

Chapter 2

Differing Views on the Environment

Abstract Environmental degradations occurred and are occurring everywhere, although they tend to vary with the economic system, the state of the economy, the geographic area, the climatic conditions, and the growth of the population – to cite just a few relevant factors. Moreover, the *perception* of environmental problems and the *attitude* towards the environment seem to depend critically on the state of the economy with consequences for tackling cross-border environmental issues. In this context, this chapter attempts to “take stock” of the environmental situation in various parts of the developed and the developing world. The survey includes the actions, or rather the reactions, regarding a more or less rigorous environmental regulation. In view of differing attitudes towards the environment, the challenges arising from a growing number of *global* environmental problems still have to be mastered.

2.1 The Europeans and the Environment

After the *ecological revolution* had reached the industrialized countries in the 1960s and the early 1970s, the European Community enacted the *First Community Environment Action Programme* (1st EAP) in 1973. In the period till 2012, the 6th EAP provides the framework for environmental policy-making in the EU. The four priority areas identified are *climate change, nature and biodiversity, environment and health, natural resources and waste*. According to the preamble, the 6th EAP “*should promote the process of integration of environmental concerns into all Community policies and activities ... in order to reduce the pressures on the environment from various sources*” ([3], preamble, paragraph 13). These priority areas were already relevant for the 5th EAP (1993–2000), which, with the title “Towards Sustainability”, focused on longer term objectives and on a more global approach – in comparison to the earlier EAPs.

To what extent were the citizens of the *European Union*, or rather the former *European Community*, concerned about environmental issues? This will be briefly

analyzed in the following subsection by means of the *Eurobarometer*, which has been employed by the European Commission to monitor the “evolution of public opinion” in the member states since 1973 (cf. [4]).

2.1.1 *Environmental Awareness in Europe*

The Environment Directorate-General of the EU commissions public opinion surveys to measure the attitudes and the behavior of Europeans towards the environment. The surveys address the *general attitude towards the environment*, the *personal relationship with the environment*, *opinions on environment policies* and questions regarding *information on the environment*.¹

One key question usually refers to the “ranking” of the concept of environment in Europeans’ minds: what are the first associations they tend to make with the word “environment” and which environmental issues worry them the most. The answers given vary, of course, over time, but “protecting nature”, “the state of the environment our children will inherit” and “pollution in towns and cities” have always been among the priorities. “Climate change”, which has only been offered as an alternative in recent years, declined surprisingly from 19% in 2007 to only 13% in 2011. People seem to be losing interest in this issue, for whatever reason. “Man-made disasters (oil spills and industrial accidents)” increased only slightly from 8% in 2007 to 9% in 2011, despite of the Deepwater Horizon Catastrophe in April 2010 and the Fukushima Nuclear Catastrophe in March 2011.² However, if people are allowed to pick the five main environmental issues that they are worried about, then “man-made disasters” rank top.

According to the latest Eurobarometer survey EB75.2 in 2011 (cf. the Summary and the Factsheet in [5]), the top three priorities (in percentages) for the citizens to protect the environment are (max. 3 answers):

Sort waste so that it can be recycled: 2011: 59%, 2007: 55%

Reduce your home energy consumption
(lighting, heating, household appliances): 2011: 48%, 2007: 47%

Use public transport as much as possible
instead of using your own car: 2011: 37%, 2007: 38%

Thus, only the issue of “sorting waste” gained increasing attention between 2007 and 2011. Of interest are also the answers (in percentages) to the following two questions, which touch on the issue of the “willingness to pay” for the environment:

¹ Cf. [6], the website for the “Special Eurobarometer”, which also covers the “attitudes towards the environment”.

² The fieldwork for this latest survey was carried out between April 13 and May 8, 2011, thus after the Fukushima Nuclear Catastrophe (cf. [5]).

How important is protecting the environment
to you personally?

Percentage of answers for “totally important”: 2011: 95%, 2007: 96%

Are you willing to buy environmentally friendly
products even if they cost a little bit more?

Percentage of answers for “totally agree”: 2011: 72%, 2007: 75%

The answers to the question regarding the “most effective ways of tackling environmental problems” prioritize the “introduction of heavier fines for offenders”, which is with an acceptance rate of 36% in 2011 far ahead of “providing more information on environmental issues”, which gained only 26%. Only 15% of those asked favor “introducing or increasing taxation on environmentally damaging activities”.

