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Marketizing Climate Policy in a Polarized Media Landscape: A Critical Discourse Analysis of News Coverage on Türkiye's Climate Law

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Abstract

Türkiye's ratification of the Paris Agreement and the subsequent enactment of Climate Law No. 7552 mark a critical phase in the institutionalization of national climate policy. The law's reliance on market-based mechanisms, particularly the Emissions Trading System, has generated substantial public and media debate. This study examines how three ideologically distinct news outlets, *Yeni Şafak*, *Evrensel*, and *Deutsche Welle Turkish*, represented the legislative process between June and July 2025. Drawing on Teun A. van Dijk's critical discourse analysis, this study analyses 14 news texts at the microstructural level, focusing on headlines, word choice, actor representation, and legitimization strategies. The findings reveal three distinct discursive roles articulated around a shared market-based logic of climate governance: pro-government coverage legitimizes the law as an economic opportunity and a national achievement, oppositional coverage contests it as ecological exploitation and neoliberal environmental governance, and international coverage audits it against international commitments and standards of technical adequacy. The analysis shows that climate legislation becomes a site of ideological struggle in news discourse, even when debate remains largely organized around a shared market-based understanding of climate policy. Journalism may support, challenge, or scrutinize this framework in different ways.

Keywords: Paris Climate Agreement; critical discourse analysis; van Dijk; media discourse; climate justice; climate communication; climate law



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1. Introduction

Türkiye ratified the Paris Agreement in 2021, adopted a 2053 net-zero emission target, and in July 2025 enacted its first Climate Law, Law No. 7552. The law was adopted by the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye on 2 July 2025 ([Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change, 2025](#)) and published in the Official Gazette on 9 July 2025; it establishes the legal basis for a national Emissions Trading System (ETS), with a pilot phase scheduled to begin in 2026 ([International Carbon Action Partnership \[ICAP\], 2025](#)). With this step, climate policy in Türkiye is reframed as a domain that intersects with carbon markets, export competitiveness, and the alignment pressures stemming from the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM). The legislative process generated substantial public and political debate, with criticisms concentrating on the law's strong

reliance on market-based mechanisms rather than structural ecological transformation. This study takes that public debate as its object of analysis and asks how a single piece of climate legislation can simultaneously appear, across three ideologically distinct news outlets, as an economic opportunity, an ecological injustice, and a question of international compliance.

The Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015, represents a shift in the international climate regime from the top-down quantified targets characteristic of the Kyoto Protocol toward a bottom-up architecture organized around Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), in which each state defines its own mitigation and adaptation targets on the basis of national circumstances (Bodansky, 2016, p. 289). This design grants states considerable flexibility; yet critics have argued that the lack of binding sanctions can allow the architecture to legitimize a minimal-effort equilibrium (Lawrence & Wong, 2017, p. 277). At the same time, by routing compliance through market-based instruments, such as emission trading systems, carbon pricing, and Article 6 transfers, the Paris architecture institutionalizes a framework in which climate policy is increasingly elaborated within the languages of carbon markets, green finance, and competitive adjustment. The IPCC reports underscore that current policy trajectories remain insufficient to limit warming to 1.5 °C (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2021); however, the principal policy instruments available within the dominant framework are themselves market-based.

Türkiye's 2021 ratification of the Paris Agreement was followed by four years of legislative preparation. Law No. 7552 was framed as the instrument that translates Paris obligations into domestic law and provides the legal basis for the ETS, alongside provisions on the Carbon Market Board, allowance allocation, and offset credits. Yet from the moment the bill was tabled, academic commentary, environmental civil society, and parliamentary opposition raised a recurring question: is this a climate law or, in substance, a market law? Göksoy Sevinçli (2025, p. 131) frames the law within a "green growth vision" that imposes new responsibilities on local governments, while Gürçam (2025, p. 38) argues that the bill is a neoliberal text opening new avenues for capital accumulation through the ETS and carbon markets rather than enacting a radical ecological transformation. This study examines that legislative period through its news coverage, focusing on the months in which the law was debated and ultimately enacted.

Türkiye occupies a distinctive position within the global climate regime, one that fits neither the Global North nor the Global South cleanly. It is an OECD member and an EU candidate country with a carbon-intensive industrial base, high export dependence on the EU market, and substantial exposure to CBAM; at the same time, it is a relatively late ratifier of the Paris Agreement (2021), now establishing its first domestic ETS under Law No. 7552. Its media system is highly polarized and characterized by concentrated ownership structures, political parallelism, and a regulatory environment in which state institutions play an active role (Yanardağoglu, 2021). The political-economy literature on Türkiye has, in turn, documented how neoliberal restructuring since the early 2000s has produced a growth-oriented and state-centred pattern of environmental governance, in which growth-oriented priorities in sectors such as construction, extractive industries, and energy have often taken precedence over ecological commitments (Adaman et al., 2017). Climate journalism operates inside this polarized field; recent empirical work shows that environmental and climate journalists in Türkiye work under sustained institutional and economic constraints, while pursuing advocacy roles in addition to reporting (Çömlekçi, 2025). These conditions render Türkiye a particularly revealing site for examining how ideologically divergent media construct the meaning of climate legislation.

This study examines how three ideologically distinct news outlets, Yeni Şafak, Evrensel, and Deutsche Welle Turkish, represented the legislative process of Climate Law No. 7552 between June and July 2025. Drawing on Teun A. van Dijk's critical discourse analysis

(CDA), the study analyses 14 news texts at the microstructural level: headlines, lexical choices, actor representation, and legitimization strategies. The central argument is that, despite their divergent ideological positions, the three outlets articulate the law within a shared discursive space defined by market-based climate governance: *Yeni Şafak* legitimizes this framework through the languages of national development and sovereignty, *Evrensel* contests it through the languages of ecological exploitation and class injustice, and *DW* audits it against international compliance, technical adequacy, and implementation capacity. The study thus asks: how do ideologically divergent news outlets in Türkiye legitimize, contest, or audit the market-based logic of Climate Law No. 7552, and what does this reveal about the role of journalism in the commodification of nature within Türkiye's polarized media landscape? The geographer [Sultana's](#) (2022, pp. 3–4) concept of “climate coloniality”, the production of new compliance burdens for historically under-industrialized economies through the dominant climate regime, provides a useful conceptual register; this register has recently been elaborated in [Sultana's](#) (2024) work on decolonizing pathways for climate justice. The study contributes to climate communication and media discourse research by demonstrating that climate legislation functions as a discursive site where the boundaries of imaginable climate policy are negotiated. Within these boundaries, divergent ideological positions may clash; yet a shared underlying framework remains intact, beyond which disagreement does not extend.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Paris Agreement, NDCs, and Market-Based Climate Governance

The Paris Agreement constitutes a structural turning point in the international climate regime by replacing the top–down quantified targets of the Kyoto Protocol with a bottom–up architecture organized around Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Under Article 4 of the Agreement, each Party determines its own mitigation and adaptation contributions on the basis of national circumstances, with the expectation that successive NDCs will progressively raise ambition ([Bodansky, 2016](#), p. 289). The legal innovation of this design lies in its combination of binding procedural obligations with non-binding substantive targets. [Lawrence and Wong](#) (2017, p. 277) argue that this soft-law structure produces a flexibility that can double as a legitimation device: in the absence of binding sanctions, states tend to set domestically convenient targets and slow the pace of additional ambition. [Falkner](#) (2016, pp. 1118–1120) similarly argues that the agreement's bottom–up architecture reflects a new logic of international climate politics, in which legitimacy depends on broad participation rather than on strong centralized enforcement. [Türkeş](#) (2022, p. 33) similarly notes that climate diplomacy is more than a technical negotiation process; it is also an economic-policy arena that reproduces the historical asymmetry of responsibility between developed and developing countries.

