

Using, choosing or creating the future?

Proceedings of the first international conference
of The Consumer Citizenship Network, Paris 2004

Victoria W. Thoresen (ed.)

”The academic and the NGO (non-governmental organisation) communities also have vital roles to play in achieving sustainable consumption. On the one hand, research is needed to better grasp the technical and sociological aspects of the issues at hand. On the other, NGO advocates provide clarity and forcefulness required to sustain a thorough debate. Together they can inform and inspire the whole debate on sustainable consumption.”

Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, 1999, The global Compact

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INTRODUCTION

USING, CHOOSING OR CREATING THE FUTURE?

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The results of the first year of cooperation amongst the partners of the Consumer Citizenship Network are reflected in this selection of some of the papers which were presented at the first annual conference of the Consumer Citizenship Network (CCN) March 2004.

The Consumer Citizenship Network is a thematic network whose goal is to stimulate dialogue between researchers, educators and civil society as well as strengthen cooperation in relation to value education, civic training, and environmental and consumer education. The CCN is an interdisciplinary network of educators and researchers from 29 countries, and includes cooperation with UNESCO, UNEP and international citizenship and consumer organizations.

The papers published here represent a wide diversity of approaches to the issues which constitute consumer citizenship. As with environmental topics, consumer citizenship issues can be seen from three distinct perspectives: fact-based, normative and pluralistic. Despite differences of perspective, there is a common theme running through all the papers in this compilation. This is the recognition of the need to prepare for the future not only by observing trends but also by making conscientious choices and contributing to the creation of solutions to the challenges mankind is facing. There was a general consensus at the CCN conference that while the events of the present manifest the consequences of what we do and do not do, time's transformations need not be the result of a deterministic classical mechanics. They can be new structures, new systems, and new solutions emerging from the seemingly chaotic encounter of numerous conflicting elements. Even without being able to recognize the complete image of the future, we can identify the parameters of visions of preferred tomorrows. Even without being entirely confident of the outcomes of our endeavours, many of the participants at the conference expressed the conviction that we can

contribute to modifications which will influence the direction development will take.

The conference and this compilation of the proceedings

Responsible lifestyle choices, increased ecological awareness and just distribution of resources were central topics at the conference which was hosted by UNESCO in Paris, France. Participants from 33 countries came together to look more closely at how the individual in his/her role as a consumer as well as a citizen, can contribute to global solidarity and sustainable consumption. The main focus points of the conference were:

- * Rethinking extravagance
 - consumption patterns in light of global disparities
- * Revising responsibilities
 - value-based education as a tool
- * Reviewing accountability
 - participatory democracy in a commercialized world
- * Reshaping cooperation
 - co-producing and sharing of teaching materials and learning methods in a global network.

Presentations and discussions at the conference emphasized the need for a comprehensive review of the fundamental values directing lifestyle choices. What do individuals want—and why? What does improved life quality mean and how can this be achieved with reduced use of resources? The presentations and discussions concurred as to the pressing need for changes in present consumption patterns in light of global disparities and environmental impacts. Such changes require accurate and accessible information, alternative products, and the ability and willingness to withstand commercial pressure. Systematic, cohesive value-based education was recommended as one of several necessary tools for helping individuals better understand their responsibilities as consumer citizens. During the conference a variety of methods such as service learning, scenarios, cases, and future workshops were discussed.

The general categories which the papers published here are divided into correspond with the conference themes which were:

- How can the consumer citizen deal with the ethical challenges of prosperity?
- How can the media and ICT be constructive tools for the consumer citizen?
- What are the consumer citizen's rights and responsibilities as regards food, transport, housing, energy use and personal finances?
- What contributions can the European consumer citizen make towards the eradication of poverty in the world?

- How can awareness and social involvement be stimulated in the consumer citizen?

The CCN is an interdisciplinary network which has not only analysis of present situations as its goal but also the development of consumer citizenship education. Thus the fact that the professional language and subject references are noticeably different in the presentations from the conference is considered a positive contribution to the process of including consumer citizenship in a variety of educational settings. Of the 53 presentations which were made at the conference it has not been possible to include all in this publication. A complete file of all presentations, power point programs and posters is on a cd-ram available from the CCN Core Unit.

Using the future?

Today, two diametrically opposed descriptions of society in general can be validated. On the one hand, as Fredrico Mayor, former director-general of UNESCO, quotes: “We cannot fail to observe the increase in ‘soul-sickness’ at the very heart of the most prosperous societies and social categories which seem best protected from misfortune. The heart itself seems pray to a curious void, indifference and passivity grow, there is an ethical desert, passions and emotions are blunted, people’s eyes are empty and solidarity evaporates. Grey areas expand, mafias work their way into the heart of states and of financial markets, and the law of the jungle prevails.” (1) But strangely enough, while statistics support this dismal description of a world in spiritual disease (2), there is also proof of the existence of an unprecedented number of opportunities for the exchange of knowledge, for debate, complaint, redress, guidance and change initiation. (3) What is needed to insure that these positive trends are further developed and that the despondency of the soul-sickened does not paralyze increasingly more people— and does not infect the coming generation?

As Nobel prize winner, Ilza Prigogine, says, human action depends on our memory of the past, our analysis of the present and our anticipation of the future. (4) Families, education and social environments (which include commercial influences) all play crucial roles in the socialization of individuals and the formation of these three criteria. They provide the attitudes, knowledge and skills with which we establish the balance between material and non-material needs and desires. They determine, to a great extent, the motivation for looking beyond one’s own personal concerns, for considering the consequences of one’s actions, and for initiating change. The CCN conference papers acknowledge the importance of the family and recognize the power of social norms and evaluate the influence of marketing. They consider the process of becoming discriminating individuals who must deal with the challenge of using,

choosing or creating the future and what education's can contribute to this process.

Our memory of the past and analysis of the present confirm that human and natural resources are being used with little heed to the needs of tomorrow. As Jerome Binde has written, three planets would be necessary if humanity as a whole were to adopt the lifestyle of North America. And so far we have failed to bring prosperity to the generality of humankind. World summits, conferences, projects large and small, discussions and debates have examined and are analyzing the extent to which humankind has prematurely exhausted the resources of the future. Many limits to growth have been identified. Research shows that consumption patterns of recent decades have been based on unequal distribution and disproportionate opportunities. The lifestyle habits of one fifth of the world's population have been shortsighted, egocentric and excessive. Consumption has lead to a long list of consequences: *social impacts* such as: poverty, economic instability, marginalization, community fragmentation, social injustices, loss of traditional knowledge, regional insecurity. It has also resulted in *environmental impacts* such as: resource depletion, pollution (biosphere), food insecurity, desertification, and reduction of biodiversity. (5) Present forms and levels of consumption are unsustainable

Sustainability is a widely used and often misinterpreted phrase. Definitions of the term are not all alike. Sustainability means in principle that something is maintained at a certain level. In terms of development, sustainability is a quality which contributes to positive social and economic growth and increased life quality for all while at the same time preserving nature. Despite the fact that development often appears to be unpredictable, the entire concept of sustainability is founded upon the belief that growth can be directed. There is today a global consensus about the basics of sustainability. Much of the discourse on sustainability has concentrated on top-down environmental regulations and controls initiated and enforced by governments. Collective governance is essential and by focusing on the individual it by no means reduces the importance of governmental and corporate responsibility. Authorities must enact both direct and indirect measures to assist in achieving sustainable consumption. CCN's consultations deal with principles behind sustainable development and the bottom-up rights and responsibilities of individual citizens and civil society groups.

Choosing the future?