91% of those interviewed “agree totally” that “the big polluters (corporations and industry) should be mainly responsible for protecting the environment”, whereas only 56% consider “protecting the environment” as a “very important” personal duty, and for an additional 36% it constitutes a “fairly important” personal duty. Moreover, 69% of the citizens believe that they themselves are not doing enough “to use natural resources efficiently”.

And, finally, “economic factors” (to the extent of 85%), the “state of the environment” (to the extent of 77%) and “social factors” (to the extent of 75%) influence “quality of life” substantially.

What does all these mean? What conclusions can be derived from these surveys?³
What can one learn for “environmental economics”?

2.1.2 Conclusions for Environmental Economics

First of all, it is important to mention that “economic factors”, the “state of the environment” and “social factors” are dependent on each other. Economic growth obviously affects the social situation. Moreover, the environment can be further polluted through economic activities, or economic resources can be used to clean up the environment or prevent further environmental pollution. In many countries environmental degradation and social factors such as poverty are strongly correlated. Thus, and this is a first lesson for “environmental economics”, the economical and the ecological conditions should not be separated when investigating environmental issues. Given the existing, persistent dichotomy between ecology and economy, this is not an easy thing to accomplish. In fact, this dichotomy results from information deficits, which tend to increase the “gap” between economical and environmental is-

³ Observe that answers to some of the questions in the *Eurobarometer* surveys are not only provided in aggregate form, but also for the individual member states of the EU. This allows, in principle, an interesting analysis of the differences in attitudes among the citizens of the member states, which shall, however, not be further pursued in the context considered here (cf., for example, [5]).

sues (cf. the discussions in the introductory chapter (Section 1.1), but also in Part III, in particular Subsection 9.1.1).

Some environmental concerns such as “protecting nature”, “the state of the environment our children will inherit” and “pollution in towns and cities” have occupied high ranks and even top ranks in the surveys for at least ten years. This is, firstly, a clear indication that it is difficult to tackle some environmental problems successfully and once and for all. Of course, in the context of “environmental economics” this immediately entails the question, why is this the case? A hint for an answer is provided by the fact that the three issues cited result from individual decisions and activities. So, it is in the hands of the economic agents to continue polluting the environment or to prevent future pollution, at least to a large extent. It is not too difficult to keep the streets clean, to not dump waste in the forests, to use one’s own car less, or to prevent water pollution. Therefore, the question should be reformulated as follows: why do people disapprove of the pollution in towns and cities on the one hand, and contribute towards exactly this pollution on the other?

Man-made disasters, however, seem to have only a short-lived effect. They are usually soon forgotten, till the next disaster starts to worry people. Similarly, environmental issues which extend over some period of time rarely receive the attention they deserve and should receive if it is difficult to experience personally severe and direct consequences. This is, for example, true for “climate change”, especially, if long and hard winters seem to contradict the forecast of “global warming”.

The question regarding the “top three environmental priorities” reveal activities, which are comparatively easy to carry out (sorting waste for recycling purposes), or they help to save money (reducing home energy consumption), or are difficult to monitor on an individual level (using public transport). Therefore, it seems to be easy to award them high priority. The question regarding the “personal importance” of the environment in combination with the “willingness to pay” for environmentally friendly products demonstrates the dilemma: when people are asked to contribute personally towards the protection of the environment, they seem to lose interest and their enthusiasm wanes. This is clearly also an aspect which is relevant for “environmental economics”.

A somewhat related situation can be observed with the answers to the question regarding the “most effective ways of tackling environmental problems”. The prioritized answer of an “introduction of heavier fines for offenders” points again to “the others” – the “polluters” should be penalized. However, as soon as there is a slight chance that one might oneself be affected by an environmental tax, this instrument suddenly becomes much less interesting. So, people tend to blame others for environmental degradation and, therefore, consider policies with a potential effect on their own economic situation less appropriate.

Finally, the fact that 91% “agree totally” that the big polluters should be mainly responsible for protecting the environment, and the fact that only 56% consider the protection of the environment a “very personal” duty points again in the same direction: “the others” are always more responsible for all issues related to environmental problems than oneself. This “attitude” is important and relevant for a number of cases of environmental degradation.

In summary, this brief analysis of the “attitudes of European citizens towards the environment” helps to explain, among other things, the *persistence* of certain environmental issues, such as the highly ranked “pollution of towns and cities”. If it is mainly the “others”, who are blamed for polluting the environment, then this attitude should be changed. It is one of the tasks of “environmental economics” to provide appropriate incentives.

