A FEW STEPS BEYOND FEAR:

The Dynamics of Viewing Climate Change and the Conditions of Social Support Required for the Struggle
Country Report Türkiye
Executive Summary

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December 2024

FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG

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Introduction

In assessments of climate change, it is often assumed that people can be placed at two opposite ends of the spectrum. On the one hand, there are those who accept the reality of climate change and become increasingly concerned as they face the consequences of the change that even ordinary people can observe (extreme weather events, global warming, drought). On the other hand, there are those who have a different perspective. They believe that climate change is a concept that has been invented for a number of reasons and that the change is not as vital and profound as it is believed to be. It would be inaccurate to assume that attitudes towards climate change are fixed or that there is no room for a more nuanced approach. While there may be people who are concerned but do not want to make changes in their lives, it is also true that many people would be willing to take action if they were better informed or if they were not concerned about the economic burdens of climate-neutral change. By gaining a deeper understanding of the emotions, thoughts, concerns, and worries that shape attitudes towards climate change, we can begin to move beyond fear and create more sustainable policies. One of the most effective ways to do this is to engage directly with communities and collect data.

Method

This research, based on quantitative data representative of the population living in Türkiye, was conducted in a total of 19 countries by the SINUS-Institute, which was commissioned by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Competence Center for Climate and Social Justice. We would like to extend our gratitude to the following countries for their participation in this research: Denmark, Germany, France, Greece, Italy, Canada, Croatia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Türkiye, Hungary, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The research was based on a standardized questionnaire and conducted through online interviews with at least 1,200 respondents aged 18-69 in each country. The study is based on an evaluation of the quantitative data obtained from interviews with 1,201 participants living in Türkiye. The participants were selected to represent a diverse range of income groups and levels of education, reflecting the social conditions in Türkiye.

In order to gain a full understanding of the data, it was important to take into account not only the socio-demographic differences between participants, but also their milieu belonging. The socio-demographic analysis of the findings is further enhanced and reinforced by the incorporation of the lifestyles and value systems that define and differentiate the Sinus meta-milieu groups.

In considering the creation of new ways of living, new consumption habits, new business practices, new legislation, and new public policies, it becomes important to consider the extent and magnitude of the support these transformations may find from society, business, and politicians. In light of the pressing reality and global challenge of climate change, even the smallest transformations in our lives can make a valuable contribution, while larger transformations may eventually prove insufficient. It would be beneficial to gain a deeper understanding of the various intersecting awareness and concerns in order to inform the development of new climate policies. This could help to illuminate the potential dynamics of transformation in Türkiye.

MILIEU GROUPS[1]

Established

Status-driven conservative elite: High self-confidence, traditional responsibility and performance ethics, exclusivity and status claims, acceptance of social order.

Intellectuals

Academic elite with post-material beliefs: High affinity for enjoyment, sensuality, art and culture, critical of globalization, advocate for justice and public welfare, taking responsibility for oneself and others, affinity for education and high quality of life

Performers

Efficiency- and progress-oriented modern elite: Global economic and liberal thinking, affinity for higher consumption, modern design, adopting, interest in technology and digital, competitive and career-oriented, networker, open to change

1 When forming Sinus meta-milieu groups, individuals are asked to describe typical features of their individual lives, their core beliefs, values and everyday life. A form consisting of 29 statements was presented to identify their effective motives. Based on the responses received, participants were assigned to living environments, i.e. milieu groups, based on a specific modeling logic. Sinus meta-milieu groups are modeled independently for each country to take into account local characteristics and country-specific response behavior. Detailed information about the methodology used https://justclimate.fes.de/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/FES_Methodenbericht_SINUS_inkl._Lesebeispiel_en.pdf

Cosmopolitan -Avantgarde
Ambitious and individualistic avant-garde: Cosmopolitan, urban, mobile and flexible, digital nomads, lifestyle vanguards, pronounced self-expression, postmodern lifestyle elite, anti-mainstream, desire to stand out, joie de vivre, ambitious and success-oriented

Progressive Realists
Drivers of social transformation: Sustainable lifestyle but without renunciation, driving the global social transformation, progressive, optimistic, ease of dealing with contradictions, party and protest, seriousness and entertainment

Adaptive Navigators
Modern mainstream: Flexible pragmatists, young modern middle class, high willingness to adapt and perform, modern lifestyle, digital affinity, reliable and loyal, open to new – but tested and verified - things

