling on them to “take immediate action” and “to introduce CC into the high school curriculum.”

According to a 3,441-person poll representing varying political views and economic statuses, awareness in Turkish society of CC's anthropogenic causes is high (71.4 percent), while a significant number (66 percent) considers the loss of forests and green spaces as a major factor of CC and underestimates the role played by the energy sector, such as the oil (42 percent) and coal (33 percent) industries (Doğru et al. 2020). The inviolability of the energy sector stems from its role in the creation of a growth-oriented economy and developmentalist ideology. This ideology has served to pre-empt oppositional forces mobilized around the issues of social and environmental justice (Akbulut 2019), visible in different aspects of society, from environmental civil society organizations (CSOs) to grassroots movements, to politics and the media.

Environmental CSOs, such as Greenpeace Mediterranean, the Doğa Association, and TEMA (Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats), were able to cooperate with the state in the 2000s and have been influential in the decision-making process on environmental policies inasmuch as their cooperation was a prerequisite for EU candidacy. When these CSOs confronted the state's red lines, such as the energy sector, their ability to contribute to policymaking was restricted (Kadirbeyoğlu et al. 2017). On the other hand, the efforts of burgeoning grassroots movements fighting against the destructive projects of the energy sector have remained localized in the absence of national and international environmental networks (Kadirbeyoğlu et al. 2017).

Business organizations, such as the Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD), or corporate members of the Resource, Environment and Climate Association (REC) Turkey focus on adaptation and resilience policies, and consider the promotion of energy efficiency on company premises as a way to mitigate both energy consumption and the GHG emissions of the country (Şahin, 2014, 175). CEOs whose companies are members of REC Turkey are well aware of CC's impacts on their businesses, both in terms of the risks and the opportunities, such as promoting green technologies (REC Turkey 2016).

As Adaman and Arsel (2016) claim, Turkey's desire to become a "European-type state" and have an active climate policy is surpassed by its ambitions regarding economic modernization and growth. Building its hegemony on this notion, AKP incorporated this historical commitment to economic growth in its election slogan since 2011: "Let stability last, let Turkey grow" (Akbulut 2019) and sought to mobilize small and medium size capitalists through an Islamic work ethic, in the same way that Protestantism played a role in Western capitalism (Adaman and Akbulut 2013). The approach of protecting the primary sources of capital accumulation, such as the construction industry or extractivist economic policies (Adaman et al. 2018), engenders authoritarian neoliberal forms of governance (Tansel 2018). Undeniably, the case that best illustrates this is the Soma mining disaster, where, despite its negligence of workplace safety, the private company running the site received political protection from the AKP (Adaman et al. 2018). Energy and construction are the two main sectors that have safeguarded economic growth since the beginning of AKP's second term. Therefore, understanding the dynamics between media ownership and the activities of media corporations, either in the energy or construction sectors, may help to reveal the motives that shape media discourse about CC.

### Media structure and the positions of selected newspapers

Turkey's journalistic field fits the Mediterranean media model described by Hallin and Mancini (2004). It is characterized by low levels of newspaper circulation, the polarization of public broadcasting, a tradition of advocacy reporting (Elmas and Kurban 2011), and its party-press parallelism (Çarkoğlu and Yavuz 2010).

Following the coup of 1980, new economic players entered the growing media sector between 1985 and 1995, among which are the Doğan Media Group, the Sabah Group, and the Uzan Group (Beyazıt 2016). Such media groups invested in the finance and energy sectors, and significantly transformed the structure and



nature of journalism while managing good relations with the Turkish Armed Forces, which had established their hegemony over political affairs (Yeşil 2016, 105).

During the AKP's first term in government (2002–2007), the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund (SDIF), a state agency, was attached to the office of then prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and became a tool of the ruling party. Following the 2001 economic crisis, the assets of bankrupted secular businesspeople were transferred to pro-government businesspeople (Erdem 2015, 42–44). Despite EU accession negotiations and associated required legal reforms, and an increase in FDI inflows during the period, the AKP's intention to maintain control over the economy for rent-seeking purposes and to appeal to the nationalist voter base drove the party to replace liberal principles with authoritarian statism (Yeşil 2016).

By 2010, AKP-friendly media companies had gained strength during the subsequent upsurge in partisanship and political parallelism, while financial and legal pressure targeting the mainstream media, particularly on the Doğan Media Group, was scaled up (Yeşil 2016, 88). The acquisition of *Sabah*/ATV by Çalık Holding (Turkuvaz Group), whose CEO at the time was Erdoğan's son-in-law, produced allegations of fraud. Indeed, Çalık Holding was the only bidder in the state-run auction managed by SDIF attached to prime minister's office and was financed by two state-owned Turkish banks (Kaya and Çakmur 2010). After unprecedented fines of \$500 million and \$2.5 billion due to 'tax irregularities', in 2018 the Doğan Media Group exited the media market and sold its assets, including *CNN Türk*, *Hürriyet*, and *Kanal D*, to the pro-government Demirören Group (Balamir Coşkun 2020).

