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APPROACHES TO GREEN ECONOMY: A CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW

YEŞİL EKONOMİYE DAİR YAKLAŞIMLAR: KAVRAMSAL BİR GENEL BAKIŞ

Mehtap İŞLER
Şef; Türkiye Şeker Fabrikaları A.Ş. / İktisat ABD [Aksaray Üniv.]
Chief; Türkiye Sugar Factories Corp. / Economy Dep. [Aksaray Univ.]
e-posta: misler@turkseker.gov.tr
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0000-9188-9260

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İletişim:
e-posta: editor@ijesos.com
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Abstract
This study is a literature review examining theoretical approaches to sustainable green economic growth. Recently, the global economy has faced challenges such as the 2008 crisis, the Russo-Ukrainian War, the Covid-19 pandemic, stress in the Asia-Pacific region, and tensions in the Middle East. Green Economics, on the other hand, proposes appealing structural solutions that prioritize nature and offer competitive sustainable development. The first of the three well-known perspectives on Green Economics, the optimistic green growth view, is expressed in conjunction with the Environmental Kuznets Curve, while the Growth-Agnostic view can be considered a critique of this optimistic view. The optimistic green growth view posits that technological progress and economic development are key to solving environmental problems. The Growth-Agnostic view, on the other hand, emphasizes a focus on social welfare, arguing that economic growth or environmental sustainability alone are insufficient. Each perspective can be considered internally consistent or requiring further proof. In this context, in light of both perspectives, developing and implementing green sustainable development plans centered on social welfare theoretically presents a challenging option. However, considering the example of the Scandinavian countries, which have made significant progress in this area, it's clear that it's not impossible. A third view, the degrowth approach, represents a school of thought that favors economic degrowth.

Keywords: Green economy, economic growth, sustainability

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, sürdürülebilir yeşil ekonomik büyümeye dair teorik yaklaşımları inceleyen bir yazın taramasıdır. Son zamanlarda Dünya ekonomisi; 2008 krizi, Rusya-Ukrayna Savaşı, Covid-19 Salgını, Asya Pasifikteki stres, Ortadoğu'daki gerginlikler gibi bazı meydan okumalara maruz kalmıştır. Yeşil Ekonomi ise doğayı merkeze alan ve rekabetçi sürdürülebilir kalkınma vaadiyle kulağa hoş gelen yapısal çözümler önermektedir. Yeşil Ekonomiye dair üç bilindik bakış açısından birincisi olan iyimser yeşil büyüme yanlısı görüş, Çevresel Kuznets Eğrisi eşliğinde ifade edilirken, Büyüme-Agnostik görüş ise bu iyimser görüşe bir eleştiri mahiyetinde değerlendirilebilir. İyimser yeşil büyüme yanlısı görüşte teknolojik ilerlemenin ve ekonomik kalkınmanın çevresel sorunları çözmenin anahtarı olduğu dile getirilir. Büyüme-Agnostik görüşe göre ise ekonomik büyümenin veya çevresel sürdürülebilirliğin tek başına yeterli olmadığı savıyla birlikte, sosyal refaha odaklanma vurgusu yapılır. Her bir bakış açısının kendi içinde tutarlı ya da ispata muhtaç yönlerinin olduğu söylenebilir. Bu bağlamda her iki görüş ışığında teorik olarak sosyal refah merkezli yeşil sürdürülebilir kalkınma planları geliştirmek ve bu planları hayata geçirmek zor bir seçenek olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Fakat bu konuda kayda değer mesafe kat etmiş olan İskandinav ülkeleri örneğine bakıldığında imkânsız olmadığı aşikardır. Üçüncü bir görüş olan *küçülme* (degrowth) yaklaşımı ise iktisadi küçülme yanlısı bir düşünce akımını temsil eder.