Sensation-Oriented
Materialistic- and entertainment-focused lower middle-class: Hedonistic, with focus on today, conspicuous consumption, unconcerned, open to risks, anti-bourgeois yet materialistic lifestyle, rejection of political correctness and conventions, looking for fun, action, entertainment, stimulation

Conventional Mainstream
Harmony-seeking older middle-class: Desire for secure circumstances, fear of losing achievements, search for community, cohesion, social life, neighbourly support, distrust towards elites, feeling of being left out in favor of other groups, down to earth

Traditionals
Order-seeking older generation: Petty bourgeois world, traditional working-class culture, desire for social security, harmony, consistency, voluntarily disconnection from modern lifestyle and digital culture, desire for simple, safe, down to earth

Consumer-Materialists
Lower class striving for validation: Precarious living conditions, undemanding adaptation to necessities, desire for consumption standard of the middle class, defiant cohesion within their own community, fear of speed of change and being left behind.

What is Climate Change?

Climate change refers to long-term changes in temperature and weather patterns. According to the United Nations, these changes are caused by both human activities and natural causes. In particular, since the 1800s, the use of fossil fuels (coal, oil, natural gas) has increased greenhouse gas emissions, leading to global warming.[2] In the 2021 Intergovernmental Report on Climate Change, it was determined that humans are primarily responsible for climate change, especially since the industrialization process.[3] Gases produced by human activities accumulate in the atmosphere, trapping heat from the sun and raising temperatures. The main greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide and methane. Given this situation, it is essential to limit the global temperature. In this context, the 2015 Paris Agreement aims to keep the global temperature increase below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels and to limit it to 1.5°C.[4]

Turkiye's Plan to Combat Climate Change

Türkiye became a party to the Paris Agreement in 2021 and submitted its updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the UN in 2023. In the declaration, it set a net zero emissions target for 2053. According to this target, Türkiye has committed to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 41 percent by the year 2030. However, this target is a strategy to limit the growth of emissions. It does not imply a drastic reduction.[5] Taking into account the announced roadmap, Türkiye expects its emissions growth to reach an upper limit by 2039 and plans to reach the net zero emissions target by 2053[6].

2 United Nations, (2021), What is Climate Change?, https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/what-is-climate-change
3 Intergovernmental Climate Change Panel (2021), IPCC WGI Sixth Assessment Report, https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/resources/press; Intergovernmental Climate Change Panel, (2023), Climate Change 2023 Synthesis Report, https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_SYR_LongerReport.pdf
4 UNFCCC, (2015), Paris Agreement, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/ english_paris_agreement.pdf
5 Directorate of Climate Change, İklim Değişikliği Azaltım Stratejisi ve Eylem Planı 2024-2030, https://iklim.gov.tr/db/turkce/icerikler/files/İklim%20 Değişikliği%20 Azaltım%20Stratejisi%20ve%20Eylem%20Planı%20 (2024-2030).pdf,
6 UNFCCC, Republic of Turkiye Updated First Nationally Determined Contribution, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2023-04/TÜRKİYE_UPDATED%201st%20 NDC_EN.pdf

Climate Change: Reality or Exaggeration?

The Turkish society considers climate change as an important issue. In fact, the SINUS Institute's research has findings that support this. According to the survey, 82% of the respondents consider climate change as an important problem. However, this issue ranked only 9th among the most important problems facing Türkiye. While climate change is seen as a problem, the reason for its low ranking in the list of top problems is that the majority of respondents focused on the economy and poverty. For example, while economic problems have a 55% share, climate change and environmental problems have a 29% share. The pressures of the economic crisis, high inflation and political uncertainty that the country has experienced in recent years have effectively pushed the environment and climate change down the list of priorities.

While there is a general consensus that climate change is an issue that requires attention, there are still some unanswered questions regarding its potential consequences. While the majority of participants expressed the view that the environment and nature should be accorded greater importance, it was also acknowledged that environmental policies in Türkiye are currently facing challenges in the context of economic concerns.