The following section investigates environmental issues in the US. Although environmental awareness in the US is supposedly as high as in the EU, differences in the *perception* of the environment and of environmental problems lead to different attitudes towards the environment. These differences can hinder negotiations on cross-border environmental problems. The current international negotiations on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions demonstrate the different positions among industrialized countries and between industrialized and developing countries regarding this issue.

2.2 The Environmental Movement in the US

On April 22, 1970, the US celebrated *Earth Day*. This is, probably, the birthday of the *environmental movement* in the US. The following excerpt from an article published in the *EPA Journal* in 1988, provides some background information.

John C. Whitaker:⁴ “Earth Day Recollections: What It Was Like When The Movement Took Off”

(excerpt from [16], *EPA Journal* July/August 1988)

When President Nixon and his staff walked into the White House on January 20, 1969, we were totally unprepared for the tidal wave of public opinion in favor of cleaning the nation's environment that was about to engulf us. If Hubert Humphrey had become President, the result would have been the same.

During the 1968 presidential campaign, neither the Nixon nor Humphrey campaign gave more than lip service to environmental issues. Rather, their thoughts focused on

such issues as Vietnam, prosperity, the rising crime rate, and inflation. Nixon made one radio speech on natural resources and the quality of the environment, which seemed adequate to cover an issue that stirred little interest among the electorate.

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Yet only 17 months after the election, on April 22, 1970, the country celebrated Earth Day, with a national outpouring of concern for cleaning up the environment. Politicians of both parties jumped on the issue. So

⁴ John C. Whitaker was Cabinet Secretary in the Nixon administration in 1969 and a member of the Domestic Council staff from 1969 to 1973. As a member of the Domestic Council, Mr. Whitaker had responsibility for environmental and natural resources policies.

many politicians were on the stump on Earth Day that Congress was forced to close down. The oratory, one of the wire services observed, was “as thick as smog at rush hour”. A comparison of White House polls (done by Opinion Research of Princeton, New Jersey) taken in May 1969, and just two years later in May 1971, showed that concern for the environment had leaped to the forefront of our national psyche. In May 1971, fully a quarter of the public thought that protecting the environment was important, yet only 1 percent had thought so just two years earlier. In the Gallup polls, public concern over air and water pollution jumped from tenth place in the summer of 1969 to fifth place in the summer of 1970, and was perceived as more important than “race”, “crime”, and “teenage” problems, but not as important as the perennial poll leaders, “peace” and the “pocketbook” issues.

In the White House, we pondered this sudden surge of public concern about cleaning up America and providing more open spaces for parks, and a heightened awareness of the necessity to dedicate more land for wildlife habitat. Why, we asked, after it was so long delayed, was the environmentalist awakening so much more advanced in the United States than in other countries? What motivated millions to so much activity so long after publication of Rachel Car-

son’s *Silent Spring* in 1962? Many factors seem to have been involved.

First, the environmental movement probably bloomed at the time it did mainly because of affluence. Americans have long been relatively much better off than people of other nations, but nothing in all history compares even remotely to the prosperity we have enjoyed since the end of World War II, and which became visibly evident by the mid-fifties. An affluent economy yields things like the 40-hour week, three-day weekends, the two-week paid vacation, plus every kind of labor-saving gadget imaginable to shorten the hours that used to be devoted to household chores. The combination of spare money and spare time created an ambiance for the growth of causes that absorb both money and time.

Another product of affluence has been the emergence of an “activist” upper middle class – college-educated, affluent, concerned, and youthful for its financial circumstances. The nation has never had anything like this “mass elite” before. Sophisticated, resourceful, politically potent, and dedicated to change, to “involvement”, it formed the backbone of the environmentalist movement in the United States.

Other factors included the rise of television and the opportunities it provides for advocacy journalism.

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In July 1970, President Nixon submitted to the Congress the *Environmental Protection Agency Plan*, and EPA was established on December 2, 1970. A variety of laws regarding clean air, water and solid waste were enacted, ocean dumping was restricted, and standards for offshore oil drilling were tightened (cf. [16] and the discussion of the *Clean Air Act* in Subsection 9.1.2).

Similarly to the situation in the EU, there were some issues regarding the “willingness to pay” for a cleaner environment. Polls in the early 1970s showed that there was a demand for a clean environment, but with government money. Spending one’s own money was obviously considered to be something completely different. In May 1971, three quarters of the population were reported to pay small price increases for pollution control, but six out of ten opposed large price increases (cf. again [16]).