This design also routes climate policy toward market-based instruments. The Paris architecture envisions national emission trading systems, internationally transferred mitigation outcomes under Article 6, and the integration of carbon pricing into domestic economies as principal compliance mechanisms. Critical political–economy scholarship reads this as the consolidation of a “neoliberal environmentalism” ([Dent, 2022](#), p. 4), in which the response to ecological crisis is sought through the marketization, privatization, and monetization of natural resources rather than their decommodification. [Böhm et al.](#) (2012, p. 1618) describe carbon markets as a mechanism that transforms nature into a tradable commodity, thereby reproducing the capitalist logic that generated the climate crisis in the first place. For export-oriented middle-income economies such as Türkiye, the European Green Deal and its Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism translate this framework into a hard adjustment pressure, requiring rapid alignment with carbon pricing

and emissions accounting standards (Küçük & Yüce Dural, 2022, p. 140). The market-based logic of the Paris regime thus does not remain confined to international negotiation; it sets the terms within which domestic climate legislation, including Türkiye's Law No. 7552, becomes legible as climate policy.

2.2. Neoliberal Environmentalism and the Commodification of Nature

van Vuuren et al. (2025), using the planetary boundaries framework and the Integrated Model to Assess the Global Environment, show that current development trajectories are projected to worsen pressures on most planetary boundaries by 2050 unless strong environmental policy measures are implemented. This interconnected structure of the climate crisis and ecological degradation points to systemic ecological risk rather than to isolated environmental problems. In this context, Salman et al. (2022), who measured the impact of the Paris Climate Agreement on the international stage using concrete data through the “fuzzy regression discontinuity design” method, demonstrate that the agreement reduces greenhouse gas emissions by increasing global environmental efficiency, but that this positive effect is far more pronounced in developed countries compared to developing and least developed countries (pp. 2–3). This situation demonstrates that global climate policies produce asymmetric outcomes depending on countries' current economic capacities, and that neoliberal policies can further deepen global inequalities.

Li et al. (2024), who investigated the role of green technology and green finance in enabling developing countries to adapt to the climate crisis and achieve the Paris Agreement targets, found through a wavelet-based quantile-on-quantile regression analysis that green finance has a far more incentivizing effect on emission reductions than green technology in both the short and long term (p. 2). The Emissions Trading System established under Law No. 7552 is a concrete example of Türkiye's efforts to integrate its climate policies into market-based “green finance” mechanisms. Therefore, how the Climate Law is represented in the news reveals not only the manner in which a legal regulation is communicated to the public but also the discourses through which market-based environmental policies are legitimized or problematized. At this point, media discourse serves as a foundational intermediary between the technical content of the climate policy and its social and ideological meanings. However, this process of financialization is also debated as a “greenwashing” strategy that, by turning nature into a commodity, re-legitimizes the functioning of the capitalist system under the guise of “green growth” rather than addressing the core of the ecological crisis. The literature on greenwashing demonstrates that claims of environmental sustainability can, in some cases, function more as symbolic forms of communication that strengthen the legitimacy of institutions or market actors rather than producing actual environmental transformation (Lyon & Montgomery, 2015).

These dynamics take on a particularly visible form in countries where neoliberal restructuring has reshaped both economic policy and environmental governance. Adaman et al. (2017) document how Türkiye's economy over the past two decades has come to depend on a growth model centred on construction, extractive industries, and energy projects, in which environmental protection is routinely subordinated to primary accumulation. Their analysis suggests that “green growth” discourses in such contexts function less as a transition strategy and more as a legitimation device for established patterns of accumulation. The Emissions Trading System introduced under Law No. 7552 therefore enters a domestic policy environment in which carbon pricing is read, by different actors, either as a step toward modernization or as a new mechanism for capital accumulation through the monetization of nature. This double reading is what makes media discourse around the law an analytically productive site: the same regulation is, depending on the discursive position from which it is read, either a credible response to ecological pressure

or a “greenwashed” rearticulation of the same accumulation logic that the literature on neoliberal environmentalism has long critiqued (Dent, 2022; Lyon & Montgomery, 2015).

2.3. Journalism, Climate Discourse, and the Public Sphere

The way in which these legal regulations, international agreements, and market-based models developed in response to the climate crisis are presented to the public, perceived by society, and legitimized is largely shaped by mass media and media discourse. By conveying scientific realities, legislative proposals, and political decisions to the public, the media facilitates the construction of public beliefs, attitudes, and ultimately, social change. Happer and Philo (2013) emphasize the media’s crucial role in informing the public and shaping perceptions, particularly regarding complex issues where audiences lack direct, everyday experience (p. 321). Political institutions, capital groups, lobbyists, and the public relations industry, all of which intervene in media flows, determine which issues are opened up for public debate, while narrowing the range of information accessible to audiences and systematically pushing alternative solutions outside the realm of discussion (Happer & Philo, 2013, p. 322). Examining the representations of macro-level political changes in the media is important because it reveals the opaque and exclusionary structure of information transmission. Hansen (2011) argues that environmental communication research must link the production processes of media content with its social impacts and political and economic contexts, asserting that the practice of making one’s voice heard in the public sphere is deeply shaped by economic and political inequalities (pp. 8–9). Which arguments are deemed legitimate in public debates is directly related to the actors’ capacity to access the media.

In her critical analysis of the discursive construction of climate change news in the British press, Carvalho (2007) addressed the unequal distribution of power and ideological orientations underlying media discourse. She emphasizes that in the reconstruction of scientific knowledge in the media, it is quite difficult to determine what is “scientific” or “true” and who can be considered “authoritative” on these matters, as scientific knowledge is intertwined with ideological perspectives (Carvalho, 2007, pp. 223–225). For example, right-leaning media outlets that advocate for the free market and economic growth seek to block government interventions in favour of the environment and to preserve the existing economic order (the status quo). Driven by this motivation, they deliberately stoke scepticism about climate change while giving climate deniers, whose views have no basis in the scientific community, excessive airtime, thereby shaping public opinion (Carvalho, 2007, pp. 229–231). In contrast, social democratic or liberal-leaning media outlets emphasize the dangers of the climate crisis, highlighting values such as global responsibility, social justice, and equality, thereby constructing a “progressive” discourse that supports more interventionist environmental policies (Carvalho, 2007, pp. 238–239). Carvalho’s study demonstrates that climate news goes beyond scientific journalism and functions as an ideological apparatus that safeguards the media’s economic interests and political affiliations.

More recent meta-level scholarship has examined how the structural conditions of climate communication research have shifted in the digital era. Wetts et al. (2025) note that climate media research has historically been organized around three relatively distinct moments: the production of climate narratives, the content and circulation of these narratives across media institutions, and the reception of media coverage by audiences, policymakers, and publics. They argue, however, that this tripartite structure has increasingly come under strain. In digital environments, processes of production, circulation, and reception are interwoven; publics produce, reinterpret, and reshare content while news media respond to these dynamics in turn. For an analysis like the present one, which focuses on the

textual content of newspaper coverage, this means that the news text remains an essential analytical object but cannot be treated as the entirety of the climate communication process. The news texts examined here are therefore treated as a limited but identifiable stage in this wider circulation, where competing interpretations of climate policy become visible in relatively stable linguistic forms.

2.4. Critical Discourse Studies and Climate News

Critical discourse analysis (CDA), as developed in van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach, provides a productive analytical apparatus for examining how ideological positions are produced, naturalized, or contested through text. In his discussion of discourse and manipulation, van Dijk (2006) conceptualizes discourse as operating across social, cognitive, and discursive dimensions, and emphasizes how ideological discourse commonly works through positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. His account of the ideological square, which involves the polarization of positive and negative representations of "Us" and "Them", is particularly relevant for examining how news texts construct legitimacy, blame, and authority (van Dijk, 2006, pp. 372–373). In his broader work on news discourse, this approach is operationalized through attention to macrostructure, microstructure, and superstructure, allowing news texts to be examined through themes and headlines, lexical and syntactic choices, actor representation, agency, and schematic organization (van Dijk, 1988).

Similarly, van Dijk (2006, p. 360) notes that discourse extends beyond information transmission and operates as a practice of manipulation that directs readers' mental models; word choices, actor positioning, and legitimization strategies in news texts are concrete tools of this direction. Based on this theoretical observation, it is clear that the manner in which the Climate Law was presented to the public in Türkiye cannot be reduced to a legal or ecological informational activity. On the contrary, the way mechanisms such as the Emissions Trading System (ETS) and carbon markets—placed at the centre of the law—are framed in the media reflects the operation of this ideological apparatus at the local level. On the one hand, the media can serve to legitimize existing neoliberal environmental policies by framing the capital accumulation and market-oriented solutions the law will bring with positive connotations such as "national development," "investment opportunity," or "growth." On the other hand, the "climate justice" discourse, which critiques the commodification of nature from a critical perspective, seeks to challenge this hegemonic narrative.

