

Challenges of Sustainable Development in International Public Opinion

Wyzwania zrównoważonego rozwoju w międzynarodowej opinii społecznej

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Abstract

The article examines the respondents' opinions on issues related to sustainable development and environmental protection. The analysis is based on the data from the International Social Survey Program, Environment 2022, which covers 14 countries (mainly in Europe and Asia). The findings show that health care, economy and the natural environment are the most important issues for the respondents. Environmental problems that are most frequently selected include: climate change, air pollution, chemicals and pesticides, and using up natural resources. The view that economic growth is necessary to protect the natural environment is relatively common (although those who disagree with this opinion also constitute a large group).

Key words: sustainable development, environment, International Social Survey Program, public opinion

Słowa kluczowe: rozwój zrównoważony, środowisko naturalne, International Social Survey Program, opinia społeczna

Introduction

Sustainable development is based on *three pillars*: society, economy and the environment, which need to be considered together. More in-depth analyses take into account also technical, legal and political dimension of sustainable development (Pawłowski, 2011). Nevertheless, the main idea is the same – people, the environment and the economy are all interrelated. A society that struggles with anxieties, poverty and diseases will not develop in the long run: social welfare and economic prosperity complement each other, and they both depend on a healthy biosphere. In June 1992, representatives of 179 countries gathered together in Rio de Janeiro to participate in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, commonly known as the Rio Earth Summit. One of the main documents signed during this conference was an action plan called Agenda 21, which set out the first steps towards sustainable development at local, national and international levels. The signatories declared to continue their actions regarding, among others, the social dimension (e.g.; combating poverty, promoting sustainable urban planning, strengthening the role of local governments and non-governmental organizations) and the environmental dimension (e.g.; protecting and managing ocean resources, combating deforestation). The Rio Summit was followed by other meetings that took place in 2002 and 2012, among others. In 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit. The Agenda includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (Strange, Bayley, 2008).

To achieve the sustainable development goals, it is necessary to take actions that require making appropriate decisions at various levels of social and economic structure. These decisions are conditioned by many factors. One of these factors that is of great importance is the social component. On the one hand, the decisions that are taken concern and respond to real social needs and problems, and on the other hand, they are made in a specific social

and political context. It is impossible to solve any social problem if there is no public consent to undertake some actions aiming at solving this problem, but also the decision-makers will not be willing to take actions if these will have negative political consequences for them. Therefore, public opinion plays an important role in implementing the sustainable development goals, as actions that do not resonate with the public will not bring the expected results. Public opinion polls are crucial at every level (macro, meso and micro-social) of implementing the sustainable development goals.

Taking a broader perspective, it can be noted that one purpose of public opinion polls (in democratic societies) is to inform public policy making. Opinion polls provide a mechanism for succinctly presenting the views of the public to government leaders who make decisions that will affect society. Leaders often monitor the public pulse when making policy decisions, especially those decisions that have political implications (Paletz et al., 2012).

Public opinion polls on the sustainable development goals have been conducted both by individual researchers and by institutions (e.g., recently by Bain et al., 2019; IPSOS, 2021). These polls fit in with the earlier and much more extensive research on the public's views on the natural environment and ecological attitudes. As a serious scientific activity, research on environmental attitudes dates back to the 1970s. The first studies focused on policies that aimed at measuring the public's environmental concern and support for environmental policies formulated and implemented in most European countries in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Initially, sociologists were interested mainly in the socio-demographic background and political views of *ecologists*. The 80s and early 90s saw a significant development of the research on attitudes towards the natural environment. As global environmental problems started to grow, researchers focused on the multidimensional nature of social attitudes, the role of *environmental knowledge*, conditions for changing behaviors in order to protect the environment, and the public's consent to specific environmental policies. The key issue was a discrepancy between people's declared concern for the environment and their reluctance to become more engaged in pro-ecological behaviors (Rüdiger, 2001).

The Sustainable Development Goals include: (1) ending poverty in all its forms everywhere, (2) ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages, (3) ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning, (4) reducing inequality within and among countries, (5) making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, (6) restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably managing forests, combating desertification, and halting and reversing land degradation and biodiversity loss, (7) promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, and (8) providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (Huck, 2022).

