
The Food and Energy Costs from the Perspective of Sociology of Social Problems

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ABSTRACT: *Since human beings are social creatures, it is inevitable for them to live in society. However, many positive or negative changes and developments in society affect people directly or indirectly. At the beginning of the issues that affect the individuals in a society most deeply are the social problems that have emerged in that society. Just as it is not possible to completely eliminate the social problem that has arisen in a society, there seems to be no society that does not experience social problems. In this context, social problems in each society may differ. In addition, while social problems have a continuity feature because they affect many institutions and areas in the society, it has the feature of multi-causality principle because it is based on many different reasons. Likewise, social problems are not social events that occur suddenly or whose effect ends in an instant. In order for such problems to arise, certain conditions and social formations must be present. Because a social issue that arises in one area can be the source or cause of other issues. Recently, especially the problems that have arisen due to economic variables have become a complete social problem. Because the economy, which is an important social institution, is an important concept that affects almost every area of society. In this study, in recent years, a sociological analysis of food and energy costs, which have emerged in many countries in the world due to many different reasons such as Covid-19 pandemic, global warming and climate change, population growth, drought, Russia-Ukraine War, and experienced as a complete social problem, has been started for Turkey. has been studied.*

KEYWORDS: sociology of religion, social problem, economy, energy and crises, food costs.

INTRODUCTION

Society, which refers to the cluster of people who cooperate collectively to sustain their lives and meet many basic needs, live together on the same piece of land and have a common culture (Ozankaya, 1975: 92), has an intricate structure with its unique characteristics and many social issues that occur within it. Individuals and societies have been in a state of change and progress since the day they came into existence. Some events that occur in the world lead both individuals and societies to enter a process of change and transformation. The phenomenon that has created a new type of society in the world and has influenced all societies with its evolutions is globalization, which has found its place especially after the Industrial Revolution. While the process of globalization offers some opportunities to societies on the one hand, it also brings along many negative consequences on the other (Güven, 2011: ix). However, within the framework of the phenomenon of rapid change, the basic social problems that societies are exposed to change, but these problems cannot be solved completely and radically. While the continuity of daily life, the dynamic structures of societies and the continuity of interaction constitute the source of social problems, they also ensure the continuity of these problems (Yılmaz et al., 2017: 139).

Not every problem that exists in society may be a social problem. In other words, the answer to the question "What characteristics should a problem have in order for it to be a social problem?" is very important at this point. A social problem, defined as "a situation arising out of a society's own environmental conditions and deeply affecting the most critical goals of the society such as social peace, social development, social welfare, social security and social integration in a negative way and requiring the use of social policy instruments to eliminate this negativity" (Güven, 1996: 2), basically has two characteristics: The first is that it has a nature affecting the society in general; the other is that a large part of the society is disturbed by this problem (Çakır, 2020: 3). The definition of a social problem may vary both in terms of societies and in the historical process. A situation that was perceived as a problem for a society in the past may not be perceived as a problem in the following years. Or, an issue that is perceived and defined in an individual sense becomes a social problem when it spreads to a large part of the society or when it affects most of the society in the process. Solving social problems is as important as identifying and defining them (Koçak, 2019: 21-22).

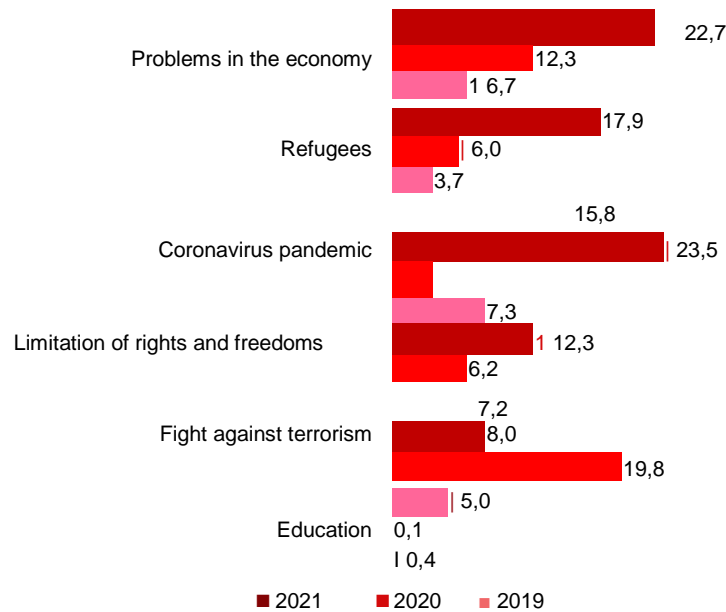
The characteristics of social problems that arise when there is a deviation from the social rules adopted by many people in a society can be listed as follows;

- ✓ Every social problem first and foremost negatively affects individuals, social groups and society itself.
- ✓ Social problems do not arise from nature; on the contrary, they are the product of humanity.
- ✓ The existence of social problems is not inevitable, but they are preventable and solvable.

- ✓ Social problems affect a large number of people, not just a few in the society in which they occur.
- ✓ Both the definition and analysis of social problems are often open to discussion and interpretation (Çevik, 2017: 186-187).

Social-economic developments, which have caused the social life to have a dynamic structure, have not only changed the definition and content of social problems, but also led to the emergence of new problems in the following processes (Tuna and Yalçıntaş, 1999: 101). Therefore, social problems, which do not have a single problem, solution or effect in a single issue, are based on the "Principle of Multiple Causality" in the sociological sense, and they also create a ball of problems like dominoes, one of which triggers the other and whose solution depends on each other (Çevik, 2017: 187). Since social institutions such as family, economy, justice, religion, politics, politics and education in a society are always in relation with each other, it is a social reality that a change or transformation in any of them, whether positive or negative, affects all other institutions. Considering today's conditions both in the world and in Turkey, we can list the existing social problems that are observed intensively as follows; poverty, unemployment, child abuse, crime and violence, disability, substance abuse, unplanned urbanization and migration, terrorist incidents, racism, population growth, hunger, environmental problems, problems related to health, education and family institutions (Sullivan, 2006: 16). In addition, the globalization of the New Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), which was first seen in Wuhan Province of China in December 2019, and many economic, political, cultural and social problems brought about by the Russian-Ukrainian War that started on February 24, 2022, have paved the way for the emergence of social problems affecting societies (İstikbal, 2022). A recent study on the social problems in Turkey was conducted by Kadir Has University. It is shown in Figure 1 that different issues constitute social problems according to years:

Figure 1: Major social problems in Turkey



Source: (Aydın et al., 2022: 29)

As can be understood from the information given above and the data in the figure, social problems that arise due to many different reasons in Turkey vary over the years according to the events experienced. In fact, according to the aforementioned research, even among the regions in Turkey, different issues have different ranks in terms of social problems. When reports and developments are analyzed carefully and interpreted realistically, it will be seen that there is a social problem in Turkey today, especially in the economic field. Since the field of economy is very broad, it would not be a very scientific method to attribute the developments to a single cause or, in other words, to explain the problem in society through a single item. In particular, the cost and prices of food and energy prices have always had an important place in the economic field throughout history (Aydın et al., 2022: 1-147)

In this study, "Food and Energy Costs", which fall within the scope of the concept of economy, which is a social institution, and which has been significantly affected by some social and current events in recent years, will be evaluated as a social problem and an evaluation of the social impacts will be made.