Consequently, this discursive competition surrounding the Climate Law actually represents a profound hegemonic struggle regarding Türkiye's future socio-economic vision, the power dynamics between nature and capital, and how the burden of the crisis will be socially distributed. The three news outlets examined in this study also represent different discursive positions within this hegemonic struggle. While Yeni Şafak's news articles align with a "green development" framework that frames climate policy around economic development, national interests, and state capacity, Evrensel's news articles are grounded in a "climate justice" framework that addresses mechanisms such as carbon markets and the ETS within the context of the commodification of nature and its restructuring in favour of capital. DW, on the other hand, positions itself within a "global compliance" framework that evaluates Türkiye's climate policies in terms of international commitments, technical consistency, and implementation capacity. This three-way distinction is analysed in the Findings Section through news headlines, word choices, representations of actors, and legitimization strategies.

When considering changes over time, it is observed that the media's portrayal of climate change has increasingly shifted from an objective and scientific arena of discussion

to one marked by sharp partisanship and political polarization. In their study conducted between 1985 and 2017, Chinn et al. (2020) analysed American press data using text analysis methods and noted that climate change news reports have become increasingly “politicized” over time and have grown more partisan at the linguistic level (pp. 112–113). The researchers found that, starting in the mid-2000s, there was a marked decline in references to scientists in news texts, while politicians and political actors began to take the place of scientists in the news (Chinn et al., 2020, p. 119). This trend toward politicization has transformed the climate crisis from an objective ecological reality into an ideological construct.

The partisanship woven around this issue and its echoes in the media have also forced traditional practices of climate journalism to evolve. Brüggemann and Engesser (2017) note that climate journalism has evolved from the traditional notions of “balance” or “neutrality” toward “interpretive journalism,” which actively frames events (pp. 58–60). Whereas in the past, journalists created a false sense of balance in the public sphere by giving climate sceptics equal airtime despite scientific consensus, today climate-specialized journalists, even when they do include sceptical views, typically do so using a “mention-to-refute” strategy aimed at debunking and discrediting them (Brüggemann & Engesser, 2017, p. 62). This interpretive journalism approach demonstrates that the climate issue is framed in the media as both a scientific–ecological problem and a space of political conflict and ideological positioning. Wang and Huan (2024) argue that examining public debates on climate change through critical discourse analysis offers a productive framework for understanding how scientific knowledge is renegotiated within political conflict zones (p. 134).

The way the Climate Law is reported in Türkiye can also be interpreted within this trend of politicization. Although the law is a technical and legal regulation, it is situated within different ideological frames, such as economic development, capital dominance, national sovereignty, ecological justice, or international credibility across various news outlets. This situation demonstrates that the claim of impartial reporting in climate journalism is often intertwined with political and ideological frameworks.

Media discourses reflecting the legal and political processes of the climate crisis generally exhibit a structural disconnect between the crisis’s destructive consequences and the action plans developed in response. Risk communication approaches framed within the Expanded Parallel Process Model (EPPM) argue that, to foster social engagement, emphasis on the severity of the threat must be paired with concrete solutions for mitigating it and with messages that convey self-efficacy. Nevertheless, in their study examining news articles in leading American newspapers, Feldman et al. (2017) found that the threat elements created by climate change and the political and individual action strategies to combat this process are generally not addressed in an integrated manner within the same text; rather, these two elements are presented as distinct from one another (pp. 481–483). Another finding of the study revealed that when discussing actions and solutions to the climate crisis, newspapers consistently excluded positive information, instead framing the issue in terms of political conflict, polarization, and negative economic consequences (Feldman et al., 2017, p. 492). Such news reports, which fail to outline solutions, do not paint a positive vision for action, and constantly highlight political disputes or the economic burdens imposed by legislation, foster cynicism, helplessness, desensitization, and ultimately inaction among readers. In situations where the perception of threat is high but a sense of agency is not fostered, the public tends to either deny the problem or completely distance themselves from the issue.

These structural differences in how the climate crisis and related legal regulations are covered in the media also represent a discursive manifestation of the historical, economic, and asymmetrical relationships between countries in the Global North and the Global South. In their study, Hase et al. (2021) analysed over 70,000 news articles from 10 different countries using automated text analysis (STM) methods and found that climate news is

fundamentally shaped by three main dimensions: scientific, ecological, and social (pp. 4–5). The study found that media in Global North countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, and Australia tended to report on climate change primarily in terms of “climate science,” “carbon reduction technologies,” “space research,” and “natural ecosystems,” whereas media in Global South countries such as India, South Africa, Thailand, and Namibia focused more directly on the effects of climate change on people and societies, foregrounding its social dimension (Hase et al., 2021, pp. 8–9). News stories from the Global South tend to emphasize human consequences, including agricultural crises, water scarcity, loss of livelihoods, disease, and economic vulnerability, while also giving greater prominence to climate justice.

2.5. Türkiye’s Polarized Media Landscape and Climate Policy

The discursive struggle examined in this study unfolds within a media system whose structural characteristics have a direct bearing on the form public debate can take. Studies of Türkiye’s media system point to concentrated ownership structures, political parallelism, regulatory pressures, and changing patterns of digital news production as important features of the public sphere in which climate journalism operates (Yanardağoglu, 2021). For the present study, this context matters in two respects: first, because the three outlets selected occupy structurally different positions within this field, namely a mainstream outlet broadly aligned with government policy, a small left-opposition newspaper sustained largely through reader subscriptions, and an internationally funded broadcaster; and second, because the kinds of discourse each outlet can produce are shaped by these structural conditions, not only by editorial choice.

Recent empirical work on climate coverage and climate journalism in Türkiye supports this reading. Baykal Fide (2022) shows that Turkish press coverage of the climate crisis is shaped by political orientation and by a recurring disconnect between the representation of climate impacts and the representation of policy responsibility, while Çömlekçi (2025), drawing on in-depth interviews with environmental and climate journalists, shows that climate journalism operates under institutional and economic constraints while retaining an advocacy orientation. Journalists in his sample describe themselves as moving beyond the conventional norms of neutral reporting; they understand their work as carrying ecological responsibility into a polarized media landscape in which, more broadly, the patterns of mediatised political polarization documented for Turkish digital communication (Bulut & Yörük, 2017) constrain the conditions under which climate stories can gain visibility. These studies also show why the outlets cannot be treated as isolated cases. Each operates within a media field in which climate coverage is already politically situated.

The media environment is also shaped by Türkiye’s broader political economy of environmental governance. The work of Adaman et al. (2017) shows that Türkiye’s environmental policy has been consistently subordinated to growth-oriented imperatives, particularly in construction, extractive industries, and energy. Within such a configuration, market-based climate instruments are not introduced as a break with prior practice but as the latest stage in an ongoing process through which environmental concerns are integrated into existing accumulation strategies. Reading the news coverage of Law No. 7552 within this context allows the analysis to move beyond a simple description of ideological difference: the three outlets debate the law within a public sphere in which the very category of “climate policy” has been progressively re-articulated through the languages of competitiveness, investment, and adjustment.

The reason why debates surrounding climate legislation in developing countries, which are beginning to grapple with the severe socio-economic consequences of the climate crisis, often centre less on emissions or technology alone than on direct economic and social

themes such as “development,” “the dispossession by capital,” “public participation,” or “social justice” is closely linked to the Global South perspective articulated by [Hase et al. \(2021\)](#). Climate justice discourses, which argue that the burden of the crisis is unequally distributed and that neoliberal market solutions such as carbon trading may deepen socio-economic inequalities, are grounded in this social framing. This distinction generates a more complex media discourse in countries like Türkiye, which are striving to manage both development goals and global climate obligations simultaneously. While the Climate Law can be presented on one hand as an opportunity for economic competition, export capacity, and green transition, on the other hand it can be portrayed as a regulation that increases market pressure on nature and deepens the costs borne by vulnerable social groups. Therefore, the Turkish example offers a specific discursive space where the global North/South divide is reproduced within local media through different ideological positions.