The aim of this article is to answer the following research questions: (1) what is (in the public opinion) the most important issue in their country today? (2) what is (in the public opinion) the most important environmental problem in their country today? (3) to what extent do these views differ from country to country? (4) what is the public opinion on the relationship between economic growth and protection of the environment? (5) to what extent do these opinions differ from country to country?

Methodology

The article is based on the most recent data from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) – Environment. The data comes from the surveys conducted between 2019 and 2021 and was made available in the fall of 2022. The ISSP is an international comparative research project carried out annually in many countries worldwide. The main idea of the project is to measure variables covering a broad scope of social life, on a regular basis. The ISSP thematic modules are repeated every few years, which enables to observe changes in the selected phenomena. One of the ISSP modules is the ISSP Environment, which was implemented in the years: 1993, 2000, 2010, and between 2019 and 2021 (with most surveys conducted in 2020 and 2021).

14 countries took part in the current edition of the ISSP Environment. These were: Austria, Taiwan, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Japan, New Zealand, Philippines, Russia, Slovenia, Switzerland, and Thailand (listed in the order of the data set). In total, the research sample consisted of 21,718 respondents. Table 1 shows sample sizes for each country taking into account the year of the survey. The following research methods and techniques were used to collect the data: face-to-face interview: computer-assisted (CAPI / CAMI), telephone interview, self-administered questionnaire: paper, self-administered questionnaire: web-based (CAWI), web-based interview, face-to-face interview: paper-and-pencil (PAPI). The obtained sample is a multi-stage random sample. Most respondents were over 18 years old, except for those in Denmark (who were 18 and over 18) and Finland (over 15) (ISSP, 2022).

A question may be asked about what population is represented in the survey results. Certainly, the sample is not representative of the worldwide population, as the respondents come only from Europe and Asia. This is a methodological problem. That is why, despite the random selection of samples, we use the terminology referring to the structure of particular samples rather than to the population.

Table 1. Sample of ISSP Environment 2019-2021 by country and year of research

Country		2019	2020	2021	Total
Austria	n	0	0	1261	1261
	%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Taiwan	n	0	1820	2	1822
	%	0.0%	99.9%	0.1%	100.0%
Denmark	n	0	1198	0	1198
	%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Finland	n	0	1137	0	1137
	%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Germany	n	0	0	1702	1702
	%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Hungary	n	1001	0	0	1001
	%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Iceland	n	0	308	842	1150
	%	0.0%	26.8%	73.2%	100.0%
Japan	n	0	1491	0	1491
	%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
New Zealand	n	0	0	993	993
	%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Philippines	n	0	0	1500	1500
	%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Russia	n	0	0	1583	1583
	%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Slovenia	n	0	966	136	1102
	%	0.0%	87.7%	12.3%	100.0%
Switzerland	n	0	4280	0	4280
	%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Thailand	n	0	0	1498	1498
	%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total	n	1001	11200	9517	21718
	%	4.6%	51.6%	43.8%	100.0%

Results

The issues that respondents were asked about included: health care, education, environment, crime, terrorism, poverty, and immigration (*which of these issues is the most important for your country today?*). They are related to the sustainable development goals mentioned in the introduction.