The participants also demonstrated an awareness of the potential impact of climate change. For instance, a significant majority of respondents (96%) believe that the destruction of nature may have negative consequences for people and their livelihoods. Similarly, 93% of respondents expressed concern about the potential effects of climate change. The impacts that society is most concerned about include an increase in extreme weather events, economic damages, and a decrease in agricultural yields. While 49% of respondents view the increase in extreme weather events as the most alarming consequence of climate change, natural interactions such as water scarcity and the extinction of animal and plant species are also identified as significant concerns.

In examining the responses, it becomes evident that while anxiety is a pervasive sentiment, there is no clear consensus on this matter. It seems that a significant majority (62%) believes that solutions for adaptation should be given greater priority than efforts to combat climate change. On the other hand, it is worth noting that a significant proportion of respondents (39%) believe that the potential consequences of climate change may not be as severe as commonly perceived. These data suggest that climate change is a significant concern for many members of our society. However, it seems that there is room for improvement in terms of the clarity and specificity of the solutions and action plans that are being put forth.

Concerns about climate change manifest themselves in different ways in different groups of society. While the group that is most concerned about climate change is the sedentary group, more educated and higher income groups, such as the Cosmopolitan Pioneers, are more skeptical about climate change. This may reflect a degree of skepticism towards environmental policies and the effects of demands for change. Furthermore, it seems that those with lower levels of education tend to view climate change as an exaggerated problem, whereas those in higher income groups express concerns that climate policies may result in economic losses.

Overall, it can be said that societal concern about climate change is high in Türkiye. However, it is often the case that this concern is overshadowed by economic and political priorities. While a considerable number of respondents express a desire for more robust implementation of environmental policies, it is also notable that a sizeable proportion of them hold the view that the impacts of climate change may be somewhat overstated. This suggests that there may be a social divide on the issue of climate change. This highlights the importance for policymakers to consider these varying viewpoints and develop a roadmap that can resonate with different societal groups and address their concerns in a scientific and comprehensible manner.

What can we do? What cannot we do?

Climate Change and Public Attitudes: Expectation of Responsibility and Justice

According to research, climate change is widely accepted as a social problem. According to Konda Research Company's 2021 and 2023 reports, 9 out of 10 people in Türkiye accept climate change as a reality. However, this acceptance alone is not enough.[7] Although people state that they want to take more responsibility for protecting the environment, they also emphasize the need for social and economic justice in this regard.

Is the recognition of this reality enough? In the research conducted by SINUS-Institute, focusing on the questions measuring attitudes towards climate and environmentally sensitive behaviors, it is seen that the participants are willing to take a

7 Konda, (2021), İklim Değişikliği Algısı Raporu 2021, https://konda.com.tr/uploads/konda iklimdegisikligialgisiraporu-aralik2021-final-0f4b56136ada676fb5d43b7ce0550c9430762ac3bcbffa11476e469bbda930a8.pdf,
Konda, (2023), Türkiye'de İklim Değişikliği Algısı 2023, https://www.iklimhaber.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/konda-arastirma-rapor-2023_v2.pdf

role both individually and socially. In this context, the emphasis on providing a livable environment for future generations stands out. 97% of the participants believe that everyone should be active and start changing their lifestyle in order to ensure a livable environment for themselves and the generations to come (58% of the respondents "Strongly agree" with this statement). Furthermore, 97% of respondents are positive that they would be willing to do more to protect the environment and climate if the costs incurred were distributed in a socially fair way. In addition, 93% of respondents are committed to changing society.

Barriers to Climate and Environmentally Responsible Behavior

Individuals who are prepared to assume responsibility for climate change have identified several impediments to their actions. In this regard, economic concerns were identified as the primary obstacle. A majority of respondents (95%) indicated that they believe individuals should be willing to modify their lifestyles for the benefit of the environment. However, a significant proportion (74%) expressed concern that significant changes in their lifestyles may result in substantial personal costs. Furthermore, 67% of respondents believe that climate measures will disproportionately affect low-income groups, perceiving this as socially unjust. The responses can be interpreted as supportive of the proposed measures, subject to two conditions. The first of these is the necessity for a profound transformation at the societal level, in accordance with the understanding that individual efforts alone are insufficient to achieve the desired outcomes. Secondly, there is a demand that the steps to be taken to combat climate change should be done in a socially and economically just manner. If these two concerns/conditions are not addressed, the participants' willingness to make efforts may diminish, potentially leading to the emergence of opposing attitudes.