Anahtar sözcükler: Yeşil ekonomi, ekonomik büyüme, sürdürülebilirlik

Introduction

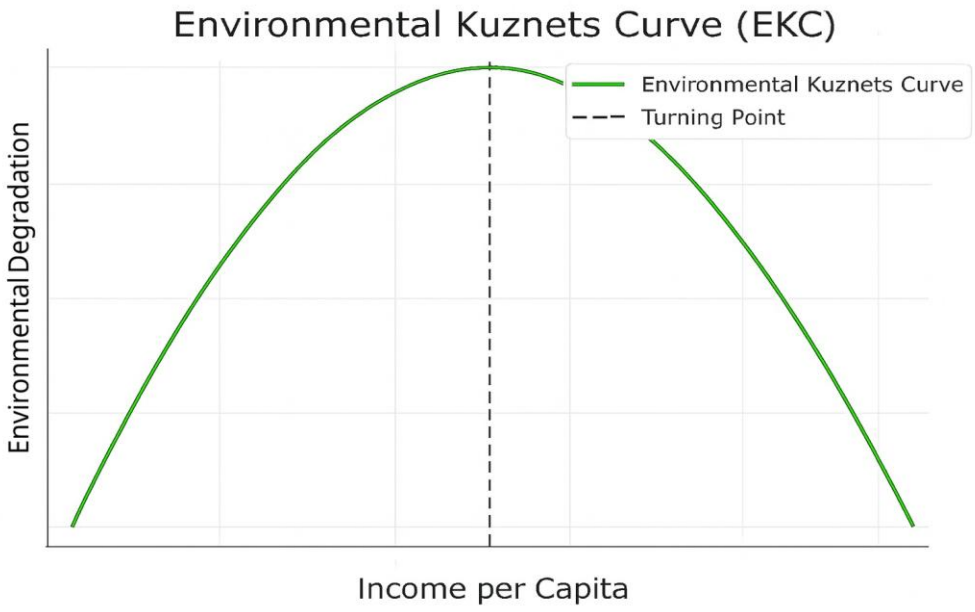
Social imbalance, coupled with socioeconomic instability and unemployment, exacerbates the effects of crises (Arıkan, 2022, p. 20). According to Grand and D'Elia (2018: 4–5), the popularity of the concepts of Sustainable Development and Green Growth has increased significantly, especially after the financial crisis of 2008. Indeed, economic crises have played an important role in the emergence of the Green Economy.

Table 1. Official Historical Development of the Sustainable Green Economy

Year	Event	Location	Common Name
1972	UN Conference on the Human Environment	Stockholm, Sweden	Stockholm Declaration
1987	UN World Commission on Environment and Development	Global	Brundtland Report
1992	UN Conference on Environment and Development	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	Rio Declaration
1993	UN World Conference on Human Rights	Vienna, Austria	Vienna Declaration
1994	International Conference on Population and Development	Cairo, Egypt	Cairo Conference
1995	World Summit for Social Development	Copenhagen, Denmark	Copenhagen Summit
1996	UN Habitat II	Istanbul, Türkiye	Istanbul Conference
1997	Kyoto Protocol	Kyoto, Japan	Kyoto Protocol
2002	World Summit on Sustainable Development	Johannesburg, South Africa	Johannesburg Summit
2005	Entry into Force of the Kyoto Protocol	Global	Kyoto Protocol
2007	UN Climate Change Conference	Bali, Indonesia	Bali Roadmap
2012	UN Conference on Sustainable Development	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	Rio+20
2015	UN Sustainable Development Summit	New York, USA	Agenda 2030: 17 Goals
2015	UN Climate Change Conference	Paris, France	COP21
2019	UN Climate Action Summit	New York, USA	Climate Action Summit
2021	UN Climate Change Conference	Glasgow, UK	COP26

Source: Author's compilation.

Among three well-established perspectives on the relationship between the economic growth and environment, the first, optimistic green growth, can be expressed through the framework of the Environmental Kuznets Curve. In contrast, the growth-agnostic perspective serves as a critical response to this optimistic stance, questioning its underlying assumptions and proposing alternative priorities.



Graph 1: EKC Curve

The optimistic green growth perspective is based on the assumption that technological progress and economic development are the primary drivers of overcoming environmental challenges. This approach posits that technological advances will increase energy efficiency, encourage the adoption of renewable energy sources, and reduce pollution, thereby contributing to environmental protection as economic prosperity increases (Grossman & Krueger, 1995; Acemoglu, Aghion, Bursztyn, & Hémous, 2012). However, this optimistic perspective is subject to criticism from the "Rebound Effect," also known as the "Jevons Paradox." According to this paradox, improvements in energy efficiency can lead to lower energy prices, which in turn stimulate increased energy demand, ultimately leading to higher overall energy consumption, potentially exacerbating environmental degradation (Sorrell et al., 2009).