Overall, health care topped the list of the most important issues, with over 37% responses in total (Table 2). It was most often indicated by inhabitants of Hungary, Slovenia, Austria and Iceland (approx. 48-55%), as well as in Germany and the Philippines (approx. 40-42%). Even in those countries where health care was not considered to be a very important issue (Taiwan, Denmark and Japan), it was still selected by no fewer than 25% of respondents. The second most important issue for respondents was economy (approx. 20% in total). Economy was most often selected by inhabitants of Japan, Thailand and Finland (approx. 36-40%) and the least often by those living in Switzerland, Germany and Hungary (approx. 8-10%). Third in importance was the environment (approx. 13% in total). The environment was most often ranked as the most important issue in Switzerland (approx. 26%), Denmark and Germany (approx. 21-22%). Residents of the Philippines, Russia and Thailand, but also those living in Hungary and Slovenia were the least likely to rank environment as the most important issue (less than 2% and approx. 2.7% respectively). Approx. 12% of respondents chose education as the most important issue. These were most often residents of Taiwan and the Philippines (approx. 27%) and the least often – residents of Slovenia (2.7%), Finland (5.3%), and Austria, Thailand and Russia (approx. 7-8%). 9.5% of respondents saw poverty as the most worrying or pathological issue. This problem was selected as the most important one by approx. 22-23% of residents in Russia and Thailand and 13-17% of residents in Hungary, New Zealand, Slovenia and the Philippines. Inhabitants of Taiwan, Denmark and Switzerland were the least likely to view poverty as the most worrying issue (approx. 2-5%). Another social issue was immigration, which was viewed as top concern by 5% of respondents – most often in Denmark and Switzerland (approx. 10%), and the least often in Taiwan, the Philippines and Thailand (0.1-0.3%). Crime was rated as the most important issue by 2.5% of respondents in total, with inhabitants of Taiwan most likely to rank it as the top issue (approx. 8%), and inhabitants of Finland, Iceland and Thailand being the least likely to choose it (0.2-0.5%). Terrorism was at the bottom of the list with only 0.7% responses in total. It was selected relatively frequently by respondents in Russia (approx. 2%).

Table 2. Opinions on most important issue today by country

Country		Health care	Education	Crime	Environment	Immigration	Economy	Terrorism	Poverty	None of these
Austria	n	603	84	49	122	75	228	12	68	9
	%	48.2%	6.7%	3.9%	9.8%	6.0%	18.2%	1.0%	5.4%	0.7%
Taiwan	n	453	455	144	200	6	417	19	42	19
	%	25.8%	25.9%	8.2%	11.4%	0.3%	23.8%	1.1%	2.4%	1.1%
Denmark	n	306	127	26	251	116	279	8	34	12
	%	26.4%	11.0%	2.2%	21.7%	10.0%	24.1%	0.7%	2.9%	1.0%
Finland	n	411	59	5	117	51	403	1	46	14
	%	37.1%	5.3%	0.5%	10.6%	4.6%	36.4%	0.1%	4.2%	1.3%
Germany	n	650	218	28	337	100	167	14	72	19
	%	40.5%	13.6%	1.7%	21.0%	6.2%	10.4%	0.9%	4.5%	1.2%
Hungary	n	542	87	35	26	63	99	9	129	3
	%	54.6%	8.8%	3.5%	2.6%	6.3%	10.0%	0.9%	13.0%	0.3%
Iceland	n	595	81	6	124	20	181	0	86	9
	%	54.0%	7.4%	0.5%	11.3%	1.8%	16.4%	0.0%	7.8%	0.8%
Japan	n	372	138	48	153	18	593	14	97	16
	%	25.7%	9.5%	3.3%	10.6%	1.2%	40.9%	1.0%	6.7%	1.1%
New Zealand	n	289	100	28	138	32	224	1	138	11
	%	30.1%	10.4%	2.9%	14.4%	3.3%	23.3%	0.1%	14.4%	1.1%
Philippines	n	624	384	23	20	2	174	4	256	5
	%	41.8%	25.7%	1.5%	1.3%	0.1%	11.7%	0.3%	17.2%	0.3%
Russia	n	588	123	55	26	56	307	28	361	11
	%	37.8%	7.9%	3.5%	1.7%	3.6%	19.7%	1.8%	23.2%	0.7%
Slovenia	n	538	29	31	29	51	195	3	142	48
	%	50.5%	2.7%	2.9%	2.7%	4.8%	18.3%	0.3%	13.3%	4.5%
Switzerland	n	1455	474	48	1093	429	338	18	210	81
	%	35.1%	11.4%	1.2%	26.4%	10.3%	8.2%	0.4%	5.1%	2.0%
Thailand	n	413	118	3	24	1	584	11	316	1
	%	28.1%	8.0%	0.2%	1.6%	0.1%	39.7%	0.7%	21.5%	0.1%
Total	n	7839	2477	529	2660	1020	4189	142	1997	258
	%	37.1%	11.7%	2.5%	12.6%	4.8%	19.8%	0.7%	9.5%	1.2%

Respondents were also asked about the most important environmental problem in their country (as a whole). They were most likely to choose (total data for all countries participating in the survey): climate change (approx. 30%) and air pollution (approx. 17%), slightly less likely – chemicals and pesticides, and using up natural resources (approx. 10%), domestic waste disposal (approx. 9%), and water pollution (approx. 7%) (Table 3).

