

LOCAL MEETS GLOBAL in EARTH SYSTEM GOVERNANCE: COLLABORATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS and INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES in CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION and MITIGATION IN TURKEY¹²

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ABSTRACT

Climate change is a global environmental problem, a perfect example of complex interdependence and requires novel approaches like earth system governance. Although states are the major players in earth system governance and responsible of dealing with climate change, some states may not be so keen on committing themselves to this end. In parallel, non-state and sub-national actors like local governments, act independent of their governments in committing themselves to emission reduction targets as a part of global networks of local government initiatives against climate change. This article analyses practices of some Turkish municipalities, which bypassed the national level and developed relatively progressive policies on climate change in collaboration with global networks of local governments. Although there is a rising impact of sub-national players through municipal voluntarism and strategic urbanism, international actors also play a very crucial role in facilitating policy change through providing news ideas and finances for policy change.

Keywords: *Climate change, local governments, Turkey, international actors.*

YERYÜZÜ SİSTEMİ YÖNETİŞİMİNDE YEREL ve KÜRESEL BULUŞMASI: TÜRKİYE'DE YEREL YÖNETİMLER ve ULUSLARARASI KURULUŞLARIN İKLİM DEĞİŞİKLİĞİYLE MÜCADELE ve UYUM SÜRECİNDEKİ İŞBİRLİĞİ

ÖZET

Küresel bir çevre sorunu olan iklim değişikliği dünya sathında görülen karmaşık karşılıklı bağımlılığın mükemmel bir örneği olup, çözümü için yeryüzü sistemi yönetişimi tarzı yeni yaklaşımlara gerek duyulmaktadır. Her ne kadar devletler iklim değişikliğiyle mücadele ve uyum süreçlerinin birincil oyuncularını olmakla birlikte, gerekli politikaların uygulanmasında bazı devletlerin fazla istekli olmadıkları görülmektedir. Bu noktada yerel yönetimler gibi ulus-altı seviyede faaliyet gösteren oyuncuların merkezi yönetimlerden bağımsız olarak, üyesi

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oldukları iklim deęişikliğiyle mücadele amaçlı uluslararası yerel yönetim aęları aracılığıyla, salımlarını azaltma ve uyum taahhüdünde bulunmaktadırlar. Bu çalışma Türkiye’de uluslararası yerel yönetim aęlarının üyesi olarak merkezi yönetimden bağımsız olarak, iklim deęişikliğiyle mücadele ve uyum alanında ilerici politikalar geliřtiren ve faaliyet gösteren bazı belediyelerin ilgili politikalarını analiz etmektedir. Bahsi geen belediyeler her ne kadar gönüllülük ve stratejik kent yönetimi olarak tanımlanan yaklaşımlarından etkilenseler de, uluslararası oyuncuların, yeni politika fikirlerinin gündeme gelmesi ve bu politikaların finansmanının sağlanması yoluyla belediyelerin politikalarının řekillenmesinde önemli katkıları olduęu görülmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: İklim deęişikliği, yerel yönetimler, Türkiye, uluslararası aktörler.

1. INTRODUCTION

Earth System Governance Project was developed in 2000’s as a response to insufficiency of the institutions, organizations, and governance mechanisms by which humans currently regulate their relationship with the natural environment and global biochemical systems. In order to grasp the complexity of those processes more fundamental and applied research on the global, national and local institutions and governance systems was undertaken to address all levels of policy-making that cut across many sectors (ESG Project, 2019).

Climate change is a truly global environmental problem and a perfect example of complex interdependence on planet earth. Although states are the major players in global environmental politics and responsible of climate change mitigation and adaptation some states may not be so keen on committing themselves to reductions in their carbon emissions. In parallel, non-state actors have an increasing impact on global environmental politics, in either negotiations or implementation of regimes. In fact, NGO’s, international organisations and business interests regularly contribute to climate change negotiations. Meanwhile, local and subnational level players ranging from local NGOs to local governments act independent of their governments in committing themselves to emission reduction targets as a part of global networks of local government initiatives against climate change. Overall, a number of players share their knowledge and resources through communication, and new policy ideas and discourses flow across different localities and scales, thereby connecting different spaces and the human and non-human players that inhabit them.