Digital media research further shows that climate discourse is shaped by competing forms of public engagement. While mainstream media often foreground elite-centred themes such as global policymaking, diplomacy, industrial responsibility, and economic consequences, climate movement actors on social media tend to emphasize policy change, climate justice, indigenous rights, and mobilizing calls to action ([Chen et al., 2023](#), pp. 384–386). At the same time, the effects of digital news consumption are filtered by political ideology, trust in science, and national context. [Diehl et al. \(2021, pp. 197–208\)](#) show that social media news use can reduce climate scepticism, but this effect varies according to macro-level and ideological factors. Similarly, [Malka et al. \(2009, pp. 633–644\)](#) demonstrate that knowledge about climate change increases concern mainly among those who trust scientific sources. These findings are relevant to the present study because technical regulations such as climate laws are often interpreted through trusted and ideologically proximate media sources rather than through the legal text itself.

When the studies in the literature are evaluated collectively, it becomes evident that climate policies and legal regulations function as scientific and technical texts, but they also operate as part of ideological battles over meaning. In the current context, where planetary boundary research shows that current policy trajectories are projected to worsen pressures on most Earth-system boundaries by 2050 ([van Vuuren et al., 2025](#)), international climate regimes ([Salman et al., 2022](#)) and market-oriented green finance mechanisms ([Li et al., 2024](#)) further deepen the historical tension between the discourses of “neoliberal environmentalism” and “climate justice.” Communication and media studies ([Hansen, 2011](#); [Happer & Philo, 2013](#); [Carvalho, 2007](#); [Chinn et al., 2020](#)) demonstrate that, in this process, the media operates as an active site where news is politicized within ideological contexts. This ideological framing evokes feelings of helplessness and cynicism ([Feldman et al., 2017](#)) among audiences, while triggering polarized activism ([Chen et al., 2023](#)) in digital spaces. Indeed, the fact that the climate crisis is framed as a technological and scientific issue in the media of the Global North, whereas in the Global South it is portrayed as a direct humanitarian and social catastrophe ([Hase et al., 2021](#)), is the most concrete indication of how fragmented and ideologically grounded the perception of this issue is worldwide.

3. Theoretical Framework: Neoliberal Environmentalism and Climate Justice

Climate change policies are largely shaped within a normative complex known as “neoliberal environmentalism.” This approach views environmental degradation as a market failure and argues that the solution lies in incorporating nature into market mechanisms through monetization ([Dent, 2022](#), p. 4). Regulations in Türkiye’s Climate Law that define carbon as a capital market instrument are a typical example of this approach.

In contrast, the concept of “climate justice” argues that the burden of the crisis is not distributed equally. Schlosberg (2012) notes that the climate crisis affects, above all, poor communities, developing countries, and vulnerable groups—those who have contributed the least to the crisis (p. 450). Newell et al. (2021), meanwhile, develop a transformative climate justice agenda that places power relations, social inequalities, and governance at the centre of climate responses. The fundamental conflict in the media centres on whether the climate crisis is framed as “a new opportunity for capital” (neoliberal environmentalism) or as “a matter of social justice” (climate justice).

While the Paris Climate Agreement offers a flexible framework in which countries participate through their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), this has created an obligation for states to align their climate policies with domestic political and economic development goals (Bodansky, 2016, p. 289). Türkiye’s Climate Law No. 7552 can be regarded as the local reflection of this global normative framework. However, the law’s prioritization of market-based mechanisms aligns with the neoliberal environmentalism paradigm highlighted by Dent (2022); this paradigm constructs solutions to environmental problems through market tools and carbon trading (p. 4). On the other hand, the climate justice perspective highlights the unequal distribution of the crisis’s burden, revealing that social and economic vulnerabilities have deepened in developing countries (Schlosberg, 2012, p. 450). Therefore, the way climate policies in Türkiye are represented in relation to both global norms and local socio-economic realities constitutes one of the central axes of this study.

In line with this theoretical framework, the study analyses Climate Law news through three primary discursive axes. The first axis is the “green development” discourse, which legitimizes market-based climate policies through concepts such as economic growth, investment, employment, competitiveness, and national interest. The second axis is the “climate justice” discourse, which problematizes the same policies within the context of the commodification of nature, regulation in favour of capital, dispossession, and ecological injustice. The third axis is the “global compliance” discourse, which evaluates regulation in terms of global commitments, the Paris Agreement, net-zero targets, technical consistency, and implementation capacity. These three axes enable a comparative analysis of news texts through their headline construction, word choice, actor representation, agency relationships, and legitimization strategies.

Situating these three discursive axes within a broader conceptual framework clarifies the theoretical contribution of the analysis. The “green development” discourse extends the developmentalist paradigm that treats economic growth and capital accumulation as responses to ecological crisis, a view critically challenged by degrowth and post-development scholarship (D’Alisa et al., 2014, pp. 4–6). By contrast, the “climate justice” discourse gives this critique a public language through media and corresponds to what environmental communication scholarship defines as communicative resistance, namely the use of media to challenge dominant framings and articulate alternative ecological imaginaries (Cox, 2013, pp. 21–23). Finally, the “global compliance” frame produced by an international broadcaster such as DW shows how global climate norms circulate through media practices by positioning Türkiye’s climate policy within a broader regime of international scrutiny.

Divergent Discourses: Shared Market-Oriented Policy Terrain

The three discourses differ ideologically, but they constitute competing journalistic responses to the same market-oriented architecture of climate governance established by Climate Law No. 7552. Yeni Şafak legitimizes this architecture by translating emissions trading, green growth, and carbon regulation into a language of national development and competitiveness. Evrensel, by contrast, renames the same architecture: commodification,

dispossession, ecological injustice. DW Turkish positions itself as an external evaluator, auditing the law through the language of international compliance, implementation capacity, and policy credibility. The analytical contribution of the study lies in showing how these divergent discourses are produced within a shared policy terrain rather than as isolated media positions.

This framing prevents the three outlets from being treated as equivalent or simply isolated ideological cases. The argument is not that all three outlets endorse neoliberal environmentalism in the same way; rather, the Climate Law creates a policy field in which market-based instruments become the common object of journalistic interpretation. Yeni Şafak normalizes these instruments as developmental necessity, Evrensel politicizes them as ecological and social injustice, and DW Turkish evaluates them as matters of institutional credibility and international compliance. The comparison therefore concerns not only what the outlets say about the law, but what each form of journalism does to the law's market-based logic in public debate.

4. Materials and Methods

This study uses Teun A. van Dijk's critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach to examine the news discourses through which Türkiye's Climate Law No. 7552 was represented in three ideologically distinct national and international news outlets. CDA enables the analysis of how power relations, ideological orientations, and social inequalities are reproduced through language. Within this framework, news texts are not neutral spaces of information transmission; rather, they are constructed in specific ways through word choice, headline construction, the positioning of actors, and rhetorical strategies, and they convey ideological meanings.

Van Dijk approaches news discourse through a three-tiered analytical model: macrostructure (themes, headlines, summaries), microstructure (lexical choices, syntactic constructions, agency relationships, transitivity), and superstructure (the schematic organization of the news, such as headline–lead–body–background). In this study, microstructural analysis is given priority because the differentiation among the three news outlets becomes most clearly observable at the level of headlines, word choices, the representation of actors, and legitimization strategies. Macrostructural elements (theme, summary) and superstructural elements (the news schema) are also taken into consideration, but the primary analytical lens is microstructural (van Dijk, 1988, 2003; Özer, 2011; Karaduman, 2017).

Moreover, Bednarek and Caple (2014) argue that news values are not properties of events themselves, but are produced through lexical and syntactic choices in the text (pp. 138–140). On this view, examining headlines, word choices, and actor positioning is a way of seeing how the climate law is made “newsworthy” within different ideological registers.