Parallel to the transfer of media ownership, these pro-government businesspeople also secured public tenders linked to mega construction projects, such as İstanbul Airport (Baloğlu 2019). In its 2014 report, TEMA exposed the scope of deforestation that would be caused by these projects, including the Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge and İstanbul Airport, and their possible impacts on CC (Tolunay 2016). Although these projects have been heavily criticized by environmentalist organizations, they have become useful tools for the pro-government media elite to foster a populist discourse based on developmentalism (Baykal Fide 2020).

After the 2018 sale of *Hürriyet* to the Demirören group, fifty journalists working in the group's TV channels, *CNN Türk* and *Kanal D*, were rapidly dismissed in May 2018, though the new CEO waited until November 2019 to discharge forty-five journalists who were members of Turkey's Union of Journalists (TGS), including authors of some of the news in our sample. Thus, within the timescale of this study, there was no shift in *Hürriyet*'s old editorial approach. However, journalists working in opposition newspapers such as *Cumhuriyet* or *Sözcü*, or in leftist newspapers and online news websites such as *Birgün*, *Evrensel*, and *Bianet*, face access bans or defamation lawsuits when they publish news exposing the relationship between the economic interests of some political figures in such projects (Adal 2020).

## Method and concepts

This study focuses only on mainstream, pro-government, and pro-main opposition press; the sample does not include left-wing opposition newspapers such as *Birgün* or *Evrensel*. When constructing the sample for this study, the abovementioned political parallelism in the journalistic field has been effective in selecting the newspapers.



As the “Polarized Pluralist Media” model is characterized by an elite-oriented press with limited circulation (Hallin and Mancini 2004), the presence of media elites with a specialism in environmental issues has been effective in the selection process. Thus, the pro-government *Sabah* and *Hürriyet*, which still hosted many non-pro-government journalists and columnists within the timescale of this study, have been included in the sample. According to a MediaCom Turkey report, *Hürriyet* appealed to both oppositional and pro-government audiences from the upper (52 percent) and lower (28 percent) middle classes (Yavçan and Ongur 2016), which it may have retained until recently. That is why it is included as a mainstream newspaper in this study. Since other pro-main opposition newspapers such as *Sözcü* do not host journalists with a specialism in the issue, this study included *Cumhuriyet* so as to cover opposition views on CC, despite its low circulation compared to *Sözcü*. Another reason for selecting *Cumhuriyet* was its loyalty to the Republican tradition and its tendency to represent the main opposition during the AKP era (Yeşil 2016; Durna and Şimşek, 2019).

Within a predetermined timescale—June 2018 to January 2020—the websites of the three newspapers were scanned for three terms in particular: “climate change,” “climate crisis,” and “global warming.” After eliminating repetitive and figurative uses of the terms “climate” and “warming” (mostly referring to other political contexts), a total of 1,165 news articles and columns were analyzed from the three newspapers. Motivated by the following research questions (RQs), the main findings of this research may be summarized as follows:

RQ1: Is there a link between specific public issues linked to CC, its timing, and location, and the representation of the anthropogenic impact on it? As Billet (2010) shows, the connection between the causes of CC and political responsibilities at the national or local level is consistently missing in the news. In support of that argument, this study shows that news related to national climate policy does not generally refer to the anthropogenic causes of CC.

RQ2: What are the most frequently proffered solutions and actors in the selected newspapers? How is the concept of nature represented in newspapers? Considering all of these elements, which of Dryzek’s (1997) categories correspond better to the selected newspapers’ discourses? The findings seem to show that newspapers which are part of the corporate media adopt discourses that prioritize economic and political actors, while a newspaper that is outside the corporate media seems to give more voice to other local actors.

RQ3: Are these conceptualizations of nature presented by the newspapers supportive of or opposed to the neoliberal developmentalist economic policy of the AKP? What is the tone of the discourses regarding Turkey’s political responsibilities in tackling CC? The study’s findings suggest that the extent of critiques of the discourses in relation to Turkey’s neoliberal developmentalist economy vary according to the newspaper’s dependence on big companies, while Turkey’s political responsibility has a tendency to be underrated in all newspapers.

In order to be more specific, this study went beyond the main framing categories proposed by Boykoff (2008) and combined them with public issues linked to CC (e.g. global climate policy, protests) appropriate to the political context of Turkey, some of which were also used in Uzelgün and Castro’s study (2015). When trying to identify the anthropogenic impacts on CC, the focus was on the impact of GHG emissions generated mainly from the fossil fuel industry.

