

**Well-Being Conditions Of The Citizens In Turkey**

**Towards a  
Healthy, Happy,  
Fair, Safe,  
Hopeful and  
Strong Society**

**RESEARCH SUMMARY**



*politikada iyilik hali*

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RESEARCH SUMMARY



**ROSA  
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## Research Summary

Field research on “The Well-Being of Citizens in Turkey” was carried out within the framework of the project of Strengthening Political Well-being in Turkey from a Queer Feminist Perspective. In the framework of the study, the concept of well-being has been used as the equivalent of the concept of well-being in the international literature to express the physical, mental, and psychological self-empowerment of the citizens. By conducting research covering the entirety of Turkey, it was aimed to analyze the well-being of the citizens in general. The study was conducted on a sample of 1,000 people with breakdowns of age group, gender, geographical region, and socio-economic status were included. The margin of error of the study was determined as 3.10 percent and the confidence interval was determined as 95 percent.

This report is based on research conducted by researchers who embrace a human flourishing-based understanding of well-being. While measuring well-being, we have defined the following activities carried out by individuals including education and health to shape their lives as the main indicators of well-being: work, political participation and management, social bonds and relations, the relationship of citizens with the environment, and both economical and physical security. In addition to these, we evaluated justice (especially income justice), the existence of institutions serving the common good, and a dignified life where citizens are valued and respected among the components of well-being.

Information on demographic structure was chosen as the starting point of the research carried out to measure the well-being of the citizens. The rate of households without a working person was measured as 10.9 percent. The rate of being a tenant was again one of the remarkable results. The data on the lives of citizens is becoming more and more considerate in terms of well-being when it comes to culture and education. The rate of those who can participate in cultural activities such as concerts, theaters and panels is limited to 26.2 percent. The frequency of these people's participation in these activities is also very low. Only 11.9 of those who have children in the nursery age can send their children to kindergarten. It has been observed that citizens embrace the use of social media in order to overcome these obstacles in front of their physical and mental development. It can be said that this decline in well-being has a share in the emergence of the aggressive environment we see on social media.

At the end of this first section for understanding the citizen profile, individuals were asked how they defined their political identification. Nationalism is the most preferred identification. While those who describe themselves as democrats rank second, the rate of leftists (28 percent) is below the total rate of those on the right (approximately 54 percent), who see themselves as nationalist, religious and conservative. Despite this, it has been observed that right-wing citizens, like left-wing citizens, have problems in terms of their quality of life and expectations. The difference here should be read as right-wing citizens

do not make a connection between the deterioration of their well-being and the responsibility of the government.

In the next part of our study, related questions were asked in order to measure the political well-being of citizens in Turkey. As a result, although policy is a large part of the agenda for Turkish society, the rate of participation in politics remains quite low. It is possible to say that the reason for this is the low trust in the capability of politics to solve problems, political actors and institutions, and the negative effects of the polarizing effects of politics on them. The rate of those who think that the general political situation in Turkey has a negative effect on them in any way reaches 61.1 percent. We stated in our report that under the conditions of authoritarianism, citizens' interest in politics is not caused by motivation or participation, but rather as exposure to politics. In addition, polarization in politics is also seen as an important problem. In this framework, when those who find the President responsible are added to those who find the ministers responsible, it is seen that the rate of citizens who think that the government is responsible for polarization is 74.3 percent. A very large proportion of citizens in Turkey state that violence has increased along with social polarization.

We asked citizens how they describe the impact of participation in policy on their social bonds. A portion of 53.8 percent thinks that engaging in such activities does not have a significant effect, while another 16.3 percent thinks that it will weaken their social ties and lead to loneliness. As a matter of fact, in the report, it was underlined that the relationship that citizens establish with politics is individualized and that they are involved in politics in an unorganized manner. It has been stated that moving away from the expectation of the common good and from collective empowerment indicates a negative picture in terms of well-being.

The rate of those who said it would increase to the question “Do you believe that activities like demonstrations, marches, petitions, etc. will increase your level of well-being?” remained at 14.8. The rate of those who answered the question “Would you consider actively participating in the activities of political parties and associations?” positively is only 27.3 percent. The rate of those who are members of any association, political platform or party is 13.9 percent. Despite the negative general approach to politics, this conjuncturally emerging difference indicates that there is a chance of increased turnout in the near future.

In the next chapter, the data obtained about the economical well-being of the citizens shows that 80.4 percent of citizens think that economic issues have an impact on their mental and emotional state. When the question is asked about Turkey, the rate of those who say that the Turkish economy has had a negative impact on them reaches 65.6 percent. In this context, the idea of minimum citizenship income is highly favored. The demand for an application that brings human dignity to the fore is an example of how the perception of sociality can flourish among citizens, starting from what points in the period after authoritarianism.