In contrast, a growth-agnostic perspective argues that neither economic growth nor environmental sustainability alone is sufficient. Instead, the primary concern is the preservation and improvement of social welfare. Within this framework, the construction of a just society, the fulfillment of basic human needs, and the improvement of individual well-being are considered primary goals (Van den Bergh, 2019). Gallopín (2003) also

emphasizes that in a system geared towards social welfare, all inputs and outputs are directly or indirectly interconnected. Consequently, this view advocates a broader analytical perspective, arguing that the ultimate goal should be the improvement of social welfare, rather than narrowly focusing on a single variable such as environmental factors or economic growth.

The third perspective, known as the degrowth approach, advocates for the deliberate reduction of economic activity. According to Turgut (2014: 137–138), this school of thought envisions a radical transformation of the consumption-driven economic order that has been entrenched since the Industrial Revolution. Through comprehensive social reforms, the transition to economic contraction is expected to lead to reduced demand, a corresponding decline in production, improved resource efficiency, and ecological restoration—the core expectations of degrowth advocates.

However, Berktaş (2023: 8) questions the practical applicability of the degrowth thesis, arguing that there is no widespread demand for such social reforms in contemporary consumer societies. Given the urgency of halting further growth, the applicability of degrowth policies remains uncertain.

Furthermore, it cannot be claimed that most governments currently view environmental protection as a primary function (Jänicke, 2007: 342). Yet states are both agents and objects of green transformation (Büchs et al., 2011). Just as the world needs a green transformation, states themselves need a green transformation. In this context, the sincere efforts of civil society organizations effectively coordinated by governments and the private sector's development of cleaner technologies within a robust legal framework could offer a win-win scenario for all stakeholders in ecological modernization (Meadowcroft, 2005: 479-480).

Method

The study is a conceptual literature review examining approaches to the green economy and sustainable growth. Methodologically, key theoretical studies in the literature, international institutional reports and recent academic articles were subjected to a qualitative analysis.

The collected data has been synthesized to classify the three main schools of thought on the green economy (optimistic green growth, Growth-Agnostic view, and degrowth perpective) and to compare the underlying theoretical assumptions (e.g., Environmental Kuznets Curve) and their focus on social welfare.

Literature Review

The literature shows that numerous environmental reports published by international organizations (most notably the 1987 Brundtland Report

(WCED, 1987)) played a formative role in shaping the discourse on the green economy. In recent years, institutions such as the OECD, BIS, and the United Nations have produced analyses examining the impact of circular economy policies on green employment and economic growth. One of the most important recent initiatives is the European Green Deal, a 2019 manifesto-like document from the European Commission that aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across Europe to net zero by 2050 (Can, 2022: 1).

Nobel Prize-winning economist Daron Acemoğlu (2012) has made significant contributions to studies investigating the balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability. His analyses focus on how technological innovation and government policies can influence environmental outcomes. Acemoğlu's research highlights the importance of adopting green technologies, arguing that environmentally friendly innovations can simultaneously promote economic growth and reduce ecological damage.

Elinor Ostrom (2010), who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics for her work on the management of common pool resources, investigates how the collective management of natural assets affects economic sustainability. In her work titled "Governing the Commons" she emphasizes the importance of community-based governance models within the framework of the green economy.

Former US Vice President and Presidential Candidate Al Gore, together with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), received the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize. The award recognized their efforts to generate and disseminate information about anthropogenic climate change and to prepare the ground for necessary countermeasures. The IPCC's climate-focused research has also inspired many environmental documentaries in subsequent years (Nobel Prize, 2024).

One of the early pioneers of the green economy, Kenneth Boulding (2013: 3–14), presented fundamental views on resource scarcity and the sustainability of growth. Perspectives on the sustainable use of natural resources in the context of economic expansion continue to occupy an important place in the green economy literature.