The Social Importance of Food and Nutrition

The human potential of a country is an important factor in the economic and social development of that country (Yılmaz and Özkan, 2007: 89). Nutrition is one of the most basic needs of all living things, especially humans, which sustains the human potential, ensures the growth of healthy individuals, and is a confidence-building factor in the fulfillment of other needs of people (Erten, 2006: 1). Individuals going through life stages such as infancy, childhood, youth, adulthood and old age have to eat healthy, balanced and adequate nutrition. In other words,

nutrition is a necessary and important condition in every period from the womb to death (Pekşen Akça, 2010: 90). In order to have a healthy, productive and capable human potential, food is the most important element that provides this nutrition for the individuals who make up the society (Baykan, 1999: 50).

Food and nutrition have not only physiological, biological and psychological importance for humans, but also sociological importance. The issue of food and nutrition has an important place in the development of social relations, the emergence of social status, the beginning of economic organizations, the invention of money, the evolution of writing, the construction of states, the acceleration of conquests, the systematization of land ownership, the development of international political and commercial relations and many other issues since the existence of humanity. Therefore, knowing the historical process of nutrition and evaluating it with the conditions of the period is also of great importance in understanding human history (Muslu, 2019: 25).

Nutrition is defined as the adequate and balanced intake of nutrients necessary for the body to ensure vitality and to maintain a healthy life. Affected by many factors such as religion, cultural elements, economic and health status, climate and agricultural conditions, nutrition/food and the cultural environment created by them also give clues about the structure of a society. Humans have undergone many changes while building culture in the historical process. As a matter of fact, nutrition has been the main element that enables individuals to interact with each other in the construction of modern societies from the first hunter-gatherer societies. While the division of tasks in the first primitive societies was mostly done to obtain food, this situation paved the way for the formation of the male-female roles seen in today's societies. In addition, the cultivation, care, collection and distribution of the food obtained has led to the formation of social status. Along with food-based commercial activities between societies, cultural characteristics have also spread, affecting countries in many areas such as language, education, social order and economy. In addition, while the sharing or distribution of food with different societies constituted the formation of the first commercial networks, such relations also led to the invention of money and writing. The invention of money and writing, on the other hand, accelerated societies that had been progressing very slowly for centuries to a great speed and enabled the construction of today's modern societies (Muslu, 2019: 25).

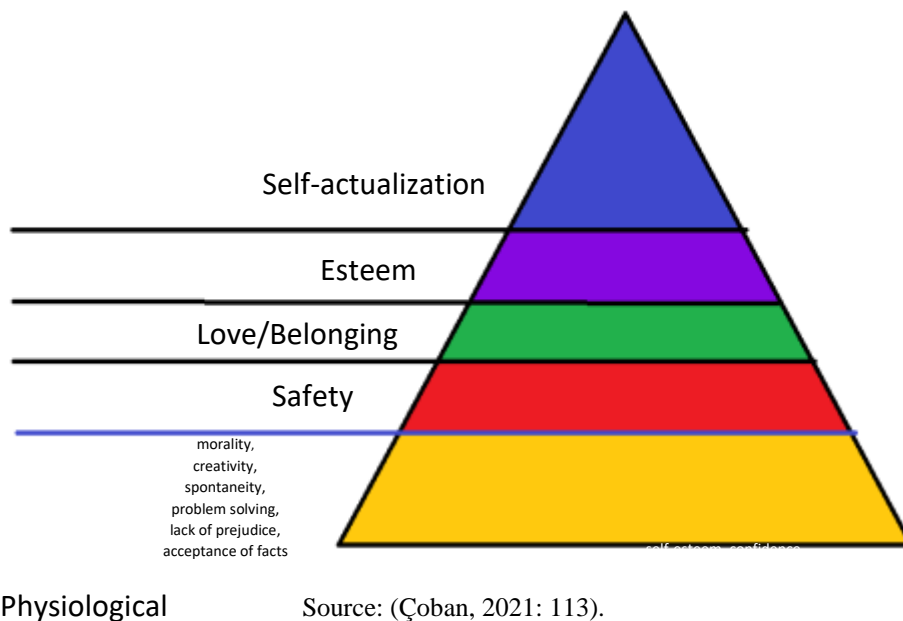
Providing food and nutrition is not only a physiological need for individuals, it also provides a social environment. In many societies, the culture of nutrition constitutes a large part of the general culture. In different religious structures, especially in Islam, there are foods that are approved or prohibited regarding both food and nutrition (See Maide, 5/3 and 88. Bakara, 2/173. Nahl, 16/115. Mu'minin, 23/51). The existence of such an applicable principle in the holy book regarding food is an inevitable social reality that affects the way of life and behavior of individuals who prioritize religious values (Yazır, 2017: 365-367, 594). In addition, nutrition is of great importance in shaping social life. For example, food is served in most celebrations, rituals, weddings and agreements. Treats for guests symbolize the value given to the guest. Some foods have even become symbols for some societies and countries. For this reason, in

order to analyze and evaluate the history of humanity correctly or to discuss and describe a society and the evolution of that society, it is necessary to know and interpret nutrition, the culture of nutrition, the products grown in their regions, food and cuisine culture very well (Beşirli, 2010; 159-165).

Ibn Khaldun, the famous Islamic sociologist Ibn Khaldun, who divides societies into two classes as Bedouin and Hadari and who fully deserves the title of the pioneer and founder of sociology, expressed the effect of nutrition and eating habits on personality development and religious life in his famous work *Muqaddime*. In the aforementioned work, the famous sociologist justifies the relationship between food and personality development as follows; *"For the most part, prosperity and abundance have a negative effect on mental performance and morality, while difficult economic conditions and consuming little food have a positive effect. Excessive and mixed food intake causes bad odors and residues to form in the body. Thus, as the body will show unhealthy and unbalanced development, both diseases will occur and an ugly appearance will occur due to obesity. As a result, the corrupted and bad fluids from these foods will go to the brain and cover the brain and ideas, and as a result, carelessness, lack of understanding, and in general, distancing from all good states will occur."* (Ibn Khaldun, 2004: 166). In line with these explanations, according to Ibn Khaldun, excessive abundance and prosperity negatively affect the structure of societies, as excess of everything is harmful. Because the desires of people living in an environment of excessive prosperity and abundance are more intense, the hedonism and addictions of these people become stronger, which not only has a negative impact on the values and characters of people, but also causes moral degeneration (Göcen, 2013: 189). Ibn Khaldun, who emphasizes that there is a relationship between nutrition and religious life and states that Bedouins are more inclined to worship, more religious and less fond of worldly goods than Hadaris, justifies this view as follows; *"People who are fond of worship are few in the cities because their hearts are hard and heedless in connection with eating too much meat, different and exaggerated foods and wheat bread without bran. The devotees come mostly from the bedouins in poverty"* (Ibn Khaldun, 2004: 124). As a result of these determinations of Ibn Khaldun, it is understood that nutrition is not only an ordinary and simple biological action, but also a psychological and sociological activity that has a spiritual effect that affects both personality and worship life (Bayar, 2018: 131).