When asked about their income, 58.5 percent of the citizens say that their expenses are more than their income, and 32.5 percent of them state that the level of income and expenditure is in balance. The number of people who say that working conditions have deteriorated and that they must accept working conditions regardless of their satisfaction is quite high. The picture encountered in terms of one of the issues that are so decisive in terms of well-being is an important data showing how far the society has moved away from the state of well-being during the authoritarianism process. When the debt issue is examined, the picture that emerges negatively affects the well-being of the citizens. It was determined that only 18 percent of the participants were not in debt. While half of them have difficulty in meeting their basic needs, they also have to stay away from their social lives and hobbies. An even more negative result is that more than a quarter of the population stated that their relationship with their family has deteriorated. A striking statistic states that 14.7 percent of the society has nothing to do if they must borrow money. Therefore, indebtedness has become an economic relationship as well as a political relationship based on domination and an important variable that determines the social relations of people, starting with their closest relatives. And in all these areas, it has a negative impact on the well-being of citizens.

When it comes to their well-being, 68.6 percent of the participants generally think that social relations have a direct effect on them, while 61.5 percent of the society think that the existing social relations in the country, they live in affect them negatively. Regarding social relations, violence against women, the effect of religion on society and changes in mood were asked. When 82.2 percent of the participants asked, “What is your general view on violence against women in Turkey?”, they replied that violence has increased in recent years. When asked about the reasons for this development, 64.5 percent of the society mentioned some developments outside the field of social relations in the increase of violence against women and stated that that the economic crisis and that the encouragement of violence against women by politics is responsible. It has been observed that the policy of making LGBTI+ individuals enemies and targeting, which is frequently used in the construction of the social dimension of the authoritarian regime, has not been adopted to a large extent by the citizens.

In addition, we see that 48.5 percent of them think that the relation of religion in politics and society has increased. An important 63 percent of this ratio perceives the said increasement as a negative development. Religinization creates a spiral with other practices of authoritarian regime building and makes secularism an urgent need for the development of well-being.

When asked about the psychological effects of social relations on their well-being, the rate of those who stated that their moods deteriorated reaches 72.2 percent. Again, when the participants were asked about the change in their relatives' moods, it was seen that 65.9 percent indicated a worsening. This ratio shows that a significant amount of people is negatively affected by authoritarianism. When the negative effects are detailed, it is seen

that 61.9 percent of the citizens feel lonely. In addition, the number of people who think that they are excluded from the society in general or at sometimes reaches a serious rate. Anxiety/depression experiences were also asked to assess the cumulative impact of authoritarianism on citizens' mental well-being. Among those who answered this question, those who could go to a private psychologist or psychiatrist had a rate of 4.9 percent, while those who could go to a public hospital were limited to 10.3 percent. The rest seek answers to their problems by using informal methods.

In the last section, happiness, and future expectations, which we see as a component of citizens' well-being, are discussed. This point is important in terms of carrying out a dynamic analysis of the future, rather than defining a passive state of well-being based on the effects of political, economic, and social conditions in the past. In this direction, the question of whether Turkey is getting better or worse was first asked. While 72.4 percent of the society thought that the trend was negative, when asked whether their own life was getting better or worse, 54.4 percent said it was getting worse, and only 11.4 percent said it was getting better. It is noteworthy that the rate of those who consider the government responsible for the negative trend is 61.1 percent.

It has been determined that 54.2 percent of the citizens in Turkey are not satisfied with the course of their lives, while only 16.6 percent are satisfied. When it comes to the expectation of the future, or in other words, to look at the future with hope, it is seen that the citizens in Turkey have a more negative approach than the answers they give to the questions about the course of social life, trust and satisfaction. While 58.2 percent of the participants stated that they were completely hopeless about their future, 28.8 percent stated that they had no expectations from the future. As can be seen, the conclusion that nearly two-thirds of the society lives with the feeling of hopelessness and helplessness gains weight.

All these results show that the authoritarian transformation that has taken place in Turkey in the last ten years has affected the well-being of citizens not only in terms of economic collapse, but also in terms of economic and social aspects. In this way, it has been demonstrated that in terms of well-being study's methodology, it is necessary to make political and social elements a part of the measurement. The emergence of a state of well-being, which will enable citizens to increase their satisfaction with their lives and look to the future with hope, will also be possible when citizens come together around political, economic and social demands and become actors of politics in a way that will improve their own well-being.