**Table 1.** The most frequent public issues linked to CC per newspapers' news and columns

Linked Public issues	<i>Hürriyet</i> news	<i>Hürriyet</i> columns	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> news	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> columns	<i>Sabah</i> news	<i>Sabah</i> columns
Science	88	16	55	9	32	≤5
Global climate policies	60	26	40	24	37	12
Economic sustainability	59	33	28	14	35	12
Impact on agriculture and water resources	55	10	18	11	28	6
National Climate Policy	39	17	≤10	12	36	15
Meteorology	36	14	34	≤5	31	≤5
Biodiversity	34	19	17	8	20	≤5
Protests	23	22	34	21	19	5
Artistic, cultural and social event	22	≤5	26	6	≤10	≤5
Municipal policies	21	11	17	9	11	≤5
Local NGO campaigns	16	≤5	≤10	≤5	≤10	≤5
Reconstruction	13	≤5	≤10	≤5	≤10	≤5
Refugees and human rights	10	≤5	≤10	6	≤10	≤5
Health	≤10	≤10	10	≤5	≤10	≤5
Total news/column or special news	379	150	247	106	220	63

Note. One news story was coded multiple times for different associated public issues.

Time and geographical scales are other elements that may create a disconnect between CC and its local or national impacts. Representation of only the future impacts of CC may result in depoliticization and prevent immediate political or social action (Hulme and Dessai 2008). Similarly, representing CC as a global phenomenon which only impacts remote countries is a way of allowing local actors to evade accountability (Olausson 2009). To measure the effects of geographical scale, news has been classified under the following categories: Turkey, Other Countries, and Other Countries and Turkey.

Defining the main actors in the news by distinguishing “actors of a solution” from other passive actors was crucial for analyzing the discourse type that fits the news. However, the representation of these actors negotiating and/or collaborating with each other was also an important element in arriving at an understanding of the relevance of the newspapers' approach in respect to Dryzek's (1997) discourse types.

### Results: the elements of discursive disconnection

First, news coverage on CC in Turkey is commonly based on international and national news agency sources, or on the Turkish news services of foreign news channels, such as the BBC and Deutsche Welle, to name a couple. As shown in Table 1,

*Cumhuriyet* devoted the most coverage to the subject (30 percent—106 of 353 articles) in its exclusive news articles and columns, though *Hürriyet* recorded the highest total news coverage. Only 22 percent of *Sabah*'s and 28 percent of *Hürriyet*'s coverage consisted of columns or special news articles. Both *Cumhuriyet* and *Hürriyet* have columnists and/or reporters who specialize in either environmental or CC news. However, *Sabah* had only three columnists who occasionally produced stories on the issue, mainly in relation to global climate policies.

Although it is not the first category in *Sabah*, the prominence given to science in all of the selected newspapers shows that the focus is still on the consequences of CC rather than its causes. In fact, the abundance of news in the science and global climate policy categories also parallels previous research and justifies the continuity of attention given to scientists and politicians (Uzelgün and Castro 2015). However, in order to understand the construction of the discourse specific to each newspaper, the other most framed categories should also be evaluated.

For *Sabah*, global and national climate policy and news about economic sustainability receive greater levels of coverage than science-related climate news. However, it is noteworthy that the economy and sustainability-related climate news were the topics that most interested *Hürriyet* editors and columnists. Climate protests were the third most debated issue by *Hürriyet* columnists and the second most covered issue for *Cumhuriyet*.

As Table 2 illustrates, the anthropogenic causes of CC have never reached the 50 percent coverage ratio in the relevant news stories categorized above, though it is less noticeable in news articles covering the 'impact on agriculture and water resources' (10 percent).

Regarding the most framed issues specific to each newspaper, only 20 percent (7 out of 51) of *Sabah*'s national climate policy news and 21 percent (10 out of 47) of its economic sustainability news cover the scientific causes of CC. The newspaper rarely refers to the anthropogenic causes of CC in categories such as protests, health, refugee and human rights, and local NGO campaigns, mentioned in less than 1 percent of the respective stories.

*Hürriyet* refers to the anthropogenic causes of CC in 46 percent (25 out of 56) of its national climate policy news, in 33 percent (31 out of 92) of its economic sustainability-related news, and in only 35 percent (16 out of 45) of news on protests. In regard to *Cumhuriyet*, 53 percent (29 out of 55) of climate protest news, 65 percent (13 out of 20) of national climate policy news, and 38 percent (16 out of 42) of its economic sustainability news cover the causes of CC. *Cumhuriyet* provides the most coverage of municipal policy-related news, with 34 percent (9 out of 26) of the stories mentioning anthropogenic causes.

In line with the country's abovementioned aspirations for economic modernization and development (Adaman and Arsel 2016), and despite differences between the selected newspapers, 70 percent of both national climate policy and economic sustainability news are categories in which the disconnect between anthropogenic causes and impacts becomes more apparent.

