

# Sustainable consumption perspectives: progress or digress?



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# Sustainable consumption challenge



Environmental improvements  
in pollution prevention,  
waste minimization and  
eco-efficiency

are largely offset by changes  
in consumption patterns  
and levels

leading to rise of aggregate  
environmental impacts and  
resource consumption

- 70–80% of national energy use and greenhouse gas emissions relate to household activities
- 10-12% to provision of public sector services
- direct and indirect impacts associated with consumption take place outside Europe (emissions & lifestyles)



# Sustainable consumption endeavors of public sector

- Development of policies for sustainable consumption
  - Direct policies (IPP - ?)
  - Infrastructure and institutional conditions (subsidies, taxes)
  - Consumption levels – still a taboo
  - Applicability of policies around the globe?
- Incorporating sustainable consumption practices into own purchasing activities
  - Green procurement (national and local levels)
  - Organic, eco-labelled, local, fair trade, services instead of products



# Sustainable consumption endeavors of businesses



- Improvement of production processes and product features
  - dematerialisation and eco-efficiency
- Incorporating sustainable consumption practices into own purchasing activities:
  - P&S & greening chains
- Information provision to consumers
  - eco-labelling, EPDs, direct advertising of eco-sound P&S
- Life cycle costing
- Sustainability marketing
  - creating markets



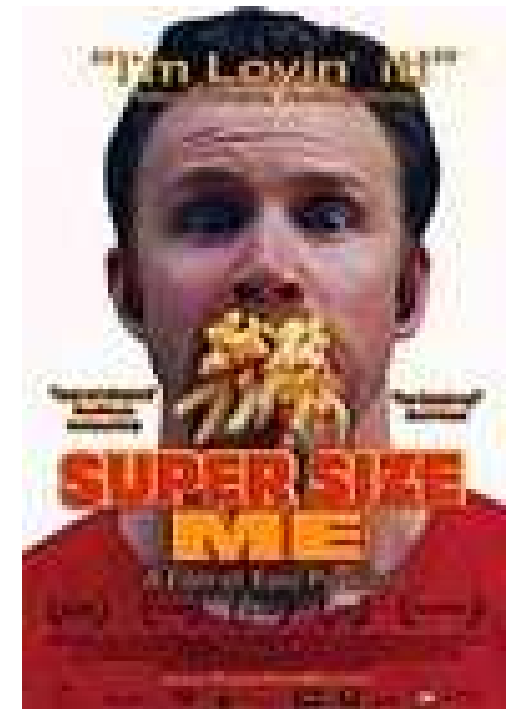
# Sustainable consumption endeavors of consumers

- Supply-oriented strategies for engaging individual consumers in consuming more environmentally and socially sound P&S,
  - but lack of knowledge about impacts elsewhere
- Demand-oriented collective actions of people or entire communities devising own ways of using and consuming P&S that reduce rebound effects that haunt many supply-oriented strategies
  - sharing and pooling, LETs, co-housing, ...
  - simpler lifestyles, eco-villages, sustainable communities



# Impediments to further progress in SC

- Consumption complexity
  - goods, happiness, infrastructure
  - individual rationality -> collectively suboptimal results
  - cultural embedding of consumption choices and the level of individualisation in society
- Limitations of information tools
  - knowledge ≠ attitude ≠ action
  - eco-labels – legitimise consumption
  - local products – global suppliers
- Consumption levels and rebound effects
  - larger, multiple, luxury and global P
  - cheaper P – increased consumption
- Deliberate support of unsustainable consumption
  - cheap labour & resources, skewed message
  - irresponsible practices in developing countries
  - use of political power in economic interests



# Towards strengthening efforts on SC

- The Marrakech Process
- National Strategies for Sustainable Consumption and Production
- National Action Plans for Sustainable Consumption
- Similar environmental and social standards in countries of operation





Thank you!