This attitude regarding the willingness to pay is obviously comparable to the situation in the EU, although the aversion against taxes, in particular pollution taxes, seems to be higher in the US. Has this situation changed fundamentally in recent years? EPA certainly built upon the power it was granted by the *Clean Air Act* (CAA) of 1970. Now EPA plans to, among other things, use the CAA to control the emissions of coal power plants, after the *cap and trade system* could not be implemented in 2010 (cf. Subsection 11.5.3). If these plans find support, the *Tennessee Valley Authority*, for example, will have to install state of the art pollution controls in most of its coal-burning units resulting in a significant reduction of NO_x and SO₂ emissions.

Nevertheless, many business groups oppose this kind of regulations, referring to a likely increase in energy costs. In a Pew Research/National Journal Congressional Connection Poll, conducted June 10-13, 2010, a sizable share of 37% still voted for keeping energy prices low, 56% for protecting the environment (the polling results mentioned in this section are taken from [12]).

Most recent polls on environmental issues in the US refer, however, to climate change and global warming, the really controversial issue in the US (cf. again Subsection 11.5.3). The polls reveal that US citizens are in principle ready to face the challenges associated with climate change. According to a Virginia Commonwealth Life Sciences Survey, conducted May 12-18, 2010, a majority of 54% believe that climate change represents a “major problem”, and 51% say that the federal government is currently doing “too little” to reduce global warming. However, as soon as the personal willingness to pay comes in, things are different. In an Ipsos/McClatchy Poll, conducted December 3-6, 2009, 48% oppose a cap and trade program, which lowers greenhouse gas emissions significantly but raises the monthly electrical bill by 10 dollars; 55% oppose the program, if monthly electrical bills are raised by 25 dollars. And, in addition, according to a Gallup Poll, conducted March 4-7, 2010, more than two thirds think that global warming will not pose a serious threat to them or to their way of life in their lifetime (cf. [12]).

Thus, the “attitude of US citizens towards the environment” is not much different from those of European citizens. The most remarkable exception is, probably, the handling of the issue of greenhouse gas emissions. Due to the fact that the country is – in comparison to Europe – more dependent on oil and cars, any environmental policy addressing a cap on CO₂ emissions is going to face severe opposition, not only from industry. And due to the fact that there seems to be a general aversion to new taxes or tax increases, at least in a significant part of the population, pollution taxes will not find much support in the US either.

Nevertheless, the US as a major source of CO₂ emissions, has to be integrated into an international agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Excluding or

omitting the US would render all other attempts to curb climate change ineffective, if not comparatively meaningless (cf. also Chapter 12).

The next section investigates the environmental situation in parts of the developing world. The presentation will mostly refer to China and India, which are (China) or will be (India) major and further strongly increasing sources of greenhouse gas emissions.

2.3 The Developing World and the Environment

Rapidly growing developing countries pose a particular challenge to international climate negotiations. Without a substantial reduction of future greenhouse gas emissions in countries such as China or, on a somewhat lower level, India, the industrialized world would be more or less left alone, and, in view of the strongly increasing greenhouse gas emissions in these countries, without the chance of a significant effect on global warming.⁵ So the question arises, how to motivate China and other developing (and developed) countries to participate in the global efforts to combat climate change?

This issue will, however, be addressed in more depth in Chapter 12, in particular in Section 12.2. This section is more devoted to the “environmental movement” in developing countries. What is then the main focus of these movements, what is the attitude of the citizens towards the environment? How do these movements depend on the integration of a developing country into the network of international trade? How can these movements be affected by the industrialized countries?

2.3.1 *China and the Environment*

The rapid expansion of China’s economy is accompanied by environmental disasters, with an increasing frequency. In summer 2010 more than 1,000 tons of crude oil spilled into the Yellow Sea, thousands of barrels containing hazardous chemicals were spotted in a river in northeast China, and a leak of waste killed probably 2,000 tons of fish in southeast China ([13]).

Of course, one does not have to point to the explosion of the Deepwater Horizon platform to point out that comparable and even larger disasters are happening everywhere. However, the number and the frequency of these catastrophes in China is striking and justifies the question, whether China can or should continue with its rapid pace of economic growth.

Nevertheless the fact that this information is available and that more and more Chinese people are aware of the environmental pollution in their neighborhood is a promising signal. The rising income for large parts of the population is helping

⁵ Besides China and India, the effective participation of the US in the efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is also required to put a ceiling on global warming.

gradually to change the attitude towards the environment, and the authorities have to react to the protests of the populations and have to get ready (and are getting ready) to meet the environmental “demands” of the population.

