OECD
BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

Public Acceptability of Climate Change Mitigation Policies

Building evidence from large scale and cross-country surveys

OECD Economics Department
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Motivation

Policies to address climate change have been **difficult to implement**

Resistance to climate change mitigation action arises largely from:

- Legitimate concerns about **distributional and lifestyle impacts**
- **Misconceptions or ignorance** about the impacts of climate change and the effects of climate policies on the economy and the environment

Addressing concerns and misconceptions may be difficult, as they are influenced by personal attributes, country specificities and political views

The political economy and public acceptability needs to play an important role in the design of climate policies

Limitations of existing research

Scope is narrow: typically limited to a single (developed) country, focus on carbon pricing, and international surveys include only very general questions

- *For reviews of the surveys, see: Carattini et al. 2018, Drews and van den Bergh, 2016*

Evidence is mainly descriptive: cross-country evidence remains largely descriptive.

- The effectiveness of information provision and the willingness to update perceptions and beliefs following new information remains unclear

Comparability is limited: it is difficult to know if differences in people's perceptions and preferences are driven by individual survey characteristics (e.g. format and phrasing) or by true cross-country differences

Studies on willingness to support climate policies usually **do not offer an incentive relying on an actual payment and tangible actions**

The role of the OECD

The OECD is well-placed to conduct **large-scale surveys across multiple countries using a homogeneous methodology** that can identify such country-specific aspects

First wave: United States, France, Denmark, and India

Second wave: United Kingdom, Germany, and Spain

Project objectives

Overall goal: construct country-specific advice on policies to deal with the transition to a low-carbon economy

Mechanism: understand **people's perceptions about climate change and preferences** over available climate policies

Methodology: large-scale cross-country surveys with three different and randomized **information treatment groups** about the impacts of climate change and related policies

- ~2,000 respondents/country, representative of the population

Main research questions

Drivers of policy support: reveal how social attitudes, values, and perceptions drive support or opposition for climate policies

Cross-country comparisons: analyze how social preferences on climate change mitigation policies differ between countries

Effects of targeted information: understand how perceptions may change after receiving new information on the effects of policies/climate change (in a video format) and how it translates into beliefs and support

Information treatments

Treatment consists in watching 2-5min. videos either informing the participant about the **effects of the three main climate policies,** or underlying the **effects of climate change in their country**

~2,000 respondents

Random assignment

29.4%

Control group

No video information provided

23.5%

Climate impact video treatment

Local impacts of climate change

23.5%

Policy video treatment

1. *Ban on combustion-car engines*
2. *Carbon tax w/ cash transfers*
3. *Green infrastructure program*

23.5%

Climate impact + policy video treatment

+

Timeline

Milestones:	Jan-20	Fev-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21
Pilot survey in the U.S.	■						
Analyse results from the U.S. pilot and refine questionnaire.	■	■	■				
Full survey in the U.S.			■				
Pilot in France, and refine questionnaire				■			
Full survey in France				■			
Survey in Denmark				■			
Survey in India				■	■		
Analyse data and draft of a first paper					■		
Scoping note to attract additional funding					■		
Additional surveys (conditional on funding)					■	■	
Draft a policy note for CAE						■	
Draft the full paper with the analysis for US, France, Denmark and India.						■	■

Survey structure

Survey structure

1. Socio-demographics
2. Political views
3. Household composition and energy characteristics
4. Open-ended question about climate change considerations
5. Information treatments
6. Climate knowledge
7. Climate attitudes
8. Policy 1: Ban on sale of combustion-engine cars
9. Policy 2: Green infrastructure program
10. Policy 3: Carbon tax with cash transfers
11. Preferences for climate policies
12. Willingness to pay
13. International burden-sharing
14. Housing policies/Preferences for bans vs. incentives
15. Trust, perceptions of institutions, inequality, and the future
16. Feedback

Total number of questions: 110
Median survey completion time: 28'