The importance of food, which means "anything that is suitable for eating, edible" (TDK, 2022), essentially started with the beginning of human beings' life in this world. Individuals are obliged to consume in order to sustain their lives. For this reason, individuals have always prioritized the most basic need such as nutrition in their consumption actions. The need for food (nutrition) is one of the three most basic needs of individuals such as shelter and clothing (Sarıipek, 2017: 47-49). The famous social scientist Abraham Harold Maslow clearly stated that food is of great importance for individuals and societies and that it is a primary social and individual need that creates a source for meeting other needs under the title of "Physiological Needs" in his "Hierarchy of Needs" theory (Kula & Çakar, 2015: 194-197). The place and importance of the need for food for individuals is shown in Figure 2:

Figure 2: Maslow's hierarchy of needs



Source: (Çoban, 2021: 113).

A Sociological Analysis of Food and Costs as a Social Problem

In the social sense, the answers to the questions "Do food costs create a social problem?" or "What kind of process does food costs become a social problem?" essentially reveal the relationship between food costs and being a social problem, while at the same time revealing the extent to which food costs will create a social problem. It is certain that food and its costs that affect a few individuals will not constitute a social problem. If these costs affect a large number of people, regionally, nationally or globally, then there is certainly a social problem. However, the act of feeding/food, which exists in all societies and continues its existence through individuals, is both affected and affected by many social changes that occur in society. As a global phenomenon, social change that affects all social institutions such as family, education, economy and politics, which exist in all societies, also affects food costs and food culture (Topuz, 2013: 99).

Changes due to the transformation of the family structure due to modernization, differentiation in gender perception, globalization and technological developments have had significant effects on food and its costs as well as changing and transforming food culture (Gürhan, 2017: 561). In addition, developments in mass communication technology, developments in bio-technology (production of GMO foods), the spread of mass production of food due to developments in the food industry, the globalization of food (the spread of fast-food foods), changes in family

structure, changes such as the increase in the visibility of women in the labor market with modernity cause changes in food, food culture and costs (Gürhan, 2017: 563-564).

While humanity continues its economic development efforts, it also has to struggle with the physical, current and concrete issues of the globe on which it lives. Perhaps human beings have been struggling the most for food supply in the globe they live on since the moment they were created (Gürlük and Turan, 2008: 63). Because food supply is the most important life endeavor of all bushes in general and humans in particular. For this reason, throughout their lifetime, individuals have struggled not only to defend themselves against risks and dangers that may come from the external environment, but also to provide food. However, with the rapid increase in population growth and the decrease in resources over time, food supply and the amount of food/food per capita have started to decrease (Cengiz and İlhan, 2016: 12).

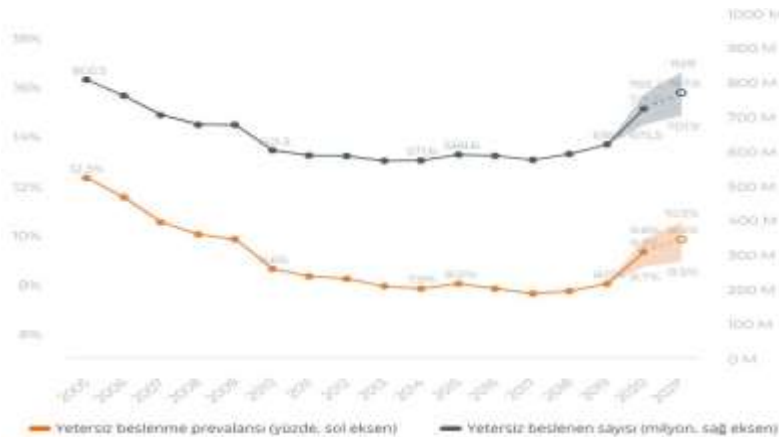
The production, consumption and costs of food become a deeper social problem, especially during periods of "Global Food Crises", which are defined as "a decrease in food consumption due to an increase in food prices and consequently an increase in the number of hungry people". Due to the increase in food costs and prices for various reasons, a large number of people around the world are unable to have an adequate and balanced diet. Although it varies according to the age, body size, physical activity and psychological state of individuals, the amount of energy that an average person should take daily is accepted as 1800 kcal (Cengiz and İlhan, 2016: 12). According to the United Nations' *"State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) 2022 Report"*, 828 million people were affected by hunger in 2021, which is a global and social problem that occurs as a result of not being able to consume enough food, with an increase of 46 million people since 2020 and 150 million people since the COVID-19 novel coronavirus pandemic (FAO, 2022a). In addition, some of the issues raised in the report show how important the issue of food, which creates a social problem, is:

- ✓ Since 2015, the proportion of people affected by hunger has remained relatively static, but in 2020 it started to jump and continued to increase in 2021, reaching 9.8% of the world's population% .
- ✓ About 2.3 billion people, accounting for about% 29.3% of the world, have experienced moderate or severe food insecurity.
- ✓ As a result of rising food costs, the gender gap in food insecurity continued to widen in 2021. Women in the world% experienced more severe and moderate food insecurity at a rate of 31.9%, while men% experienced more severe and moderate food insecurity at a rate of 27.6%.
- ✓ Around 3.1 billion people around the world did not have a healthy diet in 2020. This number increased by 112 million compared to 2019. In the economic sphere, this reflects how inflation and the COVID-19 pandemic are significant drivers of consumer food prices and cost increases, as well as the measures in place to contain their impact.

- ✓ Due to chronic nutritional deficiencies in their diets, 149 million children under the age of five in the world suffer from inadequate growth and development, while 39 million children are overweight.
- ✓ Unfortunately, progress in infant nutrition is only being made in breastfeeding. In 2020, approximately 44% of the world's babies under six months of age are exclusively breastfed, and due to rising food costs, adequate and balanced nutrition cannot be provided at the desired level.
- ✓ Projections for the future suggest that even taking into account some trade and economic recovery as a result of global economic activity, 670 million people, representing approximately 8% of the world's population, will still be facing hunger in 2030 (FAO, 2022a).