Although the use of the future tense is almost totally avoided, when it did appear, it was mainly used in relation to national climate (12 percent), meteorology (12 percent), and economic sustainability news/science news (11 percent). The future tense appears in a few national climate news articles, where political actors such as

**Table 2.** Elements of discursive disconnection between CC and its local impacts

	Is there a narrative of anthropogenic causes? (Percentage)		Timing of the CC (Percentage)			Location of the CC (Percentage)		
	No	Yes	Future	Now	Unknown	Turkey	Other countries	Other countries & Turkey
Public issues linked to CC								
<i>Global climate policies (128)</i>	51%	49%	5%	59%	36%		87%	13%
<i>Economic sustainability (124)</i>	70%	30%	5%	53%	42%	38%	25%	37%
<i>Protest (98)</i>	65%	35%		74%	26%	6%	71%	23%
<i>Science (94)</i>	58%	42%	10%	72%	18%	4%	85%	11%
<i>Impact on agriculture and water resources (76)</i>	90%	10%	6%	72%	22%	69%	7%	23%
<i>Biodiversity (59)</i>	78%	32%		86%	14%	51%	32%	17%
<i>Meteorology (59)</i>	83%	17%	12%	80%	8%	40%	29%	31%
<i>Artistic-cultural-social and event (57)</i>	86%	14%	7%	54%	39%	26%	37%	37%
<i>National climate policies (57)</i>	70%	30%	12%	47%	41%	58%	2%	40%
<i>Municipal policies (42)</i>	62%	38%	7%	52%	41%	67%	2%	31%
<i>Science/meteorology (35)</i>	60%	40%	3%	94%	3%	20%	60%	20%
<i>Health (28)</i>	61%	39%	7%	79%	14%	29%	32%	39%
<i>Science/biodiversity (24)</i>	79%	21%	4%	83%	13%	13%	79%	8%
<i>National climate policy/Global climate policies (22)</i>	59%	41%	4%	73%	23%			100%
<i>Refugees and human rights (22)</i>	73%	27%	4%	73%	23%	9%	64%	27%
<i>Economy-sustainability/science (18)</i>	55%	45%	11%	67%	22%	39%	50%	11%
<i>Global climate policies/protest (17)</i>	59%	41%		88%	12%		71%	29%
<i>Economic sustainability/Impact on agriculture and water resources (16)</i>	75%	25%	19%	56%	25%	63%	12%	25%

Note. Here one news story is coded only once for the public issue linked to CC. These are not all the linked public issues but only the most frequently connected and combined.

**Table 3.** Sabah's map of actors and solutions

Total number of news articles and columns on CC	Basic entities and assumptions about natural relationships	Most frequent actors and their cooperation	Percentage of total news		Percentage of news articles with a solution		
			Problem solvers	Most frequent solutions	Percentage of news articles with a solution	Percentage of news articles with a solution	
Sabah 283 news and columns	Nature is seen as a mean to achieve the economic projects	Scientists (54 times)	19%	Global political leaders (54)	39%	Adaptation (25)	18%
		Turkish political leaders (AKP) (34 times)	12%	Turkish business people (13)	9%	Renewables (17)	12%
		Global political leaders (35 times)	12%	Turkish political leaders (AKP) (8)	6%	Recycling (15)	10%
	Citizens are the subjects/voters that should have been served by the state and not participants in the resolution process of environmental problems	Ministry of Environment and Urbanization (30 times)	11%	Global activists (7)	5%	Adaptation-recycling/ Urban transformation (11)	8%
		Global activists (29 times)	10%	Scientists (7)	5%	Mitigation of GHG (11)	8%
		Turkish scientists (27 times)	10%	Global businesspeople (7)	5%	Social mobilization (11)	8%
		Turkish businesspeople (25 times)	9%	Global societies (6)	4%	Innovation (9)	6%
	Climate change is a problem that has to be solved by developed countries Turkey has to benefit from environmental funds	Local NGO member (23 times)	8%	Communities in Turkey (6)	4%	Sustainable development (7)	5%
		Communities in Turkey (20 times)	7%	Global political and business leaders (6)	4%	Land and forest protection (6)	4%
		Local activists (16 times)	5%	Municipal actors (AKP) (5)	4%	Awareness (6)	4%
		Global societies (15 times)	5%	Global and Turkish political leaders (4)	3%		
	There is no connection between the mega projects or the construction and coal energy-based economy and CC	Global business leaders (12 times)	4%				
		Intergovernmental institutions and global societies (11 times)	4%				
Living species (9 times)		3%					
						Total number of news articles with solution(s) 137	48%
						None (146)	52%

Note. In Tables 3, 4 and 5 frequent actors and problem solvers are coded to demonstrate outstanding single actors and the cooperation of the different categories of actors and problem solvers.

