

ANALYZING CLIMATE SECURITY PERCEPTIONS IN TÜRKİYE: TOWARD A JUST SECURITIZATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE

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*The interpretations and conclusions made in this report belong solely to the author and do not reflect IPC's offical position.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report investigates climate security perceptions in Türkiye, focusing on the potential for a just securitization of climate change. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the study combines quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to capture the views of both the general public and members of parliament (MPs).

KEY FINDINGS

1. Consensus on Climate Change as a Security Threat

- Both the general public and MPs overwhelmingly recognize climate change as a critical security threat.
- Human beings and the planet are prioritized as the primary referent objects of climate security, reflecting both anthropocentric and ecocentric perspectives.
- Water and food security are particularly prioritized by both audiences, emphasizing the critical need to address these fundamental resources as part of climate security strategies. This focus reflects the immediate and tangible threats posed by climate change to essential human needs and livelihoods. Following this, attention shifts toward heightened sensitivity to extreme climate events, reflecting growing awareness of their devastating impacts on communities and ecosystems.

2. Perceptions of Türkiye's Climate Efforts

- A significant majority of the public believes that Türkiye is not doing enough to combat climate change.
- Opposition party members emphasize that the government's efforts are not sufficient, while governing party members acknowledge that Türkiye has made significant progress but agree that more needs to be done.

3. Politics of Climate Change in Türkiye

- There is a political divide regarding Türkiye's potential to lead in global climate initiatives. Opposition MPs express skepticism about the current government's capacity, while governing party MPs are optimistic about Türkiye's leadership role, particularly for the developing world. However, both groups argue that Türkiye should adopt such a role.
- Most MPs are optimistic about cooperation on climate action but they are skeptical about the cooperation for climate change softening internal political relations, recognizing the complexities of domestic politics that may hinder further collaboration on other issues.
- While governing party MPs view climate change as transcending politics, about half of the opposition MPs agree. This perspective could foster collaboration among government and opposition parties.

4. Potential for Just Securitization

- The concept of just securitization is proposed as a framework to advance Türkiye's climate agenda, emphasizing ethical principles and balanced responses.
- This study suggests that aligning climate policies with public and parliamentary perceptions can facilitate both just and effective climate action.

5. Policy Recommendations

- Emphasize climate change as a security threat to human beings and the planet/ecosystems.
- Highlight water and food security and focus on agricultural impacts.
- Foster collaborative language and maintain open political debate to avoid the dangers of securitization, such as militarization and emergency responses.
- Enhance Türkiye's active participation in global environmental politics by advocating for equitable solutions and representing the interests of developing countries, ensuring their needs and perspectives are prioritized in international climate discussions.

The report concludes that Türkiye is well-positioned for significant climate action. By aligning discourse with existing perceptions and ensuring balanced and sincere responses, Türkiye can effectively address climate change while maintaining democratic processes and public trust. The study offers valuable insights and policy recommendations for Turkish policymakers to navigate the complex challenges posed by climate change.

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INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the perceptions of climate security in Türkiye, with a particular focus on the potential for a just securitization of climate change.[1] Grounded in securitization theory, the research provides a framework for understanding how climate change is framed as a security issue by both formal and moral audiences in Türkiye. To achieve a comprehensive analysis, the study employs a mixed-methods approach. The perceptions of the moral audience, represented by the general public, were captured through a large-scale survey involving 3,827 participants. This survey aimed to reflect the diverse societal attitudes toward climate security across different demographic segments. Simultaneously, the formal audience was examined by conducting 20 in-depth interviews with members of parliament. This report is structured into several key sections, each contributing to a holistic understanding of the topic, and aims to offer nuanced policy recommendations that align with ethical principles and practical realities.

In the Theory and Potential Applications section, the study delves into the foundational concepts of securitization theory, exploring the debates on whether securitization should be preferred when addressing climate change. It examines both the positive and negative implications of securitization and discusses the evolving concept of climate security. The section also introduces the climate security framework it adopts and the concept of just securitization as a balanced approach.

The Methodology section outlines the research design, which employs a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. Ethical considerations are highlighted, ensuring the integrity and confidentiality of the research process. The survey development and design are detailed, along with the administration and data collection methods. The interview process is also described, including the design of interview questions, participant selection, and data analysis techniques.

In the Survey Findings section, the study presents a detailed analysis of the demographic distribution of respondents and their general perceptions of climate change. It explores the analysis of climate security perceptions, the referent objects of climate security, and the security implications of climate change. The section also compares climate change with other perceived threats and evaluates Türkiye's efforts to address climate change. The relationship between demographics and climate security perceptions is examined, providing insights into how different societal groups perceive climate change.

The Interview Findings section compares the perspectives of members of parliament with those of the general public, highlighting similarities and differences in their views on climate change as a security threat. Additional questions explore the political dimensions of climate change, including Türkiye's potential leadership role in global climate initiatives and the potential for climate change to act as a unifying issue within Türkiye.

The Discussion section evaluates the findings in terms of just securitization, assessing the potential for Türkiye to engage in climate action and successful securitization. It offers policy recommendations for Turkish policymakers, empha-

1 This study has been supported by TÜBİTAK's ARDEB 1002 program and the Mercator-IPC Fellowship Program.

sizing the importance of aligning discourse with existing climate security perceptions and ensuring that responses are balanced and sincere.

The study reveals a strong consensus among both the general public and members of parliament in Türkiye regarding the recognition of climate change as a critical security threat. There is a shared understanding of the urgency to address climate change, with both audiences prioritizing human beings and the planet as the primary referent objects of climate security. The findings suggest that Türkiye is well-positioned for significant climate action, with a collective demand for more robust policies. The concept of just securitization is proposed as a valuable tool to advance Türkiye's climate agenda, provided that the potential dangers of securitization are carefully managed. Overall, the study contributes to a more informed and effective discourse on climate security in Türkiye, offering insights and recommendations for policymakers to navigate the complex challenges posed by climate change.

2. THEORY AND POTENTIAL APPLICATIONS

2.1. SECURITIZATION THEORY

Securitization theory offers a framework for understanding how issues are transformed into security threats. According to scholars like Ole Waever, Barry Buzan, and Jaap De Wilde,[2] securitization is a process in which an actor, often a member of the political elite, frames an issue as an existential threat to a valued referent object. Through this process, when this actor convinces the right number of people,[3] the issue is moved from the realm of normal politics into the realm of security, justifying the use of extraordinary measures to address it.

The core components of securitization include[4]:

- **Securitizing Actor:** The individual or group that articulates the threat, convinces the audiences through their discourses, and calls for extraordinary measures.
- **Referent Object:** The entity that is portrayed as being under threat and in need of protection.
- **Functional Actors:** Actors that influence the securitization process without being a securitizing actor.
- **Audience:** The group that must be convinced of the threat for the securitization to be successful.

Securitization is not an objective assessment of danger but a performative act that depends on the acceptance of the audience. If the audience accepts the securitizing actor's framing, the issue is legitimized as a security concern, allowing for responses that might otherwise be seen as excessive or inappropriate.

In the context of securitization theory, the role of the audience is pivotal to the success of the securitizing move. Securitization is not merely about the act of declaring something a security issue; it hinges on whether the audience accepts this framing. The audience's acceptance or rejection determines whether the issue is elevated to the status of a security threat that justifies extraordinary measures. Securitization theorists, particularly from the Copenhagen School, emphasize that without the audience's buy-in, the securitizing actor's efforts are likely to fail.

Audiences in securitization are divided into two main categories: formal and moral.[5] The formal audience consists of those with the authority to formally approve or reject the necessary actions to address the security threat. This may include legislators, businesspeople, and other key actors according to the nature of the issue. Their acceptance is crucial for the securitization process to move beyond discourse and into action. On the other hand, the moral audience includes the general public and civil society. Although they do not hold formal power, their support is essential for legitimizing the securitization process and the extraordinary measures that will be implemented. The moral audience's perception shapes the broader societal context in which securitization takes place, influencing whether the securitizing move is viewed as justified and appropriate.

This study integrates the perspectives of both formal and moral audiences into its methodology

2 Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap De Wilde, Security: *A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

3 Ciaran O'Reilly, "Primetime Patriotism: News Media and the Securitization of Iraq," *Journal of Politics and Law* 1, no. 3 (2008): 66–72, 67.

4 Başar Baysal and Çağla Lüleci, "Kopenhag Okulu ve Güvenlikleştirme Teorisi," *Güvenlik Stratejileri Dergisi* 11 (2015): 61–96.

5 Thierry Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience, and Context," *European Journal of International Relations* 11, no. 2 (2005): 171–201.

to provide a comprehensive analysis of climate security perceptions in Türkiye. By conducting interviews with members of parliament, the study captures the views of the formal audience, whose perspectives are crucial as they hold the authority to introduce new acts and regulations related to climate change and climate action. The support of members of parliament is essential for translating securitization into actionable policies. Simultaneously, the study surveys the general public to understand the moral audience's stance on climate security, offering insights into the broader societal acceptance of climate change as a security issue. This dual approach enables the research to explore how climate security is perceived across different audiences and varying segments of the moral audience itself.

2.2. DEBATES ON SECURITIZATION: SHOULD WE PREFER IT?

The question of whether securitization should be preferred has sparked significant debate within the field of security studies. This debate is deeply rooted in the normative implications of securitization theory, with scholars divided on whether framing an issue as a security threat is beneficial or detrimental.[6]

2.2.1. Positive Implications of Securitization

Proponents of securitization argue that it can serve as a powerful tool to elevate critical issues and ensure they receive the attention and resources they require. By framing an issue as a security threat, securitization can:

- **Prioritize Action:** Securitization can propel an issue to the forefront of political agendas, ensuring that it is treated with the urgency and importance it deserves. This is particularly relevant for existential threats like climate change, where delayed action could have catastrophic consequences.
- **Facilitate Urgency:** The framing of an issue as a security threat can create a sense of urgency that is necessary for mobilizing swift and decisive action. This urgency can help overcome bureaucratic inertia and galvanize political will, which is often lacking in responses to complex, long-term challenges like climate change.
- **Mobilize Support:** Securitization can help rally public and political support for extraordinary measures that might be required to address the threat. This support is crucial for legitimizing the actions needed to tackle the issue effectively.
- **Allocate More Resources:** With increased support, securitization can lead to the allocation of additional resources necessary for implementing policies and measures that might otherwise be politically or socially contentious. This ensures that the issue receives the financial and logistical backing required for effective resolution.

2.2.2. Negative Implications of Securitization

Securitization is not without its risks, and there are concerns about its potential negative consequences:

6 Başar Baysal, "20 Years of Securitization: Strengths, Limitations and A New Dual Framework," *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi* 17, no. 67 (2020): 3–20; Ole Wæver, "The EU as a Security Actor: Reflections from a Pessimistic Constructivist on Post-Sovereign Security Orders," in *International Relations Theory and the Politics of European Integration: Power, Security and Community,* ed. M. Kelstrup and M.C. Williams (London: Routledge, 2000), 250–294; Claudia Aradau, "Security and the Democratic Scene," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 7, no. 4 (2004): 388–413; Paul Roe, "Is Securitization a 'Negative' Concept? Revisiting the Normative Debate Over Normal Versus Extraordinary Politics," *Security Dialogue* 43, no. 3 (2012): 249–266; Jaap De Wilde, "Security and the Environment: Securitization Theory and US Environmental Security Policy," *Perspectives on Politics* (Book Review) 10, no. 1 (2012): 213–214.

- **Erosion of Public Deliberation:** Securitization can stifle public debate and democratic engagement. By framing an issue as a security threat, there is a risk that it will be removed from the realm of normal politics, where it can be openly debated and discussed, and placed into a securitized realm, where decisions are often made behind closed doors and without the same level of public scrutiny.
- **Restriction of Civil Liberties:** Securitization often justifies the use of extraordinary measures, which can include restrictions on civil liberties and human rights. This is a significant concern, particularly in democratic societies, where the balance between security and freedom is a delicate one. There is a risk that securitization can lead to the erosion of these freedoms, as governments adopt repressive measures in the name of security.
- **Militarization of Responses:** Securitization can also lead to the militarization of responses. This is particularly problematic in the context of issues like climate change, where military solutions are often inappropriate and can exacerbate the very problems that they are meant to solve. Militarized responses can entrench a friend-enemy dichotomy, which can hinder cooperative approaches that are essential for addressing global challenges like climate change.
- **Urgency and Emergency Mode:** While urgency can be a positive force, in the context of securitization, it can also push issues into an emergency mode that prioritizes quick, sometimes drastic, decisions over careful deliberation. This can lead to hasty policy decisions that may not fully consider long-term implications or the broader societal impact. The pressure to act swiftly in an "emergency" can result in measures that are more extreme than necessary and potentially detrimental to democratic processes and civil liberties.

The debate highlights the complexity of the securitization process and stresses the importance of context in determining whether securitization should be preferred. While some argue for the benefits of securitization in mobilizing resources and attention, others warn of the potential dangers, particularly when it comes to issues like climate change, where the stakes are high, and the consequences of securitization could be far-reaching.

2.3. CLIMATE CHANGE AND SECURITIZATION

Climate security has emerged as a crucial concern in the 21st century, reflecting the profound and multifaceted threats posed by climate change. These threats range from the direct impacts of extreme weather events to the more complex, indirect challenges such as resource conflicts, migration, and the destabilization of states. As climate change accelerates, its security implications are becoming more pronounced, driving a reexamination of how security is understood and addressed in both academic and policy circles.

2.3.1. The Evolving Concept of Climate Security

Climate security has emerged as an extension of the broader field of environmental security, which gained prominence in the latter part of the 20th century. Initially, environmental security focused on the impact of environmental degradation on national security, particularly through conflicts over scarce resources. The idea was that environmental stress, such as the scarcity of critical resources like water and arable land, could exacerbate tensions in regions already facing economic and political instability.

The concept of climate change has been mostly described as a "threat multiplier,"[7] which focuses on how climate change can intensify existing vulnerabilities, leading to increased instability and conflict. Studies have highlighted that climate change could elevate the risk of conflict, especially in regions where resources are limited and governance structures are weak. The impacts of climate change on water resources, agricultural productivity, and coastal areas are seen as factors that can heighten the risk of social unrest and conflict, emphasizing the need for comprehensive strategies to address these challenges.

Moreover, climate security has increasingly been integrated into defense studies, with military organizations and alliances such as NATO incorporating it into their strategic frameworks.[8] This inclusion reflects a growing recognition of the security implications of climate change, as militaries and defense bodies prepare to address the potential threats posed by environmental changes to national and global stability.

Despite its growing importance, the concept of climate security is not without its critics. Some argue that the securitization of climate change could lead to a militarized response that overlooks the root causes of environmental degradation. There is concern that framing climate change as a security issue might shift the focus away from development and sustainability, resulting in policies that prioritize short-term security interests over long-term environmental goals. Additionally, there are critiques that securitization could reinforce existing power imbalances, potentially being used by powerful states to justify interventions in weaker states under the guise of protecting global security, which could exacerbate global inequalities. The following subsection examines the debates over the securitization of climate change.

2.3.2. Debates Over the Securitization of Climate Change

The debate over whether to adopt securitization for addressing climate change mirrors broader discussions on the merits and drawbacks of securitization as a strategy. The securitization of climate change has been a topic of considerable debate, with proponents and critics offering divergent views.[9] Proponents argue that climate change is a security issue and framing climate change as such is essential to galvanize the political will and allocate the necessary resources to tackle it effectively.[10] By elevating climate change to a security

7 Sherri Goodman and Patrick Baudu, Climate Change as a *"Threat Multiplier": History, Uses and Future of the Concept* (Center for Climate and Security, 2023), https://councilonstrategicrisks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/38-CCThreatMultiplier.pdf; Pieter Huntjens and Karsten Nachbar, *Climate Change as a Threat Multiplier for Human Disaster and Conflict* (The Hague Institute for Global Justice, 2015), https://www.disasterprotection.org/s/working-Paper-9-climate-change-threat-multiplier.pdf; John C. Dodson, Pavel Dérer, Philip Cafaro, and Fredrik Götmark, "Population Growth and Climate Change: Addressing the Overlooked Threat Multiplier," *Science of the Total Environment* 738 (2020): 139558, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343982526_Dodson_et_al_-_Population_growth_and_climate_change_2020; Thomas A. Yackle, *Global Climate Change: Threat Multiplier for AFRICOM* (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 2007), https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=d5f2ae03cbfd8fe35ae8ed7c8547172e00dc4a89.