The sample of this study comprises 14 news articles published by Yeni Şafak, Evrensel, and Deutsche Welle's Turkish service between June and July 2025, the period during which the Climate Law was debated in the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye and ultimately enacted. These three outlets were purposively selected because they represent three distinct ideological positions in Türkiye's media landscape: Yeni Şafak as a national outlet aligned with the ruling political coalition, Evrensel as a left-oppositional newspaper with strong ties to environmental movements and labour organizations, and DW Turkish as an international public broadcaster operating outside Türkiye's domestic media ownership structure. The selection was therefore intended not to provide a statistically representative sample of all Turkish coverage, but to enable a comparative discursive analysis across ideologically divergent positions.

The three outlets differ not only in their ideological positions but also in their public reach and discursive location. *Yeni Şafak* operates as a high-visibility pro-government mainstream outlet, giving it a distinctive role in articulating government policy to mainstream conservative publics. *Evrensel* is a left-opposition newspaper with a smaller but politically organized readership associated with labour, socialist, and ecological movements. *DW Türkçe* (Turkish) is the Turkish-language service of Deutsche Welle, the German public international broadcaster; as an externally funded outlet operating outside Türkiye's domestic media ownership structure, it provides a useful case for examining how Türkiye's climate policy is evaluated through international norms of compliance and credibility. What matters analytically is that each outlet speaks from a structurally distinct position within Türkiye's polarized media field, addressing different, though sometimes overlapping, publics.

The news articles were collected from the official websites of the three outlets through searches guided by predetermined criteria. The same keyword combinations were used for each outlet: "climate law," "Climate Law No. 7552," "Climate Bill," "Emissions Trading System," "carbon market," and their Turkish equivalents. Articles were included only if they directly addressed the legislative process, the content of the law, the Emissions Trading System, carbon markets, or the political, economic, and ecological debates surrounding the law. General climate-change articles, short announcements without substantive textual content, duplicate or syndicated versions, opinion pieces not presented as news, and texts that mentioned the Climate Law only in passing were excluded. The final corpus consisted of 14 news texts: seven from *Yeni Şafak* (2025a, 2025b, 2025c, 2025d, 2025e, 2025f, 2025g), five from *Evrensel* (2025a, 2025b, 2025c, 2025d, 2025e), and two from *DW* (2025a, 2025b). The smaller number of *DW* articles is treated as a limitation. However, the texts were retained because the study seeks qualitative discursive comparison rather than statistical representation.

In the analysis, each news article was first read in its entirety; the headline, lead, and main body were then coded according to four microstructural categories: (i) lexical choices and value-laden words; (ii) the representation of actors and the distribution of agency; (iii) legitimization and de-legitimization strategies; and (iv) rhetorical patterns (interrogative structures, dichotomies, calls to action, technical references). The codes obtained were grouped under the three discursive axes outlined in the theoretical framework: green development, climate justice, and global compliance. Comparisons were then made across outlets to identify both convergent themes and the points of clearest discursive divergence. To strengthen analytical consistency, the authors reviewed the coding categories jointly, discussed ambiguous cases, and resolved interpretive differences through repeated close reading of the texts.

Because this study is based exclusively on the analysis of publicly available news texts and does not involve human participants, identifiable personal data, or interventions, no ethical review was required. The sample size of 14 news articles is intentionally limited and is appropriate for the qualitative depth of CDA, which prioritizes the close textual examination of a relatively small corpus over the breadth of large-scale content analysis. The transferability of the findings is therefore framed at the level of discursive patterns rather than statistical generalization.

5. Findings and Discussion

The analysis presented in this section proceeds in two movements. The first three subsections examine each outlet on its own terms, tracing how *Yeni Şafak*, *Evrensel*, and *DW*, respectively, construct the law through specific lexical, structural, and rhetorical choices. The fourth subsection then asks to what extent these distinct discursive positions share a

common ground, namely the market-based logic of climate governance institutionalized by Law No. 7552, and how each outlet positions itself in relation to that ground.

The analyses in this section reveal how the Climate Law process in Türkiye is represented in the media and how these representations employ ideological construction strategies, examined through the framework of news microstructure. The findings show that the discourses of the three media outlets with distinct ideological identities (Yeni Şafak, Evrensel, and DW) diverge significantly from one another. In Yeni Şafak's news reports, the climate law is legitimized through discourses of economic development and national sovereignty; Evrensel, on the other hand, sharply criticizes the law within the context of capitalist domination and ecological destruction. DW adopts an oversight-oriented tone, drawing attention to the gaps between Türkiye's international commitments and its actual practices, thereby establishing a monitoring framework.

Table 1 presents the news inventory and the headline-level diversity across the three outlets, while Table 2 sets out the microstructural categories employed in the subsequent analysis. The categories operationalize van Dijk's framework at the level of headlines, word choice, actor representation, and legitimization strategies, and they organize the analysis presented in Sections 5.1–5.4.

Table 1. News Inventory and Sample.

Media Outlet	Number of News Items	News Headlines
Yeni Şafak	7	1. "Target: Net Zero Emissions by 2053" (<i>Hedef 2053'te Net Sıfır Emisyon</i>) 2. "President Erdoğan: There is no power in the world capable of taking even an inch of our land" (<i>Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: Bir karış toprağımızı dahi teslim alacak güç dünya üzerinde henüz mevcut değildir</i>) 3. "Türkiye waited and got what it wanted: Why did it wait for years despite the Climate Law being approved?" (<i>Türkiye bekledi istediğini aldı: İklim Yasası onaylanmasına rağmen neden yıllarca bekledi?</i>) 4. "Climate Law passed: Expected to generate \$350 billion" (<i>İklim Kanunu kabul edildi: 350 milyar dolar getirisi var</i>) 5. "What will the Climate Law bring?" (<i>İklim yasaı ne getirecek?</i>) 6. "The Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change responded to claims regarding the Climate Law" (<i>İklim kanununa ilişkin iddialara Çevre, Şehircilik ve İklim Değişikliği Bakanlığı yanıt verdi</i>) 7. "What are the provisions of the Climate Law? Has the Climate Law proposal been approved by the Turkish Grand National Assembly?" (<i>İklim kanunu maddeleri nelerdir? İklim kanunu teklifi TBMM'de kabul edildi mi?</i>)
Evrensel	5	1. "EMEP MP Seveda Karaca reacts to the Climate Law: The climate law is a greenwashed plunder law" (<i>EMEP Milletvekili Seveda Karaca'dan İklim Kanunu tepkisi: İklim yasaı yeşil makyajlı talan yasasıdır</i>) 2. "Joint statement from environmental organizations in Ordu: Withdraw the laws paving the way for the massacre of life and nature" (<i>Ordu'da çevre örgütlerinden ortak açıklama: Yaşam ve doğa katliamının önünü açan yasaları geri çekin</i>) 3. "While the Climate Law is being debated, preparations for the 'occupation law' continue: Super powers for corporations, dispossession for the public" (<i>İklim kanunu görüşülürken işgal yasası hazırlıkları devam ediyor: Şirketlere süper yetki, halka mülksüzlük</i>) 4. "CHP MP Nermin Yıldırım Kara: Withdraw the Climate Law proposal" (<i>CHP Milletvekili Nermin Yıldırım Kara: İklim Kanunu teklifi geri çekilsin</i>) 5. "The 'Climate Law' proposal passed Parliament" (<i>'İklim Kanunu' teklifi Meclis'ten geçti</i>)

Table 1. Cont.

Media Outlet	Number of News Items	News Headlines
DW	2	1. “Controversial climate law proposal passed Turkish Parliament” (<i>Tartışmalı İklim Kanunu teklifi TBMM’den geçti</i>) 2. “Climate Law: Are economic concerns or the climate crisis the goal?” (<i>İklim Kanunu: Hedef ekonomik kaygılar mı iklim krizi mi?</i>)
Note: English translations of headlines are provided for reference; original Turkish headlines appear in parentheses in parentheses.		

Table 2. Microstructural Categories of News Discourse.