Moreover, due to rising food prices and costs, many people around the world are unable to consume even the daily nutrients they should. Therefore, many people face hunger and food insecurity. Due to both economic conditions and the socio-political positions taken by countries, the global food crisis is making its presence felt. In line with the information announced by FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), which was established to ensure food security for all individuals in the world and to ensure that they have planned access to sufficient and high-quality food to lead a healthy life, unfortunately, 702 to 828 million people in the world faced hunger in 2021. These numbers have increased significantly in recent years. The emergence of such a social problem and its impact on a large number of societies is, of course, largely due to developing economic events (FAO, 2022b). Figure 3 shows how nutrition and hunger have become a social problem as a result of rising food prices and developing economic events:

Figure 3: Distribution of hunger, a social problem, by years



Source: (FAO, 2022b).

These findings clearly show how societies and countries are facing a social problem as a result of rising food costs. However, in the "2020 Global Report on Food Crises" published by the Global Network on Food Crises, 135 million people in 55 countries and territories experienced acute food insecurity (IPC/CH Phase 3 and above) by the end of 2019. In addition, in 55 countries with food crises due to rising costs or other causes, 75 million children were short stature and 17 million were severely underweight in 2019. It is undeniable that the Covid-19 outbreak has contributed to such a social problem in many countries due to the increase in food costs and food crisis (UNICEF, 2020).

The phenomenon of increasing food costs and prices becomes more prominent during periods of food crises and becomes the most important factor in creating a social problem. We can list the situations that cause both global food crises and the increase in food costs and prices under the main headings as follows.

a) High economic growth and population growth: Economic development and growth data is a major cause of the world food crisis. Economic growth data are found in countries in many regions of the world. Of the countries with large populations in the world, economic growth data in India and China are particularly noteworthy. Between 2004 and 2006, economic growth rates in these two countries% were around 9, while economic growth rates in sub-Saharan African countries% were around 6 in the same years. Such high economic growth rates, on the other hand, will inevitably bring about a social and economic situation as they lead to higher consumption increases than expected (Gürlük and Turan, 2008: 65-66).

b) Global Warming, Climate Change and Drought: Global warming or climate change, which is defined as "a change in climate as a result of human activities that directly or indirectly disrupt the composition of the global atmosphere, in addition to the natural climate change observed over a comparable period of time" in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was accepted by many countries around the world and entered into force on March 21, 1994 (REC Turkey, 2006: 9), has many impacts on countries and societies. The problem of global warming is not only a geographical issue today. The most general characteristic of global warming and climate change, which has become a social issue in terms of its effects and results, is that it is caused by the concentration of gases that create greenhouse effect in the atmosphere, and unfortunately, the most important factors that cause global warming are human-induced (Şanlı and Özekicioğlu, 2007: 456-458).

The social effects of global warming, which has become a social problem, can be listed as follows;

- ✓ Glaciers start to melt due to temperature increase
- ✓ Rising water levels, especially in the oceans
- ✓ As a result of evaporation in freshwater resources, many plant and animal species are under threat of life due to the disruption of the natural balance (Şanlı and Özekicioğlu, 2007: 456).

- ✓ Drought and the increase in food costs caused by drought (Öztürk, 2002: 58-62).
- ✓ Lack of food
- ✓ Malaria-like epidemics causing mass deaths worldwide (Uzunoglu, 2006: 17).
- ✓ The occurrence of migration events
- ✓ Social discontent
- ✓ Decline in the amount of agricultural products due to the decrease in water basins (Kadioğlu, 2007: 345).
- ✓ Increasing poverty
- ✓ Declining living standards of people in rural areas (TAGEM, 2001: 49).

As a result of global warming, i.e. climate change, the most affected area is the agricultural area, especially as a result of the decrease in precipitation, drought and desertification events. Therefore, as a result of global warming, the impact of which has been felt more and more in recent years, both food crises occur and food costs increase significantly (Öztürk, 2002: 58-62). Nevertheless, according to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), there is expected to be an increase of 1 to 3.5 degrees Celsius in global temperature by 2100. This is a harbinger of further exacerbation of the already stalemated food costs and food crises (IPCC, 2001: 69). In general, the likely impact of climate change on world cereal production is shown in Figure 4:

Figure 4: Impact of climate change on potential world cereal production

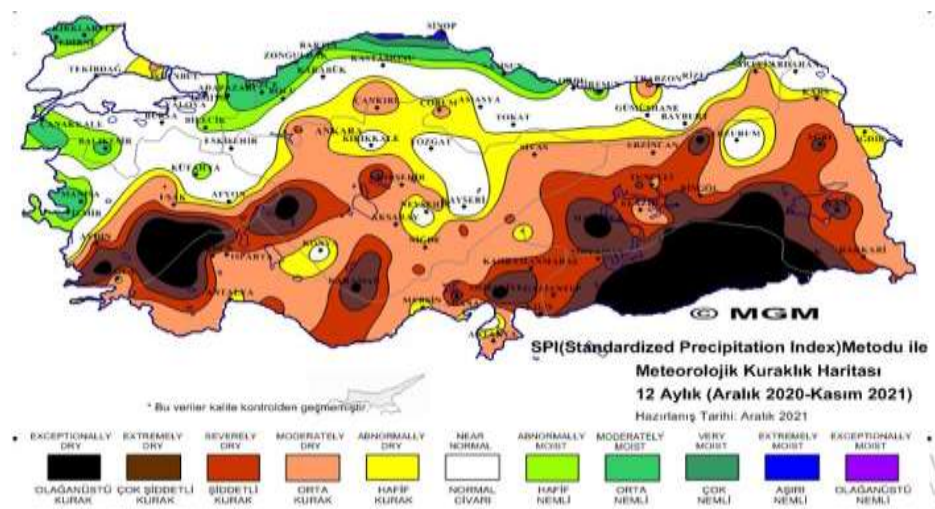
Region	1990-20X0 (% change)
World	-0.6 to -0.9
Developed countries	2.7 to 9.0
Developing countries	-3.3 to -7.2
South East Asia	-2.5 to -7.8
South Asia	-18.2 to -22.1
Sub-Saharan Alrika	-3.9 to -7.5
South America	5.2 to 12.5

Source: (Gürlük and Turan, 2008: 68).

