

# THE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

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# THE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

## Introductory statements:

- **Climate change is not a recent phenomenon but has shaped the history of civilization**
- **Throughout the recent history of global economic development climate change has substantially gained momentum that may expose civilization at risk**

# THE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE (CC)

What has changed with CC in a cultural perspective?

- Collective knowledge on climate change is increasing in almost all corners of the world
- Policies and politics are influenced worldwide by the climate change debate
- Restrictions and incentives regulate public and private behaviour „ ...*is it carbon neutral, what I am doing?*“
- Behaviour was guided so far mostly by respect against fellow beings and one's society

# THE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

- **Since app. four decades human behaviour and values are morally charged with respect to Nature, climate and one's attitude towards the material world and consumption patterns**
- **Affected development policy scenarios are:**
  - **Energy supply (CO<sub>2</sub>)**
  - **Mobility (CO<sub>2</sub>)**
  - **Industrial production (CO<sub>2</sub> & GHG)**
  - **....**

# THE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

- **Consumer Culture** is threatened worldwide by increasing environmental consciousness
- It aims at
  - **Reducing the waste of natural resources**
  - **Recycling more**
  - **Consuming less**
  - **Saving the climate by saving the forests**

# THE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Questions to be answered:

- **Can the impact of climate change ever be turned consumer friendly?**
- **Do we enter an era of global renunciation?**
- **Can climate change contribute to sustainable or only to «destructive» growth?**
- **Are today's international political institutions and decision making instruments adequate to combat climate change?**

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## Does climate neutral development need

- More permanent forest?
- More clearcutting (for biofuel from cellulosis) and reafforestation to create more carbon sinks?
- Will citizens appreciate transformations of the landscapes that they are acquainted with?

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- Is there sufficient economic power against adverse interest groups and political will to transform European forests to adapt to climate change?
- The diversity of the national legislation in European countries often leads to contradictory, not synchronized or any measures at all to counterbalance negative effects of CC



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**The diversity of European political cultures reflects different historical roots, traditions and mentalities**

**They are – still today – sometimes convergent and divergent as an outcome of political processes and economic crises**

**Although there is a European Union CC mitigation policy is predominantly run by the national governments**

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**European cultures are looking back to hundreds of years of separately evolving cultural identities and most recently they should agree to the implementation of a common climate policy (Kyoto and NN after 2012) that is based on the assumption that CC needs coordinated commitments and actions – will that work?**

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**The coming into being of a new **climate culture** needs much more than national and international climate conventions**

**IT needs **time, concern and belief** in scientific climate change scenarios by the majority of the European citizens, but...**

# THE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

**How convincing are scientific CC scenarios to the common citizen?**

**How much is he/she prepared to change his/her hedonistic life style in order to save the living standard & quality of life of the next generations?**

**What turns out to be the stronger dogma?  
CC mitigation awareness or consumption?**

# THE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

**To keep global climate change at a bearable limit for ourselves and future generations we have still to go a long way and to cross rough waters ...**

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**Thank you  
for your attention !**

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