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# Introduction

Climate policies encounter various political obstacles that make them difficult to pass. Indeed, those policies generally imply a profound change in our habits or standard of living. Moreover, they often face a strong opposition due to their distributional impacts – both real and perceived – at the national and international levels, between and within socio-economic groups.. Therefore, climate policies can only succeed if they meet public acceptability. Therefore, have to address not only legitimate concerns about distributional and lifestyle impacts, but their design should also account for people’s perceptions of climate change and the effects of climate policies on the economy and the environment, including potential misperceptions.

With this project, our purpose is to provide country-specific advice on policies that aim to decarbonize the economy. Our goal is to understand people’s perceptions about climate change and preferences over climate policies. Using large-scale surveys, we are able to answer several questions. How values and perceptions drive support or opposition for climate policies across socio-economic groups? How attitudes on climate change and climate policies differ between countries? How perceptions are affected by new information on the effects of policies or climate change and how it translates into policy support?

## Related Literature

Our work adds to a growing literature that has studied how support for different climate policies depends on their respective features. The key contributions of our study to this literature is to offer comparable cross-country evidence covering at the same time OECD and non-OECD countries. Previous work has mostly focused on single countries, making it less clear how generalizable the evidence is for other countries. This study aims to identify country-specific preferences for matters such as policy design, compensation mechanisms or level of ambition, as well as the effect of information treatments on them. Contrary to most studies, our survey also measures the effect of information on willingness to pay or take action through real stakes question, including an incentive-compatible payment (in the form of a lottery). A lot of attention has been drawn on carbon pricing, while few studies focus on other climate policies, this work looks to fill this gap.

. The literature usually distinguishes “pull” measures, that are noncoercive and reward pro-environmental behaviors (e.g., subsidies), from “push” measures, that are coercive and punish environmentally unfriendly behaviors (e.g., taxes). For instance, when asked directly people usually support subsidies over taxes Cherry et al. (2012); de Groot and Schuitema (2012); Kallbekken and Aasen (2010); Steg et al. (2006) find push measures to be more acceptable if revenues are allocated to energy-related measures, while the funding of pull measures does not affect their acceptability. However, Fischer et al. (2011) find that if people think other people are selfish and consumption-oriented, only strict regulations can achieve widespread behavioral change while voluntary behavioral changes are insufficient. Jagers and Hammar (2009) study the Swedish carbon tax study and insist on the role of perceived costs. They show that people tend to overestimate the costs of taxes while underestimating the costs of subsidies or investments in public transport. More importantly, people often reject a policy because they perceive it as ineffective. This is particularly the case for carbon tax as noted by Hsu et al. (2008) in North America or Baranzini and Carattini (2017) in Switzerland. Fairness concerns are also at play: Brannlund and Persson (2012) show that Swedish people preferr a progressive instrument rather than a regressive one. Regarding preferences for international burden-sharing, Gampfer (2014) insists on the role of fairness criteria such as vulnerability, historical responsibility or ability to pay.

Apart from the policy's characteristics, people's own views are also a main driver of the support: in particular, left-wing or trustful people are consistently found to be more climate friendly (Leiserowitz et al., 2013; Fairbrother et al., 2021). explainsby underlyingDrews and van den Bergh (2016) underline the role of socioeconomic and psychological factors as shaping those views. Clearly, the perception of the negative consequences of climate change is an important factor as well, and informing people about them is effective to increase support(DeBono et al. 2012). However, Krosnick et al. (2006) point out that increasing knowledge about climate change will translate into a broader support for policiesonly if beliefs about the existence of climate change and human responsibility and positive attitudes towards global warming are in place. According to Stoutenborough and Vedlitz (2014), it is also important to distinguish between the subjective perception of knowledge and objectively assessed scientific knowledge of climate change, as they are often unrelated and therefore their levels have different implications for policy support.

Few studies have focused on cross-country comparisons, yet it is worth mentioning some of them. Moreover, various methodologies have been employed, ranging from representative survey (Ipsos, 2020; Stokes et al. 2015; Umit and Schaffer, 2020), to collected voluntary responses (UNDP, 2021), and including semi-representative surveys using Facebook data (Leiserowitz et al., 2021). Questions are generally of general order and do not allow to specifically understand support for specific policies. However, some common trends show that there is a high concern for climate change across the world, despite major variations between countries, and that knowledge about climate change improves over time.

# Methodology

## Survey design - Data collection

Our data come from surveys we administered in 3 countries since February 2020 and that collectively cover more than 6,000 respondents. The countries already covered are the United States, France, and Denmark. Surveys are still ongoing and will cover 17 more countries for a final sample of more than 40,000 respondents (2,000 respondents per country). The additional countries that we will cover are Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Spain, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom (see Figure XXX). Those 20 countries cover around three quarters of global CO2 emissions (Crippa et al., 2020).