Thus, China experiences the classical development regarding *environmental awareness*. First, at the beginning of the economic growth process, environmental pollution and degradation typically increase. Thereafter, with a higher income, people in urban areas become more and more concerned about the environment and the future of their children. For example, a series of food scandals including the contamination of milk powder in 2008 increased worries among the population about food safety in China.

An investigation of Chinese attitudes towards the environment conducted in 2004 revealed serious concerns about the state of the environment (the following numbers are taken from [1]): 91% of those interviewed in 2004 believed that the environment had deteriorated severely during the previous decade in comparison to only 44% interviewed in 1999. Moreover, 83.9% confirmed that the environmental pollution affected their health. The “Grain for Green Project”⁶ found the support of 78%.

Not surprisingly, when asked whether they are willing to donate money for environmental conservation, 72.8% of those interviewed were willing to donate a weighted mean (cf. [1], p. 57, for details) of 32 US dollars per person. 40.9% of the people said that the environment and the economy are equally important, while 35.3% prioritized the environment.

The survey also found a strong correlation between *environmental attitudes* and the key factors *net income* and *education level*. The poorest citizens (income 625 US dollars or below per year) and citizens with an income of 1,876 US dollars or above per year expressed in particular their concern about the degradation of the environment. Moreover, better educated citizens are more concerned about the state of the environment than those with a lower education level ([1], Tables 4 and 5).

There is a further aspect regarding the environment in China: Chinese industry with its goal of becoming world market producers and even world market leaders for certain environmental technologies. In fact, Chinese companies are exporting solar products to Europe and the US, and are gaining increasing market shares at the expense of US American and European companies. According to a report of “The New York Times” of June 23, 2011, China produced at least half of the world’s solar panels in 2010 with the US accounting for 1.6 billion US dollars of the 29 billion US dollars global market ([14]).

Thus, on the one hand, China is facing a multitude of severe and potentially health impairing local environmental problems extending from air pollution in the major cities to water pollution and to pollution from landfilling hazardous waste. A substantial share of the GDP is devoted to remediation efforts; and this share will probably increase further.

On the other hand, however, China is on the road to becoming the world’s leading producer and exporter of sophisticated environmental technologies such as solar

⁶ Between 1999 and 2010, the Chinese government converted a substantial area of (marginal) farmland into forest and grassland with farmers receiving living subsidies as compensation for lost income from farming ([1], p. 56).

panels and wind turbines. Total renewable power capacity in China, including hydro power, reached 226 GW in 2009. This is more than one quarter of China's total installed power capacity of 860 GW ([10]).

Despite these and many other efforts, Chinese greenhouse gas emissions are expected to continue to rise over the next decades, at least with a "business as usual" policy. But even with all new coal power plants equipped with *Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) Technology*, China's CO₂ emissions are likely to increase by 80% by 2030 ([11]). Thus, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in China will remain a challenge, both for China and the industrialized world (cf. also the considerations in Section 12.2).

2.3.2 *India and the Environment*

The primary causes of environmental degradation in India have to be attributed to the rapid growth of the population in combination with economic development and overuse of natural resources. Serious environmental calamities in India include land degradation, deforestation, soil erosion, habitat destruction and loss of biodiversity. Economic growth and changing consumption patterns have led to, among other things, a rising demand for energy and increasing transport activities. Air, water and noise pollution together with water scarcity dominate the environmental issues in India (cf. [15] for more details).

The Indian Agricultural Research Institute expects that "*more floods, frequent droughts and forest fires, decrease in agricultural and aquacultural productivity, displacement of coastal dwellers by sea level rise and intense tropical cyclones, and the degradation of mangroves may be some of the likely consequences of climate change in Asia*" ([9]). This indicates substantial problems for a nation with such a large population depending on the productivity of primary resources and whose economic growth relies heavily on industrial growth. For this reason, India – and other countries in the area – should have particular interest in the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions or, to be more precise, in preventing a strong increase of these emissions in the further course of economic development. This will be a challenge for climate policy in India.