Knowing that humanity is using today the resources of tomorrow, raises the question of "what can be done?" Can we anticipate and prepare for a future where economic and social processes are remodelled by considerations not primarily based on maximizing economic profit but by maximizing quality and

functionality? Can the individual make choices based on more clearly defined principles of mutual benefit and global solidarity? Can we contribute to the emergence of responsive moral society?

Complexity of daily life

Individuals today are faced with dilemmas which cause many to become perplexed and passive. Modern everyday life has become more complex and uncertain, thus more difficult to deal with. Harold Innis describes the changes communication technologies have produced which:

- alter structure of interests (what we think about)
- alter the nature of symbols (what we think with)
- alter the nature of community (the area in which we think) (6)

“The world we live in is increasingly artificial and constructed; it is increasingly rich in knowledge, and yet ... increasingly opaque and incomprehensible ... The available technology ... has forever changed the way we see the world and the way we exist in it, but the price has been the destruction of our certainties and the growth of our perplexity. Paradoxically, knowledge has made us more uncertain.” (7)

Quantities of information are available to a degree never before experienced and at breathtaking speeds. There is a flood of unsorted, unqualified information. Determining what constitutes authoritative, independent research is a difficult task given that many stakeholders mix advertising with information to increase sales. In industrial countries there is an abundance of opportunities -- “choice overload” – making the act of choosing a daunting dilemma. This dilemma is looked at in more detail by the contributions in section 3 of this publication.

Modification of needs

While acknowledging the categories of basic human needs described by researchers such as Johan Galtung, Max Neef, Bjørn Hetne and others, recognition should also be given to the fact that the transformation of lifestyles in recent time has resulted in new emphasis being given to specific needs. Well-being is not limited to the appeasement of physical requirements for survival but involves achieving new levels of satisfaction. In recent years the expressed need of today’s individuals is for greater companionship; community membership; individual health; time for rest, recreation, community and cultural participation; opportunities for non-material personal development; low-levels of work-related stress; high levels of job satisfaction (8) Analysis of the modification of needs in society today is taken up in both sections 3 and 5 by the authors in this compilation.

Value vacuum

Fairytales, legends, religious wisdom and research remind us of the symbolic value consumption has acquired and advise mankind to consider the concept of “worth value” and use consumption not as a goal in itself, but rather as a means for ennobling life. Midas, had a vibrant young daughter who represented intrinsic, existent and manifest values. She was unique and incarcerated derived and future investments. When the gift of touch turned everything Midas came in contact with into hard currency, he was slow in realizing that the “soft values” the princess represented were in fact of far greater value than gold.

Buddha taught compassion, Christ expounded the golden rule, Mohammed required alms of the righteous, and Baha’u’llah taught service to humanity. Humanism has defined development in terms of rights and responsibilities, self determination and social equity. These are principles which admonish humankind to balance economic development with human needs in order to achieve the growth of a civilization based on justice, cooperation and caring rather than greed, power and self glorification. Despite variations in time and place, philosophers and educators have emphasized the four cardinal virtues as the foundation for human civilization: prudentia (prudence), justitia (justice), fortitudo (fortitude), temperantia (temperance, self-control, moderation). Nonetheless, the majority of consumers base their choices on immediate personal profit, benefit or social acceptance. The striking absence of many traditional values indicates that there exists a value vacuum. The “values vacuum” is addressed in several of the papers in section 2.

Globalization

Globalization can be regarded as another factor effecting how the individual deals with the challenge of making choices based on more clearly defined principles of mutual benefit and global solidarity. Articles in section 5 examine globalization as a well-used phrase describing a variety of phenomena which have reshaped societies. Some refer to globalization as the emergence of a global civilization stimulated by the information revolution which has brought closer contact and communication and greater access to information. Others consider globalization as the paradigm of the capitalistic free market system whose unfettered progress facilitates change and development. Characterized by multinational companies, the free market is at present based upon the tenet that to be better off people must consume more. Consequently advertising and commercial persuasion have dominated increasingly larger areas of daily life. Branding and commercial trends gain popularity and the North/South gap widens.

Sense of powerlessness

Decision-making in modern society requires new insights and skills. Acquiring and interpreting relevant information is a complicated and demanding task. Assessing risk by considering the consequences of one's actions is a multifaceted process in a society dependent on detailed scientific expertise. Deciphering product labelling still demands that the consumer have extensive background information. Determining the probability levels of alternative scenarios requires insight into systems and processes that many lack. An additional frustration is the realization that many multinational businesses function outside the laws of particular countries in a world where global governance is only just emerging. Individual consumers have repeatedly expressed their feeling of insignificance and powerlessness when confronted with the size, wealth and political influence of multinational corporations.

According to the Frankfurter school of critics and Habermas, the voice of the consumer can function as a balancing force -- a countervailing power-- in relation to business and industry. "If we could restore their voice to millions and millions of silent people, if we could give them a real possibility of using their freedom of thought and of speech, if the voiceless people of today could get their voice back, then we would see a shift in decision-making. Then, those who are counted in or omitted from censuses, opinion polls or elections would really count when their future is being shaped. Our hope lies in the voice of the people, or democracy. Not democracy for a few, but democracy for all." (9) This leads to the discussions voiced in the articles published here in section 3.

A pathway to new behaviour: sustainable consumption

Sustainable consumption is one of the means the international society has chosen by which to try and improve the balance between the material and non-material demands of today. Advocates of sustainable consumption see this as a way of remodelling economic and social processes. The United Nations Environmental Program describes sustainable consumption as encompassing three central areas of action:

1. More radical reduction of aggregate material throughput in developed countries. This refers to dematerialisation of production and consumption, addressing needs and functionality rather than just product consumption. Activities in this field have led to industrial ecology and what is commonly referred to as "green chemistry".
2. Less sustainable economic development in developing countries which responds to needs. This area involves assisting developing countries in developing their economies while leapfrogging the negative effects of

unsustainable consumption. To achieve a better quality of life for all material prosperity must be shared between the rich and poor.

3. Ethical changes in global patterns of consumption, based on reconsidered values and cultural practices in the North; access and redistribution in the South. Here the emphasis is on consumption forms which might be described in the following manner:

-Appropriate consumption: based on deep and broad debate about the type and level of consumption practiced and whether quality of life (particularly in civic, cultural and religious terms) is increased or impeded by consumption behaviour and its effects

-Conscientious consumption: based on realizing more quality of life and less environmental cost through more considered choosing and using on the part of educated consumers

-Responsible consumption: consumption which provides mutual benefits for the producer and the consumer, for those affected by the processes, waste and energy use.

-Collaborative consumption: consumption which includes actions such as leasing, repairing, sharing and recycling.

UNEP, Consumption Opportunities, 2001

Creating the future?

The CCN, the CCN conference and this publication, particularly in section 6, look at how education can stimulate the creation or perhaps *recreation* of a social contract and/or practical solutions which will secure a global society characterized by a concept of well being based on social and economic justice, cooperation and caring. Several UNESCO reports on education have emphasized the fact that education systems suffer from fragmentation of knowledge into often meaningless and irrelevant units. What is needed is a more integrated approach in which knowledge is focused on seeking the solutions to real problems. (10) This does not mean merely adding topics to curriculum but rather rearranging and developing education in ways in which the following cultures prosper.

- *Culture of reflection* and debate/dialogue where the bonds between science, civil society and education would be further strengthened. Such a culture of reflection would involve teaching and using the art of consultation and strategic questioning. It would include developing an awareness of the influences and processes involved in decision making on a personal as well as collective level. A culture of

reflection in schools would also foster respect for quality, beauty, silence and visual space.