Actors of Change and Sharing Responsibility

Climate change is a reality that cuts horizontally across all countries in the world, requiring many actors to act simultaneously and harmoniously. An analysis of the participants' perspectives on the roles and responsibilities of individuals, companies, and states reveals the following observations. According to the participants' perspectives, governments, companies, and citizens are the primary actors responsible for combating climate change. Nevertheless, it is perceived that governments and companies, in particular, have not adequately assumed responsibility to date. A significant proportion of respondents, 67%, expressed the view that political parties have been remiss in their efforts, while 65% of commercial enterprises and 58% of the government were deemed to have taken minimal action on this issue. Furthermore, 64% of respondents indicated that individuals should assume greater responsibility. Notably, the scientific community is identified as one of the most influential actors in the fight against climate change, with 31% of survey respondents citing it as such.

The entities anticipated to assume the greatest responsibility for combating climate change are as follows: the government, the scientific community, and citizens. According to respondents, the most effective actors in this regard are the government (47%), the scientific community (39%), and citizens (35%). Businesses and civil society organizations follow with 30% and 31%, respectively. Additionally, it is emphasized that trade unions, local governments, political parties, and the European Union should assume a more substantial role in this process.
The prevailing sentiment among the respondents is that the government and the scientific community, which have been the traditional subjects of politics, have not yet assumed sufficient responsibility. It is noteworthy that businesses and civil society organizations have received 30% and 31% of the responses, respectively. This suggests that there is a growing sentiment among the public that these entities are not adequately communicating their policies and action plans on climate change to the general public, or that their messages are not persuasive. Additionally, criticisms against the business world should be given due consideration. The prevailing sentiment among the participants, as expressed in the discourse, is that the business world, driven by a profit-maximizing agenda, is hesitant to undergo the requisite transformation in its operational practices to adequately address climate change. In light of the call for responsibility directed towards civil society organizations, trade unions, and local governments, it can be concluded that policies should be formulated not solely from a centralized perspective, excluding local and regional actors, but in an inclusive manner that disseminates responsibility from the general to the local level.

It is imperative that we construct a new world for ourselves: What strategies can be implemented in the domains of traffic, energy, technology, and consumption?

Social and Economic Transformation to Combat Climate Change

The efforts to combat climate change will precipitate a series of changes that will affect the way of life at the individual and societal level. A significant majority, specifically 96% of the respondents, advocate for the economic and lifestyle changes that will be experienced during the transformation process to be shaped in a socially just manner. Moreover, a significant majority, 95%, expressed support for augmenting financial assistance to low-income groups in the face of escalating

electricity, heating, and transportation costs resulting from climate protection measures. However, a significant proportion, amounting to 71%, voice reservations regarding the prospect of radical alterations in business practices and lifestyle choices. In contrast, an overwhelming majority of 87% expressed their agreement with the principle of safeguarding vulnerable populations, particularly low-income and minority groups, who are particularly burdened by the consequences of pollution. These data underscore the imperative of safeguarding social justice in the context of the global climate change initiative.

Climate Friendly Production and Renewable Energy Transition

The results of the survey indicate a strong consensus in (96%) favor of support programs that encourage businesses to transition to climate-friendly production processes and products. A significant majority of respondents, 91%, assert that clear government mandates are imperative for businesses to achieve climate neutrality. Moreover, 85% of respondents advocate for increased pressure from politicians on businesses to adopt climate-friendly production methods. Renewable energy garnered a resounding endorsement from 95% of respondents. However, 75% of respondents expressed concerns that the EU's climate policy does not adequately consider Türkiye's unique circumstances, and 75% of respondents indicated a preference for greater autonomy in shaping their nation's climate policy. This sentiment, it should be noted, is not a critique of the EU's climate policy per se, but rather a call for a more bespoke approach that aligns with the distinct needs and conditions of each nation.

A struggle that takes Türkiye's conditions into account with consistent laws

It is imperative to acknowledge the necessity for a climate policy that is tailored to Türkiye's unique circumstances, as indicated by the following findings: 92% of respondents underscore the imperative for strict and consistent laws to safeguard the environment.83% assert that existing guidelines are inadequate for a substantial transformation in lifestyle and business practices, and that their implementation would steer the nation towards a more sustainable future.85% advocate for the implementation of structural change measures, even if they result in job losses. However, a significant majority, 90%, assert that jobs affected by such structural change should be retained for as long as possible in the absence of suitable alternatives. In light of these findings, it can be concluded that to avert the potentially disastrous consequences of climate change, it is imperative for the subjects mentioned in the preceding section to embark on a comprehensive change process that takes into account Türkiye's unique circumstances, while concurrently assessing the repercussions of the proposed policies on business processes and lifestyle.