Drought is the most serious natural disaster caused by global climate change. Although many sectors are affected by drought, the agricultural sector is the most affected and damaged sector. This is because agriculture and food supply is an activity entirely dependent on nature (Bayraç and Doğan, 2016: 23-48). In the years when drought became both a geographical and social problem, countries that have a say in the agricultural sector such as the USA, China, Tunisia, Australia, Chile and Russia were negatively affected by this situation and the prices of agricultural products such as corn, wheat, broad beans and barley gained a great momentum upwards (Özdemir and Aksoy, 2022: 133-134). According to the information announced by the

General Directorate of Meteorology (DMİ), 2021 was the driest year in Turkey in the last twenty years, and the second worst drought year in the last 41 years (2001 drought being the first). Precipitation amounts have decreased significantly. Such a drought in Turkey has naturally affected agriculture and agricultural products, which has directly led to an increase in food prices. The drought problem facing Turkey due to global climate change and lack of rainfall is shown in Figure 5:

Figure 5: Drought map of Turkey in 2021



Source: (DMİ, 2021).

c) COVID-19 Pandemic: Many economists and scientists agree that epidemics have significant effects on the exorbitant increase in the prices of food products, which are very important for individuals. The COVID-19 pandemic, which was first seen in Wuhan, China in December 2019, has caused radical changes in the quality of life and consumption habits of individuals as it has increased the prices of many goods and services, especially food and foodstuffs. This epidemic has negatively affected many social institutions, especially health and economy. Many countries even started to take new and different social measures against this pandemic (Türk et al., 2020: 626-629). The reasons why food costs and prices increased excessively during the pandemic process and emerged as a social problem are; significant increases in input costs (oil, natural gas, electric irrigation, diesel oil, fertilizer, seed, medicine, labor, agricultural materials, etc.), food and agricultural materials.), expenditures incurred in the inter-country and intercity transportation of food and agricultural crops, monopolization tendencies, and the concerns of chain markets such as buying cheaper and selling more products more expensively, reflecting the profit margin and commission fees paid due to the intermediary services from the producer to the consumer to the prices, reflecting the VAT rates paid in the purchase and sale of food products to the prices, and unethical behaviors such as stockpiling-exploitation by individuals and organizations that take advantage of the pandemic process

(Cavlak & Selvi, 2022: 43-49). If we look at the changes in the food group announced by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK) for the period July-August 2021, it will be clearly seen that food prices have shown significant variability during the pandemic (TÜİK, 2021a). Some food products and their change rates are shown in Figure 6:

Figure 6: Some food products and monthly change rates

August		July	
Selected items with the highest increase	Rate of change compared to the previous month %	Selected items with the highest increase	Rate of change compared to the previous month %
Cucumber	56.30	Domestic Tours for One Week and Longer	29.42
Pumpkin	43.85	Cucumber	19.63
Lemon	36.14	Dried Onions	18.33
Green beans	32.79	Apricot	16.12
Watermelon	21.74	Electricity Cost	15.01
Dried Onions	19.11	Lemon	14.72
Egg	17.90	Watermelon	13.66
Train Fare (Intercity)	15.49	Cinema	13.08
Eggplant	14.93	Cylinder Gas Cost	12.00
Curly	13.42	LPG Cost	9.95
Garlic	13.07	Natural Gas Cost	9.84

Source: (TurkStat, 2021a).

d) Russia-Ukraine War: The outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine War, which started on February 24, 2022, while the pandemic process and its economic effects were not yet over, took the course of food prices to completely different channels. The uncertainty and instability caused by the war in the markets further strengthened the upward trend in food prices. Russia and Ukraine are the two countries in the world where foods such as wheat, sunflower and corn are grown to a significant extent (Erdal, 2022). The ongoing conflict between these two countries complicates the supply and trade of many agricultural products. Unfortunately, such a situation directly leads to an increase in food prices. For example, the increase in vegetable prices% 100 and meat% 20 since 2020, as well as the increase in fertilizer, sunflower and wheat% 50s in recent months are the best examples of this. In the light of these developments, as food prices and costs increase excessively and rapidly, people's purchasing power and consumption habits are also declining, which is already a social problem for many countries around the world and is expected to continue for a long time in the future (İstikbal, 2022).

e) The relationship between global food and oil prices

f) Changes in supply and demand balances

g) Globalization

h) Speculative movements and foreign trade movements

i) Price attitudes of some countries such as China and India (Gürlük and Turan, 2008: 65-71).

As a result, it is inevitable that countries and societies will be affected by such an economic atmosphere, even if the necessary planning and order is established at the point of

price increase. In addition to factors such as war, pandemic and speculative movements, perhaps the most important reason for the rise in food prices is the increase in agricultural input costs. Agricultural input costs, which have increased significantly, naturally and directly affect all food products. For this reason, the relationship between agricultural input prices, which change over months and years, and the increase in the prices of food products will be more clearly understood. The extreme increase in agricultural input costs that can affect food prices and the rates of change over months and years are shown in Figure 7:

Figure 7: Agricultural input costs and rates of change

Agriculture-GFE by main and sub-groups and rates of change (%) May 2022

Main and subgroups	Index	Rate of change compared to the previous month (%)	Rate of change compared to December of the previous year (%)	rate of change compared to the same month of the previous year (%)	Rate of change relative to 12-month averages (%)
Agriculture-GFE	446.57	5.51	67.77	123.72	61.54
Goods and services used in agriculture	476.38	5.55	71.53	133.09	65.28
Seed and planting material	248.52	4.14	27.24	45.53	21.13
Energy and Fats	567.69	1.22	97.76	184.42	83.89
Fertilizer and soil improvers	775.28	1.01	68.94	236.45	143.51
Pesticides	316.15	2.99	66.83	98.19	43.97
Veterinary Expenses	179.27	4.77	23.93	32.06	22.26
Animal Feed	493.50	8.65	81.17	135.36	62.65
Machine Maintenance Costs	482.66	2.43	28.03	81.19	52.58
Building Maintenance Costs	556.05	4.97	65.57	137.03	79.23
Other goods and services	309.15	8.00	35.91	59.40	32.89
Goods and services that contribute to agricultural investment	398.38	5.15	41.96	67.70	38.97
Ingredients	325.98	6.13	39.09	49.69	24.86
Farm Buildings (Non-Residential)	611.72	3.65	46.71	105.75	72.75

Source: (TurkStat, 2022a).

In Turkey, as in the rest of the world, a number of measures are being taken to prevent the high increase in food prices and costs, which has become an important social problem, especially in the economic field. In the fifth meeting of the Price Stability Committee under the Ministry of Treasury and Finance held on July 20, 2022, the supply-demand mismatch in the markets, increases in food and energy prices, domestic supply developments and commodity prices of strategically important food products such as wheat, sugar, sunflower oil and barley were evaluated and the necessary measures were discussed (Ministry of Treasury and Finance, 2022). In addition, the Ministry of Treasury and Finance has taken measures to reduce the trade disruption caused by the Russian-Ukrainian War, to allow Ukraine to transport its agricultural products to the world market, to reduce the price of cereals, especially wheat, which constitutes the beginning of a global food crisis, and to prevent high inflation, which is perceived as a social problem in Turkey. In order to find a solution to the price increases and the economic situation, Turkey hosted and mediated the signing of the "Grain Corridor Agreement", also known as the "Initiative Document on the Safe Shipment of Grain and Foodstuffs through Ukrainian Ports" between the United Nations-Turkey-Russia and Ukraine on July 22, 2022. This agreement is

expected to bring down the high prices of at least some important food and agricultural products (Republic of Turkey, Presidency of Communications, 2022).