8 NATO, "Environment, Climate Change and Security," last updated July 18, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_91048.htm.

9 Başar Baysal and Uluç Karakaş, "Climate Change and Security: Different Perceptions, Different Approaches," *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi* 14, no. 54 (2017): 21–44.

10 Jon Barnett, "Security and Climate Change," *Global Environmental Change* 13, no. 1 (2003): 7–17; Pauline Sophie Heinrichs, "Energy Security, Climate Change, and Routines as Maladaptive Politics," *Global Studies Quarterly* (2024), https://academic.oup.com/isagsq/article-pdf/doi/10.1093/isagsq/ksae050/58678519/ksae050.pdf; Sander Chan and Thomas Hale, "Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions in the Developing World," Galvanizing the Groundswell Initiative Working Paper, 2015, https://www.climategroundswell.org/s/WP_Galvanizing-the-Groundswell-of-Climate-Actions-in-the-Developing-World28429.pdf; Hans Günter Brauch, "Securitizing Global Environmental Change," in *Facing Global Environmental Change: Environmental Vulnerability and Climate Security*, edited by Hans Günter Brauch et al., 65–94 (Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer, 2009), https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-540-68488-6_4; Maria Julia Trombetta, "Securitization of Climate Change in China: Implications for Global Climate Governance," *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies* 5, no. 2 (2019): 227–250.

concern, it is believed that governments and international bodies can prioritize urgent action and implement policies that might otherwise be delayed or overlooked.

However, the decision to securitize climate change is not without controversy. Critics warn that such an approach could lead to adverse outcomes, including the militarization of climate responses, which might overshadow more sustainable and cooperative solutions.[11] There is also a risk that securitization could marginalize vulnerable populations, as the focus shifts toward protecting state interests rather than addressing the needs of those most affected by climate change. Additionally, critics express concern that securitization might narrow the focus to state-centric concerns, thereby neglecting broader human security and ecological implications. These include critical issues such as public health, food security, ecosystem preservation, biodiversity, and displacement, which require comprehensive and inclusive strategies.

2.4. CLIMATE SECURITY FRAMEWORK

This study presents a comprehensive framework for analyzing climate security that categorizes the diverse approaches to this issue into two broad categories: those who argue that climate change is not or should not be regarded as a security issue, and those who argue that climate change is or should be regarded as a security issue. These categories are further divided into subgroups based on different referent objects and theoretical perspectives. This framework is generated by the author based on the existing literature on climate security. To further refine the framework, a workshop was held at Istanbul Policy Center, bringing together academics specializing in climate change, climate security, and/or quantitative research methods. This framework is applied in the study to examine and categorize both the moral and formal audiences in Türkiye.

1) Those Who Argue That Climate Change Is Not/ Should Not Be Regarded as a Security Issue:

- **Climate Skeptics:** This subgroup denies the existence of climate change altogether and, therefore, rejects the idea that it poses a security threat.
- **Traditionalists:** This subgroup argues that the field of security should remain focused on issues of high politics, such as military conflicts and terrorism, and should not be broadened to include environmental concerns like climate change.
- **Critical Security Skeptics:** This subgroup opposes the securitization of climate change due to the inherent dynamics of the security realm, such as militarization, the limitation of public discourse, and the creation of a friend-enemy dichotomy, which may hinder the resolution of environmental issues.

2) Those Who Argue That Climate Change Is/ Should Be Regarded as a Security Issue:

- **Traditional State-Centrists:** This subgroup views climate change as a security threat

11 Georgios Koukos, *Securitizing the Environment? A Discourse Analysis of Key United Nations Documents on Climate Change* (Lund University, 2019), https://lup.lub.lu.se/student-papers/record/8986623/file/8986626.pdf; Maria Julia Trombetta, "Introduction: Linking Climate Change and Security," in *Handbook on Climate Change and International Security,* ed. Mariya Omelicheva and Douglas McCauley, 23–45 (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2023), https://www.elgaronline.com/edcollchap/book/9781789906448/book-part-9781789906448-6.xml; Judith N. Hardt, Dhanasree Jayaram, Cameron Harrington, and Duncan McLaren, "The Challenges of the Increasing Institutionalization of Climate Security," PLOS Climate 3, no. 1 (2024): e0000402, https://journals.plos.org/climate/article/file?id=10.1371/journal.pclm.0000402&type=printable; Olaf Corry, "Securitisation and 'Riskification': Second-Order Security and the Politics of Climate Change," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 40, no. 2 (2012): 235–258; Dahlia Simangan, "Responsibility and Agency in Securitizing Climate Change in the Anthropocene," *New Perspectives: Interdisciplinary Journal of Central and East European Politics and International Relations* 31, no. 1 (2023): 45–65, https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=1127681.

primarily because it may lead to state-centric security issues such as wars over resources (e.g., water wars), border security concerns due to climate-induced migration, and threats to the sovereignty and survival of states.

- **Anthropocentrists:** Anthropocentric approaches focus on human beings as the primary referent object of security. This perspective emphasizes the human security implications of climate change, including food security, economic security, access to clean water, and the potential for widespread migration.
- **Ecocentrists:** Ecocentric approaches prioritize the planet and ecosystems as the main referent objects, viewing human beings as part of a broader environmental context. This perspective highlights the need to protect the Earth's ecosystems from the destructive impacts of climate change.

It is important to recognize that none of these perspectives are completely true or false, or inherently morally right or wrong. Each approach brings valid concerns to the table, and the diversity of views reflects the complexity of climate security as an issue. For instance, critical security skeptics raise legitimate concerns about the potential negative consequences of securitizing climate change, such as the risks of militarization and the erosion of public discourse. Their caution is rooted in the fear that securitization may be misused and might lead to solutions that prioritize state security over human and environmental well-being. Similarly, traditionalists and climate skeptics may have reservations that stem from deeply held beliefs about the role of security in society. On the other hand, those advocating for the securitization of climate change, such as traditional state-centrists, anthropocentrists, and ecocentrists, do so out of a belief that the severity and urgency of the climate crisis necessitate the elevation of its importance. Each perspective, therefore, contributes to a richer, more nuanced understanding of how best to approach the challenges posed by climate change.

2.5. JUST SECURITIZATION AS A WAY OUT FROM THE SECURITIZATION DILEMMA

The various perspectives on whether or not to securitize climate change each bring valid concerns to the table. While Critical Security Skeptics raise legitimate fears about the potential militarization and erosion of democratic discourse that securitization might bring, proponents of securitization argue that the urgency and severity of the climate crisis justify framing it as a security issue to mobilize resources and political will. These conflicting views highlight the complexity of the securitization dilemma: how to secure the benefits of securitization, such as elevated political attention and resource allocation, while avoiding its negative consequences, like the restriction of civil liberties and the marginalization of vulnerable populations. At this juncture, Rita Floyd's Just Securitization approach offers a promising pathway to navigate the securitization dilemma.

2.5.1. Just Securitization Framework

Rita Floyd's "just securitization" approach integrates ethical considerations into the securitization process, proposing that securitization can be justified when it meets certain moral and practical criteria.[12] According to Floyd, a securitization is considered "just" if it satisfies key conditions:

12 Rita Floyd, "Can Securitization Theory Be Used in Normative Analysis? Towards a Just Securitization Theory," *Security Dialogue* 42, no. 4/5 (2011): 427–439; Rita Floyd, *The Morality of Security: A Theory of Just Securitization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Rita Floyd, "Just and Unjust Desecuritization," in *Contesting Security: Strategies and Logics*, edited by Thierry Balzacq, 122–138, PRIO New Security Studies. 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2014).

1) Just Initiation of Securitization

- **Just Reason:** There must be a current objective existential threat to a referent object, that is to say a danger that threatens the survival or the essential character/properties of either a social or political order, an ecosystem, a non-human species, or individuals.
- **Just Referent Object:** Only objectively valuable referent objects are morally justifiable and, on that basis, eligible for self- or other defense. Referent objects are morally justifiable if they meet basic human needs and physical health.
- **Right Intention,** Macro-Proportionality and Reasonable Chance of Success: The securitizing actor must be sincere in their intention to rescue the referent object. Securitization cannot cause more harm than it seeks to prevent. Securitization must be expected to have a greater chance at achieving just cause than less harmful alternatives.

2) Just Conduct

The security measures used must be appropriate and should aim to only address the objective existential threat. They should aim to cause, or risk, the least amount of overall harm possible and do less harm to the referent object than would otherwise be caused if securitization was abandoned. Executors of securitization must respect a limited number of relevant human rights.

3) Just Termination of Securitization/Just Desecuritization

Just Termination of Securitization is morally obligatory when the just cause for securitization no longer exists. Desecuritization is governed by three criteria: identifying the appropriate time for termination, determining which security measures to reverse, and implementing constructive steps to restore relationships or situations adversely impacted by securitization.

Rita Floyd provides a robust moral framework for just initiation, conduct, and termination of securitization, addressing key ethical criteria at each stage. While Floyd does not explicitly emphasize the mitigation of negative impacts from securitization, her framework inherently aims to limit such consequences and prevent the misuse of securitization. In particular, her just referent object criterion—which prioritizes the protection of human beings and the environment—serves as a safeguard against the misuse of securitization and helps limit its negative impacts. I argue that adhering to the criteria of just securitization—through proportionality, transparency, legitimate referent objects, and just cause—can significantly reduce potential downsides such as unnecessary militarization, unwarranted limitations on freedoms, and avoidable democratic backsliding. Thus, her approach not only ensures moral legitimacy but also promotes a more balanced, constructive, and ethically sound application of securitization principles.

2.5.2. The Role of the Audience in Just Securitization

While Floyd's framework provides a robust ethical foundation, her treatment of the audience within Just Securitization Theory (JST) warrants further exploration. Although she dedicates a specific section in her book[13] to the importance of the audience and emphasizes its role, she does not include audience acceptance as a formal criterion within the just securitization framework. This study

13 Rita Floyd, *The Morality of Security: A Theory of Just Securitization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019)

builds upon her analysis by highlighting the critical role of audience perceptions in the securitization process. Floyd's JST evaluates the ethics of securitization based on objective and moral validity rather than the degree of audience acceptance. However, I argue that audience perceptions are indispensable to the success of any securitization process, including just securitization. The extent to which the audience—whether the moral audience or the formal audience—accepts the necessity and legitimacy of securitization has a direct impact on its likelihood of achieving its intended outcomes.

It is not our aim to propose a novel criterion for JST based on audience perceptions, as it can be seamlessly integrated into the existing framework. Floyd already acknowledges that the likelihood of success is a critical component of ethical securitization, as securitizing measures must be anticipated to have a greater chance of achieving the just cause compared to less harmful alternatives. Building on this criterion, I suggest that the anticipation of success should explicitly account for audience consent and support. For instance, in the securitization of climate change, gaining widespread acceptance for extraordinary measures—such as reducing carbon-intensive practices—depends heavily on the audience's recognition of the existential threat posed by climate change. The greater the alignment among audiences with the securitizing actor's framing, the less resistance the securitization is likely to encounter, thereby increasing its chances of success.

Moreover, audience consent becomes particularly significant in scenarios where individuals are directly and personally impacted by securitization measures. For example, policies that necessitate significant lifestyle changes, such as restrictions on leisure travel, daily automobile use or meat consumption for environmental reasons, demand a higher degree of audience acceptance than those addressing distant or abstract threats. By integrating audience perceptions into the ethical evaluation of securitization, this approach ensures that the process is not only effective but also contextually sensitive. This is particularly vital in areas like climate change, where societal buy-in is essential for successful implementation.

In conclusion, while JST provides a robust ethical framework for evaluating securitization, its application can be further strengthened by explicitly considering the role of audience consent as a factor that enhances the anticipated success of just securitization. This refinement aligns seamlessly with the existing ethical criteria of reasonable chances of success, while also underscoring the importance of societal engagement in addressing critical existential threats.

2.5.3. Focus of This Study

Given the critical role of audience perception in the process of securitization, this study places significant emphasis on examining the existing climate security perceptions of both formal and moral audiences in Türkiye. The study is rooted in the understanding that the successful securitization of climate change, or indeed any issue, hinges not only on the articulation of the threat by securitizing actors but also on the acceptance and legitimization of that threat by the relevant audiences. Audience acceptance is crucially important for the success of securitization, too. In this context, formal and moral audiences play distinct yet interconnected roles in shaping the discourse and actions of policymakers regarding climate security.

By understanding how both formal and moral audiences perceive the threats posed by climate change and what they consider to be legitimate

responses, this research aims to provide nuanced policy recommendations that align with the principles of just securitization while also being practically viable. Just securitization, as theorized by Rita Floyd, emphasizes that securitization is justified when it meets specific ethical criteria, such as addressing a real existential threat, protecting morally legitimate referent objects, and ensuring that the response is appropriate and proportional. This study extends Floyd's framework by arguing that the success of just securitization and successful elimination of threat also depends on the alignment between the perceptions of formal and moral audiences. In other words, for securitization to be both ethical and effective, it must resonate with the already existing values and concerns of the moral and public audiences.

This approach not only seeks to elevate the issue of climate change on the political agenda in Türkiye but also ensures that the measures taken are both ethically sound and broadly supported. By integrating the perspectives of formal and moral audiences, the study aims to offer policy recommendations that are grounded in both ethical principles and practical applicability. These recommendations are intended to help Turkish policymakers navigate the complex terrain of climate security, balancing the need for urgent action with the imperative to maintain public trust and support. Ultimately, the study aspires to contribute to a more informed and effective discourse on climate security in Türkiye, one that reflects the diverse voices and concerns of all stakeholders involved.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to examine climate security perceptions in Türkiye. The research design is structured to capture a comprehensive understanding of how different segments of Turkish society perceive climate change as a security issue. Central to the success of this analysis is the recognition of the role of the audience in securitization, which is typically divided into two main categories: formal and moral.

By conducting a large-scale survey with the general population, the study captures the views of the moral audience, reflecting broader societal attitudes toward climate security. Simultaneously, the study conducts semi-structured interviews with members of parliament to understand the formal audience's stance on climate security, providing insight into how securitization might be translated into actionable policies. This dual approach ensures that the findings reflect both the stances of moral and formal audiences.

3.2. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations were central to the design and implementation of this study, given the sensitive nature of the topics discussed and the involvement of high-profile participants. The research was approved by the Sabancı University Research Ethics Council under protocol number FASS-2024-03, with approval granted on January 18, 2024. This approval was granted following an expedited review process, reflecting the thorough ethical safeguards embedded in the research design.

Several key ethical precautions were implemented to protect participants' rights and ensure the integrity of the research:

- **Voluntary Participation and Informed Consent:** All participants were fully informed about the nature and purpose of the study and their role in it. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before their involvement.
- **Anonymity and Confidentiality:** The study was designed to ensure that no personal data, such as names or specific political affiliations, were collected or recorded. This was particularly important given the political sensitivities involved in the study. In the survey no personal data of the participants was collected. In the interviews, to further protect the participants' anonymity, data collection focused only on distinguishing between members of the governing party and opposition parties, without delving into specific party affiliations. All data were anonymized at the point of collection, and only aggregated data were used in the analysis and reporting of results.
- **Data Security:** All data collected during the study were stored securely on password-protected devices accessible only to the principal investigator. No audio recordings were made during the interviews to further protect participant privacy. Instead, detailed notes were taken, and these notes were securely stored and handled with the utmost care to maintain confidentiality.

- **Data Usage and Dissemination:** The anonymized data collected from this study will be used solely for academic purposes, including the preparation of this report and any subsequent publications. In line with open science principles, the anonymized survey data will be made available in a respected data repository for future research, ensuring that the data can contribute to the broader academic community while maintaining participant confidentiality.

These ethical measures were crucial for ensuring that the study was conducted responsibly, respecting the rights and privacy of all participants, and adhering to the highest standards of research integrity.

3.3. SURVEY

3.3.1. Survey Development and Design

The development of the survey was a meticulous process that began with a dedicated workshop aimed at shaping the questions to effectively capture climate security perceptions among the Turkish population. This workshop was a hybrid event, bringing together experts and academics specializing in climate change, climate security, security studies, and quantitative research methods. The collaborative nature of the workshop was essential to ensuring that the survey would align with the theoretical framework developed in the study, particularly the six categories identified for climate security perceptions: climate skeptics, traditionalists, critical security skeptics, traditional state-centrists, anthropocentrists, and ecocentrists. These categories were determined through an extensive literature review and in-depth debates during the workshop, where participants discussed and refined the conceptual framework.