This article aims to focus on practices of some Turkish municipalities, which played relatively progressive roles in mitigating and adapting climate change through their activities as a part of global networks of local governments. This is a particularly interesting topic for earth system governance because of its complex nature and involvement of a number of players from transnational to local levels. Sub-national players bypass the national level, which is not so keen on having climate change as a

priority area, and translated and brought international impulses, into sub-national and local policy development processes. In this context, local government, cities and their international networks emerge as significant players in their own right and there is an image of shifting authority in earth system governance towards local and subnational players.

The paper argues that although there is a rising impact of sub-national players through municipal voluntarism and strategic urbanism approaches, international actors also play a very crucial role in facilitating policy change providing news ideas and finances for policy change. Along with international local authority networks, a number of other international players emerge and have a potential to influence earth system governance. In Turkish case, international organisations, international development finance institutions, foreign governments, private entrepreneurs, and consultancy firms facilitated policy change towards climate change adaptation and mitigation at the local level. Yet again, there are further challenges associated with future policy directions since almost all those projects are ecological modernisation projects and interventions of central government agencies are likely to develop contradictions for a climate friendly policy change.

2. GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE and ACTORS

Global environmental change is a truly global environmental problem and a perfect example of complex interdependence on planet earth. It is a cross-cutting problem area with the contribution of a number of players from different sectors of the economy and different segments of society. Although there are some controversies about the causes and consequences of climate change, the magnitude of problem is well established and there is a scientific consensus on problems and ways to tackle the problem. Decarbonisation of economies emerges as a major policy option (and challenge) and mitigation and adaptation constitute two major pathways in climate change policies.

However, mitigating climate change requires major changes concerning energy, taxation, housing, transport and a number of other policy areas. A policy change in this magnitude is rather complicated given the involvement of a number of interests, resistance of bureaucracies and institutionalised responses to policy change. Although governments do not speak with one voice, existing stalemate in climate talks highlights governments' reluctant attitudes to required policy changes. Overall, policy change is difficult to attain, especially where the cost of change is substantial for certain groups and institutionalised interests in a society. Those difficulties manifested themselves graphically in international negotiations on global climate change and Conference of the Parties.

However, global climate change so not confined to international relations and negotiations between governments. For Kern and Bulkeley, multi-level governance can be taken as shifting competencies between local, national and supranational governmental institutions or entire range of actions and



institutions, which provide order including non-state actors (Kern and Bulkeley, 2009: 311). In parallel, non-state actors have an increasing impact on global environmental politics, in either negotiations or implementation of regimes. NGO's, international organisations and business interests regularly contribute to climate change negotiations. In some occasions, sub-national players like cities, local governments and municipalities act independent of their governments in committing themselves to emission reduction targets as a part of global networks of local government initiatives against climate change. Although they are small in numbers, local governments and cities, join those international networks and commit themselves reductions in their carbon emissions. Overall, a number of players share their knowledge and resources through communication, and new policy ideas and discourses flow across different localities and scales, thereby connecting different spaces and the human and non-human players that inhabit them.

Overall, climate politics is indeed a complex arena where involvement of certain sub-national players, like cities, local governments and municipalities and their international networks through committing themselves to climate change mitigation and adaptation make them an important subject of study. In the following section, rise of cities and local governments in global climate politics will be summarised.

3. RISE of CITIES and LOCAL GOVERNMENTS in GLOBAL CLIMATE POLITICS

In fact, cities' crucial role in global environmental politics has been acknowledged well in advance and discussions concerning environmental problems and cities could be traced back to the first HABITAT meeting in 1976 where the agenda was focused on dwelling rights. Although the relationship between urbanisation and environmental problems were discussed to a certain extent, the focus of the meeting was on the local environmental problems of cities and provision of minimum dwelling and public health services. World Commission on Environment and Development's 1987 Report Our Common Future has also highlighted the role of cities in achieving sustainable development objectives. The Report highlighted the issue of rapid and uncontrolled urbanisation and its impact on housing and urban infrastructure like roads, water supply, sewers, and public services. In many Third World cities, there is limited capacity to meet demands of clean water, sanitation, schools, and transport due to their rapidly growing populations. This paves the way for, increased overcrowding, and rampant disease linked to an unhealthy environment and economic hardship make it even more difficult to cope with (WCED, 1987:235-241).