Climate change as the top environmental problem was selected most often in Japan, Iceland, Finland and Germany (approx. 43-49%) and slightly less often – by inhabitants of Switzerland, Austria and Denmark (approx. 33-38%). Russians were the least likely to rank climate change as the top environmental problem (approx. 7%). Inhabitants of Taiwan (approx. 50%), as well as respondents from Thailand (approx. 37%) and the Philippines and Russia (approx. 23%) were most likely to select air pollution as the key environmental problem in their country whereas residents of New Zealand, the Philippines, Finland and Switzerland were the least likely to consider this issue as the most important environmental problem in their country (approx. 5-8%). Chemicals and pesticides were viewed as the most important environmental problem by inhabitants of Switzerland, Denmark, Slovenia and Thailand (approx. 13-19%), while the problems related to depletion of natural resources were most often reported by inhabitants of Iceland, Switzerland, Finland and Germany (approx. 12-16%). Residents of the Philippines, Russia, Slovenia and Thailand were the most likely to view domestic waste disposal as the top environmental problem (approx. 16-20%). Water pollution was most often mentioned by inhabitants of New Zealand (approx. 20%), as well as in Slovenia, Denmark and Finland (approx. 13-15%).

Another two problems concerned the public's opinion on the relation between economic growth and environmental protection. Respondents were asked two questions: *How much do you agree or disagree with the statement that in order to protect the environment your country needs economic growth?* and *How much do you agree or disagree with the statement that economic growth always harms the environment?* These two related questions reflect the complexity of the analyzed issues.

Table 3. Opinions on most important environmental problem today by country

		Air pollution	Chemicals and pesticides	Water shortage	Water pollution	Nuclear waste	Domestic waste disposal	Climate change	Genetically modified foods	Using up our natural resources	None of these
Austria	n	117	124	57	80	76	85	473	93	123	8
	%	9.5%	10.0%	4.6%	6.5%	6.1%	6.9%	38.3%	7.5%	10.0%	0.6%
Taiwan	n	859	101	60	129	81	136	185	47	99	11
	%	50.3%	5.9%	3.5%	7.6%	4.7%	8.0%	10.8%	2.8%	5.8%	0.6%
Denmark	n	97	164	39	157	13	59	417	46	122	13
	%	8.6%	14.6%	3.5%	13.9%	1.2%	5.2%	37.0%	4.1%	10.8%	1.2%
Finland	n	78	80	5	147	37	46	500	32	142	26
	%	7.1%	7.3%	0.5%	13.4%	3.4%	4.2%	45.7%	2.9%	13.0%	2.4%
Germany	n	111	162	134	72	107	45	697	82	196	16
	%	6.8%	10.0%	8.3%	4.4%	6.6%	2.8%	43.0%	5.1%	12.1%	1.0%
Hungary	n	181	126	61	89	57	82	262	55	66	9
	%	18.3%	12.8%	6.2%	9.0%	5.8%	8.3%	26.5%	5.6%	6.7%	0.9%
Iceland	n	160	69	2	19	10	145	468	24	151	38
	%	14.7%	6.4%	0.2%	1.7%	0.9%	13.4%	43.1%	2.2%	13.9%	3.5%
Japan	n	81	35	11	29	369	97	717	25	70	18
	%	5.6%	2.4%	0.8%	2.0%	25.4%	6.7%	49.4%	1.7%	4.8%	1.2%
New Zealand	n	48	66	131	193	10	123	261	24	66	13
	%	5.1%	7.1%	14.0%	20.6%	1.1%	13.2%	27.9%	2.6%	7.1%	1.4%
Philippines	n	339	52	72	66	59	289	411	15	151	13
	%	23.1%	3.5%	4.9%	4.5%	4.0%	19.7%	28.0%	1.0%	10.3%	0.9%
Russia	n	360	123	30	180	115	287	103	155	169	27
	%	23.2%	7.9%	1.9%	11.6%	7.4%	18.5%	6.6%	10.0%	10.9%	1.7%
Slovenia	n	192	143	14	160	31	174	168	97	76	15
	%	17.9%	13.4%	1.3%	15.0%	2.9%	16.3%	15.7%	9.1%	7.1%	1.4%
Switzerland	n	341	779	116	234	288	109	1362	204	659	66
	%	8.2%	18.7%	2.8%	5.6%	6.9%	2.6%	32.8%	4.9%	15.8%	1.6%
Thailand	n	541	190	140	17	5	231	150	5	97	80
	%	37.2%	13.0%	9.6%	1.2%	0.3%	15.9%	10.3%	0.3%	6.7%	5.5%
Total	n	3505	2214	872	1572	1258	1908	6174	904	2187	353
	%	16.7%	10.6%	4.2%	7.5%	6.0%	9.1%	29.5%	4.3%	10.4%	1.7%