- *Culture of peace* Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations has explained: “Peace means more than the absence of war. Human security can no longer be understood in purely military terms. Rather it must encompass economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratization, disarmament, and respect for human rights and the rule of law.” (11) The culture of peace which has been growing across the globe (despite the conflicts and military interventions also existing) involves developing empathy and respect for diversity: national, regional, local and individual integrity.

- *Culture of encouragement* where one finds an environment conducive to positive self-acceptance and self-esteem. Consumers are repeatedly represented in the mass media as victims. Cynicism dominates. Guilt directs many consumer choices. None of these attitudes can stimulate human resources and unleash the potential needed for finding creative solutions to tomorrow’s challenges. It is important that teachers share examples of sustainable life styles rather than merely criticize the existing status quo. Mainstream social models of sustainable lifestyles that modern youth can identify with should be used in the teaching process.

- *Culture of involvement* where service to humanity is focused upon and civic action, community involvement, is revitalized. Following the principles of Agenda 21, it would consist of identifying reachable goals and maintaining efforts to accomplish them. A culture of involvement can only be constructed on the conviction that the consumer is not a victim but an agent for change. Such a culture emphasizes the mutually dependent nature of human existence, reiterating the fact that the consumer is ultimately responsible to the whole of humanity.

The role of Consumer Citizenship Education

An educational system in which the above mentioned cultures prevail must also have concrete ways of stimulating the individual’s contribution to the formation of the future. As Fareed Zakaria has said, “We need not just moral clarity but also strategic clarity”. (12) The following working definition of consumer citizenship is one contribution to this process.

“Consumer citizenship is when the individual, in his/her role as a consumer, actively participates in developing and improving society

by considering ethical issues, diversity of perspectives, global processes and future conditions. It involves taking responsibility on a local, national, regional and global scale when securing one's own personal needs and well-being.”

Consumer citizenship education aims at developing systematic holistic, solution-oriented thinking. Consumer citizenship education not only attempts to impart knowledge but also to empower young people to be critical, aware, active consumers. It has as a major goal to help students learn how to interpret relevant information and commercial messages in order to make choices that emphasize the demand for social and environmental responsibility-- prudent choices that contribute to universal human development and intra-generational equity. In Canada and Australia the concept of consumer citizenship education has existed for a number of years. In Europe, this approach is still relatively new. There are, however, three main characteristics which consumer citizenship education is expected to include. (13)

- *Valourization*: the solidifying of common norms. An axiological approach based on discourse about specific values in their own right.
- *Globalization*: the ensuring of international and intercultural perspectives while acquiring insight into the content and purpose of consumer citizenship.
- *Participation*: active, experimental learning using authentic every day situations, cases, and real life projects.

The work of the Consumer Citizenship Network

One of the main challenges the CCN faces is the further development of communication and collaboration between the network partners. The network partners represent a wide variety of diverse disciplines and the discourse and debate established so far show a willingness to become acquainted with each other's professional approaches and language. It reflects a common commitment to cooperative approaches to the more detailed goals of the network such as curriculum review and preparation of guidelines for consumer citizenship education. Clarification of which topics are collectively considered to be given priority within consumer citizenship education has begun. Cooperation concerning analysis of best practices in teaching consumer citizenship education has commenced. The main outputs of CCN are: the further development of communication channels for dialogue and debate; curriculum surveys and competency analysis; annual conferences; reports; development of the database of relevant literature; newsletters; maintenance of the CCN web-site; an intranet service and dissemination of the results to a wide audience. The outputs of CCN can be of use for lecturers, researchers and teacher trainers in higher education

in Europe, students, professionals working with children and young people, public authorities, and associations dealing with citizenship training, sustainable development and consumer issues.

CCN Curriculum Surveys

In order to be able to indicate for educational authorities as well as students and colleagues the scope of teaching dealing with consumer citizenship topics, the CCN is compiling a survey of courses offered by partner institutions. This will not give a totally comprehensive picture of consumer citizenship education in each partner country, but will provide examples of how various institutions have chosen to approach the issue. The goal of this work is not only to see what is being done but also to gain insight into which areas are not covered by present courses. In this way it may be possible to focus further development work on those areas which are least represented. The surveys are also intended to reemphasize for institutional leaders and policy makers the importance of education dealing with subjects related to consumer citizenship.

Teaching/learning guidelines

CCN has evolved from a number of European projects, particularly a Comenius 2.1 project entitled: Developing Consumer Citizenship and a Gruntvig CEA project, Consumer Education for Adults. These projects have prepared guidelines and prototype curriculum. There is an expressed need for these as well as more extensive guidelines to assist educators in dealing with the many varied subjects which consumer citizenship encompasses. Many of the papers presented at the CCN conference include evaluations of experiences in researching and teaching issues connected to consumer citizenship. CCNs teaching/learning guidelines shall include a general section giving advice on a) the value-based foundation of consumer citizenship education b) the importance of consumer citizenship as a part of the United Nations decade for education for sustainable development c) relationships to other established subjects d) connections with cross-curricular themes e) methodology (age-related approaches, participatory activities, group work, experiment work, case studies, scenarios, service teaching, etc) f) information acquisition and handling g) risk analysis. The teaching guidelines will include references to relevant research, teaching material, web sites and organisations.

The Tuning project

The Tuning project emerged from the Bologna process which aims at creating an integrated higher education area in Europe, against the background of one European economic area. The need for compatibility, comparability and competitiveness of higher education in Europe has sprung from the needs of students, whose increasing mobility requires reliable and objective information about educational programmes on offer. Also, employers in Europe require

reliable information about what a qualification or a degree, stands for in practice. The Tuning project does not aim at a standardization of degree programmes or any sort of prescriptive or definitive European curricula, but rather looks for points of convergence and common understanding. It is considered paramount to protect the rich diversity of European education, and Tuning therefore looks for common reference points in the European educational landscape. CCN's cooperation with the Tuning project will deal with:

- mapping teaching practice in relation to consumer citizenship
- identifying and discussing the most important generic competences related to degree programs which include consumer citizenship
- identifying and discussing the most important subject specific competences related to consumer citizenship
- clarifying the learning outcomes of consumer citizenship education

The United Nations decade for education for sustainable development

The basic themes of CCN— ethical challenges, the information society, rights and responsibilities, global solidarity and social involvement -- will continue to be the focus areas for CCN's discussions, database, thematic groups, conferences and publications. These topics constitute the framework for consumer citizenship education which is an important element in education for sustainable development. Thus CCN will contribute to the global efforts to establish international partnerships within education in connection to the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainability which will last from 2005-2014.

Annual CCN conferences 2005 and 2006

The Consumer Citizenship Network will hold its annual international conferences in Bratislava, Slovakia 26-27 May 2004 and in Hamar, Norway 15-16 May 2006.

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1. KEYNOTE SPEECHES - A SUMMARY

The four main keynote speakers at the Consumer Citizenship Network Conference March 2004 challenged participants to consider consumer citizenship issues from the perspectives of environmental impact, ethics and didactical innovativeness.

Professor ***Bedrich Moldan***, Director of the Charles University Environmental Center in Prague and chairman of the U.N. Commission of Sustainable Development from 2000-2001 and vice-chairman from 1993-1994 posed the question of whether or not global disparities actually exist and if they matter. Moldan went on to explain that the parameters of life satisfaction are culturally given and vary over throughout the world. What really matters, Moldan claimed, was the pressure consumption exerts on the environment. The environmental load is given by the volume of materials taken from nature and the volume of wastes released back into nature. It is the carrying capacity of an area in relation to the environmental load which must be considered. Moldan maintained that the solution is to decouple consumption from the environmental load. Doing so would involve transparent social decisions and active citizenship based on the precautionary principle that involves all stakeholders. These decisions must be based on sustainability science, relevant information and democratic principles.