Those kind of companies have a large pool of survey respondents and typically work with consulting firms for “consumer surveys”. Each respondent who completes the survey is rewarded . Compensations can either be cash or discount, which allow to cover respondents in the higher percentiles. To avoid selection bias, when the link to the survey is sent to participant, neither the topic nor the organization that has sent it are mentioned. On the first page of the survey, we then inform the respondents that this is an academic research survey, destined solely for research purposes, and run by non-partisan researchers.

## Survey design - Survey overview

The full questionnaires are available in Appendix XX, with link to web interfaces of each of them. The survey was translated into the different official languages of each country by native speakers. It contains several random informational branches and is split in blocks. We summarize the content of the more important ones in this section.

**Background socio-economic questions:** We collect information on respondents' gender, age, income, wealth, place of residence, highest level of education achieved, ethnicity, marital status, number of children, employment status, sector of occupation, and political orientation among others. For the latter, we explore several dimensions. First, we ask respondents if themselves or relatives are environmentalists. Then, we ask them for whom they voted in the last main national election. Finally, respondents are asked to classify themselves in terms of their views on economic policy, along a spectrum ranging either from “very liberal” or “very left”, to “very conservative” or “very right.”

**Household energy characteristics:** In addition to the primary socio-economics characteristics, we also collect information on energy characteristics. This blocks allows us to estimate carbon emissions and consuming behaviors of the households, and therefore the effects of different climate policies on the households' consumption and behaviors. Questions relate to gas and heating expenditures, transportation and heating habits, as well as accommodation insulation and public transport availability. This block is followed by an open-ended question on the respondents' main considerations regarding climate change.

**Informational Treatment:** Respondents are then randomly split into four different groups, who are either shown one of two instructional videos, both videos, or neither. The “Climate” video focuses on explaining the impacts of climate change in the respondent's country and provides results from the current scientific consensus about climate change. The “Policy” video contains information about our three main climate policies, namely a ban of combustion engine cars by 2030, a green infrastructure investment program, and a carbon tax with cash transfers. Both videos are short (2-5 minutes), pedagogical and provide information in a neutral manner. The goal of this informational treatment is to understand how perceptions may change after receiving new information and how it translates into policy support.

**Knowledge:** In this block, we assess the respondent's knowledge about climate change. In particular, questions refer to the anthropogenic dimension of climate change, the dynamics of climate change, the elements that contribute to climate change, and the possible consequences of climate change. Moreover, respondents are asked to relatively rank items in terms of greenhouse gases emissions for different topics, including food, mode of transportation, source of electric energy, and regional emissions (either total or per capita).

**Attitudes and Risks:** Here, we ask respondents about their views on what should be done to stop climate change, on the perception of climate change and climate policies on themselves and others, and what they are really to do in order to stop climate change as well as the factors that shape this.

**Preferences for climate policies:** First, we have a set of detailed questions on each of our three main policies. Questions tackle issues such as the effects of the policy, the perceived distributional impacts (“Who will win or lose”), the fairness, as well as the respondent's support for the policy. Respondents are then asked questions about their support for different climate policies (e.g., a tax on flying, subsidies for low-carbon technologies) and their support for a carbon tax depending on the revenue recycling (e.g., equal cash transfers to all households, cash transfers to the poorest households).

**Willingness to Pay and real stake questions:** In this block we ask respondents how much they are willing to pay annually to limit global warming to safe levels. The question is in the form of a yes or no question and the amount we ask them to pay is randomize (with possible values ranging from the equivalent of $10 to the equivalent of $1,000). Moreover, we also inform respondents that in entering the survey they were automatically enrolled in a lottery to win the equivalent of $100. We then ask them how much of this prize they are willing to forfeit and donate to a charity that acts to reduce global greenhouse gases emissions through reforestation. This allows us to extract a willingness to pay for limiting climate change.

**International burden-sharing:** This block contains questions about international climate policies and how countries should split the burden of limiting climate change. Questions relates to the intervention of the respondent's national government depending on what other countries do, as well as how countries should bear the costs of fighting climate change depending on their income or emissions. Finally, we ask respondents if they support several international climate policies.

**Housing and cattle products:** In this section, which appears only in relevant countries, we measure preferences for ban policies through the lens of mandatory insulation and consumption of cattle products.

**Final questions:** Eventually, we ask people about their level of trust in other people and in the government, as well as about their views on inequality.

**Petition:** At the very end of the survey, respondents are asked if they are willing to sign a petition to “stand up for real climate action.” We inform them that we will send this petition to the highest governmental authority (either President or Prime Minister office).

Map

Description automatically generated

Figure XXX. Countries coverage of the survey



Figure XXX. Comparison of population and sample characteristics



Figure XXX. Survey Flow

# References

Crippa, M., Guizzardi, D., Muntean, M., Schaaf, E., Solazzo, E., Monforti-Ferrario, F., Olivier, J. and Vignati, E., “Fossil CO2 emissions of all world countries - 2020 Report”, EUR 30358 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, ISBN 978-92-76-21515-8, doi:10.2760/143674, JRC121460.