As stated in the Ninth Development Plan covering the years 2007-2013, it is planned to reduce food prices by increasing the yields of agricultural products through measures such as the implementation and widespread use of modern irrigation methods and increasing high-yielding agricultural products (SPO, 2006: 47-77). If food and food prices remain high in the coming years, a planned and systematic aid program should be implemented for individuals with low purchasing power who will suffer real losses. In recent years, the number of markets of the Turkish Agricultural Credit Cooperatives has been increased in order to prevent hoarding and speculative movements, to prevent excessive increases in food prices and to meet the food needs of the poor (SPO, 2008: 62). In addition; implementing a national policy centered on production, lowering agricultural input costs and taxes, conducting the necessary inspections against speculative movements in a strict and systematic manner, reducing transportation and logistics costs, introducing financial support packages that will increase the purchasing power of individuals, fertilizer, which directly affects the prices of many foods, Very important steps such as reducing foreign dependency on products such as feed (Yıldırım, 2021), conducting the necessary training and information meetings for farmers to produce more, and enacting the necessary legislation to prevent exorbitant prices and opportunism will reduce both the food crisis and food prices, which have become a social issue by increasing at high levels (Eryılmaz, 2021: 75-80).

The Social Importance of Energy and its Assessment for Turkey

Energy, which is defined in ancient Greek as "something that is transformed into work or the ability to do work" (Karluk, 1999: 247), is defined in the dictionary of the Turkish Language Association as "the power that exists in matter and appears in the form of heat and light" (TDK, 1994: 603). The production and utilization of energy is the dynamo of the social development of countries and societies. Energy is one of the most important basic inputs in the realization of many activities such as ensuring the continuity of human life, making the necessary productions and applying the produced goods to commercial life. Energy is one of the cornerstones of economic and social progress as a production input as well as a consumption good and a means of service necessary for increasing the welfare levels of societies (Bilginoğlu, 2007: 446).

A change or development in one social institution affects all other institutions. In other words, social institutions and structures are shaped in a kind of "Butterfly Effect". The impact of a social problem that occurs locally or regionally grows and affects other societies and countries. This shows that small social problems and changes will lead to bigger consequences. Therefore, a change and crisis situation occurring in energy affects all other countries, as well as the economic sector, leaving deep wounds and taking on the atmosphere of a social problem (Bağcı, 2020: 2799-2801).

In sociological terms, there is a close relationship between the change and transformation of energy and social change. It would not be wrong to say that man's relationship with energy,

which has been using first muscle power and then the power of domesticated animals to sustain his life since he was first created, actually started with the discovery of fire. Energy, which was initially used for cooking and heating activities, has taken its current form by constantly changing due to reasons such as the development of technology and science, the increase in the accumulation of knowledge, gaining new dimensions with new discoveries, and the change in social needs over time. Nevertheless, societies have also realized the necessary reform movements according to changing energy resources and their use. The issue of energy, which has such an important impact on today's societies, often constitutes a social problem in times of insufficiency, unavailability and crises due to different reasons. In this context, energy has become an indispensable element of social life in many areas from heating to transportation, from political and commercial competition to economy, from lighting to security. So much so that a one-day energy interruption all over the world has the ability to bring life to a standstill (Yılmaz, 2012: 6).

The ability of human beings to lead a cultural life is one of the most important fundamental differences that distinguish them from other living beings. Humans lead such a life regardless of the geographical and meteorological conditions on earth. Therefore, humans are always in need of energy. However, individuals produce and consume the energy they need depending on their cultural characteristics and levels. Because of all these vitalities, energy, which is not a commercial commodity but a social service, is truly a social good. For example, electricity accounts for 35% of the energy used worldwide. At the same time, since it is predicted that this ratio will increase even more in the coming years, it reveals how important energy is in social life and how it is the source of a social problem that may arise (TMMOB, 1998).

In today's modern world, energy is the most important factor that states must have in order to sustain their existence, to respond to the energy needs of their growing populations, and to maintain their existence in industry, transportation, military and similar sectors with developing technology. Energy, an indispensable corridor for states and societies, is divided into two as renewable and non-renewable resources in line with scientific explanations and data (Koç and Şenel, 2013: 33). In addition, energy resources are divided into two classes as primary and secondary energy resources according to whether they change their properties or not. Primary energy sources are energy sources such as oil, natural gas, coal, nuclear energy, solar energy, wind energy, hydraulic energy, geothermal energy, biomass energy, which can be used as they are in nature without any prior modification. Secondary energy sources are energy sources such as electrical energy, hydrogen and boron, which can be produced and used only after certain processes (Özdemir, 2005: 16).

In order to better understand and explain the increase in energy and its costs as a social problem, the general situation of the energy resources available in Turkey should be analyzed very well. In this way, it will be possible to evaluate more scientifically and objectively in which energy branches Turkey is better or in which energy branches Turkey is more dependent on foreign energy, and how this situation is a social problem with increasing costs or some events that have developed. Unfortunately, Turkey has been an energy dependent country for many years.

Turkey's energy dependency was 74.1% in 2016, and this dependency has increased continuously. Turkey's energy dependency is likely to continue for a long time to come due to its energy consumption, which increases by around 7-8% every year, ever-increasing energy demand and the lack of sufficient fossil fuel reserves (TPAO, 2018). According to the 2019 Presidential Annual Program, Turkey's dependence on foreign oil is 91% and 98% on natural gas (TCCB, 2019: 231).

Turkey is a country whose demand for energy is increasing day by day due to its developing industry, growing population, rapid urbanization, and economic and technological developments. According to TUIK data for 2022, Turkey's population is 84,680,273, with a population growth rate of 12.7 per thousand (TUIK, 2022b). Population is not the only indicator of increasing energy demand. It is also necessary to look at industrialization and urbanization rates. According to the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change (MoEUCC) data for 2020, 76% of the population in Turkey lives in urban areas (MoEUCC, 2022). As the need for energy will be higher due to these existing reasons, energy costs are expected to increase accordingly. In addition, the data on the production and consumption of electricity, which is an important energy field and seriously affects the lives of individuals, are shown in Table 1 and Table 2:

Table 1: Electricity generation and shares by energy sources

Year	Total	Coal	Liquid fuels	Natural gas	Hydraulics	Renewable Energy and Waste ⁽¹⁾
Year	Total	Coal	Liquid fuels	Natural Gas	Hydro	Renewable Energy and wastes ⁽¹⁾
	(GWh)	(%)				
2019	303 898	37,1	0,1	18,9	29,2	14,7
2020	306 703	34,5	0,1	23,1	25,5	16,8

Source: (TurkStat, 2022c).