Agenda 21 further highlighted the importance of local governments and they were encouraged to form local Agenda 21 with the involvement of other stakeholders. According to the Chapter 28 of Agenda 21, since the problems and solutions being addressed by Agenda 21 have their roots in local

activities, the participation and cooperation of local authorities was a determining factor in fulfilling its objectives (UN, 1992: 233-234). Later on, IPCC Reports investigated the relationship between local governments, cities and municipalities and global climate change. The relationship between cities, local governments, municipalities and global climate change is manifold and IPCC Reports documented the urban dimension of climate change in detail (IPCC, 2014a).

Cities have seriously contributed to climate change through their intensive overall consumption levels and high-energy consumption levels. More than half of the global population now live in cities and urban areas account for more than half of global primary energy use and energy - related CO₂ emissions. Taking account of direct and indirect emissions urban areas account for 67–76% of global energy use and 71–76% of global energy-related CO₂ emissions (IPCC, 2014). By 2050 7 billion people are expected to live in cities. (80 % of the world population). Besides, urban centres are more vulnerable to global climate risks especially in low and middle-income countries and informal settlements with poor infrastructure (IPCC, 2014a:3). Cities and local governments also have a potential for adaptation and resilience and could be very effective in responding climate crisis as a part of a co-operative multi-level governance mechanism (IPCC, 2014a:3-4). Policy integration for climate adaptation and resilience by local governments and cities could also foster disaster risk management and contribute to policy success at all levels and scales (IPCC, 2014a: 4).

Bulkeley & Betsill summarise the importance of cities in climate reference with reference to four factors. The first reason is about the increasingly urban nature of the global population in which cities are sites of high consumption of energy and production of waste. Secondly, the proliferation of LA21 has shown that local authorities are both willing and able to take on board the complex sustainable development agenda. Thirdly, local authorities are key actors in the urban arena in terms of co-ordinating action between different partners and facilitating community involvement with policy programmes. Finally, some local governments have considerable experience in addressing environmental issues, and many have undertaken innovative measures and strategies to reduce their impact on climate change, which can act as demonstration projects or form the basis for new experimentation. Through these practices, local governments exercise a degree of influence over emissions of greenhouse gases in ways that directly affect the ability of national governments to reach targets to which they have agreed internationally. (Bulkeley & Betsill, 2005: 45). In the following section, local government networks and their achievements in climate change adaptation and mitigation will be analysed.

4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT and CITY NETWORKS

Local governments and cities initially played a very limited role in mitigating and adapting to global climate change. The first phase of their involvement took the form of municipal voluntarism, which

involved predominately small and medium-sized cities in North America and Europe and was characterised by individuals within municipal authorities recognising the potential significance of climate change and offering some form of response (Bulkeley and Betsill, 2013: 139).

The emergence of a second phase of urban response to climate change came, in part, from the challenges encountered during the initial decade. By the early 2000s, municipal authorities and other urban actors were engaged in a more overtly political approach, strategic urbanism, in which climate change became integral to the pursuit of wider urban agendas ranging from transport to waste management, ecological modernisation measures that aim to protect environment and save resources in an efficient manner (Bulkeley and Betsill, 2013: 140).

Transnational municipal networks were established in 1990's and ICLEI (The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives -Local Governments for Sustainability) is one of the pioneer local government networks focuses on environmental matters. ICLEI was founded in 1990 by 200 local governments from 43 countries who convened for the first World Congress of Local Governments for a Sustainable Future at the United Nations headquarters in New York. Operations started in 1991 at the World Secretariat in Toronto, Canada, and the European Secretariat in Freiburg, Germany. Along with ICLEI's Cities for Climate Protection (CCP) programme, the Climate Alliance and Energie-cities – ICLEI's Cities for Climate Protection (CCP) programme, the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, the Covenant of Mayors Committed to Local Sustainable Energy and the Global Cities Covenant on Climate (Mexico City Pact) are other prominent transnational municipal networks.

Local government and city networks undertake a number of functions in climate change mitigation and adaptation. They focus on reductions in greenhouse gas emissions as a part of sustainable cities initiatives. They provide guidance to local governments and cities in development of inventories, definition of problems and identification of resources. Cities and local governments also commit themselves to climate change mitigation through voluntary emission reduction targets and regular reporting their achievements. Networks also contribute to local capacity development to address climate change and promote the exchange of information, experience and transfer of knowledge among their member cities. They also represent interests of their members at various levels, including national, supranational and international.