In 2008, India's per capita emissions of greenhouse gases from fuel combustion were with 1.25 tons of CO₂ still very low in comparison to, for example, Germany with 9.79 tons or the US with 18.38 tons per year ([7], p. 95ff.). On the other hand, India's greenhouse gas emissions per capita rose by 80% between 1990 and 2008 ([7], p. 11) and have more than doubled in absolute terms in this period ([7], p. 23). Chances are that they will continue to increase from 2008 levels by more than 2.5 times by 2030 due to the growth of the population and the economy ([7], p. 23). A substantial application of *renewable energy sources* will, thus, be needed to curb CO₂ emissions.

In this context, India announced in November 2009, ahead of the international climate summit in Copenhagen, that it would reduce the intensity of greenhouse

gas emissions – the amount of gases released per unit growth in GDP – by 20-25% between 2005 and 2020 (cf. again [7], p. 23). Opponents are afraid that this will “freeze inequity in the world” (cf. the report on India’s position in the Copenhagen negotiations on p. 118).

As part of the “National Action Plan on Climate Change” released in 2008 (cf. [8]), the Indian government plans to arrive at a 10% share of renewable energy sources in power generation by 2015. In 2010, this share was estimated at 4%, although the installed capacity of renewable energies is more than 10% of total installed capacity ([2]).

In conclusion, India is on the right path although there is still a long way to go to more than compensate the increase in greenhouse gas emissions due to population growth and economic growth through the application of renewable energy sources.

2.4 Attitudes Towards the Environment: A Summary

There are, of course, differences and similarities among the three regions EU, US and China regarding attitudes towards the environment. As these aspects will turn out to be relevant for environmental policies, in particular international environmental policies, they shall be briefly summarized in this section. Some of the results will be reconsidered in other sections of the book.

Differences: One of the major differences is the degree of environmental degradation in the various regions. The general state of the environment regarding air, water or soil pollution is clearly significantly better in the EU and in the US. This observation points to an interesting relationship between the state of the environment and the state of the economy, which is relevant for international climate negotiations, for example (cf. Chapter 12).

Moreover, another difference refers to the specific type of environmental pollution, which is predominant in these areas. Besides the “classical” air, water and soil pollution, the environmental situation in China seems to be characterized by an often careless, if not to say intentional, pollution, which is also motivated by a rigorous pursuit of profit. This attitude leads then to environmental disasters, among them those mentioned in Subsection 2.3.1.

Of course, environmental catastrophes resulting from neglect or carelessness also happen in the EU or the US, however, according to experience, to a much lesser extent. It seems as if *environmental awareness* is more developed in the industrialized world and, thus, also depends on the state of the economy (cf. also Subsection 4.1.1).

The attitude towards *climate change* in its relationship to man-made greenhouse gas emissions is among those issues, which still seem to separate the EU and the US. One of the reasons for this hesitant and observant behavior in the US regarding the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is probably the dependence of the US on oil and coal, and the attitude that global warming is not expected to

have much of an effect in the near future (cf. Section 2.2). Moreover, US citizens tend to be against all kind of new taxes or increased taxes. Therefore, certain instruments of environmental policy such as *pollution taxes* are likely to meet with resistance.

There is some concern about global warming in the countries of the developing world. However, due to the rapid economic development in China and India and due to the rapid growth of the population in India, it will be difficult not only to limit the increase, but indeed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in these countries in absolute terms. Moreover, despite the fact that these countries will, with some probability, be severely affected by climate change, they still tend to blame the industrialized countries for the high concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere, resulting from all kinds of economic activities over the last 200 years. Probably substantial support from the industrialized world is required to solve this problem of transnational “pollution”.

Similarities: In all countries, people realize that environmental pollution affects their life, their health, and the well-being of their children. They therefore consider “environmental commodities” as “commodities” in the usual sense, which are, in particular, scarce. In addition, all citizens want the government of their country to take care of environmental issues.

However, when asked for their personal “willingness to pay” for some environmental project, the enthusiasm for the environment seems to decline. Obviously, it is better to let the others pay for a cleaner environment. This and related attitudes will prove responsible for a number of environmental problems in both the industrialized and the developing countries (cf., for example, Subsection 5.3.3). A further interesting observation refers to the *persistence* of certain environmental problems. Citizens in the EU, for example, have complained about the “pollution in towns and cities” for years, obviously without much success so far. So, what is the reason for this? Why is it so difficult to eradicate environmental pollution once and for all?

In summary, there are similarities among the attitudes towards the environment in different regions of the world; there are, however, also significant differences, which can affect environmental policy, in particular international environmental policy. For example, the international negotiations on global greenhouse gas emissions are confronted with these issues. The next chapter illustrates this growing international dimension of environmental policy.

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