Sherif Rushdy of the NGO *Principles in Action* has been the educational advisor for the New Era Development Institute in India and contributed to the Indian National Integrated Value Education Program for teacher trainers. Rushdy maintained in his keynote speech that that the global crisis faced by mankind today is due to fundamental shortcomings of the materialistic view of life and that we are in need of a paradigm shift if we seriously wish to bring about individual and social transformation to ensure the growth of a new global civilization characterized by qualities of justice, good governance, generosity and caring, a civilization reflective of the coming of age of the entire human race, based on the principle of the oneness of mankind. Rushdy continued by explaining that the material and spiritual dimensions of human existence must be interwoven into a common coherent framework and that science and religion, the two forces of civilization, must be reconciled and work in harmony as complementary knowledge systems guiding the development of mankind. A direct curriculum of value education, was what Rushdy suggested, reinforcing core themes in all subjects and including personal and collective growth processes, involvement of parents and the community, role modeling by the

teachers, an appropriate environment and management of the school and systematic value-based evaluation of teachers, students and the school.

Professor ***Bart J. McGettrick***, Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Glasgow, Scotland and well known for his work in connection with citizenship education, emphasized that we need to move from a culture of individualism to a culture of participation; and from a culture of accountability to a culture of responsibility. There exists the need to look at transformative changes in our society led by a concern for values, and not a concern for the kind of accountability which is determined externally, and which carries with it in its wake issues of pressure, blame, tension, compliance and conformity. McGettrick claimed that social systems do not exist merely to support economic values or “the commercialised world”. Internal accountability and an overt sense of responsibility can be developed in societies which are characterized by hope and justice for all. This is dependent on the capacity for self-reflection and self-development which leads to “discerned information” not merely measured data. It also includes the ethos of democratic participation.

Åke Bjørke, Information Officer of GRID-Arendal, an organisation working with UNEP and responsible for the pedagogy, development and running of online courses at the Global Virtual University, associated to the United Nations University (UNU) in Tokyo, provided the conference with a keynote speech focusing on the didactics of consumer citizenship education. Bjørke described the benefits of interactive educational approaches to questions of sustainable development and consumer issues. By showing the data available through several online sources such as www.globalis.no Bjørke emphasized the importance of access to updated information which is easily understood and is presented in a simple but comprehensive manner.

Texts of the keynote speeches and the power point presentation used are available on the conference cd-ram which can be gotten from the CCN Core Unit.

2. ETHICAL CHALLENGES

ABSTRACTS

Working with a staged plan in value-based education

Henk Goovaerts

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At the core of every action undertaken there must be awareness that we do so as political consumers. The realisation of the competencies that define us as active individual consumer-citizens depends on a whole range of motivations. They may be different for each individual, even if the same or similar activities are undertaken. The motivations, goals and consequences of the actions should not be based on social-economic and political cravings only, the ethical parameter also must play an important part in any decision-making process.

It is typical for generic and specific ethical assessments to include a “humane” approach in answering the question how the ethical quality of life of all and the society will be involved and influenced by individual action. The awareness of this creates dedicated consumer citizens.

People tend to experience difficulties facing evaluation processes. They often lack the broader, collective, context and they do not realise that personal intentions, expectations and actions not only have consequences for them personally, but also for others and society. It is not easy to initiate a constant awareness process and become a dedicated consumer-citizen since an individual person is so influenced by their own emotional and rational arguments that sufficient emotional distance can not always be created in order to reach a decision which is both good for the individual and the society. A method is needed to teach ethical decision-making and the follow-up assessment of the whole decision making process.

A four-stage procedure will be discussed which ends with process evaluation of the decision making, the method followed and the final decision itself. The method creates an awareness process in which an individual becomes answerable for his actions, where he is required to explicitly define and justify

the individual and professional options and choices, something which often remains unspoken or undeclared. The method gives clear indications and explanations of how the personal freedom and responsibilities became part of the equation leading to the exploration of alternatives. It is a method that allows for individual decisions, however, against a permanent backdrop of collectivity and calling for deliberation and discussion.

The stages in any ethically sound decision-making process in order to be a dedicated consumer-citizen are therefore: exploring the situation, defining alternative solutions, reaching a dedicated decision and finally evaluating not only the decision, but also the process leading to it and the individual and collective consequences it carries.

The educational process and standards creation in relation to lifestyles of the 21st century

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Lifestyles in the 21st century are characterized by the quality of products, processes and resources, quality of care of the environment and health and safety of people as well as the quality of human life itself. One of the latest trends, which is reflected in ISO 9000:2000 standards, is the focus on processes and it is the educational process that will have an increasingly important role in supporting the above-mentioned orientation.

The initial section of this paper describes the position and specifics of the educational process participants: students, i.e. customers (consumers) on one hand and educational organizations on the other hand. The second section briefly highlights the importance of the consumer's position in relation to the creation of high-quality lifestyle. The third section is an attempt to map the consumers' conditions for their active involvement in the standardization process and generally in enterprise processes bringing out the social responsibility aspect. In this respect the enterprises as well as other institutions take positions with differing openness to the pressure for cooperation with consumers and other external groups.

Consumption in everyday life - a question of ethical challenges and responsible action?

Jörgen Juul Jensen

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Jette Benn

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Households and individuals are consumer decision making units in the civil society. Consumption is both a way to construct meaning for individuals and families and a fundamental need in the household. Furthermore consumption has huge consequences for health and environment and raises a wide range of dilemmas in everyday life. These dilemmas must be discussed in consumer education.

The aim of consumer education has mainly been to teach and educate students to act as informed and rational consumers. This perception of consumption as reasoned behaviour or action is inadequate in a reflective modern society, where consumerism is first and foremost characterised by globalisation, cultural change and the liberation of the individual. Institutional consumer education stands in contrast to informal consumer socialisation and the education of individuals. The aim of formal consumer education may be described as 'educating for critical consumer awareness and action competence', but consumer education is located in the field between 'consumership' and 'citizenship'.

The presentation deals with perspectives and discussions upon the following questions

- How is it possibly to understand production and consumption regarding to households, families and individuals?
- How does the responsibility emerging from the role as households influence on the understanding of consumption at the market?
- Which ethical challenges do the family and individual have to cope with?
- How can formal consumer education contribute to a broader understanding of consumerism and raise critical awareness and responsible action, as consumption is related to health and environment?
- Which educational questions do consumer education raise – consequences for practice?

Values and their meaning in the formation of a consumer's life style

Liga Danilanae

Rezekne Higher Education Institution, Latvia

In Latvia in the 1990's, as in all post-socialist countries, changes were observed in the economic as well as social spheres. Slowly but inevitably the human value system also changed. The change of values is closely related to the conditions in economy. Countries experiencing rapid economic changes also face more rapid and contradictory changes in their value system. This is proven by the data of many surveys obtained in Latvia during the last few years. The data indicate that people's opinions about values are very contradictory and that it is quite difficult to speak about definite tendencies in values change. Periodical changes in social order and prevailing views in the society of Latvia have not let any generation develop and bring up the next generation in a stable system of social norms and values.

The research is based on the analysis of the essence of values from the point of view of various scientists and consumer culture. In connection with this an experiment among the prospective teachers of art and craft and basics of economics at Rezekne Higher Education Institution was conducted.

The good life, wealth and health - What does well-being mean to you?