Table 4. Opinions on the statement: *in order to protect the environment of the country needs economic growth* by country

		Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly
Austria	n	71	321	367	315	115
	%	6.0%	27.0%	30.9%	26.5%	9.7%
Taiwan	n	67	954	132	570	27
	%	3.8%	54.5%	7.5%	32.6%	1.5%
Denmark	n	136	333	258	169	103
	%	13.6%	33.3%	25.8%	16.9%	10.3%
Finland	n	66	273	279	301	95
	%	6.5%	26.9%	27.5%	29.7%	9.4%
Germany	n	114	405	407	461	149
	%	7.4%	26.4%	26.5%	30.0%	9.7%
Hungary	n	80	324	335	192	22
	%	8.4%	34.0%	35.2%	20.1%	2.3%
Iceland	n	50	223	379	279	121
	%	4.8%	21.2%	36.0%	26.5%	11.5%
Japan	n	226	467	528	87	47
	%	16.7%	34.5%	39.0%	6.4%	3.5%
New Zealand	n	85	313	294	197	57
	%	9.0%	33.1%	31.1%	20.8%	6.0%
Philippines	n	276	872	252	79	12
	%	18.5%	58.5%	16.9%	5.3%	0.8%
Russia	n	611	422	248	157	94
	%	39.9%	27.5%	16.2%	10.2%	6.1%
Slovenia	n	94	333	339	209	58
	%	9.1%	32.2%	32.8%	20.2%	5.6%
Switzerland	n	116	623	1152	1572	569
	%	2.9%	15.5%	28.6%	39.0%	14.1%
Thailand	n	297	686	221	147	42
	%	21.3%	49.2%	15.9%	10.6%	3.0%
Total	n	2289	6549	5191	4735	1511
	%	11.3%	32.3%	25.6%	23.4%	7.5%

Taking into account the opinions of all respondents – no matter what country they came from, it can be concluded that approx. 11% of them strongly agree with the statement that their country needs economic growth in order to protect the environment (Table 4). Approx. 32% of respondents agree with this statement, 23.4% – disagree, and 7.5% – strongly disagree. Overall, nearly 44% agree that their country needs economic growth in order to protect

the environment, whereas approx. 31% disagree (approx. 26% of respondents neither agree nor disagree with this statement). Thus, the majority of respondents support the opinion that economic growth is necessary for protecting the natural environment. The difference in opinions, however, is not large and amounts to approx. 13%.

Table 5. Opinions on the statement *economic growth harms the environment* by country

		Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly
Austria	n	85	392	418	251	58
	%	7.1%	32.6%	34.7%	20.8%	4.8%
Taiwan	n	124	1092	106	424	11
	%	7.1%	62.2%	6.0%	24.1%	0.6%
Denmark	n	50	145	227	301	228
	%	5.3%	15.2%	23.9%	31.7%	24.0%
Finland	n	42	195	282	403	127
	%	4.0%	18.6%	26.9%	38.4%	12.1%
Germany	n	98	355	387	561	144
	%	6.3%	23.0%	25.0%	36.3%	9.3%
Hungary	n	90	354	311	185	26
	%	9.3%	36.6%	32.2%	19.2%	2.7%
Iceland	n	29	88	359	430	142
	%	2.8%	8.4%	34.3%	41.0%	13.5%
Japan	n	110	319	650	184	100
	%	8.1%	23.4%	47.7%	13.5%	7.3%
New Zealand	n	30	154	318	377	75
	%	3.1%	16.1%	33.3%	39.5%	7.9%
Philippines	n	101	438	418	460	58
	%	6.8%	29.7%	28.3%	31.2%	3.9%
Russia	n	255	284	376	394	200
	%	16.9%	18.8%	24.9%	26.1%	13.3%
Slovenia	n	60	235	394	300	61
	%	5.7%	22.4%	37.5%	28.6%	5.8%
Switzerland	n	305	1276	1206	1120	175
	%	7.5%	31.3%	29.5%	27.4%	4.3%
Thailand	n	374	643	191	145	44
	%	26.8%	46.0%	13.7%	10.4%	3.1%
Total		1753	5970	5643	5535	1449
		8.6%	29.3%	27.7%	27.2%	7.1%