A Shift in Transportation and the Adoption of Electric Vehicles

In the context of the global climate change crisis, the transportation sector is undergoing a period of rapid transformation. This transformation is characterized by a shift towards electrification and reduced reliance on fossil fuels. The adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) and the expansion of public transportation are at the forefront of this transition.

In this context, The SINUS-Institute study has also examined public attitudes towards this transformation in Türkiye. The analysis revealed that Turkish society demonstrates a notable enthusiasm for the promotion of EVs and public transportation. The findings suggest that the public is highly supportive of policies that encourage the use of these environmentally friendly transportation options. Specifically, 95% of respondents expressed support for the promotion of electric vehicles, while 94% advocated for the expansion of charging stations for both electric and hybrid vehicles. A comparable level of support was observed for public transportation, with 93% of respondents in favor of reducing public transport prices and 90% supporting the expansion of the transportation network and the increase in the frequency of local public transportation. These data indicate that Turkish society holds a favorable attitude towards electric vehicles and public transportation. However, this shift is impeded by infrastructure-related challenges. The dearth of charging stations for electric vehicles and the inadequacy of the existing infrastructure are significant impediments to the widespread adoption of electric vehicles.

Public Transportation and Infrastructure Problems

The respondents' responses on public transportation reflect concerns about the existing infrastructure. A substantial proportion of respondents, specifically 93%, expressed concerns over the perceived exorbitance of public transportation costs. Moreover, a resounding 90% of respondents advocated for the augmentation of the transportation network and the enhancement of the frequency of local public transit services. This collective sentiment underscores the necessity for enhanced accessibility and widespread availability of public transportation systems. The pervasive concern regarding the inadequacy of existing public transportation infrastructure in Türkiye has given rise to a pronounced demand for amelioration. Moreover, respondents assert that enhancing public transportation infrastructure would contribute to a reduction in environmental impacts, as well as traffic and noise pollution, and accidents.

Taxation and Subsidy Policies

Respondents argue that a "stick" strategy is needed to address polluting transportation habits. 73% support a carbon tax on airline tickets and 70% support a car toll. This strategy is seen as an economic penalty for environmentally harmful activities. Low/middle income groups argue that they should bear the cost of pollution caused by high income groups who own more cars and fly more. In addition, tax rates such as SCT and VAT on electric vehicle purchases should be subsidized to encourage the transition. These data suggest that current tax policies may be more of an obstacle than a motivator for the public to change.

Society recognizes the need for a significant transformation in the fight against climate change but emphasizes that this transformation must be managed in an economically and socially equitable manner. While there is broad public support for the use of electric vehicles, the promotion of public transportation, and the transition to renewable energy, these changes need to be supported by infrastructure and incentive policies. Governments and local authorities need to act more effectively and rapidly to accelerate this transformation and promote environmentally friendly transport systems.

Energy Sources: Is it possible to phase out fossil fuels?

Reducing emissions is one of the primary goals in the fight against climate change. According to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the use of fossil fuels for heating, transportation and electricity generation is the main driver of rising emissions.

To meet existing net-zero targets, renewable energy sources - wind, solar, wave, etc. - are highlighted as the solution. - are highlighted as the solution. The research shows that respondents strongly support the transition from fossil fuels to alternative energy sources. 96% of respondents support the construction of more wind turbines and the same percentage of respondents support the mandatory use of solar energy in public and private buildings. In addition, 92% want membership in cooperatives to be encouraged. These data suggest that there is a generally positive view of renewable energy sources in society. The results can also be interpreted as indicating that the public has no need or support for thermal power plants to generate electricity.

This support for renewables is not without its problems and question marks. Employment is the main issue of concern, which could become a threat if not managed properly. Concerned about the potential negative effects of the transition to renewable energy, such as job losses, 96% of respondents said that workers affected by these changes should be retrained and financially supported. The high level of awareness of the potential negative impact of the renewable energy transition on the workforce feeds into concerns about unemployment. This suggests that a climate and employment program that addresses these concerns should go hand in hand. If alternative employment models/economic policies are not created during the transition to renewable energy sources, not only will people's positions change, but they may also be more inclined to oppose the policies of change.