Luisa Ferreira da Silva

Universidade, Portugal

Portugal during the last 25 years has crossed a period of modernisation with the public emergence of concepts such as health, environment and healthy life. The life expectancy has improved with remission of mortality taxes. Modernisation has also affected the main causes of death and illness that are now more connected with modern lifestyles – mainly, food and sedetary lifestyles.

We have conducted 70 interviews with adult people (25-75 years old) in the north of Portugal (urban and rural) with the aim of understanding their daily way of relating to the concepts of well-being and healthy-life. Are these notions present in their day-to-day practices? Where and how are they influencing their lives? Which are the rationalities that support their views about life, risk and ageing? How do people integrate the information "for health an healthy long life" with their other preoccupations? How do they decide about priorities?

This paper will present the concept of the good life in relation to Portuguese people taking in account their social diversity (gender, age, family status and socio-economic insertion).

Consumer citizenship for life quality in Latvia

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The paper will deal with how to understand the European concept of consumer citizenship in Latvia. What are the existent attitudes of society towards consumer rights and responsibilities? What are the criteria of life quality and its adaptation for analyzing local social processes. The paper will also provide an analysis of consumer science study programs in higher education level and further education. How does research about consumer education made in the Institute of Education and Home Economics influence life quality? Latvian society's awareness within consumer education is insufficient, except on the higher educational level and amongst professionals working in consumer education field, but it is necessary to strengthen the conceptual initiation of consumer citizenship in Latvia.

Personal responsibility for ethical consumption - A challenge to education for achieving a sustainable future

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Undoubtedly, the behaviour of every man is guided by his/her needs. Not so much by the needs themselves, however, as by their hierarchy. The newly-born child has only necessities and instincts, but not needs. It is the potential human being that becomes a person only if at least one person is near it. The influences of other people are precisely what turn necessities into conscious needs, add new ones and 'sets in order' all needs according to their importance for the individual, i.e. they define the first value system. Later in life this system changes due to personal experiences and developments, but human behaviour is always a result of choices made on the basis of values. So it is possible to say that, being a system of criteria for choosing behaviour, the current value system is a personal ideal for the 'quality of life' or 'good life'. Consumer behaviour, as all other choices, is also a result of personal values. But if the 'quality of life' is an ideal or ultimate value, there are instrumental values as well. They are criteria for choosing the ways of achieving goals. Personal responsibility for ethical or sustainable consumption stems from those values, which as ultimate values, are

consequences of learning and education. So, if we need a sustainable future, we need family- and school education entirely oriented towards sustainable values. This poses a problem especially in less developed countries like Bulgaria where the concept of such education is totally missing and such way of thinking is just starting to appear.

PROCEEDINGS

Working with a staged plan in value-based education

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At the core of every action undertaken there must be awareness that we do so as political consumers. The realisation of the competencies that define us as active individual consumer-citizens depends on a whole range of motivations. They may be different for each individual, even if the same or similar activities are undertaken. The motivations, goals and consequences of the actions should not be based only on social-economic and political cravings the ethical parameter must also play an important part in any decision-making process. It is typical for generic and specific ethical assessments to include a “humane” approach in answering the question how the ethical quality of life of all and the society will be involved and influenced by individual action. The awareness of this creates dedicated consumer citizens.

People tend to experience difficulties facing evaluation processes. They often lack the broader, collective, context and they do not realise that personal intentions, expectations and actions not only have consequences for them personally, but also for others and society. It is not easy to initiate a constant awareness process and become a dedicated consumer-citizen since an individual person is so influenced by their own emotional and rational arguments that sufficient emotional distance can not always be created so as to reach a decision which is both good for the individual and the society. A method is needed to teach ethical decision-making and the follow-up assessment of the whole decision making process.

A four-stage procedure will be discussed which ends with the process evaluation of the decision making, the method followed and the final decision itself.

The method creates an awareness process in which an individual becomes answerable for his actions, where he is required to explicitly define and justify the individual and professional options and choices, something which often remains unspoken or undeclared. The method gives clear indications and explanations of how personal freedom and responsibilities became part of the equation leading to the exploration of alternatives. It is a method that allows for

individual decisions, however, against a permanent backdrop of collectivity and calling for deliberation and discussion. The stages in any ethically sound decision-making process so as to be a dedicated consumer-citizen are therefore: exploring the situation, defining alternative solutions, reaching a dedicated decision and finally evaluating not only the decision, but also the process leading to it and the individual and collective consequences it carries.

In the field of social care work the ethical question should be an obvious part of the discussion. In my every day teaching, however, I notice two things:

1. students have difficulty to define the ethical angle next to an emotional and rational evaluation,
2. if they succeed to bring their discussion to an ethical level, they will persist in a dilemma discussion.

In order to upgrade the discussion, the students are given the task of reflecting on cases in groups. Quite soon two camps will emerge, namely those who are resolutely in favour and those who choose to be against. Several advantages and disadvantages are considered and one group often tries hard to convince the other that they are right. I often see students getting stuck in this dilemma: they often only give one or two options, to be quickly brought back to the essence of the problem by the others: the choice between right or wrong.

Apparently, students seem to have some difficulty in exploring problems in a broader context and in realising that their solutions sometimes have more to do with their own intentions and expectations. Nor do the students succeed in distancing themselves from the problem in order to find alternatives, because they often mix emotional arguments with rational ones. Later, after having studied with them the staged plan, I ask the students to look at the problem again, and this produces quite a number of surprising analyses.

Using a staged plan

Several authors formulated instructions on the steps to take in order to arrive at a process to come to a well-balanced opinion and a sound decision. This process typically involves asking oneself a number of important questions the answers to which are needed before any decision can be made. To take the all important factors into account, you have to answer the questions one by one. Such a staged plan or scheme is a practical aid and does not automatically provide standard solutions. It prevents rushing into things or doing things which later will be regretted. Such a scheme forces people to stop and strip the problems they are emotionally involved in of their tension, by systematically analysing them and looking at them from different angles.

Moreover, with the scheme, you can explain to others why you have come to certain conclusions and made that specific decision and not another. It enables a person to become answerable to himself for his own actions. People are explicitly required to translate their decision making process into words and to justify a number of choices they usually make from a personal or professional point of view, because these justifications often remain unspoken.

Putting your rationale in words will give a clear indication of how you have handled your freedom and responsibility. At the same time, a staged plan such as this also offers a structure in which decisions are made together with other people, because in a work environment important decisions are not made by a single person, but rather by a team. And this will take quite a lot of deliberation and discussion.

I would suggest a four-stage plan covering the process and ending in the assessment of the whole process. The staged scheme presented below is based on several other staged plans that can be found in the literature, including those of Ebskamp and Kroon (1990), De Jonghe (1995) and especially Houdart (1997).

All in all, the staged plan I will present here is similar to the one Houdart describes. However, in my rendering of the four-stage plan, I put more emphasis on the alternatives, and within these alternatives, the creativity of the people involved. In my opinion, you can thus avoid dilemma-thinking and encourage the participants to search for alternatives with an open mind. There are a number of advantages:

- it creates new solutions which did not exist previously,
- it stimulates participants to come to open and free reflection,
- it offers opponents the opportunity suggest solutions without losing the argument,
- it offers new opportunities for social work,
- it has an emancipatory effect because it allows everybody to participate in their own way.

Finally, I would like to point out that, in order to have a satisfactory ethical discussion, several preconditions have to be fulfilled. In this case satisfactory does not mean ideal or unanimous, but rather a discussion and an outcome that all participants can live with; i.e. a discussion that invites people to move on. An essential precondition is to be able and to be willing to speak freely.

