



Analysis

Value-based adaptation to climate change and divergent developmentalisms in Turkish agriculture

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ABSTRACT

There is an increased recognition and attention on human values with respect to their role in shaping climate change adaptation policies. Furthermore, as the recent literature suggests, values held by policy actors are centrally located in the debates linking adaptation to development. However, different values tend to give way to diverging adaptation policy preferences, which often appear as a dichotomy of adjustment (incremental change) versus transformation. This study enquires the assumptions and values in adaptation policy by using Q-methodology and advances value-based approach to adaptation policy with an empirical case from Turkey, a developing country with key vulnerabilities in its agricultural system. By exploring the narratives of 29 policy actors who participated in the making of Turkey's climate change adaptation strategy, the analysis suggests that assumptions regarding an economic growth-driven development agenda often shape adaptation concerns. Further analysis of the 4 emerging discourses (productivism, techno-managerialism, eco-localism, and authoritarianism) suggests that while discourses agree that the ultimate goal of adaptation is safeguarding a developmentalist vision in agriculture, they differ on the means and agents for reaching this goal. I argue that this divergence can enhance the transformative potential of adaptation by bringing "how," "for whom," and "why" questions back to policymaking.

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1. Introduction

As the late Uruguayan author [Eduardo Galeano \(1997\)](#) once famously posited, "technocracy sees statistics, not people [...] statistics admit but [do] not repent." While formal policies often depict climate change adaptation as a technical, rational, and manageable process (hence prevailing technocratic interventions), climate change adaptation necessitates multi-scalar, multi-actor, and multi-temporal action ([Conway and Mustelin, 2014](#)). One of the reasons "why we disagree about climate change," as [Hulme \(2009\)](#) articulates, is the fact that people ascribe different values to activities, assets, constructs, and resources. The World Social Sciences Report 2013 recently claimed that "understanding how values, attitudes, worldviews, beliefs, and visions of the future influence system structure and processes is critical" within the context of global environmental change ([Hackmann and Moser, 2013: 68](#)). Similar concerns are now echoed across various disciplines ([Dietz et al., 2005; Corner et al., 2014; Castree et al., 2014; Hulme, 2011](#)). As these accounts make it clear, research on human values and responses to global environmental challenges provide us with new tools to understand and evaluate the underlying assumptions of policy preferences.

This study explores the emerging notion of "value-based adaptation" ([O'Brien and Wolf, 2010](#)) with an empirical case from Turkey, a rapidly

developing economy with a significant agricultural economy (accounting for 7.1% of the GDP while employing 21.1% of the working population, see [TUIK, 2015](#)). Contributing to the incipient literature on social and cognitive limits of adaptation ([Adger et al., 2009](#)), I focus on the multiple shared narratives of policy actors of Turkey's national climate change adaptation plan. Adaptation is a key policy domain for Turkey as the country refrains from taking any quantified emission reduction targets. Moreover, Turkey is situated at the eastern belt of the Mediterranean, deemed highly vulnerable to adverse impacts of climate change ([Lelieveld et al., 2012: 668](#)), and the need for harmonization of policy efforts on adaptation is imminent ([MOEU, 2013: 52](#)). Hence in an attempt to categorize overlapping and contradicting subjectivities in this domain, I employ Q-methodology to explore the shared values that underlie adaptation policy discourses of 29 policy actors who took part in or have a stake in adaptation policymaking. The emerging narratives reveal discourse coalitions broadly understood as the best policy preferences for the society. As such, the narratives presented here differ from personal preferences of individuals and rather depict desired alternative socio-ecological trajectories.

In what follows, I first present the theoretical linkages between values and climate change adaptation as the basis of the value-based adaptation approach. Following a brief presentation of the methodology, I offer an empirical case study exploring the dominant values underlying the adaptation efforts in Turkey. This case study, mapping the cognitive terrain of the policy actors, identifies four

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emerging discourses: productivism, eco-localism, techno-modernism, and authoritarianism. I argue that these discourses point at diverging notions of developmentalism underlying the Turkish adaptation policy, in which an understanding of development as economic growth prevails. Crucial, however, are the differences between these narratives, which indicate disagreements on the means (*how is it to be achieved*) of development and agency-related aspects (*by whom*). I conclude with a discussion of potential opportunities provided by such disagreements in the last section.

2. Values and Climate Change Adaptation Governance

O'Neill et al. (2008: 12) posit that values can be apprehended as the various ways in which individuals, processes, and places matter to us, as well as how we relate to and consider them in informing our actions. While values may refer to a wide set of concepts ranging from interests to preferences, they eventually constitute the core conceptions of “the desirable” (O'Brien, 2009). These conceptions are often seen as “deeply rooted, abstract motivations that guide, justify, and explain attitudes, norms, opinions, and actions” (Schwartz, 2007, see also Schwartz, 1994, for a categorization of human values).