Following the workshop, a draft of the survey was created, incorporating the insights and suggestions from the workshop participants. This draft was then subjected to a pilot study with 70 participants, which was critical for testing the clarity, reliability, and validity of the questions. The pilot study provided valuable feedback, highlighting areas where questions needed to be refined to ensure they were comprehensive and accessible to a broad audience. Based on this feedback, several modifications were made to improve the survey's design and effectiveness. After these refinements, the finalized survey was prepared for broader distribution.

Collaboration with Survey Company and Funding: To administer the survey on a national scale, a collaboration was established with the professional survey company "YouReply." The execution of the survey was made possible through funding from TÜBİTAK's ARDEB 1002 program and the Mercator-IPC Fellowship Program. The survey successfully reached a total of 3,827 participants, ensuring a broad and representative sample of the Turkish population. To capture the demographic diversity of the country, participants were carefully stratified based on key factors such as age, gender, education level, and region of residence. However, it is important to note that 381 participants did not fully complete the survey. As a result, the final analysis was conducted with data from 3,446 participants, ensuring the integrity and reliability of the findings.

Demographic Questions and Their Purpose: The first seven questions of the survey were designed to gather essential demographic information. These questions included:

a. **Gender:** Understanding gender differences in climate security perceptions.

b. **Age:** Capturing generational perspectives on climate change as a security issue.

c. **Education Level:** Assessing whether education influences perceptions of climate threats.

d. **Vocational Knowledge:** Identifying participants engaged in agriculture to explore how their direct experience with environmental conditions might affect their views.

e. **Region of Residence:** Understanding regional variations.

f. **Residence Type:** Differentiating between urban, suburban, and rural respondents.

g. **Direct Harm from Climate Change:** Investigating whether personal experience with climate-related events alters perceptions of climate security.

These demographic questions were crucial for analyzing whether and how climate security perceptions diverge across different societal groups.

3.3.2. Survey Administration and Data Collection

The finalized survey was conducted between March and July 2024 with the support of the professional survey company "YouReply." The company managed the implementation and data collection process, ensuring a broad and representative sample of the Turkish population. The survey was administered using the Qualtrics platform, an online tool that facilitates efficient data collection while maintaining the anonymity of respondents. This comprehensive approach ensured that the data collected provided valuable insights into the general public's (moral audience) attitudes toward climate security in Türkiye.

The survey was designed to ensure representativeness of Türkiye's population. The sample included 3,446 respondents, surpassing the minimum sample size requirements calculated using G-Power analysis for the seven geographic regions of Türkiye. Gender distribution in the sample closely mirrors the national population, with 49.2% female and 48.6% male respondents, aligning with Türkiye's demographic composition as reported by TÜİK. Age distribution also reflects the national averages, with slight overrepresentation in the 25–44 age group, which is within acceptable limits for representativeness. Additionally, the sample captures occupational and residential diversity, with a balanced representation of individuals engaged in agriculture and participants from various regions. These attributes collectively demonstrate that the survey sample is well-suited to represent Türkiye's demographic and geographic diversity, ensuring the reliability and applicability of the findings to the broader population.

3.3.3. Data Analysis

The survey data were analyzed using SPSS software, employing both descriptive statistics and correlation analysis to gain a comprehensive understanding of climate security perceptions across the Turkish population. Descriptive statistics provided a clear summary of the general trends. This approach highlighted key patterns and variations in the data, offering valuable insights into the broader attitudes toward climate security.

In addition to descriptive statistics, correlation analyses were conducted to explore the relationships between important demographic variables—such as age, education level, geographic location, and direct experience with climate-related events—and respondents' views on climate change and climate security. These analyses were instrumental in identifying how specific demographic factors influence perceptions and determining whether certain groups are more likely to view climate change as an urgent security issue. For example, the correlations helped reveal whether individuals with higher education levels or those residing in

rural regions exhibited greater concern about the security implications of climate change.

3.4. INTERVIEWS

3.4.1. Designing Interview Questions

The design of the interview questions was a critical component of this study. The workshop, which brought together experts in climate change, security studies, and quantitative research methods, was instrumental in ensuring that the interview questions aligned with the broader research goals. The primary aim was to mirror the survey questions as closely as possible, allowing for meaningful comparisons between the general population (moral audience) and the formal audience represented by members of parliament.

However, while the interviews retained much of the structure and content of the survey to ensure consistency, they also included additional questions specifically tailored to capture the unique perspectives of members of parliament regarding the politics of climate change. Members of parliament were asked about Türkiye's role in global climate policy, reflecting the need to understand how members of parliament view Türkiye's responsibilities and potential on the international stage. Furthermore, the interviews explored whether climate change could act as a unifying issue in Turkish politics, potentially bridging divides across party lines—an area not covered in the survey but crucial for understanding the political dimensions of climate security.

3.4.2. Participant Selection

The interview component of the study focused on the formal audience, specifically members of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye. A total of 20 members of parliament from various political parties were selected to participate in semi-structured interviews. The selection process was designed to ensure that the distribution of participants represented the overall composition of the Turkish parliament, including members from different political parties. This approach aimed to capture a broad spectrum of political perspectives, ensuring that the study reflects the diverse views within Türkiye's political landscape.

3.4.3. Interview Instrument

Interview questions were designed to delve deeper into the perceptions and priorities of members of parliament regarding climate security. The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility, enabling interviewees to discuss topics in depth while still providing consistent data across interviews. The questions explored how members of parliament perceive the risks associated with climate change, whether they believe it should be securitized, and how they prioritize different security concerns.

3.4.4. Data Collection

The interviews were conducted between April and July 2024, with careful consideration given to the participants' busy schedules and the sensitive nature of the topics discussed. Approximately 75% of the interviews were conducted in person, while the remaining 25% were completed through a written format, where the questions were sent to the participants, and they returned their responses in writing. The decision to offer a written option was made to accommodate the demanding schedules of the members of parliament, many of whom found it challenging to allocate time for in-person interviews.

The in-person interviews were primarily conducted in the offices of the Turkish parliament in Ankara, taking advantage of the convenience for the members of parliament. However, some interviews took place at members' respective party headquarters, also located in Ankara, depending

on the participants' preferences and availability. Each interview lasted between 45 to 60 minutes, providing sufficient time to delve into the key topics without overburdening the participants.

Given the sensitive nature of the discussions and the participants' high-profile positions, no audio recordings were made during the interviews. Instead, detailed notes were taken throughout each session. In preparation for this, note-taking templates were prepared beforehand to ensure that all relevant topics were covered systematically.

To further protect the anonymity of the participants, no personalized data, such as names or specific political party affiliations, were recorded. The only distinction made was between members of the governing party and those from opposition parties, which allowed for a broad comparison without compromising the confidentiality of the individuals involved. This approach was essential to ensure that the participants felt comfortable sharing their perspectives, knowing that their privacy was safeguarded.

3.4.5. Data Analysis

The analysis of the interview data was conducted using a qualitative approach, tailored to the relatively small number of interviews conducted. Given that only 20 interviews were included in the study, I opted for a more hands-on, detailed method of analysis, rather than using specialized qualitative data analysis software like MAXQDA.

The process began with a thorough double reading of all the interview notes. This approach allowed me to immerse myself in the data, ensuring that I fully understood the nuances of each participant's responses. During the first read-through, I focused on grasping the overall themes and patterns that emerged across the interviews. The second reading was more detailed, where I paid closer attention to the specific viewpoints and insights offered by the participants, noting any recurring themes, key points, or divergent opinions.

Rather than employing formal coding techniques, which can sometimes be restrictive, I adopted a more flexible and interpretative approach. This method allowed me to consider the context of each participant's responses, drawing connections and identifying themes organically as they appeared in the data. By doing so, I was able to capture the richness of the interviews and reflect the complexity of the perspectives shared by the members of parliament. Additionally, I could categorize the members of parliament according to the climate security framework developed earlier in the study, which includes categories such as climate skeptics, traditionalists, critical security skeptics, traditional state-centrists, anthropocentrists, and ecocentrists. This categorization provided a structured way to interpret the diverse perspectives of the members of parliament.

Furthermore, I focused on identifying and analyzing the differences between the perspectives of the members of parliament and those of the general public as captured in the survey data. This allowed for a comparison between the formal audience (members of parliament) and the moral audience (general public), offering valuable insights into how climate security is perceived differently across these two key groups.

4. SURVEY FINDINGS

This section presents a comprehensive analysis of the survey data collected to understand the perceptions of climate security among the general public in Türkiye. The survey, which involved 3,827 participants, provides valuable insights into how different demographic groups perceive climate change as a security issue. The findings are organized to highlight the demographic distribution of respondents, their general perceptions of climate change, and the specific security implications they associate with it. By examining the relationship between various demographic factors and climate security perceptions, this section aims to uncover the diverse attitudes and concerns present within Turkish society. The analysis also evaluates Türkiye's efforts to address climate change, offering a nuanced understanding of public sentiment and readiness for climate action.

4.1. DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

This subsection provides a detailed overview of the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents, which is essential for understanding the diverse perspectives on climate security within the Turkish population. The demographic questions were designed to ensure a representative sample, capturing a wide array of viewpoints across different segments of society. The survey features a balanced gender distribution, with nearly equal numbers of male and female respondents, and a small percentage choosing not to disclose their gender. This balance is crucial for reflecting the varied perspectives on climate security issues. The age distribution encompasses a broad range of generations, from young adults to seniors, allowing for an analysis of how generational differences influence perceptions of climate change as a security threat. Educational attainment among respondents is diverse, with a significant portion holding university degrees or higher, providing insights into the role of education in shaping climate security views. The survey also examines respondents' involvement in agricultural work, which is vital for understanding how direct experience with environmental conditions might impact perceptions of climate-related risks. Geographically, respondents are spread across Türkiye's regions, from urban centers to rural villages, enabling an exploration of how location and regional vulnerabilities affect climate security perceptions. Additionally, the survey considers whether respondents have personally experienced harm from climate change events, a factor that may significantly shape their views on climate security. By examining these demographic differences, the study aims to uncover how various factors contribute to the diverse climate security perceptions in Türkiye, providing a nuanced understanding of the issue across different societal groups.

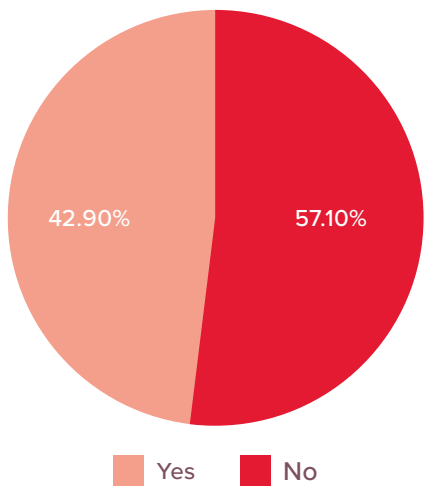
4.2. EXPERIENCE OF HARM FROM CLIMATE CHANGE

Among the respondents, 42.9% reported having been harmed by an event caused by climate change, while 57.1% have not experienced such harm. Although I asked this question to explore potential differences in perceptions between those who have been harmed by climate change and those who have not, the finding itself is particularly interesting, as it indicates that a very high percentage of individuals perceive themselves as directly affected by climate change. In the survey, I intentionally did not provide specific examples, such as experiencing a flood, to allow respondents to self-identify as climate victims based on

their own perceptions. Remarkably, almost half of the respondents consider themselves as climate victims.

This data is particularly significant as it suggests a strong foundation for public support in Türkiye for initiatives addressing climate change. The perception of harm experienced by nearly half of the respondents underscores a shared sense of vulnerability, which can be a powerful motivator for collective action. Additionally, the fact that the moral audience view themselves as direct victims of climate change implies a convergence between the moral audience and the referent object of climate security. This alignment is a critical factor in the potential success of securitizing climate change, as it bridges the referent object of securitization and the audience, creating an environment conducive to implementing effective climate policies. Such convergence enhances the legitimacy of framing climate change as a security issue, paving the way for stronger advocacy, resource allocation, and policy action.

Figure 1 – Have you been harmed by an event caused by climate change?



4.3. GENERAL PERCEPTION OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The survey results regarding the general perception toward climate change provide critical insights into the general perceptions of the Turkish population regarding climate change. A substantial 64.4% of respondents affirm that climate change exists and consider it the most important problem of our time. This strong consensus indicates a widespread awareness of the urgency and significance of addressing climate change, aligning with the global discourse that frames it as a critical issue requiring immediate attention.

Additionally, 31.6% of respondents recognize the existence of climate change but believe it is important only in relation to other pressing issues. This group also considers climate change a major challenge, albeit in a context that prioritizes other immediate concerns. When combined with the 64.4% who view climate change as the most important problem, this results in a total of 96% of respondents acknowledging climate change as a significant challenge that warrants attention.

Conversely, a small segment of the population, approximately 2.8%, downplays the significance of climate change, asserting that it is exaggerated, while only 1.2% outright deny its existence. This minimal level of skepticism indicates that the overwhelming majority of the Turkish public acknowledges the reality and importance of climate change. However, the presence of climate skeptics, even in this minority, is noteworthy. Their views could stem from various factors, including political ideologies, misinformation, or a lack of awareness about the scientific consensus on climate change.

In summary, the survey findings indicate a strong foundation for recognizing climate change in Türkiye, with the vast majority of the population acknowledging its existence and significance. This widespread awareness provides a critical opportunity for policymakers to

Figure 2 – Do you think that climate change exists?
Which of the following statements expresses your opinion on this subject?

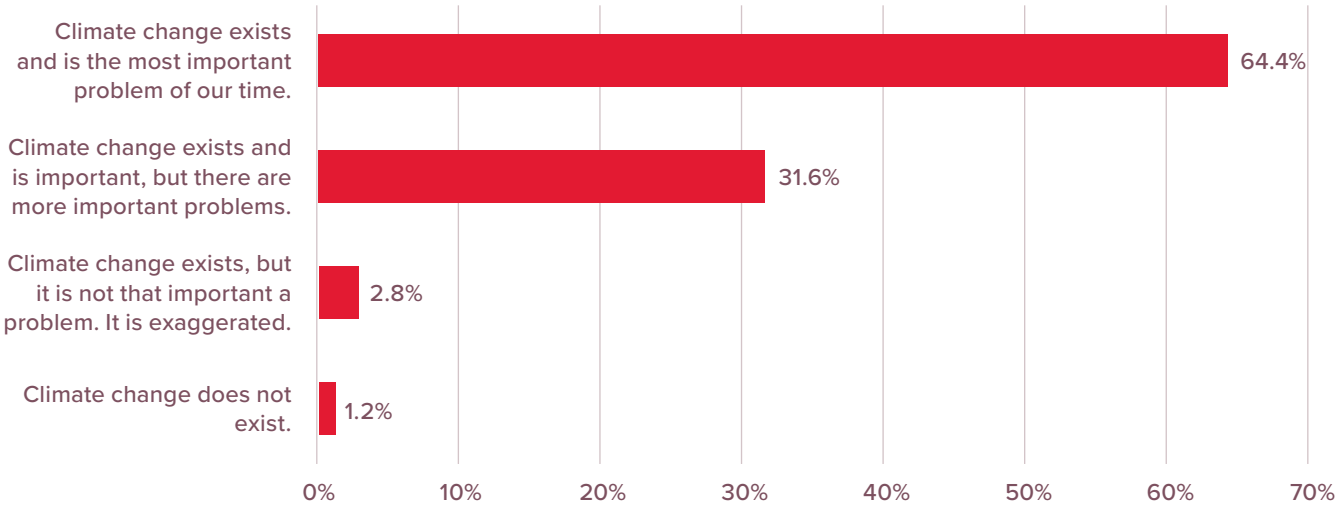
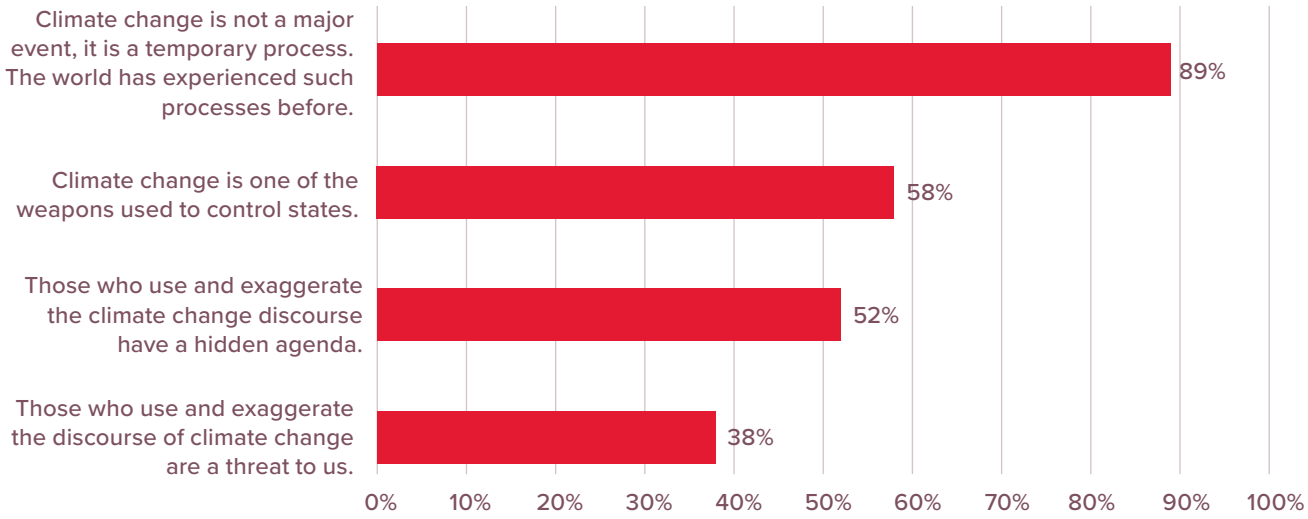


Figure 3 – Which option best describes your skepticism of climate change? (For Climate Skeptics)



engage with the public and develop comprehensive strategies that address climate change effectively.