Category	Yeni Şafak	Evrensel	DW
Headline and lead structure	Emphasis on economic gains and national will	Plunder, massacre, and dispossession	Question sentences and explanatory framing
Word choice and conceptual framing	Affirmative, developmentalist discourse drawing on terms such as “gains,” “target,” “local and national,” “green growth,” “investment,” and “employment”	Critical and confrontational discourse drawing on terms such as “plunder,” “greenwashing,” “ecocide,” “dispossession,” and “rent-seeking”	More technical and explanatory concepts such as “criticism,” “regulation,” “implementation,” “expert opinion,” “target,” and “net zero”
Actor representation and citation styles	Government representatives and state actors	Opposition lawmakers and environmental organizations	Opposition lawmakers, environmental organizations, and explanatory expert opinions
Rhetorical strategies and metaphor use	Discourse centred on security and sovereignty	Crisis and threat	Explanation, objectivity, oversight
Numerical data and technical legitimization	Figures such as “\$350 billion in revenue” and “2 million additional jobs” function as legitimizing devices for the bill	Critical figures exposing the underlying market logic	Predominantly explanatory and oversight-oriented technical information
Agency framing and sentence structure	Active subject: government/economic gains	Explicit attribution of agency to corporations and political actors	Implicit agent
Overall ideological frame	Economic development/national sovereignty	Climate justice/critique of capital/ecological destruction	Global compliance/technical consistency/oversight

Note: Categories adapted from van Dijk’s critical discourse analysis framework, focusing on the microstructural level of news texts.

5.1. Yeni Şafak Newspaper: A Green Development Discourse

The news reports in the Yeni Şafak newspaper present Türkiye’s first Climate Law within the framework of “economic development” and “diplomatic success.” In Yeni Şafak’s news discourse, the Climate Law is presented not primarily as a text addressing an environmental crisis, but as a regulation that generates economic benefits, enhances Türkiye’s international competitive strength, and demonstrates the state’s strategic capacity. The strategy van Dijk refers to as “positive self-presentation” comes into play precisely at this point: the state, the government, and relevant institutions are portrayed in the news text as solution-oriented, rational actors who plan for the future.

When the headlines in Yeni Şafak are examined from a microstructural perspective, strong ideological orientations emerge through word choices and rhetorical strategies. The phrase “Target: Net Zero Emissions by 2053” frames the climate crisis not as an environmental threat but as a long-term development vision. While the word “target” evokes planning and success, a distant date like “2053” creates a sense of a strategic

future in the reader's mind. This headline establishes a positive framework by aligning environmental policy with economic growth and national goals.

The repetition of phrases such as “\$350 billion in revenue,” “2 million additional jobs,” “the 2053 net-zero emissions target,” and “keeping the carbon price in Türkiye” in news headlines and body text shifts the debate surrounding the law from environmental risks to the axis of economic gains and administrative efficiency. In this regard, the newspaper frames the bill not only as an environmental regulation but also as a development-oriented project. This approach links environmental protection to profitability in a manner consistent with neoliberal environmentalist discourse. The headline “Türkiye waited and got what it wanted: Why did it wait for years despite the Climate Law being approved?” frames the process as a strategic move. The phrases “waited” and “got what it wanted” create the impression that the government acted rationally and with a plan. The question format in the headline piques curiosity, guiding the reader and conveying the message that the process was conducted in line with national interests.

The headline “President Erdoğan: There is no power in the world capable of taking even an inch of our land” frames the climate issue within the discourse of national sovereignty. Words like “take” and “power” position environmental policies as a matter of national security. The use of direct quotes reinforces the leader's authority, while the active sentence structure emphasizes the speaker's position of strength. The choice of actors in Yeni Şafak's discourse serves to reinforce its ideological orientation. Ministry statements, technical regulatory information, and the President's speeches guide the news coverage; thus, the legislative debate is reframed within a state-centred governance discourse rather than a space for social negotiation. In particular, Erdoğan's presentation of the Climate Law as a “domestic and national” regulation and his framing of criticisms surrounding the Paris Climate Agreement using the language of “operation” and “slander” anchors the environmental policy debate within a discourse of national sovereignty and security. By featuring this discourse in its reports, Yeni Şafak employs a strategy of positive self-presentation, ensuring that the government and its leader remain constantly visible.

The headline “What will the Climate Law bring?” appears neutral but implies the assumption that the changes brought by the law will be positive. The question format sparks curiosity in the reader, highlighting the news story's informational function. Similarly, in the headline “The Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change responded to claims regarding the Climate Law,” the word “claims” weakens the counter-narrative, while the phrase “responded” reinforces the government's active and strong position. The explicit identification of the agent makes authority visible and conveys the message that the government is transparent. Additionally, critical discourse surrounding the law is positioned in Yeni Şafak not as a direct, legitimate counter-argument, but often within the realm of “disinformation,” “speculation,” or misunderstanding. Thus, the opposition, environmental organizations, or social concerns are not represented as a separate sphere of political legitimacy, but rather as distortions of information to be corrected or neutralized. The headline “What are the provisions of the climate law? Has the climate law proposal been approved by the Turkish Grand National Assembly?” establishes an information-focused discourse. Presenting these two questions together draws the reader's attention, highlights the technical details of the law, and reinforces the legitimacy of the process. Clear statements in the Ministry's 9-point explanatory text prepared against “misinformation” regarding the Climate Law—such as “no carbon tax for citizens” and “agriculture will not be banned”—are positioned as a linguistic strategy aimed at neutralizing anti-law discourse.

In Yeni Şafak's news language and discourse, the law is framed not so much through technical regulations but through economic benefits and national strategy. For example, the frequently used phrase “an ETS will be established in line with Türkiye's 2053 net-zero

target” creates a narrative that links environmental policy to a development vision. At the micro level, the prominent terms used in the news—such as “gains,” “competitive advantage,” and “green development revolution”—can foster optimism and a perception of national success among readers. Overall, these headlines clearly reveal ideological orientations at the micro level; word choices and rhetorical strategies frame the climate crisis as a development project, a matter of national sovereignty, and an economic opportunity. The analysis reveals that *Yeni Şafak* reported on the legislative text not as a technical regulation but as an economic and political success story.

These microstructural patterns reveal a relatively coherent ideological configuration. Five recurring elements organize *Yeni Şafak*’s coverage. Quantified economic benefits (“350 billion dollars,” “2 million jobs”) are kept in the foreground. A long-term planning frame, anchored in the 2053 net-zero target, is consistently invoked. Erdoğan and ministry voices dominate as the law’s principal actors, while criticism is repeatedly reframed as “claims” or “disinformation.” Finally, the law itself is presented as a strategic move, not a reactive one. These elements produce a hybrid discourse in which the language of neoliberal environmentalism, expressed through markets, targets, and competitiveness, is fused with a developmentalist national imaginary, so that the market-based logic of the law appears not as a constraint imposed from outside but as a state-led achievement aligned with national interest.

5.2. *Evrensel Newspaper: A Climate Justice Discourse*

In *Evrensel*’s news discourse, however, the Climate Law is not represented as a legal framework protecting the environment, but rather as a hegemonic sphere—one that is structured in favour of capital, commodifies nature, and weakens the public good, and is read within the context of environmental justice and class struggle. The newspaper’s headlines employ concepts with extremely high rhetorical intensity, such as “greenwashed plunder law,” “massacre of nature,” “occupation law,” and “dispossession of the people”; this demonstrates that the newspaper adopts a critical and counter-hegemonic stance even at the headline level.

When the headlines in *Evrensel* are examined from a microstructural perspective, it becomes evident that ideological orientations are established very strongly at the linguistic level. Word choices, rhetorical figures, and strategies of hyper-verbalization clearly reveal the critical and oppositional character of the news discourse. Within the general framework of the news, van Dijk’s strategy of “emphasizing their (the ruling power’s/capital’s) negative aspects” is widely observed in news discourse through the questioning of the intentions behind the bill.

The distribution of actors in *Evrensel* also supports this framework. In the news reports, EMEP and CHP lawmakers, environmental organizations, ecology activists, and lawyers associated with environmental cases are prominently featured, while government actors are portrayed primarily in a position of being criticized or indirectly held accountable. With the headline “EMEP MP Sevdâ Karaca reacts to the Climate Law: The climate law is a greenwashed plunder law,” the newspaper positions itself in opposition to the law and develops a counter-narrative by citing the MP’s statements as an example. The MP’s use of the phrase “greenwashing” implies that the law’s eco-friendly appearance is fake, while the description “plunder law” conveys the message that nature and public spaces will be plundered by capital through the law.

