

## AT THE CROSS-ROADS OF GLOBAL AND LOCAL VILLAGE: PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS CLIMATE CHANGE IN LITHUANIA

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*Abstract:* This paper is aimed at exploring climate change-related societal attitudes and public discourse in Lithuania. Research questions deal with the ways in which public perceives the causes and possible mitigation strategies and measures of climate change. The empirical evidence presented in this article is based upon the representative public opinion surveys and media in 2007-2010. The Lithuanian survey data are enriched and contrasted with the data of Eurobarometer survey results (2008). Some of the framings in the Lithuanian questionnaire are enriched by the questions corresponding with the Gallup climate change-related poll conducted in the US (Dunlap, 2008). The Lithuanian public opinion surveys identify a relatively poor public knowledge of the major international treaties and events related to climate change. How could this public ignorance be interpreted? Does it reflect the low or marginalized environmental awareness of Lithuanian society at large? However, some other empirical evidence points to almost the opposite conclusions and interpretation, - especially as reflected in environmentalism as the major driving social force behind the collapse of the Soviet regime in the late 1980s – early 1990s. Exploring where, when and in which contexts are the messages regarding climate change placed in Lithuanian mass media and ranked in the public opinion polls clearly indicate the tendency that global warming is at best an exotic theme reaching the “local village” of Lithuanian mass-audience from abroad, rather than becoming a socially internalized issue. Climate change remains a minor issue of concern both in public perceptions and in mass media discourse. Why the key contemporary issue – climate change - is diffusing so slowly in the “local village” of Lithuanian society? Why the messages of global warming are so marginally echoed in Lithuanian mass media? These and other research questions are addressed in this paper, pointing to the interpretation of the state of society inter alia as undergoing a “double-risk” (Rinkevicius, 2000) or “all encompassing risk” (Yanitsky, 2000) character and period of transformations.

## CLIMATE CHANGE - PERCEPTION AND RESPONSES IN EVERYDAY LIFE BY DIFFERENT SOCIAL GROUPS: AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY

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*Abstract:* In recent years research results have pointed to an increased effect of climate change and its debate on consumer decisions. Thus large parts of the German population express their willingness to preferably respond to offers and services targeted at climate protection and to further reduce direct consumption of natural resources.

Based on these results a one-year explorative study by the Research Centre for Sustainability Studies (artec) at Bremen University aimed at researching whether climate change affects private consumption behavior and its relevance for sustainable consumption. Special focus was put on the everyday perception of climate change

as well as on the interviewed consumers` actual responses with respect to the consumption areas of energy, mobility and food.

Methodically the study was based on focus groups as well as face-to-face interviews and it was conducted among members of three different social groups: The first included members of an environmental organisation with a presumably heightened interest in environmental topics. The second included people who were affected by a particular high risk of poverty while the third was not subjected to any sort of preconceptions.

## PRACTICES AND CULTURES OF ADAPTIVE GOVERNANCE FOR RAPIDLY ERODING PORTUGUESE COASTLINES

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*Abstract:* Portuguese coasts, which are among the most energetic and eroded coastal stretches in Europe, have experienced intense urban and tourist pressure over the last decades. 80% of the coastal population and 85% of GDP are concentrated on coastal stretches. 50% of the urban areas are located within 13 km of the coastline, and coastal erosion reaches retreats over 220m in the last 50 years.

While coastal change dynamics led by human occupation and erosion occur at fast pace, the legal framework and political actions have been very slow. According to all scenarios, coastal erosion rates will only accelerate in the coming decades in a situation in which the management of coastal zones is trusted to a chaotic maze of public entities, raising serious accountability problems. Any planning for adaptive sustainability must also consider the present context of the Portuguese financial crisis, as well as the forecast reduction of European Union (EU) funds after 2013.

All these factors combine to make the Portuguese coastline an unmatched laboratory for testing new designs for adaptive governance for sustainability in a hostile economic atmosphere.

We identify two possible current coping tactics that generate unsustainable options arising from these contradictions: a calamity coast adaptation, with the existing coastline protected at all costs through top-down decision making, and a Faustian bargain adaptation, where politicians, planners and developers demand ever more elaborate coastal protection in order to safeguard their investments.

This paper deals with: 1) scenarios of possible future coastal erosion and flooding based on the best scientific estimates available; 2) how these scenarios are interpreted in coastal policy making and planning, and 3) how the Portuguese society is responding to the opportunities offered by adaptive governance for sustainable coastlines.

These findings will be based on evidence from a series of interviews with key-actors involved in coastal policies and decision-making, as well as local stakeholders in 3 case study locations. All of them are critical sandy stretches, with heavy urban growth, raising sharp questions on sustainability, justice, public policy and scientific awareness. Participation seems to be a central issue in forthcoming adaptive social processes.