**Table 4.** *Hürriyet's* map of actors and solutions

Total number of news articles and columns on CC	Basic entities and assumptions about natural relationships	Most frequent actors and their cooperation	Percentage of total news	Problem solvers	Percentage of news articles with a solution	Most frequent solutions	Percentage of news articles with a solution
<i>Hürriyet</i> 529 news and columns	Nature is a place where we live. So societies develop their economies by considering the limited sources and in a sustainable way	Scientists (110 times)	20%	Global political leaders (54)	20%	Political shift (45)	16%
		Global political leaders (79 times)	15%	Turkish businesspeople (30)	11%	Mitigation of GHG (38)	13%
		Turkish businesspeople (59 times)	11%	Turkish political leaders (AKP) (19)	7%	Social mobilization (29)	10%
		Turkish scientists (49 times)	9%	Scientists (15)	6%	Sustainable development (22)	8%
		Global activists (48 times)	9%	Communities in Turkey (13)	5%	Land and forest protection (20)	7%
	The state is instrumental in letting business contribute to the economy without destroying nature. Businesspeople have key roles in both developing the country and protecting nature	Local NGO member (49 times)	9%	Global and Turkish political leaders (12)	4%	Adaptation (19)	7%
		Communities in Turkey (42 times)	8%	Municipal actors (all) (12)	4%	Innovation (17)	6%
		Turkish political leaders (AKP) (31 times)	6%	Global political leaders and activists (11)	4%	Renewables (15)	5%
		Intergovernmental institutions and global societies (29 times)	5%	Global activists (11)	4%	Municipal political shift (13)	5%
	Climate change is a problem that has to be solved by businesspeople with the support of international organizations' funding and a national policy that would promote this kind of cooperation			Global societies (11)	4%	Recycling (11)	4%
		Ministry of Environment and Urbanization (30 times)	5%	Global political and business leaders (10)	4%	Mitigation of GHG and carbon footprint (8)	3%
		Living species (30 times)	5%	Global businesspeople (9)	3%		
		Global societies (30 times)	5%				
		Local activists (21 times)	4%				
	Balanced discourse vis-a-vis government and opposition	Municipal actors (CHP) (18 times)	3%				
Global business leaders (20 times)		3%					
Total number of news articles with solution(s) (275)							52%
None (254)							48%

President Erdoğan or his wife mention the forecasts of scientists in their speeches or emphasize the importance of adaptation projects. Its use is also outstanding in economic sustainability news when businesspeople, generally from the insurance or finance sectors, talk about their future adaptation plans. Discourses expressed in the future tense generally tend to evoke the notion of deferred risk (Harré et al. 1999) which enables political leaders to postpone immediate action concerning CC, whereas more explicit and impending threats may compel them to act without delay (Günay et al. 2018). Furthermore, the ambiguity of the timing emerges as an element that creates a disconnect between CC and its local impact, mainly in economic sustainability news and national and municipal climate policy news.

News articles covering the “impact on agriculture and water resources” (92 percent), meteorology (71 percent), and “health” (68 percent) are mostly localized in Turkey, whereas 83 percent of meteorology news and 90 percent of news covering the “impact on agriculture and water resources” do not mention the anthropogenic impact on CC. However, news about issues such as protests, refugee and human rights, and, naturally, global climate politics (generally consisting of climate summits) are localized in other countries.

Unfortunately, regarding climate protest news, CC and its impacts have been generally localized in other countries, as the protests started in Europe and expanded all over the world. Even though students in Turkey have organized climate strikes since April 2019, only 6 percent of protest news is framed in a way that localizes the impacts of CC. The causes of CC are also absent in 65 percent of news articles and the demands of protesters are framed in an ambiguous way—or not framed at all—describing only the actions of protesters without explaining their demands. Consequently, the discursive elements of the disconnection between CC, its causes, and local impact are often noticed in news related to the impact on agriculture and water resources, meteorology, national climate policy, economic sustainability, and protest.

### The economic rationalism of *Sabah*

*Sabah* depicts nature as a resource that can be exploited for the purposes of economic growth and development. This conception of nature became apparent and concrete in *Sabah*, largely owing to Greta Thunberg’s and other climate activists’ complaint filed against five countries in reference to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Among the signatories of this Convention, 45 countries agreed to an additional protocol that let children petition the UN directly regarding the five top polluters out of these 45 countries, including Turkey. The following remarks by a *Sabah* columnist against the complaint epitomizes both the newspaper’s conception of nature and its support of Turkish energy policy:

China is responsible for the 27 percent of carbon emissions in the world, followed by US with 14 percent, India with 6.8 percent, Russia with 4.7 percent, and Japan with 3.3 percent of the total emissions. However, Greta Thunberg and her friends do not complain about these countries. Instead, they filed a complaint against Turkey, which is responsible for only 1 percent of global carbon emissions. Really now? (. . .) We are a developing country; we should



produce energy in the cheapest way but they want us to stop coal-based energy production! We are responsible for only 1 percent of global (carbon) emissions. For us, it is a huge luxury to ratify the Paris Agreement. First, the superpowers should clean up the world that they polluted! (Tezel 2019; author's translation)

*Sabah* regularly cites the speeches of the President and the Minister of Environment and Urbanization or Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. Sometimes after devastating floods or, for instance, at a ceremony on the forestation of an area encompassing a former coal plant, it captions photos in its headlines to underline that Turkey is among the countries that least pollutes the world (*Sabah*, 17 December 2018).

As Turkey does not have a coherent strategy of mitigation, options such as adaptation, recycling, and urban greening are considered to be solutions to CC, which are frequently proposed by the newspaper. This is why *Sabah* mostly suggests solutions such as the construction of “Gardens of the Nation” (*millet bahçeleri*) on already natural green spaces in urban areas (Şehir Plancıları Odası 2018) by the Housing Development Administration (Toplu Konut İdaresi, TOKİ). The “Gardens of the Nation” is one of the three strategies that has been developed to combat CC and was often promoted both by the Minister of Environment and Urbanization, Murat Kurum, and President Erdoğan (BIA News Desk 2021).