Pearce (1989) contributed to the early development of the Green Economy (GE) concept by focusing environmental economics research on the sustainable use of natural resources. His work systematically examined the environmental impacts of economic activities, establishing fundamental perspectives for this field.

Fatih Birol (2014: 21–33), Chief Economist at the International Energy Agency (IEA), has produced influential work on energy policies and green growth. He is particularly known for his emphasis on renewable energy strategies and his advocacy for a sustainable and environmentally friendly

transformation of the energy sector. Birol's analyses of global energy trends highlight the need to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and emphasize the importance of long-term, sustainable energy strategies for policymakers.

Rees (1996: 53–72), one of the pioneers of the ecological footprint concept, focused his research on measuring the environmental impacts of economic activities and developing sustainable development policies. His seminal work, Our Ecological Footprint, provides valuable insights for understanding the environmental consequences of green economy policies.

Jacobs (2023) explores how green economy policies can support post-COVID-19 economic recovery. His work examines the potential impacts of the "Green New Deal" framework on green transformation and economic growth, providing a timely analysis of policy integration in the wake of global upheaval.

Daly (1991) positioned himself as one of the leading advocates of the green economy by bringing an innovative perspective to sustainable development. He proposed a balanced economic growth model that respects ecological limits and argued that economies must be restructured within the constraints of limited natural resources. Daly's contributions include the development of fundamental concepts at the heart of contemporary sustainability discourse, such as the circular economy, full employment, and resource efficiency.

Aşıcı and Şahin (2021: 1–50), in their study titled The Green Economy, examined the conceptual and theoretical framework of the green economy and evaluated the policy measures implemented during Türkiye's transition to a green economy model. Using a SWOT analysis, the article identifies the strengths and weaknesses of renewable energy sources in the Turkish context.

Bao and Xu (2019: 483–493) investigated the impact of renewable energy consumption on urbanization and economic growth in Chinese provinces and regions. Their findings show that renewable energy use has a positive effect on economic growth.

Foster et al. (2011) examine the environmental consequences of capitalism and analyze how the green economy can mitigate these effects. Their research provides in-depth insights into ecological crises and sustainable development.

Jacobs (1991) analyzes the relationship between sustainable development and environmental policy by addressing the political and social dimensions of the green economy.

Koyuncu and Karabulut (2021: 466–482) aim to determine the long-term effects of sustainable energy sources and ecological footprint on economic growth in their quantitative study on renewable energy in the context of

sustainable growth and green economy, using Türkiye as a case study. Using data from 1961 to 2015 and applying the Threshold Autoregressive (TAR) model, they found that renewable energy consumption contributes positively to Türkiye's long-term economic growth, while the impact of the ecological footprint on growth varies according to threshold values.

Sarıcı and Erikli (2022: 98–119) comprehensively reviewed the national and international literature on the green economy, green products, green productivity, and sustainability, and classified 66 international and 54 local studies using content analysis.

Al (2019: 112–124), in his study titled Sustainable development and green economy: A composite index proposal for Türkiye, argues that the green economy, accepted as a fundamental element of sustainability, aims to reconcile the tension between environmental threats and economic goals. The study also includes a green economy index calculation covering the period 2002–2015.

Alam and Murad (2020: 382–390) examine the effects of energy from sustainable production on consumption in OECD countries, taking into account factors such as economic growth, trade deficits, and technological progress. Their findings show that renewable energy use supports economic growth.

Apergis and Payne (2010: 656–660) analyze the relationship between economic development and renewable energy consumption in OECD countries. Based on panel data analysis, they find that renewable energy consumption has a positive effect on economic growth.

Menyah and Wolde-Rufael (2010: 1374–1382) examine the interaction between energy consumption, pollutant emissions, and economic growth in their study on South Africa. Their findings reveal that although energy consumption has a positive effect on economic growth, there is an urgent need to reduce pollutant emissions.

Büchs et al. (2011) emphasize the necessity of reducing carbon emissions and propose policies aimed at mitigating climate change. Their work contributes to the development of climate-sensitive economic strategies within the framework of a green economy.