A second precondition is that the participants know which discussions they can and cannot have. Houdart (1997) describes these preconditions as stage 0, which

seems logical given that compliance with these conditions is a *conditio sine qua non*. However, I would not put it so strongly, because this issue is usually assessed during the course of the discussion and only then can it be tackled. I rather agree with the premise used in Theme Centred Interaction (TCI): ‘Disturbances have priority’. (Cohn, 1976).

At the end of the process I have included a mandatory assessment stage. This is a necessary stage, but it does not necessarily have to take place immediately after the decision making process was finished. Indeed, it will often prove more productive if there has been some ‘time to reflect’.

The four stage plan

The different stages in this plan are:

Stage 1: What are the facts and whose interests are at stake?

It is advisable to approach the situation as objectively as possible, because this leads to a clear view on the situation. This often does not happen when one is emotionally involved, though. In that case, outsiders are needed to help brush aside prejudices and opinions when all the facts are listed relating to questions of: ‘who, what, why, where, when and how’? You need to consider which facts (old and new) are necessary. Are the facts reliable, are they relevant to the issues at hand and do we have complete information? Of course, it is about gathering this factual knowledge according to ability and circumstances. Most of the time you only have little material and you work in a limited time frame. Furthermore, it is important to objectify the rather subjective information as much as possible in order for the participants to have the opportunity to look upon the problem from a meta-level – to get, as it were, a bird’s eye view.

The analysis may cause confusion or give rise to a conflict of interests. With the term interest the following is understood: that which meets someone's needs, that which is advantageous to someone, that which, deservedly or undeservedly, is good for someone. This stage therefore also entails trying to gain an insight into the mind frames of the people involved in the dilemma and discovering the underlying meaning related to their interests and opinions. In other words, how do the people involved experience the facts, how do they think and feel about them? After all, everyone involved has got a number of responsibilities related to the effective performance of the job. It is quite possible that what is presented as a particular interest is also linked to someone’s responsibilities. In other words, the question must be asked: “Who is responsible for what?” It is often about weighing up the values, whether or not they are connected to certain interests. In this phase, you try to establish clarity and you try arrive at a conclusion regarding the nature of the real issue.

Once we have gone through the previous stages and completed a thorough analysis, we can find out what the dilemma is, that is, the nature of the real problem. What is the question which is asked or which you ask yourself? Is there really a choice; is it a dilemma after all? Is it an ethical or a moral dilemma; in other words, is it human welfare which is at the heart of the discussion?

Stage 2: What are the alternatives?

This is the crucial stage, it is the heart of the process. Creativity is a vitally important factor here. Before you are able to form an opinion or make a decision, it is crucial to consider the options. Sometimes a compromise or an alternative counterproposal may be found. In a number of cases this will help to widen the choice, to open up the options. When listing the alternatives, the advantages and disadvantages, consequences, feasibility and the price to pay are mapped out. Finally, the link between values and interests is made. In other words, whose responsibility will we make an appeal on? To carry out this stage optimally, students will have to be encouraged to work freely, in a critically creative manner, using lateral thinking methods. I often encourage students to literally get out of their normal discussion pattern, because I see that set habits in meetings form mind ruts, which will often lead to rigidity and which might block any creativity in the process.

Stage 3: What is the conclusion?

In this phase of the process the alternatives are being weighed against each other. Based on the listed facts and the priorities set in terms of values and interests, the alternatives are compared and the advantages and disadvantages are balanced against each other. After that, a choice is made. At first, an idea has to be formed of the different values and standards in the case concerned. Further, we need to check whether there is a conflict of values/standards and what type of hierarchical system of ordering the values/standards is to be employed. Which decision do we make and which arguments are we using to justify ourselves? In order to reach at this decision we should ask ourselves the following questions: are (the) standards/regulations absolute, and whose responsibility will be the most decisive?

Stage 4: How to carry out the decision?

Finally the time has come to act, the decision arrived at is to be executed now. In case it is your dilemma, you are the one to jump into the water and you are the one to carry out what has been decided upon. If several people are responsible for the decisions made it has to be decided who will carry out the decisions.

The 'when' and the 'where' issues are always important, since it is also essential to handle ethical issues with great care. Sometimes it takes courage to actually do what in your view needs to be done. An important question is: what agreements have to be concluded to follow up the case?

Evaluation and reflection

The aim of the evaluation is quite different from the aim of the other stages in the staged plan. In the final assessment, a number of meta-questions are asked about how the staged plan was completed and about the quality of the discussion. We take stock of how the staged plan was completed and the following questions need to be answered: “What has the staged plan taught us? Have we learned something? Do we now have a better understanding of the case? Have we examined all the possibilities?”

In addition to the assessment of the problem and the decisions, we will also need to have an eye for the process between those involved in the staged plan.

The importance of communication

Working with ethical issues that occur in practical life, calls for good communication lines and communication procedures within an organisation. Ensuring good communication implies that the conversation happens efficiently and that it is problem-oriented and problem-solving in an effective manner. However, good communication is more than a simple exchange of information or employing sound and efficient conversation techniques. Apart from the content and the efficiency of the message, good communication requires an ethical relationship between people. The conversation partners have to be willing to take each other’s questions and requests mutually seriously, together with the protests, frustrations and unspoken expectations. This is not the same as just complying with someone else’s wishes, though. Without sincerity, the conversation becomes streamlined in advance, and it is not about real human communication, but about a good strategy to achieve something in the guise of seduction, control or blackmail. Communication as a strategy or as a technique is radically different from communication as an ethical relationship. The latter requires a very demanding relationship of mutual respect and responsibility, which is not always the case for communication strategies such as marketing, advertising, demagoguery or image-building.

In order to be able to arrive at what can be considered to be ethical judgement, a reference point or a standard is required. A reasonable standard would be that morally good communication aims at consulting all the groups involved, with special attention to the weakest partners. There should be good communication between all groups involved, even with those which sometimes tend to be forgotten or which remain neglected. It is obvious that we cannot come to a conclusion from some kind of detailed normative ethics, such as a Christian or ideological attitude to life, but rather from communicative ethics in which the quality of the communication process is emphasised. Communicative ethics will put an emphasis on a dialogue in a pluralist context. The quality of the

communication between the partners is linked to a number of conditions that must be fulfilled as a necessary condition:

- the willingness to have an open communication;
- clear agreement on the areas of responsibility and the power of decision-making;
- attempts to solve controversies and the right to have dissident opinions.

Only if groups are willing to pay heed to these preconditions can the results of a staged plan be considered satisfactory - not in the sense of an ideal solution or a general conclusion, but rather entailing having a good feeling about the discussion and as having reached an interim result that can be worked with.

Conclusions

A staged plan is a very useful tool to help structure discussions on ethical topics in every field of society. Its use is not to be limited to social or health issues. The scheme is also a valuable tool to be used in discussions on environmental, economic and financial issues. It gives participants the possibility and the opportunity to make observations from a certain emotional distance and to explore the whole range of alternatives. However, it is not a miracle-worker, and the main condition of its use must be found in its task of helping the issue of ethical communication. It therefore is vital that students also learn to use certain discussion techniques, e.g. practising Socratic dialogue would be an example of a useful exercise. As it is the case with Socratic dialogue, working with the 4-stage scheme calls for strong commitment from the student group. Indeed, students sometimes complain that it takes a lot of time to use the staged plan. Furthermore, by using the step-by-step method, the discussions are likely to get a rather personal slant and participants may be pulled into very demanding confrontations with their own value system and their own attitudes. Teachers or facilitators need to be aware of the conditions necessary for an efficient and effective debate, and participants must be given the possibility to indicate where their limits are and consequently possibly withdraw from the discussion.