2015 Paris Summit also witnessed the rising impact of cities and local governments in tackling climate change. Climate Summit for Local Leaders held in Paris during COP21, 440 Mayors and subnational leaders pledged to “deliver up to 3.7 gigatons of urban greenhouse gas emissions reductions annually by 2030 — the equivalent of up to 30 % of the difference between current national commitments and the 2 degree emissions reduction pathway identified by the scientific community”

(C40 Cities, 2016). As Seoul Mayor Park Won-soon stated “local governments are actually leading national governments. They are the driving force,” (Worland, 2015).

5. CLIMATE POLICY in TURKEY and PRACTICES of SOME TURKISH MUNICIPALITIES

Activities of Turkish local governments on climate change were documented earlier in a number of descriptive studies (Orhan, 2013; Orhan 2014). Turkish governments’ official attitude on climate change has been rather defensive though we could speak of mixed responses from various departments in the public bureaucracy and sectors in private sector. Cities have a substantial impact on climate change and municipalities have serious opportunities for mitigation and adaption. However, given the predominance of central government in Turkish politics and policy process, and developmentalist attitudes of almost at all a level of government, climate change has been a rather sidelined issue in Turkey. However, this picture has started to change by the 2000s. Droughts of the second half of 2000s, rising impact of climate movement and the active role played by international organizations in agenda setting have raised the consciousness on climate change (Şahin, 2015). Yet again, “special circumstances discourse” is very influential and consecutive Turkish governments prioritised economic development over environmental concerns like climate change.

In this context, Turkish municipalities have started to develop climate mitigation policies either as a part of international networks of local governments or alone as a part of their local mandates on environmental matters. In 2009, REC and ICLEI organised a campaign for Climate Friendly Cities in collaboration and the technical support of ICLEI and financial support of Dutch Ministry of Planning and Environment (VROM) to increase awareness on sustainable cities and decarbonisation processes with participation of fourteen local authorities from Turkey. In 2010, İstanbul Metropolitan Mayor Kadir Topbaş became the President of Union of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and Turkish municipalities’ activities at the international level has accelerated. İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality is a signatory to the Global Cities Covenant on Climate, which is also known “the Mexico City Pact.”

At the moment;

- 16 municipalities from Turkey, with 15 284 365 inhabitants, are signatory to Covenant of Mayors.
- Some of them have already submitted their Action Plan and committed to reductions in carbon emissions stemming from municipal services.
- 5 municipalities are member of ICLEI.
- 6 municipalities are member of Energy Cities initiative.

- Some other municipalities are involved in a number of activities for climate change mitigation and adaptation, on their own ranging from energy efficient public transport projects, to renewable energy projects.

Local governments in Turkish cities played relatively progressive roles in mitigating and adapting climate change through their activities as a part of global networks of local governments. This is a particularly interesting topic for earth system governance because sub-national players bypass the national level, which is not so keen on having climate change as a priority area, and translated and brought international impulses, into sub-national and local policy development processes. In this context, local government, cities and their international networks emerge as significant players in their own right and there is an image of shifting authority in earth system governance towards local and subnational players. However, this image is partial because, the success of local governments and cities rests on the continual support of international actors other than transnational agencies and in the next section, those support mechanisms will be outlined.

6. INTERNATIONAL ACTORS and SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Since some governments, like Turkey, are not so keen on taking further steps for climate change mitigation and adaptation, non-state actors deserve attention. Although there is a rising impact of sub-national players through municipal voluntarism and strategic urbanism approaches, international local authority networks also play a very crucial role in facilitating policy change providing news ideas and finances for policy change. They also facilitate policy learning and introduce new ideas and technical support for member municipalities, in being a part of network, preparing inventories and reduction target plans. Along with international local authority networks, a number of other international players emerge and have a potential to influence earth system governance. In Turkish case, involvement of a number of players facilitated policy change towards climate change adaptation and mitigation at the local level.

- International organisations,
- International development finance institutions,
- Foreign governments,
- Policy entrepreneurs (both from public and private sectors),
- Turkish investment banks and consultancy firms

The Role of International Organisations: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) acted as a facilitator in the introduction of climate change agenda in Turkey. International organisations like REC Turkey, financed by the EU, played a major role in agenda setting concerning cities and climate

change and introduced new policy ideas into the vocabulary of some municipal players. REC Turkey organised a campaign on Climate Friendly Cities and provided support in collaboration with ICLEI.