Zhang et al. (2019) examine the impact of green innovation on company performance among publicly traded companies in China. Their findings show that green innovation has a positive effect on corporate performance and strengthens the economic rationale for environmental technological investments.

Barbier (2010, 2012, 2013) and Barbier & Markandya (2013) have produced groundbreaking research on the green economy and sustainable

development, with a particular emphasis on the "Green New Deal" and post-crisis economic recovery. Their contributions offer a macroeconomic perspective on integrating environmental sustainability into growth-oriented policy agendas.

Bozlağan (2005) traces the historical evolution of sustainability thinking and offers theoretical perspectives on the green economy and sustainable development. His work contextualizes contemporary green economy debates within a broader intellectual tradition.

Cato (2012) reinforces the theoretical foundations and practical applications of the green economy in his comprehensive book, Green economics: an introduction to theory, policy and practice. The book serves as an important reference for understanding the interdisciplinary nature of green economy policy.

Aşıcı and Şahin (2021) conduct an in-depth analysis of Türkiye's green economy policies and practices, evaluating the implementation and institutional dynamics of sustainable development strategies in the national context.

Rockström et al. (2009) present empirical findings on planetary boundaries and their effects on sustainable development, introducing the concept of a "safe operating space for humanity." Their work highlights the ecological constraints within which economic systems must operate.

Stern (2007), in his influential Stern Review, lays out the economic rationale for transitioning to a green economy. Examining the costs and risks associated with climate change, he advocates for proactive economic incentives to support mitigation efforts.

Stiglitz (2006), known for his work on economic development and social inequality, argues that climate action must be consistent with economic justice and sustainable growth. His research supports the integration of environmental and economic policies within the green economy paradigm.

Known for his critical approach to traditional growth models, Jackson (2009: 67–85) addresses the compatibility of economic growth with environmental and social sustainability. In his work Prosperity Without Growth, he argues for the necessity of transitioning to a green economy and advocates for alternative economic frameworks by criticizing the ecological consequences of unlimited economic expansion.

Ekins (2000) is widely recognized for his contributions to sustainable development and the green economy. His theoretical and empirical research explores how a balance can be achieved between economic growth and

environmental sustainability. His book Economic Growth and Environmental Sustainability remains an important reference in this field.

Costanza et al. (1997: 253–260), a leading name in ecological economics, focuses on the valuation of ecosystem services and the assessment of the environmental impacts of economic activities. His work critically examines how the sustainable use of natural resources can be reconciled with economic growth.

Lovins & Hawken (1999) explore the role of renewable energy in facilitating the transition to a green economy. Their research emphasizes the interrelationship between economic growth and environmental protection, focusing particularly on energy efficiency and sustainable energy systems.

Raworth's (2023) study, Doughnut Economics, presents a revised framework for circular economy and sustainable development policy. The model aims to increase social welfare within planetary boundaries and provide a normative guide for green economic planning.

Kılıç (2019) analyzes the balance between the green economy, environmental sustainability, and economic development in Türkiye. The study also evaluates national strategies for the green economy and the macroeconomic effects of renewable energy use.

Öztürk (2020: 67–83) examines Türkiye's renewable energy policies and environmental economy, analyzing the impact of green growth strategies on national economic performance.

Geels (2011: 24–40) offers theoretical perspectives on the green economy and sustainable development with a multi-level view of sustainability transitions. His work emphasizes the systemic nature of socio-technical change.

Weinthal (2023) examines the intersection of environmental peacebuilding and green economy policies, analyzing how sustainable development initiatives can affect peace processes in conflict-affected regions.

Meo et al. (2022) investigate the role of the green economy in sustainability and green finance, emphasizing the importance of financial instruments in reducing carbon emissions and supporting ecological goals.

Colenbrander et al. (2023) aim to contribute to the climate finance literature by assessing whether India's financial system is ready for a low-carbon transition and identifying institutional and policy gaps.

Additional studies featured in the journal Sustainable Earth Reviews (2024) highlight the importance of deep technological transformations in advancing sustainable production. These studies argue that incremental innovations are

insufficient and that more radical technological changes are necessary to achieve long-term sustainability goals.