Two other strategies abundantly covered by *Sabah* are the “Zero Waste Project” and the “Black Sea Region Climate Action Plan.” “The Zero Waste Project,” initiated by the president’s wife Emine Erdoğan in 2017, has been presented since (mostly by herself) as one of Turkey’s main strategies to tackle CC at the Climate Action Summit (*Sabah* 26 September 2019) and at OECD meetings (*Sabah* 7 November 2018) held to evaluate countries’ environmental performances (Paris, 2018).

Although the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization is the second most cited actor/institution (11 percent), *Sabah* does not consider the Ministry’s technical expertise as a tool in developing a solution for CC and, thus, its discourse differs from the administrative rationalist type. Indeed, for the pro-government *Sabah*, there are various actors from developed countries, such as global political leaders (39 percent), activists (5 percent), scientists (5 percent), or societies (4 percent) who should solve the problem, as these countries have been the main polluter countries.

*Sabah* chose a phrase from Erdoğan’s speech at the UN Climate Action Summit in New York in 2019 for its headline: “Assume responsibility vis-a-vis climate change” (*Sabah* 24 September 2019). Through this headline, the paper endorsed his call for international organizations and corporations to invest in Turkey’s “Zero carbon buildings for everyone” project or to recognize the country’s eligibility for environmental funds. This pure expression of the neoliberal developmentalist policy, which is sometimes backed by an anti-Western populist discourse, masks the responsibilities of Turkey regarding CC, such as that in the following quote: “European states that once applauded Gezi protesters, now use violence without hesitation when its own Gezi-like protesters poured onto the streets; hundreds of environmentalists were detained” (*Sabah* 9 October 2019). Furthermore, few news articles portray protesters in a positive light, as actors of a solution to CC.

However, after the global actors of a solution, the next most represented national actor category comprises Turkish businesspeople. Their representation, together with Turkish political leaders—mostly pro-AKP—appears to be characteristic of the economic rationalist discourse. Although the agents of economic rationalism, as per Dryzek's definition (1997, 113), are normally businesspeople cooperating with politicians, few agents in government positions can also be considered as agents of economic rationalism. In harmony with the government's neoliberal developmentalist economic policy, *economic rationalism*, which excludes citizens from the process of finding a solution to environmental problems and considers nature as property that can be privatized and commodified (Dryzek 1997), marks both the discourses of AKP leaders and their flagship paper, *Sabah*.

### The sustainability discourse of *Hürriyet*

Within the timescale of the study, although *Hürriyet* published the press releases issued by President Erdoğan or the Minister of Environment and Urbanization, Murat Kurum, as a popular mainstream newspaper it differed from *Sabah* in that it gave a voice to other political parties' MPs or mayors, along with various other social actors. Therefore, it was possible to see in the newspaper President Erdoğan explaining how parliament defended Turkey's interests by not ratifying the Paris Agreement (*Hürriyet* 3 December 2019). At the same time, it also identified social actors such as the president of the Chamber of Environmental Engineers in Zonguldak, a city with major coal power plants, and cited the calls of social actors on financial organizations to divest from coal power plant projects by considering CC and air pollution problems (*Hürriyet* 20 September 2018).

*Hürriyet* also differed from *Sabah* in its conception of nature inasmuch as it adopted a discourse that simultaneously endorsed economic growth, environmental protection, and distributive justice, which is characteristic of the *sustainable development discourse* (Dryzek 1997). *Hürriyet's* economic sustainability-related news consisted of recycling projects or the mitigation intentions of corporations in the sectors of finance, insurance, domestic appliances, the automotive industry, and even fossil fuel companies. Occasionally, in exclusive interviews with CEOs or in corporations' press releases about annual revenues, CC was generally a secondary topic.

*Hürriyet* had many reporters and columnists specializing in CC whose articles diverge from the regular editorial approach and style of the newspaper. A reporter specializing in CC covered all aspects of the crisis, including negotiations in UN climate summits and protests, mostly through exclusive interviews. A contributor regularly wrote about biodiversity-related issues, while another columnist covered the views of all types of actors, including incumbent and opposition parties' members, businesspeople and activists, and follows a meeting between participants discussing the tourism sector and its sustainability. In a column entitled "High-income tourist visits qualified ecosystem" (Benmayor 2019b), the columnist stressed that "a conscious tourist would think twice before visiting a country that allows coal power plants to run unfiltered for 2.5 years." The emphasis on the importance of environmental protection for the sustainability of the business community itself reflected *Hürriyet's* approach on the issue. Meanwhile, the same columnist, in another article, revealed that the owners of the abovementioned unfiltered coal plants are, ironically,

part of a campaign against the use of plastics, deemed an attempt to greenwash their polluting industries (Benmayor 2019b).