The Role of Foreign Governments: Dutch government supported installation of air pollution monitoring equipment in Konya and Climate Friendly Cities Project of REC and ICLEI. UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Prosperity Fund financed the Pilot Project in Bursa. Some other governments channelled their funds through their development finance institutions, French government through AFD and German government through KfW

The Role of Private Entrepreneurs/Consultancy Firms: They actively involved in project development that suits the criteria of international donors' funds. Actually, they have been major players in bringing available resources to those in need. Sometimes their role only confined to consultancy, but all have contributed to development of climate related projects. Demir Enerji Danışmanlık (in Seferihisar, Bornova and Karaman Municipalities), ICE and Mavi Consultants (in Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality), Ricardo-AEA and its partner Bluecern (in Bursa Metropolitan Municipality Pilot Project) Aspiro consultants (in Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality) Private advisers and project hunters play a crucial role in policy change

The Role of International Development Finance Institutions: International development banks and agencies play a facilitative role in this process. French Development Agency (AFD) supported local governments' initiatives towards climate change mitigation in Turkey through their specific grants and loans. AFD aims to encourage low carbon growth, contribute to the reduction of territorial inequalities and conserve regional public goods through its long maturity credits below market costs and technical assistance via partners in both public and private sector. Gaziantep Climate Action Plan, new energy efficient passenger ferries and new tramway lines in İzmir, extension of metro lines in İstanbul and tramway lines in Kayseri have received full or partial AFD financial and technical support. Among others, promoting environmentally friendly and low carbon cities have been the strategic target of AFD and AFD officials visit Turkish municipalities to let them about their support mechanisms. AFD has also authorised some Turkish banks, like Denizbank, TEB and TSKB, for its lending projects for environmentally friendly projects. EBRD has also contributed to Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality as a part of EU Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Programme for Turkey in providing finances for 50 CNG buses for public transport. KfW provided 312 million Euros for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in Turkey, as a part of International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) for a climate protection programme. KfW also supported municipal infrastructure projects in Turkey.

The Role of Turkish Commercial Banks: TSKB, Denizbank and TEB have played a major role in distributing AFD and KwF funds allocated to Turkish municipalities as well as some private firms and SMEs. This mechanism has aimed to draw people's attention to energy efficiency, renewable energy and carbon emissions and to encourage companies to invest in these fields. Municipalities and municipal affiliates have benefitted from this facility.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Climate change is a human induced complex global environmental problem. Climate change adaptation and mitigation constitute two major policy responses. Yet again, it is rather difficult to achieve those policy objectives since there are a number of actors and interests involved. A number of actors ranging from international organisations to governments and NGOs get involved in the negotiation process for an effective climate regime and the resistance of vested interests make the progress rather difficult. Although governments are major players in global environmental politics, some governments are not keen supporters of climate change mitigation and adaptation and drag their foot.

Local governments, cities and their networks are vital players in global climate politics. They are at the heart of the problem, with their energy intensive production and consumption patterns. Being the source of the problem and they are also highly vulnerable to climate hazards. Their decisions will have a critical and decisive in achieving goals specified in Paris Agreement. As it was outlined above, there are optimistic signals from cities and local governments, because they commit themselves to climate change adaptation and mitigation despite some negative signals from their own governments. Their networks also provide valuable contributions in providing technical support and they are also influential in connecting the local and global. Local governments and cities by-pass this deadlock through their collaborative projects.

Those networks' contributed to climate change politics and policy in Turkey significantly. Since Turkish governments have been reluctant players concerning climate change through their discourse of "special circumstances" and limited incentives for change, a number of local governments bypassed the national level, translated and brought international impulses, into sub-national and local policy development processes. Turkish experience has the potential to reflect on the multilevel capacity for climate change mitigation and adaptation. In this case, transnational networks and local players act together in tackling climate change and this article shed some light on the conditions of success. Turkish experience also illustrates that local initiative and membership in global networks are not sufficient to explain policy change. Involvement of international organisations, international development finance institutions, foreign governments, policy entrepreneurs (from both public and private sectors), Turkish investment banks and consultancy firms play a major role in developing a local level capacity in adapting

and mitigating climate change. Involvement of those players is an important source of improvement given the reluctance of central government institutions in Turkey. As a result, local governments' achievements do not necessarily their own since they operate in a complex process in which other actors are involved. This article identified the actors who took place in this process and illustrated that development of local capacity needs global support, which cannot be limited to international local government networks for climate change.

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