Inhabitants of the Philippines (approx. 77%), Thailand (approx. 70%) and Taiwan (approx. 58%) express the strongest support for the statement that economic growth is necessary for environmental protection (answers *definitely yes* and *yes* combined), whereas those who disagree with this statement (answers *definitely not* and *no* combined) live mainly in Switzerland (approx. 53%), Finland, Iceland and Germany (approx. 38-40%).

On the other hand, many respondents see negative effects of economic growth on the natural environment. This view is strongly supported by 8.6% of respondents, supported by 29.3%, 27.2% disagree with this opinion, and 7.1% strongly disagree (Table 5). In total, the view that economic growth harms environment is favored by approx. 38%, whereas 34.3% of respondents disagree with it (approx. 28% of respondents neither agree nor disagree with this statement).

The opinion about the negative impact of economic growth on environmental protection is mostly favored (answers *definitely yes* and *yes* combined) in Taiwan (approx. 73%) and Thailand (approx. 70%). On the other hand, most opponents of this view (answers *definitely not* and *no*) can be found in Denmark (approx. 56%) and Finland (approx. 51%), as well as in Iceland and New Zealand (approx. 45-47%).

Conclusions

(1) Health protection, (2) economy, and (3) the natural environment top the list of the most important issues for inhabitants of the countries participating in the survey. Asked about the most important environmental problems, the respondents most often select: (1) climate change, (2) air pollution, (3) chemicals and pesticides, and (4) using up natural resources. Inhabitants of the countries in the survey relatively often (approx. 44%) believe that economic growth is necessary to protect the natural environment (approx. 33% disagree with this opinion). However, many

respondents (approx. 38%) see the negative effects of economic growth on the natural environment. What is interesting is that the percentage of respondents who believe that economic growth does not have a negative impact on the natural environment is almost the same (approx. 34%).

This last finding requires some comment. It seems that we are dealing here with a situation where the object of the attitude which is difficult to assess, gives rise to ambivalent reactions. Pro-ecological attitudes are fairly well-established in contemporary societies; however, juxtaposing the environmental option with the demands of the economy may lead to seemingly contradictory opinions. The high percentage of respondents who believe that economic growth has a negative impact on the environment, compared to the high percentage of those who claim that economic growth is needed to protect the environment, can be interpreted in the categories of trying to solve the Gordian knot; i.e., to answer the question: how to protect what should be protected and not compromise much on the economy? This is a dilemma that contemporary societies treated as wholes and not reduced to attitudes expressed by individuals, are facing. Such an approach is necessary when making decisions that affect the whole societies.

There are also significant differences in public opinion across countries. Not going into details (which were discussed earlier), we can observe differences between the views held by inhabitants of Europe and Asia, and between the views expressed by respondents from the Scandinavian countries (sometimes including Switzerland) and those living in other European countries. In Asia, opinions also vary from country to country, but they cannot be grouped to form any reasonably consistent pattern. Undoubtedly, many difficulties in interpreting the results can be attributed to a much smaller number of countries that the current ISSP Environment survey covers as compared to its previous editions. In the future, other countries are to be added to the ISSP Environment 2022 data set; however, it is not known yet which countries will be added and when exactly the data set will be updated. This may give rise to concerns as to whether combining data that covers a few (or in fact, many) years in one data set will not result in analyses focusing on the dynamics of changes rather than describing the existing state. These concerns are especially justified in view of a dynamic world situation that we are experiencing nowadays.

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