The headline “Joint statement from environmental organizations in Ordu: Withdraw the laws paving the way for the massacre of life and nature” serves as an example of hyperbole through the use of the word “massacre.” This phrasing positions the proposed legislation not simply as harmful, but as a deadly threat. The combined use of the terms

“life” and “nature” highlights the human dimension of ecological destruction, emphasizing the gravity and importance of the issue. Furthermore, by incorporating the environmental groups’ decisive demand “withdraw” into the headline, the newspaper draws attention to the combative and assertive tone of public discourse.

With the headline “While the Climate Law is being debated, preparations for the ‘occupation law’ continue: Super powers for corporations, dispossession for the public”, the newspaper frames the opposition to the law by contrasting companies and the public. The phrase “occupation law” in the news language frames the legislative process as an attack, while constructing the news narrative by making visible opposing concepts such as “super powers for corporations” and “dispossession of the public” and the resulting power asymmetry. This headline constructs the conflict between capital and the public through discourse by establishing the “us/them” dichotomy at the linguistic level, as noted by van Dijk. The distinction between “us” and “them” is clear at the discursive level: “us” refers to the people defending their living spaces, environmental organizations, and opposition political actors; “them” refers to mining companies, the energy sector, and the political establishment held responsible for these structures.

Finally, the newspaper, which features the remarks of an opposition party MP under the headline “CHP MP Nermin Yıldırım Kara: Withdraw the Climate Law proposal,” expresses a clear opposition to the bill with the phrase “withdraw,” even though it is softer in tone compared to other discourses. This headline, while directly conveying the opposition’s stance, carries a tone that questions the legitimacy of the legislative process.

Overall, the language used in Evrensel’s headlines clearly reveals an ideological positioning within the news discourse. Word choices and rhetorical devices frame the climate bill as a tool of capitalist domination and ecological destruction. In particular, the carbon market, “green investment,” the Emissions Trading System, and corporate incentives are coded in the news not as tools of climate policy, but as new instruments of exploitation of nature. In this context, the language of the climate law is presented as “neoliberalism,” and its goal as “turning nature into a commodity.” There is no concealment of the perpetrators; on the contrary, while corporations and lawmakers are portrayed as the negative agents, the public and nature are positioned as victims within the news narrative.

In Evrensel’s reports, the bill is criticized in the context of direct corporate interests and ecological destruction. Phrases frequently used in the articles, such as “greenwashing of plunder,” “preparations for an occupation law,” and “super powers for corporations,” frame the legislative process as a rent-seeking mechanism. For example, MP Sevdâ Karaca’s statement that “This law centres carbon trading; corporations will buy the right to pollute with money” reinforces the ideological critique of market-based mechanisms. Similarly, CHP MP Nermin Yıldırım Kara’s remarks emphasize that the bill’s text is “not about combating the climate crisis, but a market mechanism for capital,” supported by concrete examples such as “342,000 hectares of forest land have been opened up for exploitation since 2012.” In statements by local environmental organizations, phrases such as “EIA processes will effectively be eliminated, and olive groves and pastures will be opened up to mining” assess the connection between the law and ecological destruction within the context of life-threatening consequences. At the micro level, the “us versus them” dichotomy is established along the axis of corporations-government versus the people and nature. At the rhetorical level, Evrensel’s discourse is constructed through a narrative of intense crisis and threat. The call-to-action phrases in the news articles transform the news text from a passive information space into a form of political communication that calls for collective action. Within this framework, the law is represented not simply as an incomplete or problematic regulation, but as a structural attack directly targeting living spaces, olive groves, pastures, agricultural lands, and water sources. In this sense, Evrensel’s coverage

operates not only as critical journalism but as a form of communicative resistance: it mobilizes ecological loss, class language, and place-based attachments such as olive groves, pastures, and forests into a counter-hegemonic public language that challenges the law's developmentalist framing.

Evrensel's coverage works through four overlapping registers. The first is accusatory: the bill is repeatedly framed as "greenwashed plunder," "massacre," or "occupation law." Running alongside this is a class-inflected us/them opposition that maps capital against labour and the place-based communities affected by the law. The spatial register is unusually concrete; olive groves, pastures, water, and forests appear again and again as what is being defended. Finally, the call-to-action is direct, with the imperative "withdraw" carried straight into headlines. The first three of these registers push against the framing logic of the law itself; the place-based language, in particular, draws the abstraction of carbon markets back into the materiality of specific landscapes and livelihoods. Even so, Evrensel's critique unfolds, of necessity, through the same vocabulary it contests (carbon trade, ETS, greenwashing), and the counter-discourse is therefore constructed in dialogue with, rather than entirely outside, the dominant frame. The result is a counter-public language oriented toward exposure and resistance rather than the systematic articulation of an alternative climate policy vision.

5.3. DW: A Global Compliance Discourse

DW approaches the climate law process through an international oversight and compliance framework. In its news discourse, by focusing on potential gaps between Türkiye's international commitments and actual practices, it positions the process as an issue of accountability. When the headlines published by DW are examined from a microstructural perspective, it is observed that the language carries a more neutral and information-focused tone, yet ideological construction is evident through specific critical strategies.

In the headline "Controversial climate law proposal passed Turkish Parliament," while conveying the legislative process as an objective fact, the use of the word "controversial" emphasizes that the bill has not been fully endorsed by all segments of society. The report pushes the regulation's connection to environmental policies into the background, framing the issue primarily at the level of legislation and implementation. The agent is concealed in the headline; the actors who drafted the bill are not specified, which leads to the process being presented as a purely institutional procedure. The prominence of question structures and explanatory sub-frames within the news text on DW further supports this approach. After explaining the principles the regulation contains, the concepts it defines, and the institutional authorities it establishes, the text brings to the fore the points where criticism is concentrated, specifically by including the views of opposition party representatives. The report creates a space for inquiry that makes both the content of the regulation and the objections directed at it visible within the same text. In this regard, the news text produces a discourse that maps out the axes of the debate rather than forcing the reader toward a specific conclusion. However, this "moderation" does not equate to complete impartiality; because the selection of criticisms and the question-driven logic of the report indirectly challenge the regulation's adequacy and implementation capacity.

The headline used, "Climate Law: Are Economic Concerns or the Climate Crisis the Goal?", is framed from a critical perspective through its interrogative structure. This structure reflects DW's scrutinizing and questioning tone; while maintaining the news story's appearance of impartiality, it brings the controversial aspects of the legislation to the fore. While the word choices (such as "economic concerns?") contain a subtle negation, the news text is constructed in a dichotomous structure. By incorporating the views of representatives from environmental organizations and civil society groups regarding

the law, the news text addresses the law's controversial dimension in a multifaceted manner within a strategy of evidence-based reporting and transparency. One of DW's most distinctive features is its use of actors to strengthen its strategy of evidence-based reporting and explanation. Environmental organizations, experts, reports, and the technical aspects of the regulation are all included; thus, while the level of polemic is reduced, critical content is preserved. Although a technical and information-focused tone dominates DW's news discourse, the question structures and emphasis on criticism create a framework that questions the adequacy of Türkiye's climate policies. Rhetorical strategies operate through an element of curiosity that invites the reader into the debate. This approach can be interpreted as a stance that reflects DW's perspective on compliance with and oversight of international norms at the linguistic level.

In DW's news coverage, the law is discussed not merely as a technical regulation but in terms of the gap between international commitments and their implementation. Phrases frequently appearing in the texts, such as "experts" and "reports," reinforce the claim of objectivity through an evidence-based strategy. For example, sentences in the news texts such as "Is Türkiye falling behind global targets?" and "The plan to phase out fossil fuels is lacking" question the law's shortcomings and ambiguities through technical language. Additionally, the news highlights that concepts like "just transition" and "fossil fuel phase-out" are not sufficiently explained; this supports the criticism that the legislative text focuses on market mechanisms while neglecting the social dimension. News narratives generally use question sentences and expert opinions to foster a critical mindset among readers. These news texts evaluate Türkiye's climate policy within the context of compliance with international norms and transparency. Consequently, it has been observed that DW adopts a more oversight-oriented stance in its coverage of the Climate Law.