Information video-treatment examples

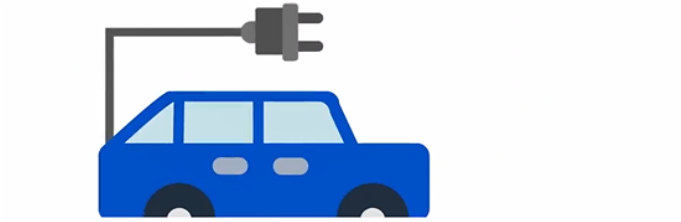
Local climate impact

With the mix of more hurricanes, rising sea levels, more heatwaves, and lower agricultural output

Green infrastructure program

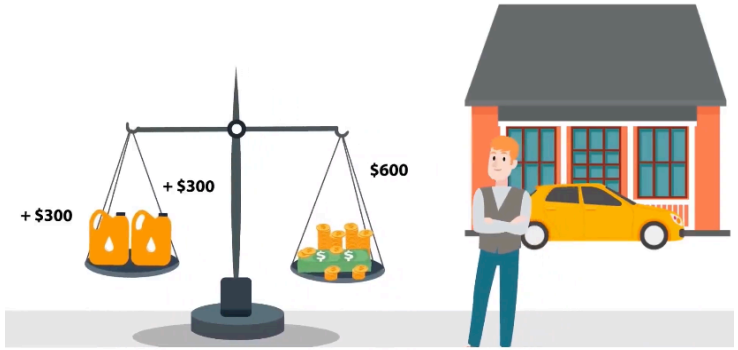
In the US, such a programme could create 4 million jobs in green sectors, such as public transportation, renewable power plants, buildings' insulation, or sustainable agriculture.

Ban on combustion-engine cars



so that only electric or hydrogen vehicles can be sold after 2030.

Carbon tax with cash transfers



To compensate people for the higher prices, the revenues of the carbon tax would be redistributed to all households, regardless of their income.

Climate knowledge examples: Understanding of the impacts of climate change

What part of climate change do you think is due to human activity?

None	A little	Some	A lot	Most

Which source of electric energy emits the most greenhouse gases to provide power for a house?

Please rank the items from 1 (most) to 3 (least) (by clicking and dragging the items).

Gas-fired power plant

Nuclear power plant

Coal-fired power station

Climate attitudes examples: From climate risks to climate policies

If we decide to halt climate change through ambitious policies, what would be the effects on the U.S economy and employment?

Very negative effects	Somewhat negative effects	No noticeable effects	Somewhat positive effects	Very positive effects

How important are the factors below in order for you to adopt a sustainable lifestyle (i.e. limit driving, flying, and consumption, cycle more, etc.)?

	Not at all	A little	Moderately	A lot	A great deal
Ambitious climate policies	○	○	○	○	○
Having enough financial support	○	○	○	○	○
People around you also changing their behavior	○	○	○	○	○
The most well off also changing their behavior	○	○	○	○	○

Policy preferences examples

Do you support or oppose a ban on combustion-engine cars where alternatives such as public transports are made available to people?

Strongly oppose	Somewhat oppose	Neither support nor oppose	Somewhat support	Strongly support

What sources of funding do you find appropriate for public investments in green infrastructure? (Multiple answers are possible)

- Additional public debt
- Increase in sales taxes
- Increase in taxes on the wealthiest
- Reduction in social spending
- Reduction in military spending

WTP example

By taking this survey, you are automatically entered into a lottery to win $100. In a few days you will know whether you have been selected in the lottery. The payment will be made to you in the same way as your compensation for this survey, so no further action is required on your part.

You can also donate a part of this additional compensation (should you be selected in the lottery) to a reforestation project through the charity The Gold Standard. This charity has already proven effective to reduce 151 million tons of CO2 to fight climate change and has been carefully selected by our team. The Gold Standard is highly transparent and ensures that its projects feature the highest levels of environmental integrity and contribute to sustainable development.