Addressing the concerns of climate skeptics is also essential to ensure a cohesive and informed response to the challenges posed by climate change in Türkiye.

Figure 3 provides valuable insights into the perceptions of individuals who either deny the existence of climate change or believe it to be exaggerated. This question was specifically posed to those who selected the last two options in the previous question (Climate change exists,

but it is not that important a problem. It is exaggerated. — Climate change does not exist.), making it crucial for understanding the underlying beliefs and attitudes that contribute to climate skepticism.

A total of 89 respondents assert that climate change is not a major event and is merely a temporary process, suggesting a belief that climate variations are part of natural cycles rather than anthropogenic influences. Additionally, 52 respondents believe that those who emphasize climate change have a hidden agenda, indicating a distrust of the motives behind climate advocacy.

Furthermore, 38 respondents view the discourse on climate change as a tool used to control states, reflecting a belief that climate change narratives are politically motivated rather than based on scientific consensus. Notably, 58 respondents express that those who exaggerate climate change pose a threat, illustrating a counter-securitization perspective, where climate skeptics frame climate advocacy as a potential threat to their interests or societal stability.

The low frequencies of respondents selecting these options indicate that skepticism about climate change remains a minority viewpoint within the broader context of the survey, where a significant majority acknowledges climate change as a pressing issue. This suggests that while climate skeptics exist, their numbers are still very low compared to those who recognize the urgency of climate action.

The findings from this question suggest that climate skeptics hold a complex set of beliefs that intertwine skepticism about climate science with concerns about political motives and control. Understanding the perceptions of climate skeptics is essential for policymakers to develop effective communication strategies that address their concerns while promoting awareness of the scientific consensus on climate change. Engaging with this group necessitates policymakers understand their viewpoints and shape their discourses accordingly. By recognizing the underlying fears and misconceptions held by climate skeptics, it may be possible to shift perceptions and foster a more unified approach to tackling climate-related challenges.

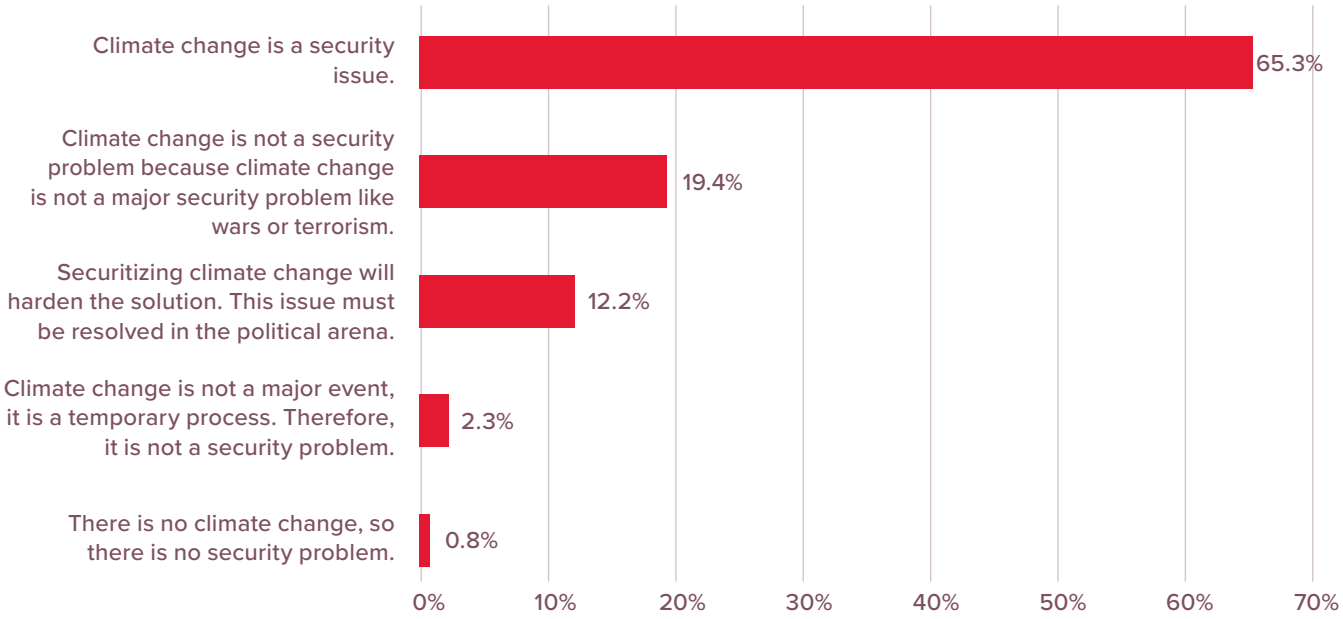
4.4. ANALYSIS OF CLIMATE SECURITY PERCEPTIONS

The question “Do you think climate change is a security problem?” is a central element of the survey, offering vital insights into the perceptions of the Turkish population regarding climate change as a security issue. This question is crucial for assessing the readiness of the moral audience—the general public—for climate action and their acceptance of climate change as a securitized issue.

The survey results indicate that a significant majority, 65.3% of respondents, perceive climate change as a security issue. This substantial proportion reflects a strong recognition among the Turkish population of the potential threats posed by climate change, aligning with the broader global discourse that frames climate change as an existential threat requiring urgent attention. This perception is crucial for legitimizing climate action and supports the notion that the moral audience in Türkiye is largely prepared to endorse policies aimed at addressing climate security.

The broad consensus that climate change is a security threat suggests that the Turkish public is ready to support extraordinary measures to address this issue, provided they are ethically justified and practically viable, as outlined in the concept of just securitization.

Figure 4 – Do you think climate change is a security problem? Tick the statement closest to your beliefs.



Conversely, 19.4% of respondents do not view climate change as a major security problem, aligning with the "traditional state-centrists" category in our framework. This group prioritizes traditional security threats such as wars or terrorism over environmental concerns, reflecting a state-centric view of security.

A smaller segment, 12.2%, aligns with the "critical security skeptics" category, expressing concern that securitizing climate change could complicate solutions. They advocate for addressing the issue within the political arena, emphasizing the potential negative consequences of securitization, such as the erosion of public deliberation and democratic engagement. This underscores the importance of balancing urgency with inclusive political processes to ensure effective and equitable climate action.

Only a marginal 0.8% of respondents deny the existence of climate change altogether, categorizing them as climate skeptics. This minimal level of skepticism indicates that the overwhelming majority of the Turkish public acknowledges the reality and significance of climate change, which is essential for fostering a collective response to climate security.

Overall, the survey results suggest that the Turkish moral audience is largely supportive of recognizing climate change as a security issue, which is a positive indicator for policymakers aiming to implement climate-related policies. The findings demonstrate a public readiness to accept climate change as a legitimate security concern. This readiness can facilitate the translation of public support into actionable policies, thereby elevating climate change on Türkiye's political agenda and ensuring that measures taken are both effective and broadly supported.

4.5. THE REFERENT OBJECT IN CLIMATE SECURITY

The referent object in the context of climate security refers to the entities that are perceived to be most threatened by climate change, which can include individuals, communities, ecosystems, and states. This concept is crucial for understanding how different groups prioritize the impacts of climate

change and the associated risks. As climate change intensifies, it poses multifaceted threats that extend beyond environmental degradation to encompass social, economic, and political dimensions. Our framework of climate security categorizes these referent objects into anthropocentric, ecocentric, and state-centric perspectives. This analysis will explore how respondents rank the threats posed by climate change, reflecting their perceptions of what is most at risk within this framework, thereby providing insights into the prevailing values and priorities regarding climate threats.

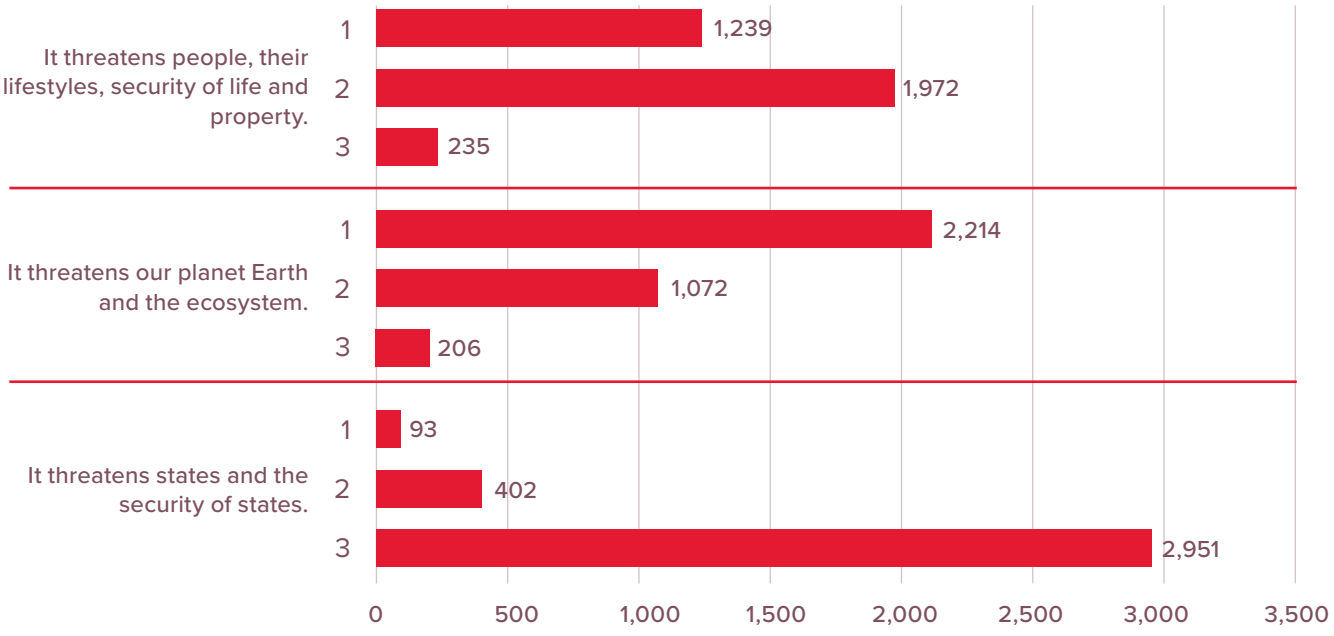
Figure 5 provides valuable insights into how respondents prioritize various referent objects affected by climate change, aligning with our framework of climate security that includes anthropocentrists, ecocentrists, and state-centrists.

The data reveals that the highest number of respondents, 2,114 (61.3%), ranked the planet and its ecosystems as the most threatened referent object, indicating a strong ecocentric perspective. This prioritization underscores a significant awareness of the broader environmental implications of climate change, such as biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, which are critical concerns for ecocentrists who advocate for the protection of the environment as a primary referent object.

The threat to people was ranked second, with 1,239 (36.0%) respondents identifying it as a primary concern. This reflects an anthropocentric viewpoint, emphasizing the direct human impacts of climate change, including food and water security, health risks, and displacement.

Finally, the security of states was ranked the lowest, with only 295 (2.7%) respondents considering it a significant threat. This suggests that while some state-centrists may acknowledge the potential for climate change to exacerbate geopolitical tensions

Figure 5 – What is most threatened by climate change? Rank the following in order of importance according to your point of view.



and resource conflicts, the majority of respondents view these issues as secondary to the immediate impacts on human lives and the environment.

The ranking of these referent objects illustrates an understanding of climate security among the respondents, highlighting the interconnectedness of human well-being and environmental health. The strong emphasis on the threats to ecosystems indicates a public readiness to support policies that prioritize ecological sustainability, reflecting the ecocentric perspective as the most prominent in this context. This insight is crucial for policymakers, as it emphasizes the need for climate action that addresses both immediate human concerns and long-term environmental protection, ensuring that responses are aligned with the values and priorities of the population.

4.6. SECURITY IMPLICATIONS

Figure 6 provides a comprehensive understanding of the security implications of climate change as prioritized by the moral audience. This figure collectively aims to evaluate which security implications are deemed most critical by the respondents, reflecting their perceptions and priorities in the context of climate security.

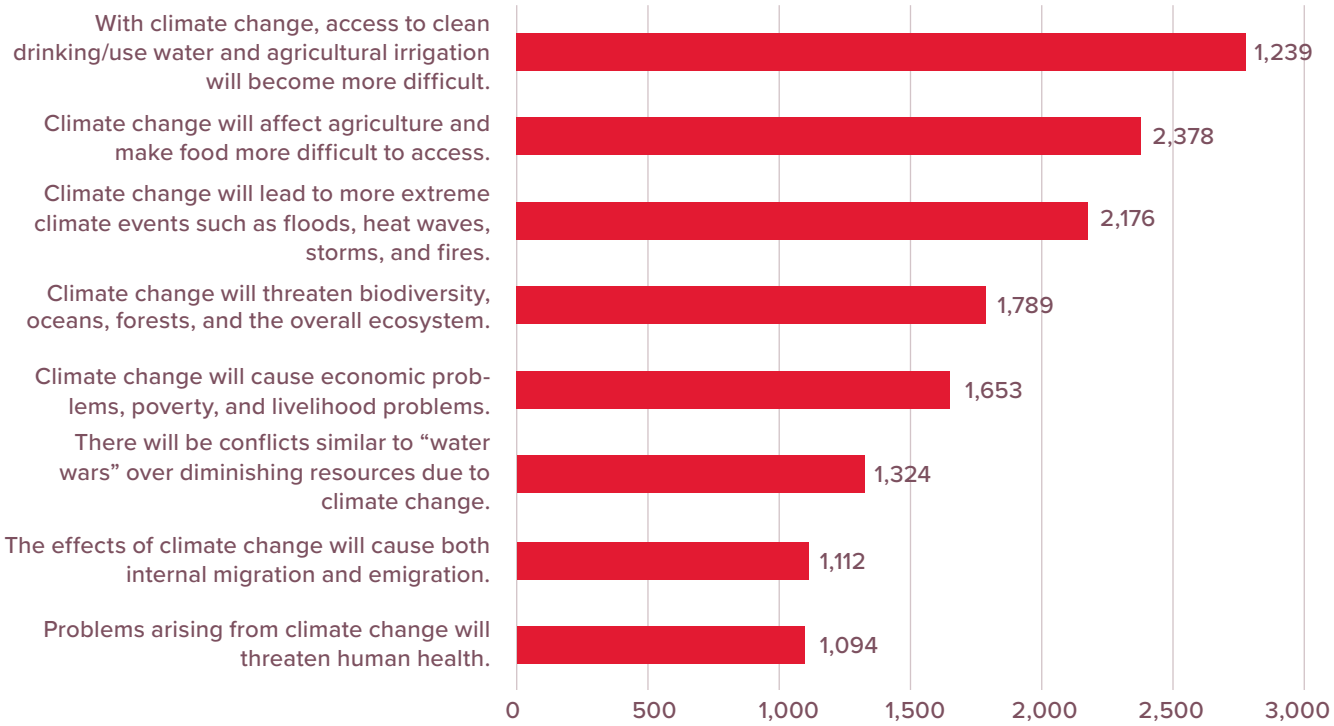
In the figure, the most frequently selected security implication of climate change is access to clean water and agricultural irrigation, with 2,778 respondents identifying this as a critical issue. This underscores a significant concern for water security, a fundamental aspect of human survival and a key component of climate security. Closely following this, 2,378 respondents highlighted the impact of climate change on agriculture and food accessibility, underscoring the importance of food security. These results indicate a strong prioritization of basic human needs, reflecting an anthropocentric perspective that emphasizes the direct impacts of climate change on human well-being. The figure collectively reveals a pronounced concern about the impacts of climate change on agriculture, highlighting the public's awareness of how climate change threatens essential resources and livelihoods.