The rhetorical power of DW's news articles stems not from the use of highly accusatory adjectives, as seen in Evrensel, but from the exposure of technical shortcomings and normative gaps. In particular, themes such as "just transition," "phase-out of fossil fuels," the adequacy of emission reduction targets, and the uncertainty of the implementation timeline form the core axis of inquiry in the news. For this reason, the law is framed in DW as a regulation that is evaluated primarily by comparison with international climate norms and, from this perspective, subject to scrutiny.

DW's coverage builds its critique through several converging strategies. It uses an interrogative framing that opens the law to scrutiny without directly assigning blame; it leans on experts and reports as sources of evaluative authority; and it consistently invokes international standards, including "just transition," "fossil-fuel phase-out," the adequacy of emission targets, and implementation timelines. These strategies do not contest the underlying market-based framework of the law; they audit its sufficiency against international norms. The discourse positions Türkiye's climate policy as an object of supervision, asking not whether emissions trading is the right instrument but whether the version of it embedded in Law No. 7552 is consistent and credible. This audit position depends, in turn, on DW's location outside Türkiye's domestic media ownership and funding structure: it produces a register that is harder to sustain from within outlets operating under domestic political and economic constraints.

5.4. Convergent Market Logic Across Divergent Ideological Registers

Read across the three outlets, a common structural feature becomes visible. Yeni Şafak, Evrensel, and DW occupy clearly different ideological positions, and the headlines, lexical choices, and patterns of actor representation analysed above bear this out. Yet across all three, the law is engaged within a single discursive space: that of market-based climate governance, organized around emissions trading, carbon pricing, alignment with

CBAM, and the technical languages of targets and timelines. None of the three outlets develops a sustained alternative policy grammar that fully moves beyond the market-based terms of the law, although their relations to that frame differ in important ways. What divides them is the position they adopt within this shared frame. *Yeni Şafak* legitimizes it; *Evrensel* contests it; *DW* audits it. This pattern resonates with the broader political–economy reading of Türkiye’s environmental governance offered by [Adaman et al. \(2017\)](#), in which oppositional discourses, while genuinely oppositional in intent, are nonetheless shaped by the categories of the dominant accumulation model.

This convergence does not mean that the three outlets endorse market-based climate governance to the same degree. *Yeni Şafak* embraces it; *DW* works within the framework while scrutinizing its implementation; and *Evrensel* openly opposes it from a position structurally at odds with neoliberal environmentalism. The place-based and labour-centred vocabularies that organize *Evrensel*’s coverage (olive groves, pastures, mining, dispossession) gesture toward an alternative grammar, one in which climate questions are reframed as questions about specific landscapes and livelihoods rather than tradable units of carbon. In this sense, *Evrensel* produces partial openings within the dominant frame: moments where the counter-discourse stops borrowing the vocabulary it contests and reaches for a different one. Whether such openings cohere into a sustained alternative climate–political vision is, however, a question that falls beyond the resources of journalism alone and depends on the strength of the wider ecological and labour movements with which the newspaper is aligned.

These findings suggest a specific account of journalism’s role in the public articulation of climate policy in Türkiye. The three outlets perform three distinct functions in relation to the same market-based frame: they legitimize, contest, and audit it. Each function contributes, in its own way, to the public process through which the commodification of nature is rendered intelligible and debatable. Yet none of the three opens, as a sustained question, the possibility that climate policy might be organized otherwise. Journalism, in this configuration, does not so much renegotiate the limits of climate policy as it stages positions within those limits. This is the sense in which the polarized Turkish media field, despite its visible ideological intensity, produces a relatively bounded public discussion of climate legislation.

6. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that the media representation of Türkiye’s Climate Law No. 7552 reflects the polarization of Türkiye’s media landscape. The same legal regulation was framed through three distinct discursive axes: *Yeni Şafak* legitimized the law through development, sovereignty, and administrative capacity; *Evrensel* represented it as a mechanism of ecological exploitation and capital-oriented governance; and *DW* evaluated it through international compliance, technical consistency, and accountability. This differentiation indicates that climate legislation is not simply presented as a legal or technical issue; it is reconstructed through the ideological cultures of news organizations. In this respect, the findings align with [Carvalho’s \(2007\)](#) argument that climate news is shaped by ideological cultures and with [Chinn et al.’s \(2020\)](#) observation that climate journalism has become increasingly politicized.

At the microstructural level, this distinction becomes clearer. *Yeni Şafak* uses numerical data, technical explanations, and leader- or institution-centred quotations to construct the law as rational and necessary. *Evrensel*, by contrast, relies on confrontational headlines, value-laden words, and opposition actors to frame the law as a social and ecological threat. *DW*, despite the limited number of texts in the sample, adopts a more technical and supervisory tone through interrogative structures, explanatory subheadings, and

expert-based criticism. These patterns support van Dijk's view that ideological preferences are reproduced through linguistic choices, while also showing how climate policy can be turned into different realities across ideologically distinct media outlets.

The findings also show that climate policies do not reach the public through legal texts alone. They are filtered through news frames that are close to particular ideological positions. The same regulation may therefore appear as an economic opportunity, an ecological threat, or a compliance problem depending on the outlet through which it is reported. In this sense, this study contributes to climate communication research by showing how climate policy is reinterpreted within national political contexts and pluralized media environments.

These findings also carry normative implications for environmental journalism. As [Lester and Cottle \(2009\)](#) argue, journalism on environmental issues helps shape ecological reflexivity, understood as the public capacity to question and transform society's relationship with the natural world. In the Turkish case, the three outlets examined here construct this capacity through divergent ecological registers: *Yeni Şafak* encloses nature within a growth narrative, *Evrensel* positions it as a site of struggle and builds a counter-hegemonic public language oriented toward environmental resilience, and *DW* frames ecological responsibility through international standards, implementation capacity, and policy accountability. More broadly, this study also shows why critical discourse analysis remains useful in environmental policy research: it makes visible how climate legislation is legitimized, contested, or placed under international scrutiny in news discourse. These findings also speak to broader questions about how journalism can either consolidate or interrupt the public language of growth and commodification through which climate legislation is rendered legitimate.

This study's contribution runs along three connected lines. For climate communication research, it shows that climate legislation works as a discursive site where the boundaries of public debate over market-based environmental governance are set and reset. The Turkish material makes this concrete. Outlets that stand far apart ideologically do not, on closer inspection, defend different policy frameworks. What differs is the function each one performs: *Yeni Şafak* legitimizes the law, *Evrensel* contests it, and *DW* audits it, yet all three work inside the same market-based frame. The implication is that critical analysis of climate media has to look past where an outlet sits ideologically and ask about the structure that lets it disagree in the first place.

The Turkish case is also worth attention in its own right. Türkiye is an OECD member and an EU candidate, it ratified the Paris Agreement late, and it has a heavily polarized media system. That mix does not sit cleanly on either side of the Global North–South divide, which is part of what makes it useful for thinking about climate communication beyond that binary. How global climate norms are translated into domestic debate depends on the particular conditions of the national media field ([Adaman et al., 2017](#); [Baykal Fide, 2022](#); [Çömlekçi, 2025](#); [Yanardağoglu, 2021](#)). What emerges is a bounded debate: the ideological polarization is plain on the surface, while underneath the outlets share a market-based grammar.

The third line bears on the long-running argument about journalism and the commodification of nature. The three outlets engage with this market-based frame in different registers. *Yeni Şafak* celebrates it, *Evrensel* organizes counter-publics against it, and *DW* tests its technical adequacy. None of them, however, develop a sustained policy framework that moves fully beyond the commodification of nature. Here, journalism operates less as a neutral conduit of information than as a site where the limits of imaginable climate policy are drawn: opposing positions can argue within those limits, but the frame they share holds. Whether the limits can widen is not settled by the news text. It depends on conditions

outside it, among them the strength of independent reporting, the resources available to ecological and labour movements, and the broader political–economic configuration in which the press operates.

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