Society wants to be producer not just consumer

The study's findings indicate a societal desire to assume a more proactive role in shaping these policies. A significant proportion of respondents, 94%, underscored the significance of mechanisms such as citizen forums and advisory boards in facilitating societal engagement in the process of achieving climate neutrality. This inclination towards engagement is further evidenced by their active involvement in energy production. Moreover, 90% of respondents expressed a desire to play an active role in shaping their community's energy supply, with 37% asserting their capacity to do so. Furthermore, 67% of respondents expressed a desire to engage in energy production activities, underscoring a growing inclination towards active involvement in shaping their own energy environment. This indicates a shift in the community's mindset, moving beyond a passive role as consumers to a more active position as producers.

The emphasis placed on involvement in energy production through local cooperatives by the participants provides a tangible response to the question of how to achieve this objective.

In Türkiye, local governments play a substantial role in the national planning process, as determined by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, with the aim of combating climate change. However, the collective action and cooperation between citizens and local governments remains constrained. The establishment of energy cooperatives at the regional level has the potential to empower citizens in their efforts to address climate change, thereby enhancing the efficacy of the implemented strategies. This organizational framework facilitates the establishment of mechanisms tailored to regional needs, thereby contributing to the development of effective strategies for addressing climate change.

The State Should Increase Incentives and Support

Government support for renewable energy generation can be categorized into two distinct groups: VAT refunds and financial support for the installation of solar panels. However, these support mechanisms are not accessible to the majority of participants due to exchange rates and prevailing economic conditions. The economic crisis in Türkiye since 2021 has led to a decline in purchasing power and an increase in exchange rates. Consequently, it appears challenging for minimum wage and low-income groups to become renewable energy producers. To address these challenges, the state should simplify incentive programs, particularly in low-income regions, and engage local governments in this process.

At the enterprise level, KOSGEB[8] offers support for renewable energy initiatives, albeit contingent on specific criteria. While licensed power plants facilitate direct electricity sales to the grid, unlicensed plants are constrained to internal consumption.[9] The sale of excess electricity from unlicensed power plants is precluded by legislation. This hinders the desired increase in renewable energy production. Moreover, the decline in the use of natural gas in electricity generation is possible through the promotion of solar energy. According to data from 2023, natural gas accounted for 21% of electricity generation, while coal accounted for 36.3%.[10] The widespread adoption of solar energy is poised to play a pivotal role in enabling Türkiye to achieve its ambitious 2053 net zero emission targets.

Renewable Energy: The Enhancement of Energy Security and the Possibility of Foreign Policy Independence

In the context of Türkiye, natural gas is predominantly utilized in residential buildings (28%) and industrial facilities.[11] Notably, 98% of the gas utilized in these sectors is imported, underscoring the country's reliance on external sources for its energy needs. According to data from the Ministry of Trade, Türkiye allocates 70 billion dollars toward energy imports annually, despite the economic challenges faced during this period. The promotion of solar energy has the potential to reduce Türkiye's dependence on imports and the trade deficit by decreasing the reliance on natural gas. This, in turn, would enhance Türkiye's energy security and reduce potential risks.
The potential for renewable energy to enhance energy security is not exclusive to Türkiye; it has the potential to benefit the global community. The International Energy Agency (IEA) has defined energy security as not only the uninterrupted flow of energy, but also the guarantee of supply at affordable prices. The global production of fossil fuels is concentrated in a small number of countries, which can lead to disruptions in energy flows in the event of geopolitical crises and broken agreements. Renewable energy production has the potential to enhance energy security in the face of these global risks, thereby enabling more autonomous foreign policy decisions.

Technological Innovations and Business

Technological developments and transformation in the production structure have an important role in combating climate change. The participants articulated their perspectives on two predominant trends. The initial trend pertains to the development and labeling of climate-friendly products. An overwhelming majority of respondents, amounting to 95%, advocate for the promotion and labeling of these eco-friendly products. This indicates a societal preference for A+++, energy-efficient, and climate-friendly options, particularly in the context of white goods and other technological products. Moreover, a significant proportion of respondents, 93%, expressed support for the implementation of legal regulations that prioritize energy efficiency in electrical household appliances.

