



# Altering Attitudes - From a Culture of Consumerism to a Culture of Prosperity

A report review by CRISTINA P. RODRÍGUEZ TORRES

Authors: Meinhard Miegel, Stefanie Wahl, Martin Schulte with the collaboration of Elias Butzmann

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Many people are convinced that happiness, life satisfaction and wellbeing can be reached through material wealth. This is a consequence of the traditional production and consumer patterns from early industrialised countries and lately from developing countries. Additionally, the focuses on financial success, economic growth, social status etc. are other drivers to a materialistic lifestyle. However, have you ever wondered what involve the production and usage of products and services in terms of sustainability? And not only that, but also how consumers are making use of them as well.

Hence, this culture of consumerism has been causing negative impacts on the environment such as, global warming, increase of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, exploitation of natural resources, contamination of rivers, forests etc. (Miegel et al. 2011, p.15). In response to this concern, in 2011 a report was published by Denkwerk Zukunft, in which it recommended a cultural transformation. It emphasised the need for an urgent shift of society from a culture of consumerism towards a culture of prosperity. Furthermore, a change in attitudes, consumer patterns and behaviours are required to reach a non materialistic lifestyle. Therefore the term "non material wealth", in this context, means the internal enrichment of people with values for living and enjoying life on a sustainable way with more awareness and consciousness about nature.

Nonetheless, the authors identified small groups of people who support at different degrees, the adoption of sustainable economic practices and the

recognition of the necessity to change attitudes. In contrast, there are few ones who have a lack of interest or do not have enough knowledge about sustainability. This is associated, on the one hand, to the difficulty to change behaviours and the challenge of leaving material comforts aside. On the other hand, there is misinformation, lack of governmental action, greenwashing, few role models, among other reasons (Miegel et al. 2011, p.16ff).

What is also pointed out is the force of the mobilisation of individuals and groups and how can it be stimulated through adequate information and education. Especially, more support from the media, advertisers and celebrities is necessary to communicate and motivate people, for example through sustainable campaigns. In regard to the educational sector, schools programmes and projects are a key to develop social skills from childhood.

In addition, further education for teachers and parents by means of sustainability promotion is fundamental (Miegel et al. 2011, p.25ff). The state has to be more active in implementing environmentally friendly policies and reducing environmentally harmful subsidies. Moreover, the international cooperation among countries can be decisive for the placement of broad standards (Miegel et al. 2011, p.45ff). Lastly, the coordination of efforts between societies, public and private institutions can facilitate the development of more sustainable practices with the management of resources and less intense production and consumption.

### Author information:

Cristina P. Rodríguez Torres is from Ecuador and obtained her bachelor degree in Nutrition Science in Argentina. At the present, she is studying a master program in Germany, called International Food Business and Consumer Studies at University of Kassel. She has experience in the field of clinic nutrition and food management, especially in catering services and hospitals in South America. Her aspiration for the moment is to complement her knowledge abroad in the food business sector, with focus on food technology, quality management and organic food system.

## The Farmer and his Prince



Photo credit: Denkmal Film Verhaag

**“We are ourselves very much a part of nature,  
not just separate from her which is what  
people brought up to believe”  
-His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales**

Director and Producer : Bertram Verhaag

Production year: 2013

Length: 84 Minutes

Production company: Denkmal Film Verhaag, Germany

Distributors: Barnsteiner-Film (Germany), Denkmal Film Verhaag (World-wide) (DVD)

A film review by AZADEH FARAJPOUR-JAVAZMI

Industrial agriculture is the main driver of climate change, loss of biodiversity, soil degradation and water pollution. Organic agriculture takes a long-term approach towards sustainability, food security and

human health. Organic agriculture recognizes the multi functionality of agriculture, like maintaining a prosperous environment, fertile soil and pure water while producing healthy food to feed the world.