Table 2: Distribution of net electricity consumption by sectors

Year	Total	Household	Commercial	Government	Industrial	Illumination	Other ⁽¹⁾
	(GWh)	(%)					
2019	257 273	21,8	19,3	5,3	45,0	2,0	6,6
2020	262 702	23,1	17,3	4,9	45,7	2,0	7,0

Source: (TurkStat, 2021b).

Turkey also uses renewable and non-renewable energy sources, primarily hard coal, lignite, natural gas, petroleum, wind, hydroelectricity, solar energy, biogas and geothermal, in order to meet its increasing energy needs and reduce foreign dependency. However, since there are not enough resources in natural gas and oil, these resources are mostly solved through imports (Koç

et al., 2018: 87). In terms of both economic and energy supply security, the inability of domestic resources to meet the increasing energy demand increases foreign dependency and at the same time causes energy costs to rise. In order to minimize energy costs, reduce foreign dependence, ensure energy security, and diversify energy sources, Turkey has made an effort to invest in both nuclear power plants and renewable energy plants in recent years (Pekmezci, 2020: 56-57). In this context, the discovery of natural gas in the Black Sea in recent years will both reduce high energy costs and reduce foreign dependence to a great extent (TRT Haber, 2021).

The use of energy, which has become an indispensable part of human life, is no longer a luxury but a necessity. Therefore, energy has a key role in all areas of social life. Although many factors are effective in increasing the importance of energy for individuals and societies, the Industrial Revolution and the developments in the 18th century are the most important factors in making energy so important today (Tandoğan, 1984: 13-16). We can list the factors that are effective in both the social importance and the social problem of energy as follows;

- ✓ Industrial Revolution and its aftermath
- ✓ Demographic movements and rapid population growth
- ✓ Implementation of the Fordist production model
- ✓ Experiencing periods of crisis
- ✓ Macroeconomic movements in the markets
- ✓ The relationship between energy prices and real exchange rates
- ✓ Inflation
- ✓ Globalization
- ✓ Global warming and climate change
- ✓ Investment decisions of companies
- ✓ Attitudes and behaviors of countries on energy
- ✓ The situation of countries having or not having rich energy resources (Yılmaz, 2012: 4-7).

Energy, which is an important factor in creating a social problem as a result of a social impact, is also one of the most important issues in both the maintenance of human life and the realization of economic organizations. Therefore, energy is an indispensable input for production, making the most of transportation opportunities and ensuring the continuity of daily life. Today, energy has started to gain value not only in economic and daily life but also in the socio-economic development of societies. For this reason, countries with rich energy resources make high level technological, scientific, military, financial and economic investments in order to protect their existing resources, while countries that do not have enough energy resources make high level technological, scientific, military, financial and economic investments in order to have more

valuable resources. In a way, the situation that raises the importance of a country's strategic position and increases its bargaining power in the global political arena is closely related to the energy resources of those countries. However, since fossil-based fuel resources, which have been used for years and are still predominantly used, are not unlimited, they will surely run out one day. Non-fossil-based energy sources, on the other hand, vary from period to period depending on the available technology, the state of the resource and environmental impacts. For nearly two centuries until the second half of the 1960s, the energy age based on oil and coal dominance continued without any problems. However, the oil crises that occurred in the 1970s, skyrocketing prices, global warming and climate change issues caused a serious insecurity environment all over the world regarding energy resources, while at the same time putting countries into an intense search for new and renewable energy resources. In this context, there has been a transition from coal, which has functioned as the main energy source for the last one hundred and fifty years, to oil, from oil to natural gas and from natural gas to renewable energy sources (Yılmaz, 2012: 1).

A Sociological Analysis of Energy as a Social Problem

Energy need and consumption is one of the most important requirements of developed and developing countries. There is no doubt that the increase in the need for energy will continue to grow rapidly in the future. The vast majority of the energy that all societies have to consume is fossil fuels, while the rest is nuclear and renewable energy. Especially considering the damage fossil fuels cause to human health and ecological balance, the greenhouse gases caused by fossil fuels cause global warming and climate change, and the fact that nuclear energy brings a great burden to countries in terms of cost, the importance and the need to use renewable energy, which is nature's own work, is understood more clearly every day. If the necessary planning and measures are not taken regarding irregular and unhealthy energy use, it will be very difficult to prevent the negative impact on all balances in the world, especially on living beings and the environment. In this respect, all kinds of alternatives related to energy should be discussed and evaluated scientifically in order not to create a social problem. Otherwise, when the energy issue, which is a great need of societies, becomes a complex and inextricable situation, it will become an inevitable reality that it will create social problems (Ağaçbiçer, 2010: 33-34).

In order to prevent the energy issue from creating a social problem, countries must provide energy from uninterrupted, reliable, cheap, clean and diversified sources and use it efficiently. However, the damages caused to both living beings and nature by many energy and conversion methods that we have consumed until today have now reached serious levels. In addition, the phenomenon of more energy consumption caused by the perspective of more production and profit motive of companies and brought about by industrialization, technology and modernity, especially in the 20th century, has brought along a number of social problems such as commercial, economic, political and agricultural (Dikmen, 2009: 161-179).

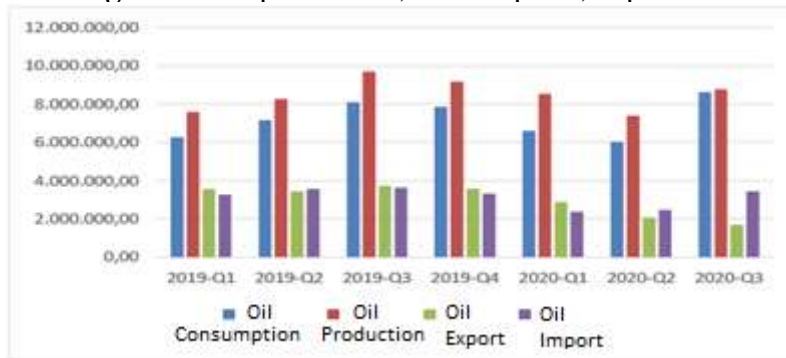
The energy crises, the pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine War have also had an impact on the fact that energy and its costs have changed and become a social problem. It would be appropriate to briefly explain these important effects for the understanding of the issue.