The second prevailing trend pertains to the penalization of climate-unfriendly products and technologies. The prevailing sentiment among respondents is that subsidies detrimental to the climate should undergo reduction (91%), and products that are harmful should be subject to increased costs (86%). This underscores the necessity for governmental entities to impose economic sanctions on products that exert a detrimental effect on climate change. However, it is emphasized that an approach limited to financial penalties alone will not bring an effective solution to the climate crisis. The respondents propose a comprehensive strategy that encompasses not only financial sanctions but also the exclusion of companies that persist in engaging in detrimental practices from the market.

8 The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization (KOSGEB) is a legal entity that was established under the authority of the Ministry of Industry and Technology. KOSGEB functions as a public institution and is bound by the provisions of private law.The foundation of KOSGEB dates back to 1990, with the primary objective being to bolster the manufacturing sector and enhance the efficiency of SMEs within the broader economic landscape.The legal framework underpinning KOSGEB's operations is delineated in Law No. 3624, which stipulates the organization's mandate to provide non-profit support to medium and small-sized enterprises. For detailed information see: https://www.kosgeb.gov.tr/site

9 The Ministry of Industry and Technology, Yatırımlarda Devlet Yardımları Hakkında Kararın Uygulanmasına İlişkin Tebliğ'de (Tebliğ No: 2012/1) Değişiklik Yapılmasına Dair Tebliğ, Resmi Gazete, n. 32642, 24 Ağustos 2024, https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2024/08/20240824-4.htm; Enerji ve Tabii Kaynaklar Bakanlığı, Yerli Aksam Destekleri,28.05.2021, https://enerji.gov.tr/bilgi-merkezi-yerli-aksam-destekleri ; "Yenilenebilir Enerji Kaynaklarının Belgelendirilmesi ve Desteklenmesine İlişkin Yönetmelik", T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Mevzuat Bilgi Sistemi, 1 Ekim 2013, https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuat?MevzuatNo=18907&MevzuatTur=7&MevzuatTertip=5

10 The Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, Elektrik, https://enerji.gov.tr/bilgi-merkezi-enerji-elektrik

11 Gaz Bir, 2023 Doğal Gaz Dağıtım Sektörü Raporu, https://gazbir.org.tr/GAZBIR-2023-Yili-Dogal-Gaz-Dagitim-Sektoru-Raporu/

Education

Education is a fundamental and driving factor in increasing the level of knowledge of society in combating climate change and in helping individuals to adopt environmentally friendly habits and future generations to act on this knowledge. A significant majority of respondents, specifically 96%, expressed support for the enhancement of environmental and climate protection subjects within the context of school education. Moreover, a substantial majority, amounting to 92%, expressed support for the provision of retraining opportunities for individuals who are at risk of experiencing unemployment due to shifts in employment patterns resulting from climate change. This collective sentiment underscores the imperative for comprehensive and strategic modifications to educational curricula and occupational structures during the transitional phase. The respondents further posit that education in the fight against climate change can serve as a preventative measure against unemployment, and they express a desire for support from decision makers in this area.

Energy Security

The ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war has had a profound impact on energy markets, particularly in Europe, leading to a significant reduction in Russia's influence within the energy sector. Specifically, Russia's share in the European natural gas market has experienced a notable decline, from 38% in 2021 to 20% in 2023. Conversely, Türkiye has adopted a divergent course, opting to maintain its energy relations with Russia. As of 2023, Türkiye imported 43% of its natural gas and 51% of its oil from Russia.[12] Additionally, the construction of the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant is ongoing, with Russia assuming the role of the primary contractor. Notably, Türkiye has not experienced any interruption in its energy supply during this period.

However, when respondents were asked whether renewable energy has become more important in the aftermath of the Russia-Ukraine war, 49% responded in the affirmative and 42% responded in the negative. These results underscore the respondents' emphasis on the imperative to transition to renewable energy sources to ensure energy security. These findings underscore Türkiye's cognizance of energy security and its commitment to fostering a robust energy policy framework. This heightened awareness underscores the imperative for a transition to renewable energy sources, one that is supported by a reduction in reliance on fossil fuels.

What do we know about climate change and where do we get our information?