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The educational process and standards creation in relation to the lifestyles of the 21st century

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Lifestyles in the 21st century are characterized by the quality of products, processes and resources, quality of care of environment and health and safety of people as well as the quality of human life itself. One of the latest trends, which is reflected in ISO 9000:2000 standards, is the focus on processes and it is the educational process that will have increasingly important role in supporting the above-mentioned orientation.

The initial section of this paper describes the position and specifics of the educational process participants: students, i.e. customers (consumers) on one hand and educational organizations on the other hand. The second section briefly highlights the importance of the consumer's position in relation to the creation of high-quality lifestyles. The third section is an attempt to map the consumers' conditions for their active involvement in the standardization process and generally in enterprise processes bringing out the social responsibility aspect. In this respect the enterprises as well as other institutions take positions with differing openness to the pressure for cooperation with consumers and other external groups.

The educational process and its attributes

The educational process is designed to impart new knowledge, skills and findings. The ISO standards present the following definition of this process: "A group of logically ordered activities with clearly defined input and output where the input resources are transformed into output products during the process". If we are to apply this definition to the educational process then this unambiguously shows the educational process is characterized by two groups: educational organizations (and their staff) and customers (students). Generally, the educational organization is the product supplier and the student's education is the product.

Customer-Student

As in case of every product (process outcome) the customer-student has his or her requirements, wishes, ideas and expects them to be fulfilled. If treating the educational process products two aspects must be dealt with. Firstly, there is a responsible student tenacious of purpose. It is rather an objective person who

accepts also demanding and difficult process components. Secondly, there is a student who studies mainly to obtain a paper confirming he has the relevant education (i.e. school leaving certificate or personal attestation) as quickly as possible and with the minimum effort. Let's suppose the latter case is less frequent because a high-quality educational process cannot provide the space required for such outcomes and situations. A high-quality educational process must teach the student and induce him or her to ambition, responsibility and relation to quality.

Educational Organization

Quality is a phenomenon which will accompany our being, activities and processes in our everyday future life. Although the ISO 9000 standards are focused largely on the production process the educational process cannot be omitted because it is the high-quality of educational process application that produces competent managers and leaders who will subsequently keep the introduced continuous quality improvement trend. This implies the competent managers are a result of high-quality educational process.

This reasoning requires us to emphasize the social responsibility whose major attributes can be specified as certain conditionalities and successions. These include in particular:

- Voluntary involvement of organizations in the provision of education and addressing social issues
- Conviction and assuredness of public that the organization is concerned about their future
- Conviction and assuredness of employees that the organization takes proper care of them
- Correctness and transparency
- Customer's (student's) confidence in the product quality

Each supplier including any educational organization should endeavour to satisfy the customer to the maximum extent (because without this effort it runs the risk of loss of the customer and potentially a number of other customers) but it has its specific opportunities to satisfy the customers (its „know-how“, competence of its personnel, technical and organizational resources, etc.). One of the most important elements of all educational organizations is the unreplaceable role of educationalist who should, among others, try to create awareness of the quality importance and instil the quality principles into the students during teaching.

The high-quality education of the young generation should thus become the supreme objective of educational process. Not to mention the fact the person

having passed through the educational process should be a well educated expert in the particular sphere, any such person should also receive the basic lessons in the quality area. But how to achieve this stage?

The educational process product is always designed for a long-term use. For that reason its life is very important (rather in terms of its information nature than moral life). The volume of educational process product long-term use depends largely on its moral life. The educational organizations should therefore seek to provide solutions ensuring the maximum moral life of the product.

The moral obsolescence cannot be stopped. It can, however, be slowed down by, for instance, anticipating the future needs of the customer-student. In doing that it is helpful to apply the following important findings in the educational process:

- The broader grounds of the student's knowledge are laid the longer life of the education since such grounds can usually be utilized also in other spheres. This helps improve the educational process efficiency as well because the understanding of general principles facilitates the perception of specific findings and various relations.
- The educational process is, in fact, always framed as a preparation of a man for value creation processes. And it is the way in which a person learns to think in course of education that determines the development of his or her other abilities (e.g. the ability to receive and understand new knowledge).

Nevertheless, the description above is not intended to suggest the best approach would be to educate a man only at the most general level. If one is to create values the general knowledge alone is insufficient; he or she must be able to make use of it also to create values in the particular sphere.

As regards the quality area, there are substantial differences to be noted: for example the standards setting forth the quality management rules become null and void not later than within 10 years. On the contrary, general principles such as Deming cycle (PDCA), Juran quality spiral, total quality management (TQM), etc. have been applied unchanged for decades. This shows for a quality expert it is more important to know, understand and adopt the general principles than to learn the passages from various standards by rote.

The consumer's role and relation to standards development

Consumer protection became a very significant market factor in the late 20th century. It can be stated the consumer protection and quality are communicating vessels. In course of the educational process also the knowledge and findings regarding the quality management systems, environmental management systems, safety, ethics, consumer protection, etc. are imparted to the students of

Ostrava Technical University. The study programmes are set up also with respect to the EU where the compliance with the requirements for consumer protection and quality management areas and legal aspects of quality are commonplace in a number of areas. All activities and teaching of these subjects are driven by the endeavour to meet the demands of varied bodies and organizations for qualification improvement and knowledge extension.

However, the qualified experts specializing in the consumer protection and quality issues are only one part of the educational process. The other equally important part is the necessity to make the students realize their consumer role. Any one of us, irrespective of the age and education, puts himself or herself in the position of a consumer though often even not perceiving this role. As early as in the bathroom in the morning we use a variety of cosmetics, at the breakfast we use various kinds of dishes, spend various kinds of products, then we put on clothes, travel to work or school where we become users of lots of other products (computers, furniture, electric appliances, etc.) as well as in our households and all is considered by us common and safe. We use and rely on products which were manufactured to some standards and for us – for the consumers.

But try to answer a question whether we are always fully pleased with the products and services. Are we as the customers satisfied generally with all products or do we harbour feelings they were fabricated for a market at which the consumer is not taken into account and the only ambition of the manufacturers and distributors is financial profit from the sales of such products? And which ways and proceedings can we as the consumers use to protect ourselves in cases where we have been injured?

The educational process thus should also be aimed at pointing out the importance of the consumers' involvement in the standardization and their active role in the standardization bodies as one of the ways to improve the development of standards regarding products and services surrounding us and provided to us in our everyday activities.

Cooperation of Businesses with Consumers

Over the past years there has been increased demand for representation of consumers in technical standardization. Although the European and international standards are made up of professionals and experts from the hands-on sphere, research institutes, universities etc., which ensures the highest professional quality and level of standards, the voice of consumers in this field is not irrelevant or unsubstantiated. Unfortunately in spite of great advancements made in this field there are still many standards that look as if they were created more

for producers themselves and the consumers' requirements are not always fully taken into account in them.

The significance of consumer participation in standardization is unquestionable and substantive. In this respect it is also necessary to point out that participation in the creation of standards in the Czech Republic is permitted to consumers themselves but unfortunately practice shows that all activities often fail due to several factors:

- The consumers' rights and interests are asserted in the environment of information and economic disparity in the relation between the businessman (entrepreneur) and consumer (customer). Usually the consumer has not enough knowledge and possibilities to thoroughly verify the information by which the product or service sales is supported. He or she is led mainly by the inward need to get a product of certain specification. The consumer is often under the pressure of massive advertisement, insufficiently circumspect, easy to manipulate and suffers from the lack of unbiased information.
- For isolated consumers – individuals it is not possible to influence legislation or the application practice of public authorities. Very often there are special interest groups standing against them, which, contrary to consumers – individuals, are able to make use of many advantages from the government. Here we come to the point where it is possible to influence the “macro” setup of laws of the market economy. Without the ability of the consumer public to defend itself against the pressure of special interest groups motivated by the interest to achieve more, even to the disadvantage of consumers, the economic freedom of an individual becomes rather a fictive, marginal category, while the “freedom of players of the “offer” side” can break out into willfulness, though sanctioned by the valid laws.
- It is however necessary to point out that the creation of standards is a highly qualified matter, to which a common consumer can rarely commit himself. He can run up against obstacles such as his lack of qualifications and very often insufficient motivation to implement changes, the bureaucracy of standardization bodies, which do not like to change their decisions and directives and last but not least the long-term aspect, which does not contribute to the process of change and the creation of standards.