Conclusion

This study examines the concept of sustainable green economy from both theoretical and empirical perspectives, covering global perspectives as well as Türkiye's specific context. In the literature, green economy is defined as an approach that aims to integrate environmental sustainability with economic development. The findings show that technological progress and economic growth have the potential to contribute to solving environmental problems. However, this contribution must be evaluated within a framework that does not neglect social welfare. Therefore, it has been concluded that environmental sustainability cannot be based solely on economic growth; on the contrary, it requires a policy orientation that focuses on social welfare. Furthermore, following the turning point predicted by the Environmental Kuznets Curve hypothesis, the consistent implementation of pollution reduction measures and green transformation policies becomes imperative.

Empirical studies show that Türkiye has significant potential for green economic transformation in line with its sustainable development goals. To fully realize this potential, it is essential to increase the use of renewable energy sources, invest in energy efficiency, and encourage the widespread adoption of environmentally friendly technologies. In the empirical part of the author's thesis study, it was determined that Turkey's economic growth and environmental pollution curve had passed its turning point by 2015. In this context, it is critically important to establish and implement comprehensive policy frameworks that encourage cooperation at both the national and international levels.

Ultimately, the green economy is conceptualized as a holistic paradigm that supports not only environmental sustainability but also economic growth and social welfare. Türkiye can play a leading role in achieving green economy goals through efficient resource management and innovative policy approaches. The findings of this study are considered to be instructive in terms of both academic discourse and policy-making. It seems possible for political actors to steer the economy towards a green transformation; however, this process requires more explicit participation from both public institutions and private sector stakeholders.

Recommendations

This study examines both the historical and current dynamics of the transition to a sustainable green economy globally and in Türkiye. Based on the findings, the following recommendations may serve as a strategic guide for academics, bureaucrats, policymakers, and practitioners:

1. Promotion of Green Growth Strategies: Policies aimed at increasing the use of renewable energy should be implemented to strike a balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability in Türkiye. Investment in low-carbon technologies should be encouraged, and research and development (R&D) activities in this field should be actively supported.
2. Development of Data Integration: High-quality and detailed data sets should be developed to better analyze the relationship between economic growth and environmental degradation. Sector-specific environmental and economic indicators should be examined in depth. In addition to global resources such as the World Bank Open Data platform, establishing and strengthening local databases will increase both the quality and quantity of scientific research.
3. Sectoral Transformation and Innovation: New and dynamic policies aligned with green transformation goals should be developed in the agriculture, industry, and energy sectors. Measures promoting sustainable agricultural practices, energy efficiency projects, and the reduction of pollution in industrial activities should be expanded.
4. Strengthening International Cooperation: International cooperation should be strengthened in line with the Paris Climate Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Binding decisions should be taken by official authorities. In this context, mobilizing financial resources and facilitating technology transfer are essential.
5. Education and Awareness Programs: To strengthen the social foundations of the transition to a green economy, educational initiatives and community-based projects that raise environmental awareness should be developed. In the long term, this will encourage sustainable consumption and production habits. Education programs for young people and children should include experiential activities that enable them to internalize environmental values through direct participation.Alignment of Environmental and Economic Policies: To support the positive implications of the Environmental Kuznets Curve, environmental regulations and economic policies must be harmonized. Multi-sectoral strategies should be designed to balance energy consumption, carbon emissions, and economic growth.
6. Public-Private Sector Collaboration: Collaboration between public institutions and the private sector should be intensified throughout the green transformation process. Public incentives to finance green projects should be combined with private sector investments, and coordination mechanisms should be strengthened. The public sector should take proactive steps to facilitate voluntary private initiatives.

These recommendations are not only applicable to Türkiye but can also offer viable strategies for other developing economies striving to achieve

sustainable development goals. The findings of this study can serve as a foundation for more comprehensive research in this field in the future.

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Extended Abstract

The increasing urgency of environmental degradation and recurring global crises, including the 2008 financial crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, have intensified global interest in sustainable development. In this context, the green economy has emerged as a paradigm that aims to integrate economic growth with ecological balance. Derived from the author's 2025 thesis, "Investigation of Sustainable Green Economy in the Example of Türkiye" this study presents a

theoretical review of fundamental approaches to the green economy and examines their impact on sustainable growth, welfare, and policy design.