Public awareness and knowledge of climate change play an important role in shaping future environmental policies. The majority of respondents (91%) have a basic interest in climate change, while 43% are very interested. Additionally, the survey revealed that nearly 80% of respondents possess a certain degree of knowledge regarding ecological relations and environmental issues. However, a notable gap emerges concerning climate change and environmentally friendly policies, with a significant proportion of respondents expressing a lack of familiarity with these subjects. Approximately half of the respondents assert that climate and environmentally friendly economic policies are not adequately elucidated and explained to the public. This dearth of clarity can give rise to information pollution and the propagation of conspiracy theories, which not only serve to undermine support for change but also foment opposition.
Media usage habits have a guiding effect on informing and encouraging the public about climate change and the prescriptions to be applied in this regard. The prevailing trend in media consumption patterns indicates a significant reliance on the internet as a primary source of news, with 92% of respondents citing it as their main news outlet. Television stands as a close second, with 82% of participants expressing a preference for it. The prevalence of social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter have emerged as a significant source of information, given the vast expanse of the Internet. However, given the potential for social media to generate misinformation, a multifaceted approach is necessary to ensure the dissemination of accurate information. This multifaceted approach should encompass a combination of television, news websites, and reliable social media channels that adhere to journalistic principles, including editorial oversight and verification.

CONCLUSION

Addressing the issue of climate change necessitates the engagement and collaboration of the social sector. Participants acknowledge the profound ramifications of climate change. Research findings suggest that societal actors encompass not only governments but also local governments, businesses, cooperatives, and individuals. The analysis of the data collected from respondents indicates a preference for climate change action plans that take into account the diverse concerns of societal groups. This preference suggests a call for a more inclusive and democratic approach to addressing the issue. This approach, they contend, would foster social justice and ensure a more equitable distribution of the burden.

12 Energy Market Regularty Authority (EMRA), Natural Gas Report 2023, https://www.epdk.gov.tr/Detay/Icerik/3-0-94/dogal-gazyillik-sektor-raporu

Economic concerns have been identified as a significant impediment to the efforts to combat climate change, particularly among lower and middle-income groups. Unemployment and economic uncertainty have been shown to directly influence these groups' perceptions of the problem. Indeed, participants have stated that the process of transformation may have adverse effects on various segments of society due to the loss of jobs and radical changes that will result. Consequently, the necessity of implementing social justice principles and ensuring the implementation of just transition programs within the transformation process was underscored. It is imperative to acknowledge that climate change policies are not exclusively an environmental concern; they are also economic and social issues, necessitating the consideration of the diverse demands and needs of all societal segments.

The reliance on fossil fuels has been identified as a significant concern, as it presents considerable challenges to energy security. This, in turn, has ramifications for foreign policy and economic autonomy. The necessity to invest in renewable energy sources for ensuring Türkiye's energy security was emphasized by the participants. Additionally, the expansion of transportation alternatives, such as public transit, has been identified as a pivotal strategy to curtail carbon emissions and mitigate the prevalence of traffic congestion and road accidents. A crucial aspect of ensuring energy security is the provision of affordable and accessible transportation infrastructure. This can be achieved through the subsidization of transportation fares and the expansion of public transportation services.

Participants further expressed a readiness to adopt energy-efficient household appliances and heating systems. To encourage this transition, it was emphasized that companies should be guided by laws. Specifically, the provision of incentives and the imposition of financial penalties on enterprises that do not produce environmentally friendly products is recommended. The imposition of carbon taxes and analogous penalties has been identified as a pivotal mechanism for orienting business enterprises toward climate-friendly practices. However, it has been posited that penalties should extend beyond financial obligations, and more stringent sanctions should be imposed on enterprises that fail to undergo the requisite transformation. This strategy is expected to bolster public support by fostering confidence in the efficacy of policies aimed at addressing climate change.

The necessity of a participatory plan to combat climate change was emphasized. A dual-faceted strategy is recommended to facilitate the dissemination of this plan to the public in a meticulous and efficacious manner. The initial strategy entails the creation of video and visual content designed for dissemination on social media platforms. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the challenges posed by social media, including the potential for counterpropaganda and information pollution. Conversely, the utilization of more reliable channels, such as television and online media, is recommended to mitigate the propagation of false and incomplete information by providing accurate information. The employment of a multifaceted strategy, integrating these approaches, is paramount to enhance public participation and ensure the reliable dissemination of information in the effort to combat climate change.

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Executive Summary

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