Among the newspapers in the sample, *Hürriyet* not only gave wide coverage to Turkish businesspeople (11 percent), but also represented them as actors of solutions to CC, along with AKP leaders, generally in news related to disasters caused by extreme weather events or adaptation policies, without necessarily calling on the ruling party to take the responsibility for mitigation policies. *Hürriyet* did not prioritize any particular political party when describing municipal figures as actors of solutions nor while covering international meetings in which local mayors took part. Thus, solutions, such as the mitigation of GHG emissions and sustainability, and the presentation of political leaders, businesspeople, and communities in Turkey (e.g. fishers/farmers or women) as actors of solutions, are characteristic of the sustainability discourse adopted by the newspaper.

### The green rationalism of *Cumhuriyet*

*Cumhuriyet* also hosts reporters who specialized in environmental issues and columnists who regularly wrote on different aspects of CC, such as the impact of climate protests on the rise of Green parties and the damage to economic systems on both the national and global scale. Most of the reporters and columnists consider humanity to be an inherent part of nature and even criticize growth-oriented economies:

Growth-oriented economics and the dominance of a criteria based by growth-driven variables affects almost every field. Energy consumption, GNP, and per capita income are all components used to measure life quality, happiness, progress, and prosperity by how much you consume. The evaluations of poverty and prosperity are based on your consumption ability and capacity for goods and services. All are elements of a societal model and an economy driven by capital. Consume everything and be happy! (Bursalı 2019; author's translation).

*Cumhuriyet* columnists promote eco-socialism (Yeldan 2019) or the 'vegan revolution' (Kalkandelen 2019) and they commonly critique the capitalist system and fossil fuel-driven economies (Yıldızoğlu 11 November 2019). The newspaper's conception of nature and the discourse of its reporters and columnists evoke a green rationalist discourse (Dryzek 1997), seen in headlines such as "Mountains of Profit" (*Cumhuriyet* 8 August 2019). In reference to the Ida Mountains where the government defended the deforestation that resulting from allowing the Canadian Alamos Gold Company to prospect for gold, the paper asked, "How could you sacrifice this country?" (*Cumhuriyet* 11 August 2019). *Cumhuriyet* always links these kinds of stories to their effects on CC and hardens the tone of its criticism when extreme weather events or other disasters occur, and the damage caused to people's lives are not properly addressed by the government: "It should elicit a response in that Minister Kurum started a subsequent speech with the promotion of the Canal Istanbul Project and the Gardens of the Nation instead of the flood disaster in Ordu" (*Cumhuriyet* 10 August 2018).

When *Cumhuriyet* represents Turkish political leaders (that is, AKP leaders) as the actors of a solution, it is usually when calling on the government to take responsibility and sign the Paris Agreement or to make the necessary arrangements to

mitigate GHG emissions at the national level. In this sense, the newspaper is more progressive than the main opposition party's climate policy, as reflected in the aforementioned party program.

Other than global and Turkish political leaders, the newspaper also considers municipal actors, and especially mayors from CHP, to be part of a solution to CC, along with global activists and civil societies. The mayor of İstanbul, Ekrem İmamoğlu (CHP), has been portrayed positively in *Cumhuriyet*, which reported on his statement with the headline "Call for a Climate Emergency" (*Cumhuriyet* 11 October 2019), or his declaration on the impact of the Canal İstanbul Project on the environment and on CC (*Cumhuriyet* 3 December 2019). As seen in Table 5, *Cumhuriyet* is the only newspaper in our sample which frames local activists as actors of a solution. In a few news items, it is also possible to see CHP mayors, local activists, and farmers as cooperating on seeking a solution. A municipal political shift, along with a national and global political shift, are also among the solutions presented as necessary to take legal measures to mitigate GHG emissions. However, the most represented solution in the newspaper is social mobilization, which not only consists of climate protests, but also of the mobilization of different communities such as farmers, students, and women. Thus, its references to the cooperation of multiple actors can be also seen as characteristic of its green rationalist discourse.

## Conclusion

Based on the idea that the media can play a crucial role in mobilizing or dissuading (Spence and Pidgeon 2010) its audience by using effective discourse, this study examined the elements that have the ability to generate action or inertia regarding CC in the articles of three newspapers with different political orientations.

The study demonstrates the disconnect between the causes of CC and the responsibilities of the government in terms of news coverage in Turkey. News about national climate policy constitutes one of the categories where most coverage (70 percent) is devoid of any reference to the anthropogenic impacts on CC in all the newspapers. However, the pro-government *Sabah* was most likely to ignore (80 percent) explanations for the causes of CC. Although the use of the future tense is rare in news categories overall, its appearance in national climate policy and economic sustainability-related news is remarkable.

Regarding solutions to CC, in line with previous research (Mercado 2012), the newspapers pointed to all global political actors as actors of a solution and did not present CC as something for which Turkey bore responsibility. Except for *Cumhuriyet*, the papers ignore the per capita emissions of the established and newly rising middle classes in the country, as the Indian press once did. Nevertheless, the Turkish press' discourse differs from that of the pre-Paris Agreement era Indian nationwide press, which utilized a strong reactionary narrative based on North-South divisions alongside charges of neo-colonialism (Billet 2010). However, there are some narratives in the pro-government *Sabah* that defend Turkey's right to develop. Furthermore, the investments of media owners in the energy and construction sectors and their connections to the incumbent party make the Turkish press' discourse on CC an exception from that of other industrializing countries' media. In India or Argentina, media businesses are developed but are not necessarily involved in the energy and construction sectors.