The article identifies three main theoretical perspectives: the optimistic pro-green growth view, the growth-independent (degrowth) approach, and the degrowth perspective. The pro-green growth view, based on the Environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC) hypothesis, argues that economic growth initially worsens environmental quality but improves it once income reaches a critical threshold. Proponents argue that technological innovation and renewable energy use can decouple growth from environmental harm and that sustainability can be achieved through market mechanisms and innovation (Grossman and Krueger, 1995; Acemoglu et al., 2012). However, this optimism is balanced by the Jevons Paradox (rebound effect), which implies that efficiency gains can paradoxically increase overall resource use (Sorrell et al., 2009).

Growth-indifferent or Growth Perspective (Van den Bergh, 2019) rejects growth as an ultimate goal and prioritizes human well-being, equality, and ecological stability. This view challenges GDP-based economic orthodoxy by emphasizing multidimensional well-being indicators such as social inclusion, equality, and institutional resilience. In this sense, sustainability depends not only on economic efficiency but also on systemic coherence between environmental and social systems. Gallopín (2003) emphasizes that economic and ecological processes are integral parts of a complex system and require integrated policy approaches consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The degrowth approach offers a more radical critique, arguing that continuous industrial expansion leads to ecological excess and social inequalities (Turgut, 2014). Its proponents advocate for reduced production and consumption and a stable economy focused on sufficiency and social well-being. However, scientists note that downsizing is politically and socially challenging to implement, given global consumption habits and institutional inertia (Berktaş, 2023).

The study built upon these theoretical frameworks, examines key turning points that have shaped global environmental policy: from the 1972 Stockholm Conference and the 1987 Brundtland Report (Our Common Future) to the 2015 Paris Agreement and the 2019 European Green Deal. These events signal the gradual institutionalization of environmental principles in global economic governance. Empirical studies such as those by Apergis and Payne (2010) and Bao and Xu (2019) show that renewable energy investments can boost growth and reduce emissions when supported by consistent policy frameworks. Similarly, Daly (1991) and Raworth (2023) advocate for economic systems that remain within planetary boundaries while ensuring social justice.

For Türkiye, the green economy presents both opportunities and constraints. The country has significant renewable energy potential and has aligned parts of its national strategy with the UN's 2030 Agenda. Studies by Aşıcı and Şahin (2021) and Koyuncu and Karabulut (2021) show that the widespread use of renewable energy contributes positively to long-term growth and employment. However, policy inconsistency, limited data integration, and weak institutional coordination hinder progress. To advance the green transition, public-private partnerships must be strengthened, and environmental goals must be integrated into fiscal and industrial policy.

The article concludes that sustainable green growth is only possible when environmental, social, and economic goals are pursued together. Governments must strike a balance between regulation and innovation by providing incentives for clean technologies while ensuring the benefits of the green transition are distributed fairly. Transparent governance, technological innovation, and inclusive participation are the key drivers of long-term success.

At its core, the green economy represents a holistic model that combines environmental integrity with social well-being, redefining prosperity beyond GDP. For

Türkiye and similar developing economies, progress toward sustainability depends more on political will, institutional reforms, and collective commitment than on technical competence. The study contributes to the literature by clarifying theoretical debates on green economy thinking and providing a framework for integrating social welfare and environmental protection into economic policy.

Genişletilmiş Özet

Çevresel tahribatın artan aciliyeti ve 2008 finansal çöküşü, COVID-19 pandemisi ve Rusya-Ukrayna çatışmasını da içeren ve tekerrür eden küresel krizler, sürdürülebilir kalkınmaya yönelik küresel ilgiyi cezbetmiştir. Bu bağlamda yeşil ekonomi, ekonomik büyümeyi ekolojik denge ile bütünleştirmeyi amaçlayan bir paradigma olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Yazarın 2025 tarihli "Sürdürülebilir Yeşil Ekonominin Türkiye Örneğinde İncelenmesi" başlıklı tezinden türetilen bu çalışma, yeşil ekonomiye yönelik temel yaklaşımların kuramsal bir incelemesini sunmakta ve bu yaklaşımların sürdürülebilir büyüme, refah ve politika tasarımı üzerindeki doğurgularını incelemektedir.