The third most selected issue is the increase in extreme climate events, such as floods, heatwaves, storms, and wildfires, with 2,176 respondents highlighting this concern. This reflects an acute awareness of the immediate and tangible threats posed by climate change, which can have devastating effects on communities and infrastructure. People are experiencing the devastating effects of these climate-induced extreme events firsthand, which is highly influential in shaping their perceptions. Türkiye has faced severe floods, wildfires, and heatwaves in recent years, which have significantly influenced public perceptions.

Interestingly, economic problems, poverty, and livelihood issues due to climate change's impact on sectors like agriculture and energy were selected by 1,653 respondents. This highlights concerns about economic and energy security, as climate change can disrupt essential services and industries, leading to broader socio-economic challenges. It is notable that this figure is not higher, despite Türkiye experiencing difficult economic times and significant inflation in food prices, suggesting that while these issues are recognized, they may not be perceived as the most immediate threats compared to other climate-related concerns.

In contrast, the potential for conflicts over dwindling resources, akin to "water wars," was selected by 1,324 respondents, indicating a lower prioritization of traditional state security concerns. This suggests that while geopolitical tensions are acknowledged, they are not viewed as the most immediate threat compared to other issues.

Figure 6 – Please select the four most important security problems/risks that climate change may create.



It is noteworthy that migration, often a significant and already securitized issue in Türkiye due to the influx of Syrian refugees, was not ranked as highly as might be expected, with only 72 respondents selecting it as their top concern. This may indicate a focus on more immediate resource-based threats. Similarly, health security, despite the recent COVID-19 pandemic, was not prioritized, with only 165 respondents ranking it as their top concern. This could suggest a perception that health threats are less directly linked to climate change or that other issues are seen as more pressing.

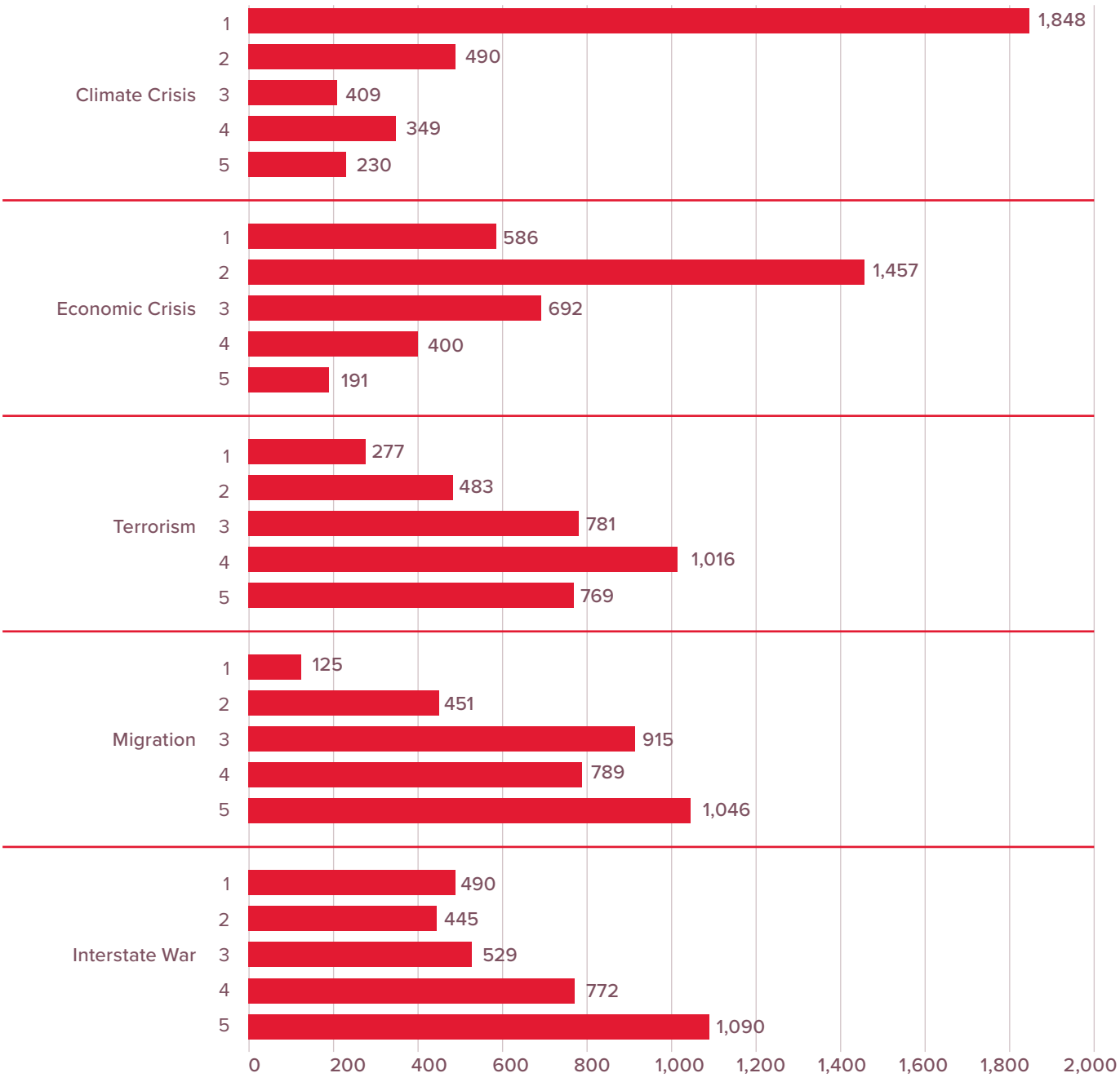
Overall, the analysis reveals a clear prioritization of water and food security among the moral audience, reflecting a focus on the fundamental needs that are most directly threatened by climate change. Additionally, the prioritization of extreme climate events and the ecocentric perception that emphasizes the protection of the planet are also noteworthy, highlighting a significant awareness of the environmental impacts and the urgency to address these challenges. The lower emphasis on migration and health security is intriguing given their relevance in recent years and suggests areas where further engagement and communication may be needed to align public perceptions with the broader implications of climate change.

4.7. COMPARISON WITH OTHER THREATS

Figure 7 provides a comparative analysis of various threats perceived by respondents, allowing for a clearer understanding of how climate-related risks are prioritized alongside other security concerns. The analysis reveals the following insights based on the frequency of responses.

The most significant threat identified by respondents is the climate crisis, with 1,848 individuals

Figure 7 – Rank the threats/risks



ranking it as a primary concern. This high frequency underscores the public's recognition of the urgent and multifaceted nature of climate change, which poses direct risks to human well-being, ecosystems, and societal stability. Notably, the gap between the climate crisis and other threats is substantial, highlighting the overwhelming consensus on the urgency of addressing climate change compared to other security concerns.

Following the climate crisis, the economic crisis is ranked second, with 586 respondents acknowledging it as a significant threat. This indicates a strong concern for economic stability, particularly in light of the current economic challenges faced by Türkiye, including inflation and rising food prices.

The third-ranked threat is interstate war, with 490 respondents identifying it as a concern. This ranking suggests that while interstate conflict remains a significant issue, it is perceived as less immediate compared to the pressing challenges posed by climate change and economic instability. The lower prioritization of interstate war may reflect a shift in public focus toward more tangible and immediate threats that directly impact daily life.

Interestingly, terrorism is ranked fourth, with 277 respondents considering it a significant threat. This ranking is particularly noteworthy given that Türkiye has faced a persistent terrorism problem for decades, which has been a prominent issue on its national agenda. Despite this long-standing concern, the relatively low prioritization of terrorism suggests that respondents perceive it as less pressing compared to the impacts of climate change and economic instability. This may indicate that the public is more focused on threats that directly affect their daily lives and livelihoods, reflecting a shift in priorities toward more tangible and urgent challenges.

Lastly, migration is ranked fifth, with only 125 respondents identifying it as a primary concern. This is particularly noteworthy given the ongoing discussions surrounding migration in Türkiye, especially in the context of the Syrian refugee crisis.

Overall, Figure 7 reveals a clear prioritization of the climate crisis among the moral audience, with traditional security concerns such as interstate war, terrorism, and migration acknowledged but ranked as less pressing compared to the immediate impacts of climate change and economic instability. However, it is important to recognize that this question was presented at the final part of the survey, following numerous questions on climate change and its impacts. This sequencing may have influenced respondents' prioritization, a phenomenon known as priming, where earlier survey content shapes subsequent perceptions and judgments.

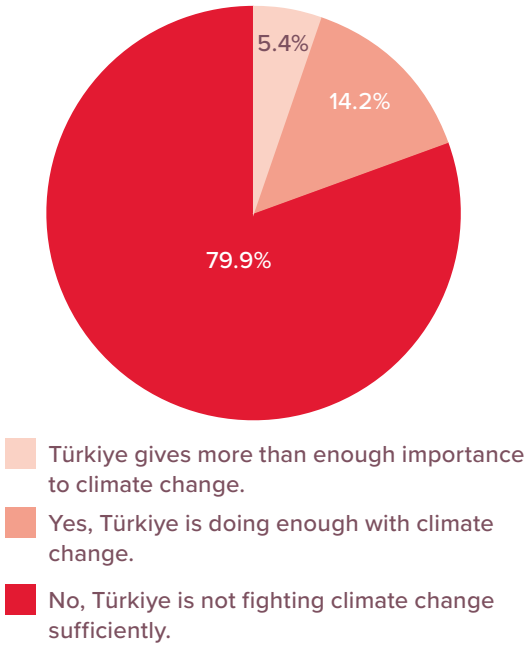
While this potential influence should be considered, the findings still provide valuable guidance for policymakers. They highlight the urgency of addressing climate-related challenges and economic vulnerabilities as central components of a comprehensive security strategy. By aligning policy responses with public perceptions and fostering an inclusive approach, decision-makers can effectively tackle the multifaceted threats posed by climate change while remaining attentive to the broader security landscape.

4.8. EVALUATION OF TÜRKIYE'S EFFORTS TO DEAL WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

Figure 8 provides critical insights into public perceptions regarding the effectiveness of Türkiye's efforts to address climate change. The responses reveal a significant level of concern among the Turkish population about the adequacy of actions in combating climate-related challenges.

A substantial majority, comprising 2,755 respondents (79.9%), believe that Türkiye is not sufficiently fighting climate change. This overwhelming figure indicates a strong sentiment among the public

Figure 8 – Do you think Türkiye is adequately fighting climate change?



that current measures are inadequate to address the pressing issues posed by climate change. Notably, this figure is significantly higher than the voting results for both governing and opposition parties, suggesting that a majority of the Turkish public—regardless of their political affiliations—considers the government's efforts insufficient. This perception of inadequate action highlights a disconnect between public expectations and the government's climate policies, pointing to a critical area for improvement in policy implementation and communication.

Conversely, only 488 respondents (14.2%) feel that Türkiye is doing enough to combat climate change, while a mere 185 respondents (5.4%) believe that the country gives more than enough importance to the issue. These low figures further emphasize the prevailing dissatisfaction with the government's climate initiatives and the urgent need for more robust and effective strategies.

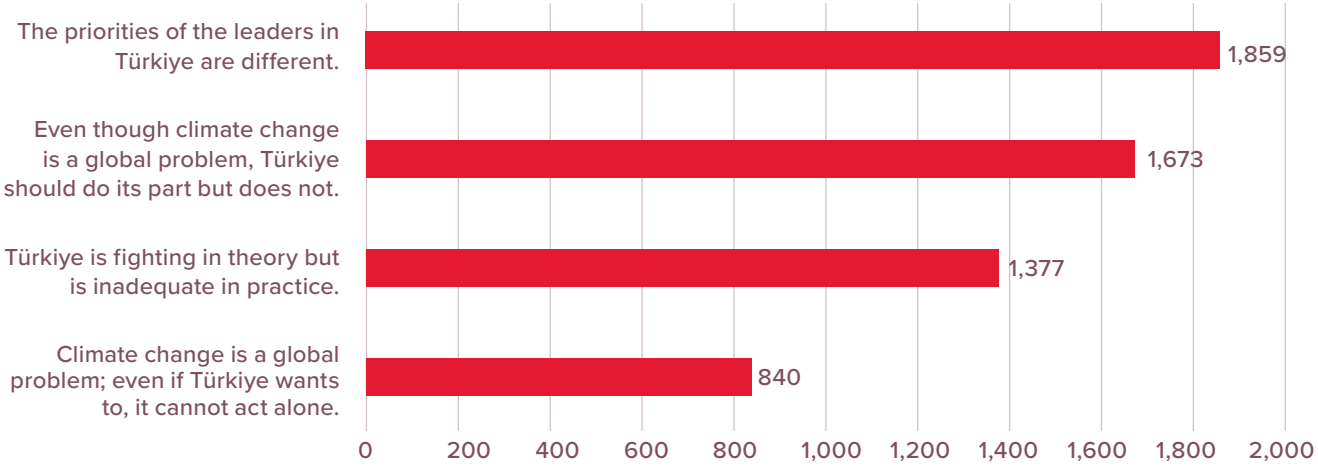
The data also reveals that a significant portion of the population is aware of the challenges posed by climate change and is likely to advocate for more decisive action from policymakers. This insight is crucial for understanding public sentiment and can guide government efforts to enhance their climate policies and engage with citizens more effectively.

Figure 9 reveals significant insights into public perceptions regarding the shortcomings of Türkiye's climate change efforts. This question was asked only to those who answered that Türkiye is not doing enough to deal with climate change in the previous question. A substantial majority of respondents, 1,859 individuals, believe that the priorities of the leaders in Türkiye are different, indicating a widespread sentiment that the government is not adequately prioritizing climate change in its agenda.

Following closely, 1,673 respondents feel that even though climate change is a global problem, Türkiye should do its part but does not. This response highlights a recognition of the global nature of climate change while simultaneously expressing disappointment in the government's lack of initiative. It underscores the expectation among the public that Türkiye must take responsibility and contribute to global efforts, even if the challenges are complex and multifaceted.

A significant portion of respondents, specifically 1,377 individuals, believe that Türkiye is fighting climate change in theory but is inadequate in practice. This perception suggests that while policymakers may publicly emphasize the importance of addressing climate change in their discourses, the actual implementation and effectiveness of their measures fall short. Many citizens feel that there is a disconnect between the rhetoric used by government officials and the tangible actions taken to combat climate change. This sentiment

Figure 9 – Why do you think Türkiye is not fighting climate change adequately? You can select more than one option. (Asked of those who responded "no" to the previous question)



highlights a demand for more concrete steps and results from the government, indicating that the public is seeking genuine commitment and action rather than mere verbal assurances.

Lastly, 840 respondents selected the option indicating that climate change is a global problem, and even if Türkiye wants to act, it cannot do so alone. While this response reflects an understanding of the complexities involved in addressing climate change on a global scale, the relatively low number suggests that many respondents still believe Türkiye should strive to take more initiative in its climate policies, even within the constraints of international cooperation. This indicates a desire for the government to demonstrate commitment to climate action, rather than relying solely on the global context as an excuse for inaction.

Overall, the analysis of this figure reveals a clear consensus among respondents that Türkiye's efforts to combat climate change are inadequate. The primary concerns center around political priorities, the need for more proactive measures, and the expectation for the government to align its actions with public sentiment. Additionally, respondents demonstrate an awareness of the global nature of climate change and its complexities, indicating that while they recognize the challenges, they still expect Türkiye to take a more active role in addressing the issue. These insights provide critical guidance for policymakers, emphasizing the importance of addressing public concerns and fostering a more robust commitment to effectively tackling climate change.