**Table 5.** *Cumhuriyet's* map of actors and solutions

Total number of news articles and columns on CC	Basic entities and assumptions about natural relationships	Most frequent actors and their cooperation	Percentage of total news		Percentage of news articles with a solution		Percentage of news articles with a solution	
				Problem solvers		Most frequent solutions		
<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 353 news and columns	Humanity is part of nature and has its limits; with a committed government it is possible to better manage the environment	Scientists (83 times)	23%			Social mobilization (29)	16%	
		Global political leaders (82 times)	23%	Global political leaders (41)	23%	Mitigation of GHG (23)	13%	
		Global activists (56 times)	15%	Municipal actors (CHP) (14)	8%	Political shift (22)	12%	
		Turkish businesspeople (28 times)	8%	Global political leaders and activists (12)	7%	Municipal political shift (16)	9%	
	Criticism of growth-driven economy. Cooperation of different social actors is seen as crucial in the resolution of environmental problems	Local NGO members (30 times)	8%	Global political leaders and global societies (12)	7%	Adaptation (14)	8%	
		Municipal actors (CHP) (27 times)	7%	Turkish political leaders (AKP) (9)	5%	Sustainable development (11)	6%	
		Turkish scientists (27 times)	7%	Global societies (9)	5%			
		Global societies (24 times)	6%	Turkish businesspeople (9)	5%			
	Climate change is a crucial problem that has to be solved by the cooperation of multiple actors. As well as other developing countries Turkey has its responsibility in this issue	Local activists (18 times)	5%	Global activists (9)	5%	Mitigation of GHG/Renewables (10)	5%	
		Living species (17 times)	5%	Global and local activists (7)	4%	Awareness (10)	5%	
		International NGO members (17 times)	5%	Turkish political leaders (in general) (7)	4%	Renewables (8)	4%	
		Communities in Turkey (18 times)	5%			Land and forest protection (7)	4%	
	Criticism of the environmental policy of the government	Global business leaders (16 times)	4%			Change of diet and lifestyle (6)	3%	
		Intergovernmental institutions and global societies (9 times)	3%			Protection of oceans and water resources (6)	3%	
	Total number of news articles with solution(s) (178)							50,60%
	None (177)							50,40%

Therefore, *Sabah*, part of the Turkuvaz Group involved in the energy and construction sectors, used an economic rationalist discourse (Dryzek 1997) that is compatible with the government's neoliberal developmentalist policies. This considers the environment as property to be privatized and commodified, thus promoting Turkish businesspeople as actors of a solution. *Hürriyet*, part of the Demirören Group involved in the energy sector, also defined Turkish businesspeople as actors of a solution to CC. However, it proposed different solutions, such as the mitigation of GHG emissions, sustainable development, and even social mobilization, characteristics of a sustainability discourse which partly reflect the main opposition's approach to the issue within the specified time frame. Furthermore, *Hürriyet's* discourse acknowledges economic growth and development but also emphasizes the importance of environmental protection and readjusting the system according to protective arrangements and redistributive justice. The prominence of Turkish businesspeople as problem-solving actors in these two newspapers is noticeable, indicating that priority is given to them by the corporate media's newspapers. However, *Cumhuriyet*, which is not part of the big media holdings, rarely referred to political incumbents and businesspeople as problem solvers, instead reminding them of their responsibilities. This supports the argument that corporate media's newspapers do not use critical language towards Turkey's growth-based economic policy and domestic responsibility in tackling CC. Furthermore, *Cumhuriyet* is the only newspaper to recognize global activists as actors of solutions, together with global political actors, societies, municipal actors, as well as local activists. In this sense, the newspaper's green rationalist discourse on CC is more progressive than the main opposition party, and it represents the stances of minority groups within the main opposition, such as CSOs or grassroots movements. Nonetheless, the references to local communities and activists remain few compared to those of global political leaders and activists.

In summary, both solutions and actors involved in CC were represented in just 50 percent of CC news in all newspapers, in keeping with the findings of previous research regarding developing countries' media's extensive coverage on the consequences rather than the causes and potential solutions of CC (Uzelgün and Castro 2015; Günay et al. 2018). Global political leaders appear as outstanding problem solvers, although each newspaper prioritized subsidiary actors specific to the type of environmental discourse they promulgated. This study focused only on news in mainstream pro-government and opposition media outlets that mention CC and it put aside the coverage of other news outlets of environmental issues or investments in the energy and construction sectors. However, the findings provide insight into the newspapers' environmental discourse regarding the way they anchor CC with public issues and solutions. Future studies may fill this gap by analyzing these elements in different contexts and look at different media outlets that represent a wider spectrum of the political opposition.

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