Makale üç ana kuramsal perspektifi tanımlamaktadır: iyimser yeşil büyüme yanlısı (pro-green growth) görüş, büyüme-agnostik (Agrowth) yaklaşım ve küçülme (degrowth) perspektifi. Çevresel Kuznets Eğrisi (ÇKE) hipotezine dayanan yeşil büyüme yanlısı görüş, ekonomik büyümenin başlangıçta çevre kalitesini kötüleştirdiğini, ancak gelir kritik bir eşiğe ulaştığında iyileştirdiğini öne sürmektedir. Bu görüşün savunucuları, teknolojik yeniliklerin ve yenilenebilir enerji kullanımının, büyümeyi çevresel tahribattan ayrıştırabileceğini (decoupling) ve böylece sürdürülebilirliği piyasa mekanizmaları ve inovasyon yoluyla ulaşılabilir hale getirebileceğini savunmaktadır (Grossman & Krueger, 1995; Acemoglu vd., 2012). Ancak bu iyimserlik, verimlilik kazanımlarının paradoksal bir şekilde toplam kaynak kullanımını artırabileceğini ima eden Jevons Paradoksu (geri tepme etkisi) tarafından gölgelenmektedir (Sorrell vd., 2009).

Büyüme-agnostik veya Agrowth perspektifi (Van den Bergh, 2019), büyümeyi nihai bir hedef olarak reddetmekte ve insan esenliğini, eşitliği ve ekolojik istikrarı önceliklendirmektedir. Bu görüş, sosyal kapsayıcılık, hakkaniyet ve kurumsal dayanıklılık gibi çok boyutlu refah göstergelerini vurgulayarak GSYİH temelli iktisadi ortodoksiye meydan okumaktadır. Bu anlamda sürdürülebilirlik, yalnızca ekonomik verimliliğe değil, aynı zamanda çevresel ve sosyal sistemler arasındaki sistemik uyuma da bağlıdır. Gallopín (2003), ekonomik ve ekolojik süreçlerin karmaşık bir sistemin ayrılmaz parçaları olduğunu ve Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma Amaçları (SKA) ile uyumlu bütünleşik politika yaklaşımları gerektirdiğini vurgulamaktadır.

Küçülme yaklaşımı, sürekli endüstriyel genişlemenin ekolojik limit aşımına (overshoot) ve sosyal eşitsizliklere yol açtığını savunarak daha radikal bir eleştiri sunmaktadır (Turgut, 2014). Savunucuları, azaltılmış üretim ve tüketim ile yeterlilik ve toplumsal refahı merkeze alan bir durağan durum ekonomisi (steady-state economy) çağrısında bulunmaktadır. Bununla birlikte akademisyenler, küresel tüketim alışkanlıkları ve kurumsal atalet göz önüne alındığında, küçülmeyi uygulamanın politik ve sosyal açıdan zorlu olduğuna dikkat çekmektedir (Berktaş, 2023).

Bu kuramsal çerçevelere dayanarak çalışma, 1972 Stockholm Konferansı ve 1987 Brundtland Raporu'ndan (Ortak Geleceğimiz) 2015 Paris Anlaşması ve 2019 Avrupa Yeşil Mutabakatı'na kadar küresel çevre politikasını şekillendiren başlıca mihenk taşlarını gözden geçirmektedir. Bu olaylar, çevresel ilkelerin küresel ekonomik yönetişim içinde kademeli olarak kurumsallaşmasına işaret etmektedir. Apergis ve Payne (2010) ile Bao ve Xu (2019) tarafından yapılanlar gibi ampirik çalışmalar, yenilenebilir enerji yatırımlarının, tutarlı politika çerçeveleriyle desteklendiğinde büyümeyi artırabildiğini ve emisyonları azaltabildiğini göstermektedir. Benzer şekilde, Daly (1991) ve Raworth (2023) de sosyal adaleti güvence altına alırken gezegenin sınırları (planetary boundaries) içinde kalan ekonomik sistemleri savunmaktadır.