4.9. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHICS AND CLIMATE SECURITY PERCEPTIONS

This section examines the relationships between various demographic factors and perceptions of climate security among the Turkish population. While many of the correlations presented in the analysis appear to be statistically insignificant, there are several noteworthy correlations that do emerge. However, the correlation coefficients are generally low, indicating that the strength of these relationships is limited. This suggests that, despite some variations in perceptions based on demographic factors such as education level and gender, there is a broader consensus across different segments of society regarding the importance of climate security. Overall, this analysis highlights that climate security is a concern shared by diverse groups within the population.

4.9.1. General Correlation Analyses – Irrelevant Factors

This section focuses on the relationships between key demographic factors and the principal questions of the survey regarding climate change perceptions. The three main questions explored in this analysis are: 1) "Do you think that climate change exists?" 2) "Do you think climate change is a security problem?" and 3) "Do you think Türkiye is sufficiently fighting climate change?" The first question is particularly significant as it gauges respondents' beliefs about the existence of climate change, serving as a foundational indicator of public awareness and concern. The second question assesses whether individuals perceive climate change as a security issue. The third question evaluates perceptions of Türkiye's effectiveness in addressing climate change, reflecting public expectations of governmental action. By examining the correlations between these questions and the demographic factors, we can gain insights into how demographic factors influence perceptions of climate change and its associated risks, thereby informing policy discussions and strategies aimed at enhancing climate action. Table 1 shows the coloration between demographic variables and these three questions.

Among the demographic factors analyzed, gender emerges as the most relevant, as there are meaningful correlations between gender and all three main questions regarding climate change perceptions. This suggests that gender may play a role in shaping individuals' views on climate change, its security implications, and the adequacy of Türkiye's efforts to address the issue. However, it is important to note that the correlation coefficient for the second question is low, indicating that its influence is minimal and can be considered ignorable in practical terms.

In contrast, age is found to be irrelevant for the first two questions, as it shows no significant correlation. Although it is significant for the third question, the correlation coefficient is so low that it can be argued that age is essentially irrelevant in influencing perceptions of climate change.

Education level is also deemed irrelevant for the first question, as it does not show a meaningful correlation. While it is relevant for the second question, the low coefficient indicates that its impact is minimal, allowing it to be considered irrelevant in practical terms. Education level is only relevant for the third question, where it may have a more noticeable effect on perceptions.

Agricultural job information is irrelevant for the first two questions, indicating that involvement in agriculture does not significantly influence beliefs about climate change or its security implications. However, it is relevant for the third question, suggesting that agricultural workers may have distinct views on Türkiye's efforts to combat climate change.

The region of residence is fully irrelevant, as all correlations are statistically insignificant, indicating that geographical location does not significantly affect beliefs about climate change. Similarly, residence type (city center, town, village) is only relevant for the third question, suggesting that where individuals live may influence their perceptions of Türkiye's climate change efforts.

Lastly, the experience of being harmed by climate change appears relevant for all three questions, indicating that personal experiences may shape beliefs about climate change. However, the correlation coefficients for the second and third questions are notably low, suggesting that while experiencing harm may influence views on climate change, it does not significantly affect perceptions of its security implications or the adequacy of

Table 1

Demographic Indicator		Do you think that climate change exists?	Do you think climate change is a security problem?	Do you think Türkiye is sufficiently fighting climate change?
Gender	Pearson Correlation	.124**	.084**	-.126**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Age	Pearson Correlation	0.005	0.010	-.074**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.791	0.542	0.000
Education Level	Pearson Correlation	-0.013	-.087**	.151**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.460	0.000	0.000
Agricultural Job Info	Pearson Correlation	0.001	-0.026	.231**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.960	0.127	0.000
Residence Information-1: Region	Pearson Correlation	0.014	0.025	-0.029
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.410	0.142	0.095
Residence Information-2: Where do you live?	Pearson Correlation	0.013	0.031	-.144**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.455	0.070	0.000
Have you been harmed by an event caused by climate change?	Pearson Correlation	.146**	.085**	-.041*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.016
Do you think that climate change exists? Which of the following statements expresses your opinion on this subject?	Pearson Correlation	1	.455**	-.136**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000
Do you think climate change is a security problem? Tick the statement closest to your beliefs.	Pearson Correlation	.455**	1	-.135**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000
Do you think Türkiye is sufficiently fighting climate change?	Pearson Correlation	-.136**	-.135**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	

Türkiye's response. Therefore, we may regard the experience of being harmed by climate change as primarily relevant for the first question, where it likely has a more pronounced impact on individuals' beliefs about the existence and significance of climate change.

In summary, the analysis of Table 1 reveals that while some demographic factors show relevance to perceptions of climate change, most of the relevant correlations are weak or insignificant. This suggests a broader consensus across different segments of society regarding the importance of climate security, reinforcing the notion that climate change is a universally significant issue that transcends demographic divisions.

The analysis reveals meaningful correlations between all three main questions regarding climate change perceptions. Respondents who believe in the existence of climate change are also likely to view it as a security issue and express concerns about Türkiye's insufficient efforts to address the problem. This interconnectedness among the responses suggests a coherent understanding of climate change as a pressing issue that encompasses both existential and practical dimensions. These findings also indicate the robustness of the data collected.

4.9.2. Gender

As the figures and the correlation table indicate, women are slightly more inclined than men to view climate change as a critical issue, particularly regarding its existence and the adequacy of Türkiye's response. This difference suggests that women may have a broader awareness of the diverse impacts of climate change, such as on health, livelihoods, and community stability.

The correlation analysis also shows that women are more critical of the government's efforts to fight climate change, reflecting a stronger desire for proactive and effective measures. Female respondents are more likely to view current policies as inadequate, underscoring their demand for more decisive actions.

In conclusion, both men and women in Türkiye are highly concerned about climate change, with a shared recognition of its security implications. However, women display slightly higher levels of concern about its existence and are more critical of current governmental efforts.

Table 2

		Do you think that climate change exists?	Do you think climate change is a security problem?	Do you think Türkiye is sufficiently fighting climate change?
Gender	Pearson Correlation	.124**	.084**	-.126**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000

Figure 10 – Do you think that climate change exists? Which of the following statements expresses your opinion on this subject? * Gender

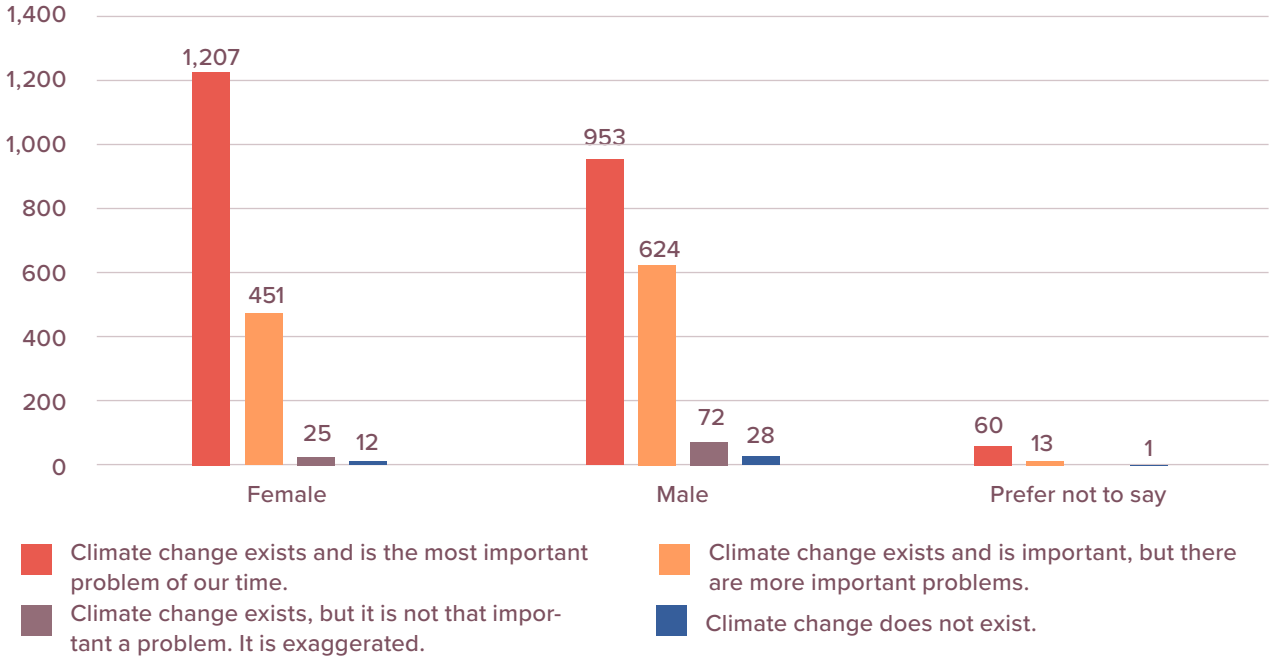
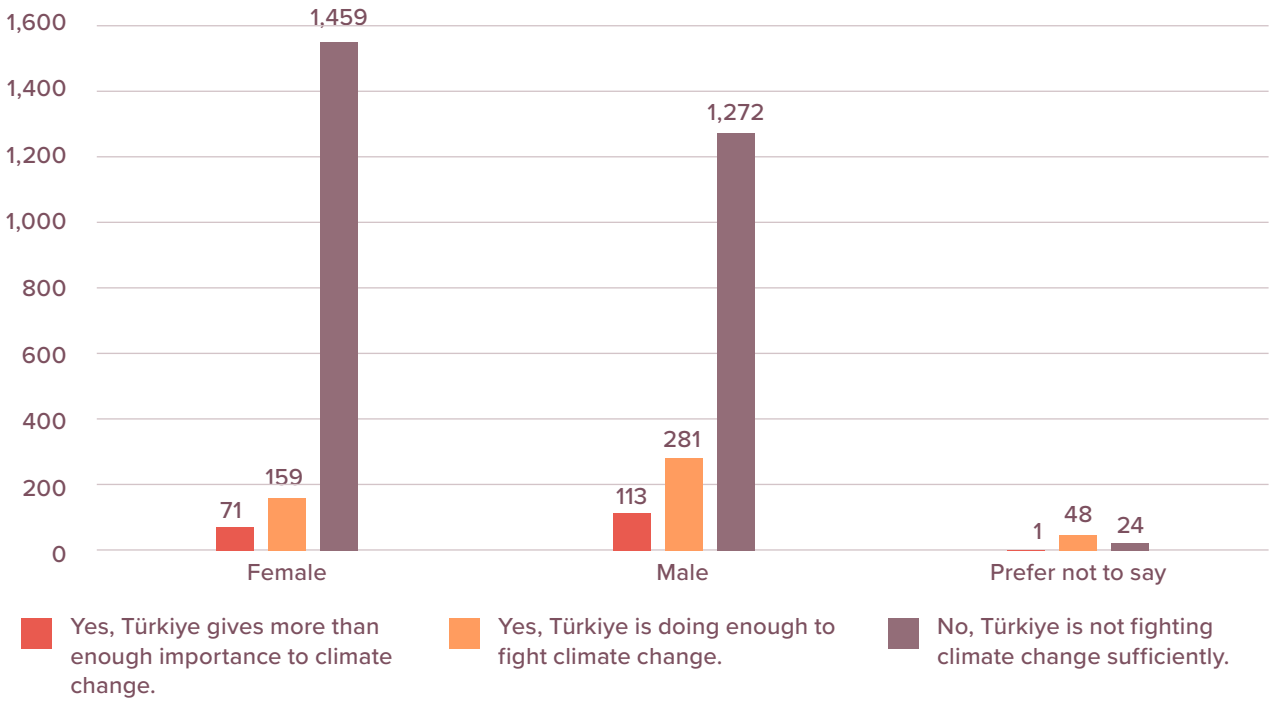


Figure 11 – Do you think Türkiye is sufficiently fighting climate change? * Gender



4.9.3. Education Level

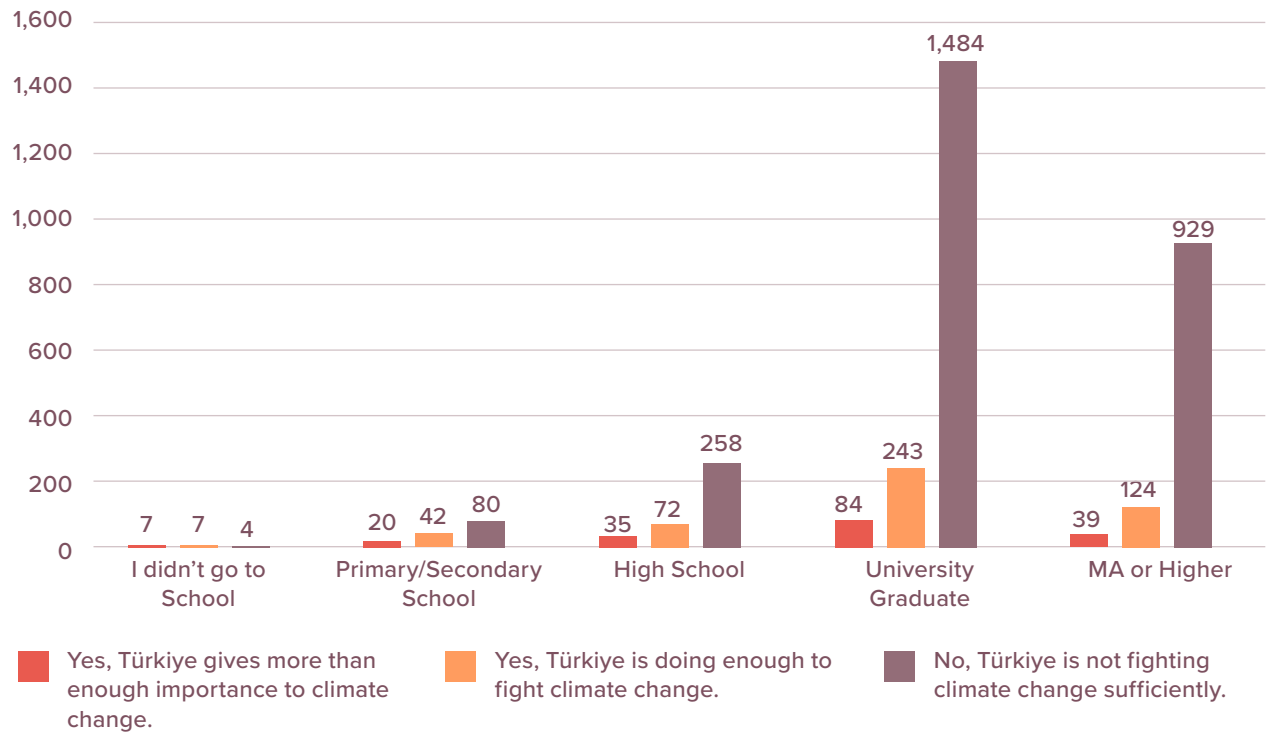
The analysis of the "Education Level" demographic factor reveals its relevance primarily in relation to the third question, "Do you think Türkiye is sufficiently fighting climate change?" While education level is deemed irrelevant for the first question regarding belief in climate change, it does show a correlation with the second question about perceiving climate change as a security issue. However, the correlation coefficient for the second question is notably low, suggesting that its influence is minimal and can be considered ignorable in practical terms.

Overall, the analysis indicates that as educational attainment increases, so does the perception of inadequacy in Türkiye's climate change efforts. Higher education levels correlate with a more critical stance toward governmental actions,

Table 3

		Do you think that climate change exists?	Do you think climate change is a security problem?	Do you think Türkiye is sufficiently fighting climate change?
Education Level	Pearson Correlation	-0.013	-.087**	.151**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.460	0.000	0.000

Figure 12 – Do you think Türkiye is sufficiently fighting climate change? * Education Level



suggesting that educated individuals demand stronger and more effective climate policies.

