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Attitudes on climate change and their relations to opinions about the economy, willingness to pay, and social trust

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Attitudes on climate change and the protection of the environment have been found to relate in different ways to the current economic and social situation of the respondents. This presentation will describe people's attitudes by analyzing surveys on the topic of climate change and the protection of the environment, including the recent International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) and the Swiss Environmental Panel Study. A closer look will be taken at the economic opinions and willingness to pay higher prices or taxes and their relationship to climate change attitudes. In addition, respondent's trust in people and different institutions will be analyzed. A structural equation analysis is performed to highlight the relations between those concepts. The results will show that support for a better economy and private enterprises are related to lower environmental and climate change concerns, support for paying higher prices or taxes is related to more environmental concerns and higher trust in people and institutions is related to deeper environmental concerns. After that, several demographic characteristics will be used to show if the results are stable when controlling for these. Demographic variables used are age, gender, education level, employment status, income, and political left-right placement. It can be shown that the factors of economic opinions, willingness to pay, and trust in people and institutions all relate to the environmental and climate change attitudes.