Should you win the lottery, please enter your donation amount using the slider below:

0 20 40 60 80 100

Donation amount (in U.S. dollars)

U.S. Pilot

U.S. Pilot: key results

Sample: 582 respondents, not representative along the education, ethnicity/race, vote and occupation dimensions

Causes of climate change: a majority (67%) attributes climate change to human activity

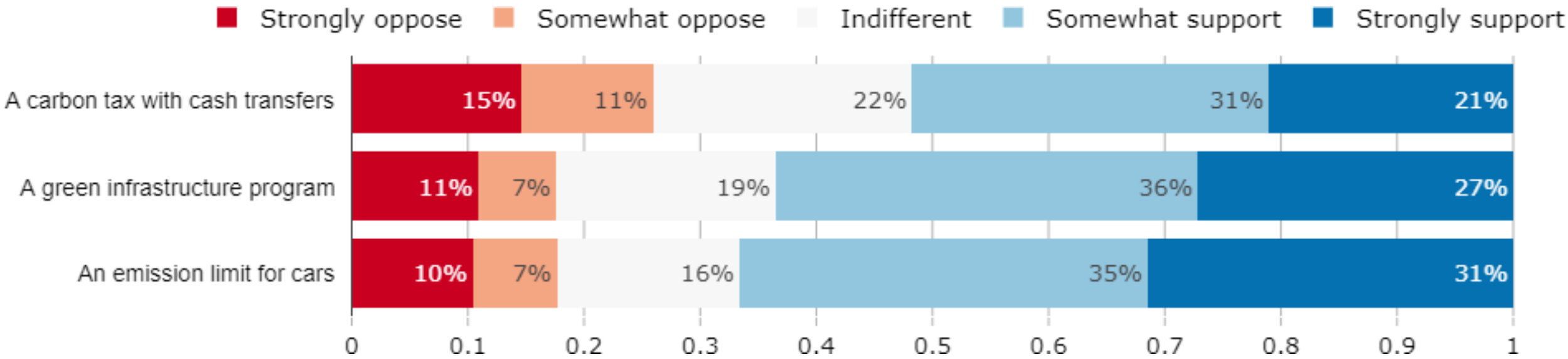
Support for policies: A majority supports each climate policy proposed, with the except of carbon taxes

- **Preferred use of carbon tax revenues**: earmarking to green investments
- **Least-favored use of revenues**: compensating affected firms

Effectiveness to reduce GHG emissions: carbon tax with cash transfers is seen as the least cost-effective policy to reduce emissions (57% believe it's cost-effective) followed by a green infrastructure program (60%) and an emission limit for cars (64%)

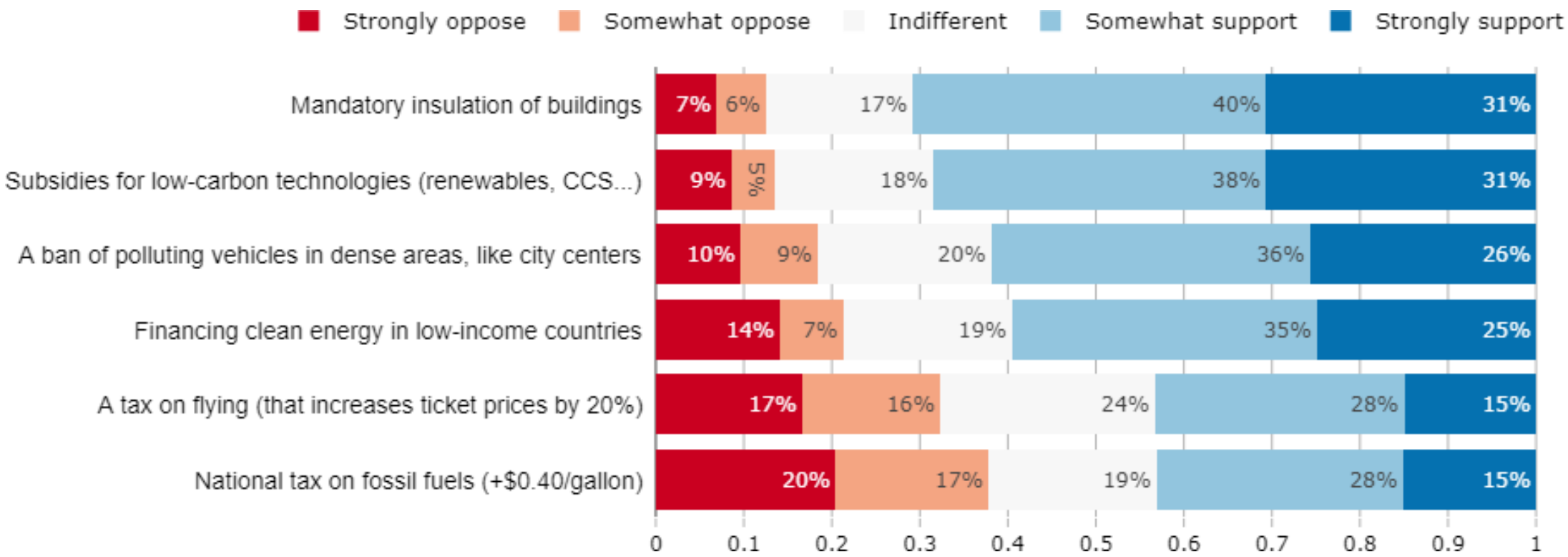
Effect of information treatments: targeted and clear information campaigns on the mechanisms of carbon taxes can significantly increase support for this type of policy