4.9.4. Agricultural Job Info

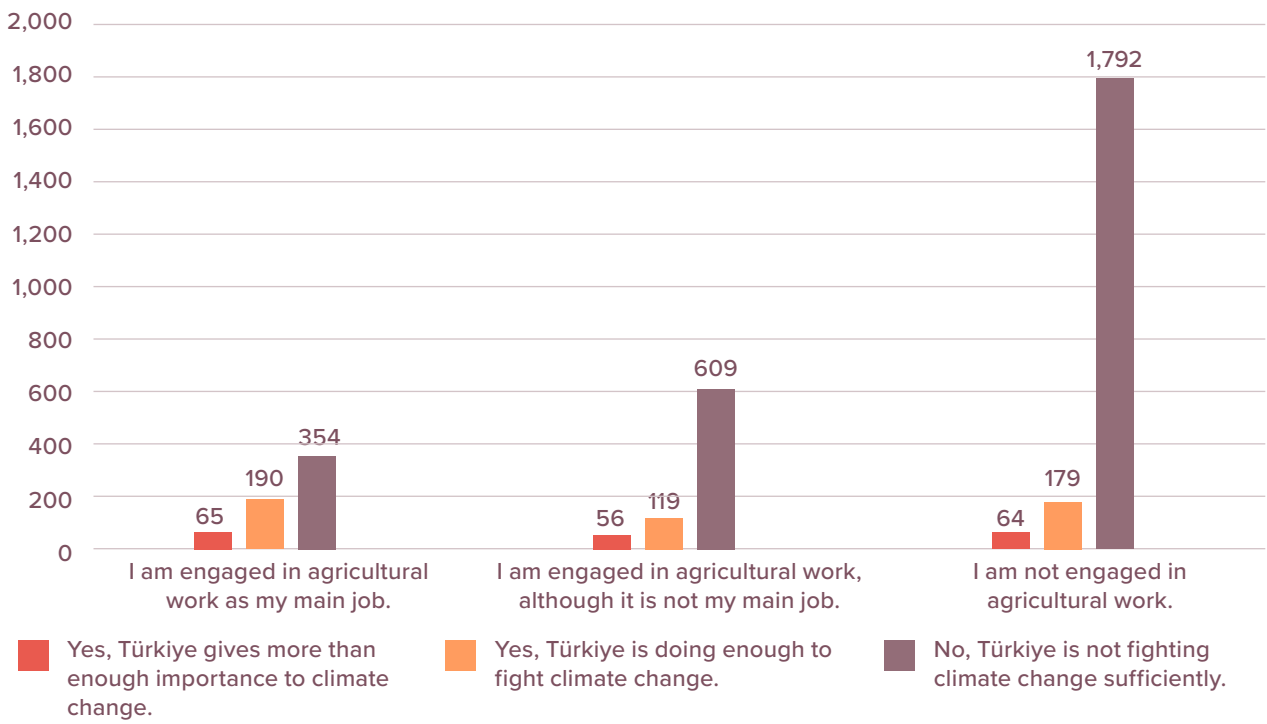
Figure 13 provides insights into how individuals involved in agriculture perceive Türkiye's efforts to combat climate change compared to those not in the agricultural sector.

Very interestingly, the analysis reveals that individuals not engaged in agriculture are more critical of Türkiye's climate change efforts compared to those involved in the sector. This finding challenges the expectation that agricultural workers, who are directly affected by the impacts of climate change on productivity and food security, would be more critical. This unexpected finding may stem from the political orientations of those in the agricultural sector, as they might be less inclined to criticize the

Table 4

		Do you think that climate change exists?	Do you think climate change is a security problem?	Do you think Türkiye is sufficiently fighting climate change?
Agricultural Job Info	Pearson Correlation	0.001	-0.026	.231**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.960	0.127	0.000

Figure 13 – Do you think Türkiye is sufficiently fighting climate change? * Agricultural Job Info



government. It should be stressed, however, that as the figures show, the majority of respondents across all groups demand more action and view current efforts as inadequate, emphasizing a broad societal expectation for stronger climate policies.

4.9.5. Residence Type

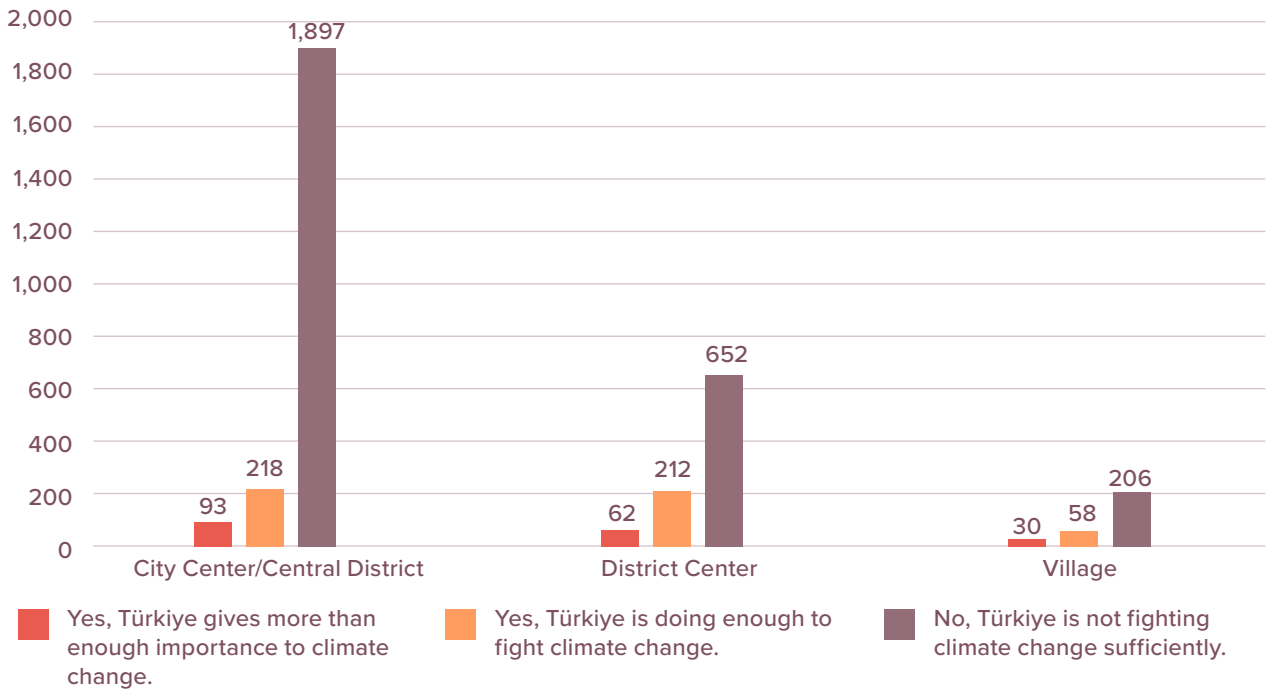
The analysis of the "Residence Type" demographic factor is only relevant for the question, "Do you think Türkiye is sufficiently fighting climate change?" The data from the corresponding figures provides insights into how individuals living in different types of residences perceive Türkiye's efforts to combat climate change.

Overall, the analysis indicates that individuals living in urban areas are more critical of Türkiye's climate change efforts compared to those in district centers and villages. This heightened concern among urban residents likely stems from their awareness of the immediate impacts of climate change on infrastructure, public health, and overall quality of life. This

Table 5

		Do you think that climate change exists?	Do you think climate change is a security problem?	Do you think Türkiye is sufficiently fighting climate change?
Residence Information-2: Where do you live?	Pearson Correlation	0.013	0.031	-.144**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.455	0.070	0.000

Figure 14 – Do you think Türkiye is sufficiently fighting climate change? * Residence Information-2: Where do you live?



aligns with the previous question, which indicated that those not engaged in agriculture express slightly greater concern about Türkiye's efforts to address climate change.

4.9.6. Being Directly Harmed by Climate Change

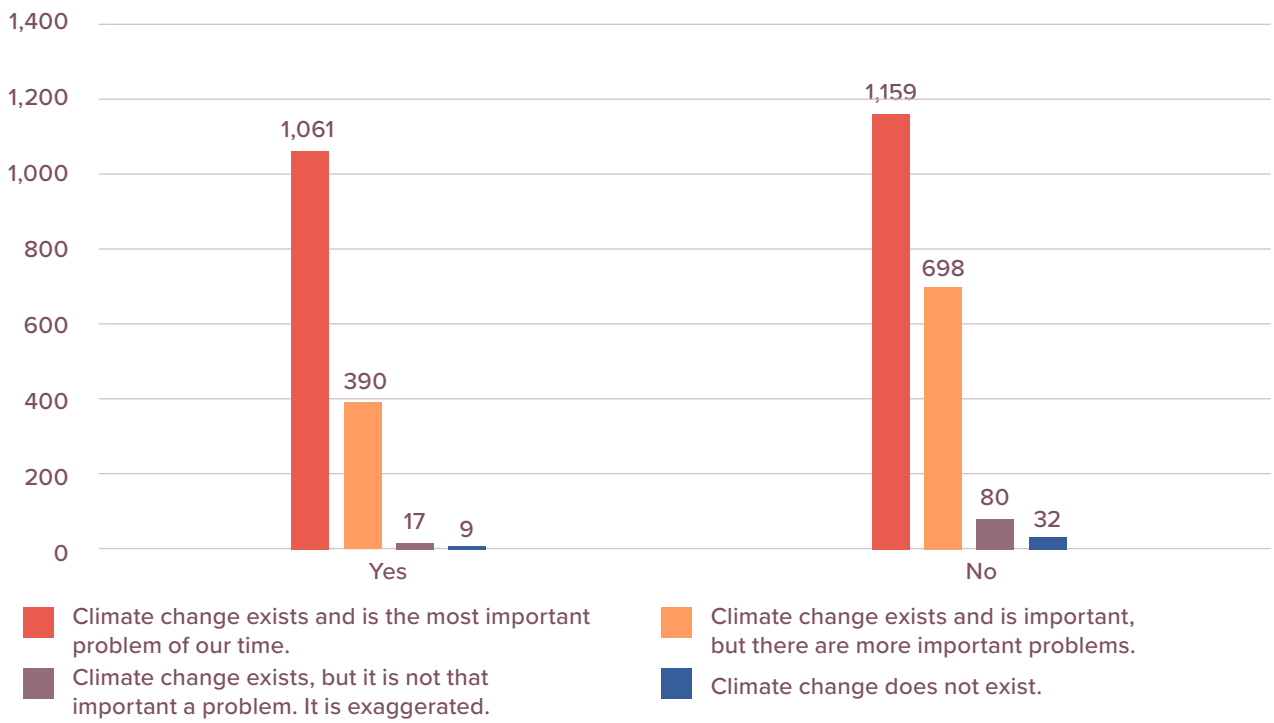
Figure 15 provides insights into how individuals who have experienced harm from climate change perceive Türkiye's efforts to combat the issue compared to those who have not.

Overall, the analysis indicates that individuals who have been directly harmed by climate change are more critical of Türkiye's climate change efforts compared to those who have not experienced harm. This heightened concern likely stems from their firsthand experiences with climate-related challenges.

Table 6

		Do you think that climate change exists?	Do you think climate change is a security problem?	Do you think Türkiye is sufficiently fighting climate change?
Have you been harmed by an event caused by climate change?	Pearson Correlation	.146**	.085**	-.041*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.016

Figure 15 – Do you think that climate change exists? Which of the following statements expresses your opinion on this subject? * Harmed by climate change



4.10. GENERAL EVALUATION OF SURVEY RESULTS

The survey analysis conducted on the general public in Türkiye, representing the moral audience, reveals a strong consensus regarding perceptions of climate change and its associated security implications. The findings indicate that a significant majority of respondents across various demographic segments recognize the existence of climate change and express concern about its potential impacts. This widespread consensus underscores the urgency of addressing climate-related issues, as the public perceives climate change not only as an environmental challenge but also as a pressing security concern.

Despite the overall agreement on the importance of climate change, the analysis highlights only slight differences among various segments of the population. For instance, while educational attainment and agricultural involvement influence perceptions of Türkiye's effectiveness in combating climate change, the general sentiment remains that the government is not doing enough. This consistent viewpoint across different demographics suggests a collective expectation for more robust and effective climate policies, reflecting a unified call for action from the moral audience.

As we transition to the next phase of this research, the focus will shift to the analysis of interviews with members of parliament (MPs), representing the formal audience. This upcoming section will provide insights into how the formal audience, the MPs, perceive climate change and its security implications, as well as their perspectives on the adequacy of Türkiye's current climate strategies. By comparing the views of the moral audience with those of the formal audience, we can gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics between public sentiment and governmental action in addressing climate change.

5. INTERVIEW FINDINGS

This section delves into the perspectives of members of Türkiye's parliament on climate change, providing a detailed comparison with the views of the general public as captured in the survey. By focusing on the formal audience, represented by members of parliament (MPs), the analysis explores their perceptions of climate change as a security threat, their prioritization of issues, and their views on Türkiye's efforts to address climate change. To ensure a comprehensive understanding, similar questions were posed in both the interviews and the survey, allowing for a direct comparison between the moral audience (the general public) and the formal audience (MPs). Additionally, the interviews included more questions about the political dimensions of climate change, offering deeper insights into the political context and implications of climate action in Türkiye. This section begins by examining the similarities and differences between the moral and formal audiences, highlighting the shared concerns and unique perspectives of each group. It then presents an analysis of additional questions posed during the interviews, which explore Türkiye's potential leadership role in global climate initiatives, the possibility of climate change acting as a unifying force within Türkiye, and the perceptions of climate activists. Through this analysis, the section aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the political landscape surrounding climate change in Türkiye, as perceived by the formal audience.

5.1. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Like the moral audience, the MPs overwhelmingly acknowledge the existence of climate change and recognize it as a security threat. Out of the 20 MPs interviewed, only one expressed skepticism about the manmade nature of climate change, although this individual still acknowledged the existing crisis. This consensus among MPs aligns with the general public's recognition of climate change as a pressing issue, underscoring a shared understanding across both formal and moral audiences. The MPs, much like the general public, exhibit a high level of concern regarding the impacts of climate change, reflecting a broad awareness of its significance and urgency. They not only believe in the reality of climate change but also consider it a critical security issue that demands immediate attention and action. The shared concern across these audiences emphasizes the importance of addressing climate change comprehensively, as it is recognized as a significant challenge that transcends political and societal boundaries. This widespread consensus provides a strong foundation for developing and implementing effective climate policies that resonate with both the public and MPs.

In terms of prioritization of the referent objects of climate security, MPs, like the general public, emphasize the importance of human beings (anthropocentric) and the planet Earth (ecocentric) as the referent objects of climate security. The anthropocentric view focuses on the direct impacts of climate change on human well-being, such as health risks, water and food security, displacement, and resource scarcity, while the ecocentric perspective highlights the broader environmental implications, including biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. While the general public demonstrated a stronger ecocentric perspective, prioritizing the protection of ecosystems and the planet, the MPs exhibited a more balanced view. Nearly the same number of MPs prioritized anthro-

pocentric and ecocentric concerns, indicating a dual focus on both the immediate impacts of climate change on human populations and the broader environmental challenges. This balance suggests that MPs are attuned to the interconnectedness of human and environmental issues. The MPs' approaches align with the concept of climate security as a multidimensional issue that requires comprehensive strategies to protect both people and the planet. Additionally, like the general public, MPs mostly do not prioritize the state as the main referent object of climate security, reflecting a broader focus on human and ecological well-being over traditional state-centric security concerns.

The prioritization of the security implications of climate change among MPs mirrors trends seen in the general public. Like the public, MPs do not prioritize traditional state-centric security concerns such as potential "water wars." They also emphasize water and food security, reflecting shared concerns about these essential resources. Notably, a higher proportion of MPs prioritize extreme climate events, acknowledging the significant threat posed by severe weather conditions. Additionally, nearly all MPs prioritize issues related to agriculture, highlighting a strong awareness of the sector's vulnerability to climate change.

The political divide is evident in the MPs' views on Türkiye's efforts to combat climate change. Opposition party MPs are direct and critical, asserting that the current government is not doing enough to address the pressing challenges posed by climate change. They emphasize the need for more robust and comprehensive policies, arguing that the existing measures fall short of what is required to effectively mitigate climate risks and promote sustainable development. In contrast, MPs from the governing party acknowledge that Türkiye has initiated significant efforts to tackle climate change. However, they also concede that these efforts are not yet fully sufficient. This statement suggests that even within the governing party, there is recognition of the need for enhanced action and commitment to climate initiatives.

Importantly, the fact that MPs from the governing party also believe that more needs to be done signifies a critical finding: there is a consensus across party lines that additional measures are necessary to effectively address climate change. This shared understanding underscores the urgency of the climate crisis and the collective responsibility of all political factions to prioritize and enhance Türkiye's climate policies. The recognition that more comprehensive actions are required can serve as a foundation for potential collaboration among political parties.