Values do not happen haphazardly. Instead, they are “organized into integrated, coherent structures or systems and linked to motivations” which drive our actions (O'Brien and Wolf, 2010: 234). In environmental decision-making, policymakers “are often faced, not with a clear cut decision between protection and damage but with the distribution of different kinds of damage and benefit across different dimensions of value” (O'Neill et al., 2008: 15). These competing values also manifest themselves clearly in climate change adaptation, where confrontation of diverse values and worldviews is particularly evident on what is perceived to be worth adapting and what is to be done collectively. Values, therefore, determine subjective limits to adaptation while also underpinning how, and in what ways, vulnerability is perceived (Wolf et al., 2013). These limits shape the debate on uneven distribution of risks across time and space as well as between different social groups. If adaptation is not “simply about the changes in systems and behaviors required to reduce the negative impacts of climate change, but about the wider capacity of individuals and societies to respond to challenges to existing beliefs, values, and worldviews” (O'Brien and Hochachka, 2010:2), then it is imperative to make the values underlying adaptation preferences explicit (Adger et al., 2009).

The recent surge in policy-relevant adaptation research can be attributed to the urgency and importance of climate change risks on development policies (Bassett and Fogelman, 2013). Although a number of studies address value dimensions in adaptation (i.e. Albizua and Zografos, 2014; Wolf et al., 2013), how policy actors understand and subjectively shape adaptation still remains an open question. This question is often shadowed by uncritical approaches that may potentially lead to re-legitimization and repetition of old development practices (Ireland, 2012). As O'Brien (2009) explains, “successful adaptation will depend on the capacity of individuals and societies to perceive and respond to a spectrum of legitimate values that extend beyond those that are relevant to oneself or one's group.” Henceforth, framing adaptation not only as a means for protecting what individuals and communities perceive to be worth preserving but also as a discussion of alternative collective futures is tempting (O'Brien and Wolf, 2010).

Adaptation, however, is often “a contested and painful process that may achieve human security gains for some but also put at risk the security of others” (Zografos et al., 2014). Diverse understandings of the ultimate goals of adaptation lead to the emergence of two different constellations of adaptation: (i) understanding adaptation as “fitting to” the environment versus (ii) understanding adaptation as “fitting with” the environment (Rickards and Howden, 2012). These two contrasting visions of adaptation correspond to “adaptation to” and “adaptation of” approaches (Thomsen et al., 2012). While the first of these approaches suggests a self-directed change for modifying internal characters of a

system to better suit the external conditions, the latter seeks to modify external contexts and hence allow peripheral change to fit better the purposes of the existing predisposition of individuals or social groups. This cognitive split unavoidably leads to ontologically different adaptation pathways. Pelling (2011) categorizes adaptation pathways in three categories as (a) resilience (maintaining status quo), (b) transition (incremental change without a shift in system goals), and (c) transformation (radical change in system goals). Schulz and Siriwardane (2015) also suggest a three-tier categorization along adjustment, reformism, and transformation. However, due to the high level of ambiguity on the distinctiveness of adjustment/resilience and reformism/transition approaches, I contend to group these two sets under “adjustment” and leave “transformation” as the competing paradigm for the sake of this analysis. The lack of clear divisions between adjustment and reformism arises mainly since both of these pathways discourage (or at best, avoid) a thorough questioning of a socio-ecological system's goals.

Transformation in the context of adaptation can be defined as the “physical and qualitative changes in form, structure, and meaning-making” (O'Brien, 2012: 670). Transformations question the basic societal assumptions on economic, political, and cultural configurations (O'Brien et al., 2015; Pelling, 2011; Kates et al., 2012) and occur across three nested-spheres: personal, political, and practical (O'Brien and Sygna, 2013). The overarching personal sphere, which is also the unit of analysis here, “includes individual and collective beliefs, values, and worldviews that shape the ways that the systems and structures are viewed, and influence what types of practical solutions are considered possible” (ibid.: 19). Eventually, these individual and collective beliefs, values, and worldviews reconfigure the political to have practical implications as regards what type of adaptation is preferred, how it is managed, and who benefits from it.

Conversely, framing adaptation as adjustment pays little attention to root causes and rather works to alleviate the adverse impacts and capitalize on potential opportunities (Bassett and Fogelman, 2013). As such, adjustment occurs when the ratio of what remains constant to what is changed deliberately remains high (Rickards and Howden, 2012: 242). Adjustment is also a value-laden process particularly seeking to avoid radical change and accommodate changes within the existing system. It can be characterized by an emphasis on the conservation of the status quo (and hence the resilience of existing systems) as well as on self-enhancement, which focuses on ambition, authority, and power (Schwartz, 1994). For instance, literature suggests that the more people adhere to hierarchical and individual values, the more they are likely to downplay socio-ecological challenges (Corner et al., 2014). Hence, while transformational processes aim to produce substantive changes in the goals/motivations of a system, as well as spatial/contextual changes of its activities, adjustment seeks to contain these activities (in-situ or ex-situ) and maintain systemic goals relatively undisturbed.

Research on values underlying adaptation policy preferences contribute to elucidating the “hidden assumptions and disparate uncertainties” (Eakin et al., 2009: 224). In this vein, Simonet and Fatorić (2015) argue that terminological ambiguity, either framing adaptation as a resignation of efforts or as an opportunity, may influence the perceptions of decision makers. Therefore, a study of values on adaptation preferences can help us to understand the ways in which different interest groups produce and legitimize new political subjectivities (Pelling, 2012). Consequently, the next section focuses on unearthing the different discourses of policy actors in Turkey's national climate change adaptation strategy with an eye on agriculture.

3. Case Study: Exploring Values in Adaptation Decision-Making in Turkish Agriculture

Since Turkey's accession to UNFCCC, national climate policy processes have focused on adaptation to a great extent. Turkey's unwillingness to engage in mitigation and ineligibility to receive funds for such

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