a) The Process of Energy Crises: It would be appropriate to evaluate each energy crisis in itself. However, although the effects of some important energy crises throughout history have varied, in general, they have been instrumental in the emergence of some social issues on society. One of these important issues is energy. The consumption and demand for energy, which has limited resources in the world, is increasing day by day. There have been scientific, technological and cultural interactions from developed countries to developing countries. Thanks to these interactions, there has been an increase in demographic movements, industry, transportation and urbanization in developing countries, which has led to a significant increase in energy demands (Erdoğan, 2016: 33). For this reason, the drive to control energy resources, which lies at the heart of the economic, political and military conflicts that occur between countries from time to time, has led to the emergence of global energy crises in some periods. Especially as a result of the 1973 Oil Crisis, the 1979 Second Oil Crisis and the 2008 Economic Crisis (Great Recession), the costs of many commodities, especially oil, have increased, people's purchasing power has decreased, and social problems have emerged in a number of areas such as commercial, political, medical, cultural, especially economic (Pekmezci, 2020: 13-17).

b) Pandemic process: The two social institutions that have been most affected by the pandemic process, which has had a worldwide impact in the last three years, have undoubtedly been the economy and health. The significant contraction in the volume of international trade has been caused by economies limiting their factor activities with each other during the pandemic process. This situation has also brought along the fact that the production volume in many sectors operating in the economic field has been reduced. Therefore, the panic atmosphere created by the pandemic process affected market mechanisms in economies and caused both supply and demand shocks to be experienced together. In line with the shocks and developments, oil prices dropped significantly, electricity consumption and production as well as natural gas prices experienced downward trends in some months of 2020. In addition, oil prices declined further due to the oil supply increases realized by Russia and Saudi Arabia in early 2020 due to their competition with each other (Karadağ, 2021: 11-16). However, the loss of production in economies during the pandemic brought along an increase in unemployment. The increase in unemployment in a developing country like Turkey will also be a source of many different social problems, primarily in the economy (Eryüzlü, 2020: 15). Nevertheless, since the vaccine studies have been welcomed positively by the economies and the positive atmosphere created by the process due to the recent decisions taken by the states, it is seen that the Brent oil price has started to climb again from the bottom levels. For example, while the Brent oil price fell to around \$15 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it rose again to \$40 as of the second quarter of 2020 and reached the \$50 band at the end of the year. It is predicted that the pandemic process will continue to increase costs in terms of energy in the

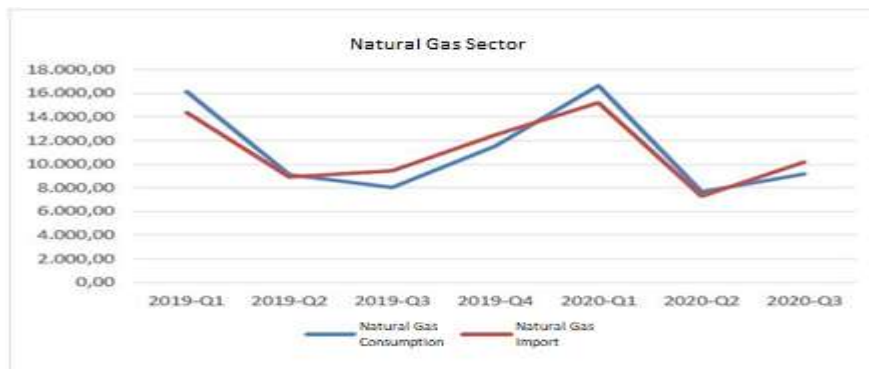
future (Karadağ, 2021: 11-23). Some of the changes in the energy sector in line with the pandemic and other developments are shown in Figures 8, 9 and 10:

Figure 8: Oil production, consumption, exports and imports (2019-2020)



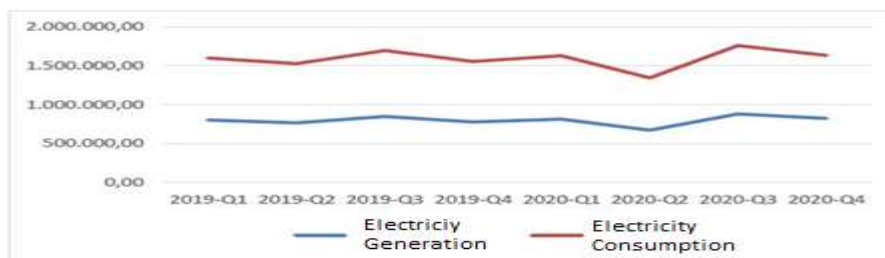
Source: (EMRA, 2021).

Figure 9: Natural gas consumption and imports (2019-2020)



Source: (EMRA, 2021).

Figure 10: Change in electricity generation and consumption (2019-2020)



Source: (CBRT, 2021).

c) Russia-Ukraine War: Russia is one of the largest suppliers of gas, oil and coal to European countries. Considering that 80% of the energy needs of today's world are currently met from oil, gas and coal, it becomes clear how important Russia is in terms of energy. After the pandemic, as economies slowly started to grow again and energy prices started to rise due to the cold winter, they reached levels that could reach crisis proportions with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Indeed, Turkey is one of the countries most affected by the rise in energy costs. From oil to gas, from fuel oil to coal and in many other areas, energy costs have reached very serious figures in Turkey, which has seriously reduced people's purchasing power. At this point, if evaluated in today's conditions, such an increase in energy costs constitutes a social problem (World Energy Council, 2022).

CONCLUSION

As natural as it is to have different social systems, ways of life, cultures, histories, social institutions and functions within the structure of societies formed by individuals who have many common characteristics such as religion, language, history, culture, homeland, way of living and thinking, it is just as natural for some social issues to have a great impact and create social problems in some periods due to their dynamic characteristics. Because there is a close relationship between each social institution in the structures called society, which expresses integrity and continuity. A change or transformation in a social institution affects other institutions like the spreading movement on the surface of the water and causes some developments to take place.

In this research, the factors that are effective in the social problem of food and energy costs, which are within the scope of the economy, which is an important social institution and maintains its relevance at every moment of individuals' daily lives, have been evaluated. The increase in food and energy costs is not only related to the economy, but also to many other fields such as health, politics, nutrition and trade. What makes food and energy costs a social problem is that they affect many areas of social life and many individuals around the world. Although there are many different reasons behind the fact that food and energy costs have increased significantly in recent years and have become a full social problem by turning into a kind of crisis, the reasons such as global warming and climate change, drought, the attitudes of some states such as China and India on this issue, globalization, inflation, very high inputs of basic food costs, continued high foreign dependence on energy, the traces left behind by the COVID-19 pandemic, the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine War have been more effective. In order for developing countries like Turkey to get rid of such a social problem, it is urgently necessary to think about the causes of the problems and take the necessary political, economic and commercial activities to prevent the problem from continuing in the coming years. In this context, if the necessary planning, measures, legislative developments, production activities and innovation practices are not carried out both in the world and in Turkey regarding the increase in food and energy costs, price increases in this sector will become unpreventable, will continue to be a social problem exponentially and will pave the way for the emergence of some new social problems.

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