5.2. ANALYSIS OF ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

This section examines additional questions related to the politics of climate change, which were exclusively posed during the interviews with Turkish MPs. These questions delve into the political dimensions of climate action, exploring several key areas. First, they assess Türkiye's potential to assume a leadership role in global climate initiatives, particularly focusing on its position as a leader for the developing world in global environmental politics. Second, the questions explore the potential for climate change to act as a unifying force within Türkiye, by softening internal political divides and fostering collaboration. Third, the questions investigate whether climate change is perceived as an apolitical issue that transcends traditional political boundaries, or if it remains inherently political. Lastly, the questions address perceptions of climate activists, examining whether MPs view them as genuine advocates or if there are concerns about potential hidden agendas, which could indicate counter-securitization dynamics. By analyzing the responses to

these additional questions, this section aims to provide deeper insights into the political context and implications of climate change in Türkiye, as perceived by the formal audience.

The first additional interview question explored the potential for Türkiye to become a leader in climate action, revealing a clear political divide between opposition and governing party MPs. Opposition MPs expressed skepticism about Türkiye's ability to assume a leadership role in global environmental politics, particularly under the current government. They argued that while Türkiye should indeed aspire to such leadership, the existing political and administrative framework lacks the necessary commitment to achieve this goal. This skepticism reflects broader criticisms from the opposition regarding the government's overall approach to climate policy, which they perceive as insufficiently ambitious and lacking in effective implementation.

MPs from the governing party were more optimistic about Türkiye's potential to lead in addressing climate change. They highlighted the significant steps already taken by the government to enhance Türkiye's environmental policies and international standing, asserting that these efforts provide a strong foundation for future leadership. Governing party MPs believe that with continued progress and commitment, Türkiye can indeed become a pivotal player in global climate initiatives, particularly as a representative and advocate for the developing world. They also emphasized the strong potential of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to play a key role in this leadership position, underscoring his influence and capacity to drive Türkiye's climate agenda forward on the international stage.

Despite the political divide, it is important to note that both opposition and governing party MPs agree on the fundamental notion that Türkiye should play a leadership role in global environmental politics for the developing world. This consensus underscores a shared recognition of Türkiye's strategic position and potential influence. The alignment on this broader vision suggests that, regardless of political differences, there is a common understanding of the importance of elevating Türkiye's role in international climate action, which could serve as a basis for future collaborative efforts across the political spectrum.

Regarding the potential for climate change to soften internal political relations, most MPs, regardless of party affiliation, expressed skepticism. This skepticism reflects a nuanced understanding of the complex political landscape within Türkiye. Many MPs recognize that while climate change could serve as a common issue that transcends political divides, the realities of domestic politics often complicate further collaboration and general softening of relations. Entrenched party loyalties and differing political agendas can hinder the ability to leverage climate change as a unifying issue for cooperation among political factions. However, it should be emphasized that nearly all MPs acknowledged the potential for cooperation on climate action. Nevertheless, they also expressed skepticism about whether such collaboration would translate into broader political normalization or lead to a softening of the polarized political climate in Türkiye.

The question of whether climate change is an apolitical issue elicited varied responses among MPs, reflecting the complexities of political discourse surrounding environmental issues. Governing party MPs unanimously agreed that climate change transcends politics, while approximately half of the opposition MPs shared this view. This alignment suggests that seeing climate change as an apolitical issue could foster potential collaboration among different political factions. If

climate change is perceived as a shared concern rather than a partisan issue, it may open avenues for cooperation and collective action across party lines, enhancing the effectiveness of climate policies.

However, it is essential to recognize that framing climate change as apolitical and technical also carries inherent risks. Such a stance can lead to the limitation of public political discussion and restrict necessary criticisms regarding decisions and implementations related to climate policy. Those who responded negatively to the notion of climate change as an apolitical issue emphasized that it is inherently political and should be addressed within the political realm. They contend that acknowledging the political dimensions of climate change is crucial for ensuring accountability and transparency in governmental actions. This perspective highlights the importance of maintaining robust political discourse around climate issues, as it allows for diverse viewpoints and critical engagement with policies that affect the environment and society at large.

Finally, while most MPs did not criticize climate activists, a few expressed concerns about potential hidden agendas. This cautious stance indicates that some MPs are concerned about the motivations behind certain activist groups. However, it is important to note that this perspective is not a dominant view among the MPs; the majority appreciate the critical role that climate activists play in raising awareness and pushing for necessary policy changes. This nuanced understanding indicates that while there is a general appreciation for the efforts of climate activists, there remains a level of caution among some MPs about the motivations behind their advocacy.

In conclusion, the analysis of additional questions regarding the politics of climate change among Turkish MPs reveals a complex interplay of perspectives that reflect both optimism and skepticism. While there is a shared recognition of Türkiye's potential to lead in global environmental initiatives, particularly for the developing world, opposition MPs express skepticism toward the current government's capacity to achieve this leadership. The discussions also highlight the skepticism for climate change to act as a unifying issue within Türkiye. Furthermore, the varied views on whether climate change is an apolitical issue underscore its potential to foster collaboration among different political factions. By framing climate change as a shared concern, there is an opportunity for MPs to work together across party lines, enhancing the effectiveness of climate policies. However, this perspective also carries risks, as viewing climate change as apolitical could lead to the limitation of democratic processes and public political discussion.

6. DISCUSSION: POTENTIAL FOR JUST SECURITIZATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN TÜRKIYE

This section explores the potential for implementing a just securitization framework for climate change in Türkiye, building on the findings from both the survey and interviews. The discussion evaluates how the concept of just securitization can be applied to address the urgent challenges posed by climate change while ensuring that responses are ethically sound and practically viable. The section assesses Türkiye's readiness for climate action and the feasibility of integrating just securitization into national strategies. The section concludes with policy recommendations that align with the principles of just securitization, and the findings of this research, offering a pathway for Türkiye to effectively address climate change while maintaining democratic processes.

6.1. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS IN TERMS OF JUST SECURITIZATION

To evaluate the potential for just securitization of climate change in Türkiye, it is essential to revisit Rita Floyd's criteria for just securitization:

Just Initiation of Securitization

- **Just Reason:** Rita Floyd emphasizes that an objective existential threat must be credible and evidenced by reliable data. Climate change unequivocally meets this criterion, as its impacts on ecosystems, human health, and socioeconomic stability are well-documented. This study reveals that both moral and formal audiences in Türkiye overwhelmingly recognize climate change as the most critical security threat, providing a strong foundation for just securitization. Their acknowledgment also strengthens the chances of successful securitization by reducing resistance to necessary measures.
- **Morally Legitimate Referent Object:** Floyd's framework prioritizes referent objects that address basic human needs, autonomy, and physical health. The findings indicate that human beings and the planet Earth are viewed as primary referent objects by both audiences, reflecting anthropocentric and ecocentric values. This focus moves away from state-centric approaches that risk militarization, ensuring alignment with ethical principles and reducing the likelihood of misuse. By framing climate action around these morally legitimate referent objects, Türkiye's securitization process aligns with JST while addressing societal priorities.
- **Right Intention, Proportionality, and Reasonable Chance of Success:** The sincerity of policymakers' intentions and the proportionality of their measures are critical to just securitization. This study shows a preference among Turkish audiences for collaborative and inclusive measures over coercive or militarized responses. Adopting such approaches not only minimizes harm but also increases the likelihood of achieving the just cause while adhering to ethical standards. Above all, as the research indicates, both the moral and formal audiences in Türkiye are ready for the just securitization of climate change. This readiness significantly enhances the chances of success. The integration of audience analysis into the framework of just securitization underscores its critical importance, demonstrating that when the audience is prepared/ready, the likelihood

of success in achieving just securitization is considerably higher.

Just Conduct

Securitization measures must directly address the existential threat while causing the least possible harm. Türkiye's policymakers have an opportunity to focus on protecting both human populations and ecosystems without resorting to measures like militarization. The findings also reflect a public sensitivity to the misuse of security measures, which aligns with JST's emphasis on proportionate and targeted actions. Ensuring that human rights are respected throughout the process will be essential for maintaining ethical integrity.

Just Termination of Securitization / Just Desecuritization

Floyd highlights the importance of ending securitization when the just cause no longer exists. While it is too early to foresee the conditions for desecuritization in the context of climate change, decision-makers must plan for a proactive and ethical transition. Equity, transparency, and measures such as fostering global cooperation and restoring community stability should guide future desecuritization efforts.

In summary, the findings demonstrate that if climate change is securitized in alignment with existing perceptions in Türkiye, it can meet the criteria for just securitization. Audience readiness, coupled with the prioritization of human and environmental referent objects, enhances the ethical and practical viability of securitization, and increases its chances of success. This alignment not only ensures moral legitimacy but also minimizes risks such as unnecessary militarization, restrictions on freedoms, or democratic backsliding.

6.2. TÜRKIYE'S POTENTIAL FOR CLIMATE ACTION AND JUST AND SUCCESSFUL SECURITIZATION

Rita Floyd's Just Securitization Theory emphasizes the ethical justness of the securitization process itself, prioritizing objective and moral validity over audience perceptions. However, this study argues that audience acceptance is equally critical for the successful implementation of securitization, particularly in addressing climate change. The findings reveal that both moral and formal audiences in Türkiye are not only aware of the urgency of climate change but also prepared to support significant climate action, creating a unique alignment for successful securitization.

Türkiye is well-positioned for impactful climate action due to the shared perspectives of its moral and formal audiences. Both groups identify climate change as an existential threat to human beings and the planet, underscoring the ethical basis for just securitization. Furthermore, there is a strong consensus that current efforts to combat climate change are insufficient, indicating a collective demand for more effective policies. This alignment provides policymakers with a unique opportunity to frame climate action in ways that fulfill the criteria of just securitization while gaining widespread public and institutional support.

The congruence between the general public (moral audience) and MPs (formal audience) strengthens the feasibility of securitizing climate change in Türkiye. The recognition of morally legitimate referent objects and the potential for proportionate, inclusive responses suggest that Türkiye is well-suited to meet the foundational criteria of JST. This readiness enhances the likelihood of successful securitization by reducing resistance and fostering cooperation.

Nonetheless, decision-makers must remain vigilant about the potential risks associated with secu-

ritization, such as the limitation of public discourse, the risks of emergency-driven policies, and the potential militarization of climate responses. While these dangers may not yet be prominent, they must be anticipated and mitigated to ensure a just and sustainable approach to climate action.

To fully harness the potential of just securitization, policymakers must foster inclusive dialogue and maintain transparency. By addressing the concerns and aspirations of both audiences, Türkiye can advance its climate agenda while minimizing risks. This balanced approach ensures that climate action aligns with ethical principles and secures long-term support for sustainable and equitable solutions.

6.3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TURKISH POLICYMAKERS

Shape Discourse in Line with Existing Climate Security Perceptions: Policymakers should emphasize climate change as a security threat to human beings and the planet, highlight water and food security, focus on agricultural impacts, and foster collaborative language, while being mindful of the potential risks of depoliticizing climate issues.

1) **Emphasize Climate Change as a Security Threat to Human Beings and the Planet:** Policymakers should frame climate change as a critical security threat to human beings and the planet. This narrative should be reinforced in public communications, speeches, and policy documents to align with the existing perceptions of both moral and formal audiences, thereby legitimizing the urgency of climate action.

2) **Highlight Water and Food Security:** In discussions and policy proposals, policymakers should emphasize the importance of water and food security as essential components of climate action. Given that these issues are prioritized by both audiences, framing them as critical areas of concern will resonate with public values and underscore the need for immediate and effective responses and public and parliamentary support for these responses. Furthermore, extreme climate events should be highlighted as a critical focal point for urgent action and policy development, given that they represent the most immediate and devastating consequences of climate change and that both audiences are already highly sensitive to their impacts.

3) **Focus on Agricultural Impacts:** Policymakers should address the specific impacts of climate change on agriculture, which is a significant concern for both moral and formal audiences. By prioritizing agricultural resilience in climate policies, they can demonstrate a commitment to protecting livelihoods and ensuring food security, thereby aligning with public expectations.

4) **Foster Collaborative Language:** Use inclusive language that encourages collaboration across political lines. By framing climate action as a shared responsibility, policymakers can create a sense of unity and collective purpose, which is essential for effective climate governance. However, be mindful of the potential risks of depoliticizing climate issues like the limitation of public political discourse.

Develop Policies in Line with Just Securitization Criteria: Policymakers should ensure that climate policies maintain balanced and sincere actions and focus on morally legitimate referent objects such as human beings and the planet Earth.

1) **Ensure Balanced and Sincere Responses:** Ensure that responses to climate change are balanced and sincere. Avoid the dangers of securitization, such as militarization or emergency measures that could undermine democratic processes.

2) **Focus on Morally Legitimate Referent Objects:** Align climate policies with the protection of morally legitimate referent objects, human beings and the planet Earth. This approach should prioritize the safeguarding of human health, livelihoods, ecosystem, and environmental sustainability, ensuring that policies resonate with public values and ethical standards.

Be Aware of the Dangers of Securitization: As 12.2% of the moral audience/general public is concerned, policymakers should be aware of the dangers of securitization and maintain open political discourse and avoid the militarization of climate issues, ensuring that responses remain collaborative and inclusive.

1) **Avoid Militarization:** Policymakers should be vigilant against the potential militarization of climate responses. Emphasizing collaborative and inclusive approaches that prioritize dialogue and cooperation can prevent the escalation of climate issues into military concerns, thereby maintaining public trust and democratic processes.

2) **Maintain Open Political Discourse:** It is crucial to ensure that the securitization of climate change does not lead to the limitation of public debate and criticism. Encouraging diverse viewpoints and critical engagement with climate policies is essential for accountability and transparency, allowing for robust political discourse that adheres to democratic norms.

3) **Avoid Emergency Mode:** Policymakers should resist the urge to enter an emergency mode that prioritizes rapid responses over thoughtful deliberation. Maintaining a balanced approach ensures that climate actions are well-considered and sustainable, avoiding hasty decisions that could undermine democratic values and long-term goals.

Political Collaboration and International Efforts: The study reveals significant opportunities for bipartisan cooperation within the country and a shared vision for Türkiye to play a leading role in international environmental politics.

1) **Foster Cooperation Across Political Parties:** Policymakers should actively pursue collaboration among political parties to address climate change. This approach is highly feasible, as the research indicates that both moral and formal audiences are motivated for climate action, and their demands transcend party affiliations. By leveraging this shared concern, policymakers can build bipartisan consensus and promote unified, effective climate policies.

2) **Enhance Türkiye's Role in Global Environmental Politics:** Türkiye should take on a more active and prominent role in global environmental politics. Both opposition and governing party members recognize the country's potential to act as a spokesperson and advocate for developing countries. By representing their interests, Türkiye can drive equitable and sustainable climate solutions, addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by these nations in international forums.

7. CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of climate security perceptions in Türkiye, focusing on the potential for a just securitization of climate change. Through a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews, the research captures the nuanced views of both the general public and members of parliament on climate change as a security issue.

The findings indicate a strong consensus among both audiences, acknowledging the existence and significance of climate change and viewing it as a critical security threat. Both groups prioritize human beings and the planet as the primary referent objects of climate security. The study highlights that while traditional state-centric security concerns are not prioritized, there is a significant emphasis on water and food security, as well as the impacts on agriculture.

The analysis also uncovers the ideas of Turkish MPs regarding the security impacts of climate change. Opposition party members are critical of the current government's actions, while governing party members acknowledge the need for enhanced efforts. Despite these differences, there is a consensus that more robust and effective climate policies are necessary, indicating a collective demand for action. This conclusion is further reinforced by survey results, which reveal that a majority of the Turkish public perceives the country's efforts to combat climate change as insufficient and expresses a clear expectation for more robust and effective actions.

The concept of just securitization emerges as a valuable framework for advancing Türkiye's climate agenda. By aligning climate policies with the ethical principles of just securitization, which emphasize the protection of morally legitimate referent objects and developing balanced responses, Türkiye can effectively address climate change while maintaining democratic processes and public trust.

Overall, the study contributes to a more informed and effective discourse on climate security in Türkiye. It offers valuable insights and policy recommendations for Turkish policymakers, emphasizing the importance of aligning discourse with the existing perceptions of the Turkish public and members of parliament, and ensuring that responses are balanced and sincere. By navigating the potential dangers of securitization and fostering inclusive dialogue, Türkiye is well-positioned to take significant climate action.

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