Support for main policies



Notes: 582 respondents. Representative along the gender, age, income, region and rural/urban dimensions but not representative along the education, ethnicity/race, vote and occupation dimensions. Weighted along the gender, income, region, living in a metropolitan area, age, and race dimensions

Support for different climate policies



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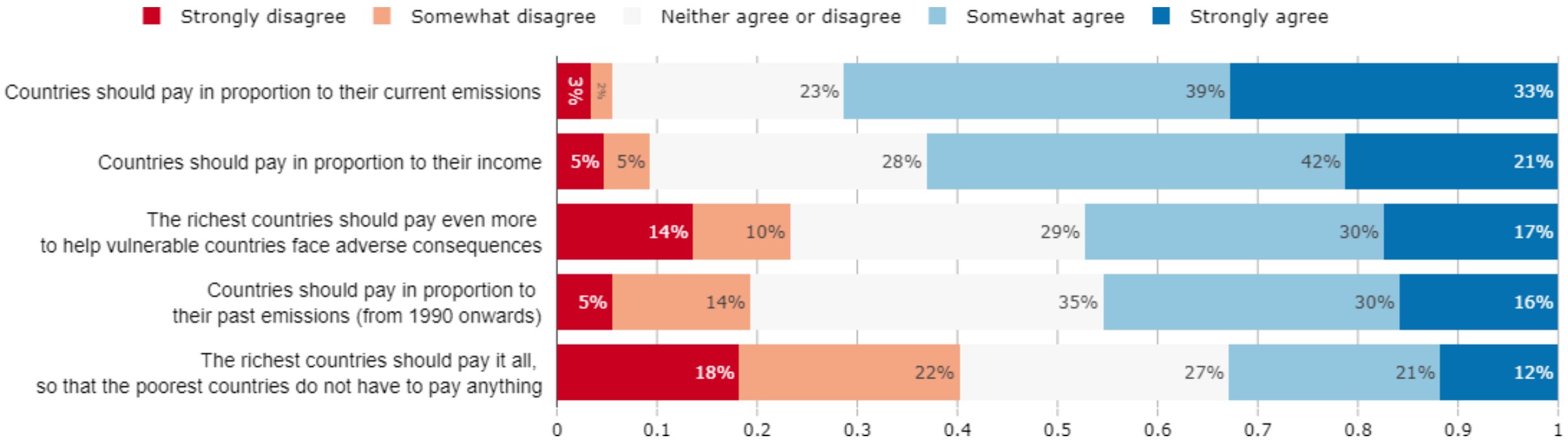
How should countries bear the costs of fighting climate change?



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Thank you

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Related Literature

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