Based on the arguments above we will try to structure the positions of enterprise or other institutions influencing both the standardization and the lifestyle quality in general.

Social responsibility

The consumers are an integral part of social groups that are not incorporated in a company's organizational structure and they do not belong to groups involved in economic relationships to the company's behaviour. Among examples of such interests rank negative impacts on the environment, manipulation with prices for goods, breaching laws by the companies including cheating, safety products, efficiency of utilization and other aspects of lifestyle quality.

The consumers by this way form social standards for the "responsible" behaviour of enterprises and institutions in face of consumers and society generally. The social responsibility then reflects the extent to which the enterprise overfills the legal requirements. It is closely connected with the definition of human needs and wishes through which the consumers can influence, whether successfully or not, the life quality establishment.

The typology of social responsibility

The following discussion will be oriented to basic typical features of individual forms where we expect they are included in a majority of opinions representing the given form of social responsibility like social and political phenomena.

Liberal form

For this type a starting point is a statement of Milton Friedman from which results that a single form of responsibility of corporate managers is „to manage a company according to their wish which, in principle, means as much money as possible, while complying with the general rules of the society“. Then it is possible to assume that the superiority of profit practically will lead to the current passing of social rules.

Paternalistic form

This form is based on the opinion that enterprises attempt to respond to more general interests, values and pressures from the side of the society. It includes a higher than necessarily inevitable level of fulfilment of economic and legal requirements. The companies take greater responsibilities than imposed by the market, consumers and other involved entities and legal obligations. The companies respond to relevant social requirements and in this connection they try to adapt their strategy. One fact is important, their behaviour incorporates a dialogue, as mentioned above, with groups involved that are not directly interested in economic targets of the organization [consumers, protectors of the environment, local inhabitants...].

One major insufficiency is that they determine with whom from involved groups will negotiate. There is persisting some undervaluation of a value of the

knowledge of consumers and other external entities, there is still the conviction of superiority of the specialized knowledge of corporate personnel [„only corporate experts know what is the best“].

For example, this is true in the our topical case of discussions concerning the risk of nuclear power stations or chemical industry. Generally, it is assumed that „imprudence“ of the public could be solved by a better system of „training“.

The example of philosophy of presentation of a risk being under control and non-exposure of lifestyle quality may see in the case of the most conflict construction of the former Czech - Slovak Federation - the dam Gabčíkovo – Nagymaros. During a promotion voyage there were attempts to convince visitors of unaffected ecosystem and water quality from one of the greatest reservoir of drinking water in central Europe. Furthermore, there is a problem of information availability. Provided that consumers have to come to a dialogue as equal, they must have the information available, however, the information remain under a strict control of the enterprises or institutions.

Unfortunately, despite the relatively new act on free access to information the existing legislative constraints often bar the consumers or other persons involved outside the enterprise from acquiring relevant facts based on which they could proficiently and, in particular, timely respond to the activities of the enterprise or other institutions not only within the standardization process.

There are also ideas the consumers’ and public standpoints should be included in the decision making process of businesses.

Democratic form

According to Sethi this form contemplates an effort of the companies to identify and respond flexibly to potential restrictions which might emerge at implementation of their economic goals. With this perspective planning they can get more easily a competitive advantage. The democratic form recognizes the fact that there exists the plurality of opinions, standpoints and conclusions. At creation of strategy and potential corrections of business policy, the company will accept relevant voices from outside. Thus, a number of mutually beneficial contacts may be established.

Corporate responsibility and co-operation with consumers

In this point we would try to suggest a relationship between the corporate responsibility and co-operation: corporate – consumers based on the previous characteristics of individual forms. In the case of the first type of corporate responsibility, i. e. liberal form, one cannot expect that is would be suitable for

actual co-operation or the accepting of consumer's opinions. The corporates do not admit the participation of other groups than those economically involved in the results of their activity. Moreover, the company's strategy is leading mostly to one goal - to maximize a profit. Such orientation to legal and economic obligations gives a space to consideration that the accepting or not accepting of consumer's perceptions may damage the profit.

These enterprises tend to closely focus on their objectives and adopt short-term strategies and are afraid from „unnecessary“ investments in responding to the requirements and opinions of the customers and involved public.

A technocratic faith in the expertise of internal groups involved is of a key importance in conjunction with paternalism, and associated assumptions about irrationalism of non-professional groups from outside. Dominant models experienced by the organization survive as relatively undoubted therefore although the consumers are given an ear their influence is none too strong. As far as the democratic form is concerned, wide possibilities for the participation of consumers are open. Basically, it is necessary to incorporate in the decision making process as many as possible opinions, to organize a dialogue which supports and requires communication and different views of the problem. A more conspicuous evidence of the influence of public access to information is provided by the relation between the democratic form of social responsibility and the consumers' involvement in the creation of high-quality lifestyle. It should be emphasized this is clearly an enterprise social responsibility form which cannot be a mere supplement of the existing enterprise standards, values and practises. It represents a strategic approach which requires that the enterprises and institutions try to identify and respond to probable constraints created by the society. The cooperation with the consumers in doing that can prove to be a considerable competitive edge.

Summary

This paper was intended as a contribution to the discussion on the consumers' position and their chances to influence the lifestyle. Obviously not only technical or administrative problems are involved. The main point of discussions and conflicts are the basic values and also they must be presented in economic context because it is the only argumentation to which most of the enterprises and institutions are willing to respond.

The indicated relation between the position of educationalist (preparation for life, creation of awareness of the quality importance, imparting of the quality principles), position of student (relation to standards creation, understanding of the consumer's role, voluntary involvement in the solution of social and environmental issues) and position of enterprises, administrative bodies, etc.

(their willingness to accept the requirements from the consumers, i.e. those being outside the enterprise, respective body, etc.) raises additional questions which are far from being answered and deserve further research.

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Consumption in everyday life – Challenges and responsible actions

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Introduction

Globalisation has become part of our living conditions; this circumstance has a huge impact on the lives of parents and children, households and individuals. Households and individuals are consumer decision-making units in the civil society. Consumption is both a way to construct meaning for individuals and families, but also a fundamental need for human beings, as consumption has to 'cover' fundamental and basic needs for food, housing/shelter and cloths.

Consumption raises a wide range of dilemmas in everyday life. These dilemmas are of many kinds economic, practical, theoretical, emotional, aesthetical and ethical. A great part of the dilemmas can be hidden or tacit, but nevertheless they must be discussed when it comes to consumer education, information and research. It's also a dilemma that consumers often have this feeling of consumption as the only place with freedom where only you decide. But it is as Baumann has expressed it a kind of "velvet repression". "For the majority, it is a sort of do-it-yourself dependency; people gladly, willingly, joyfully enter the dependency relationship with marketing companies, with experts, technological or scientific, psychologists, psychiatrists and so on" (Podor Pedersen 1992, p.15). However it must be mentioned that the article presents views and perspectives experienced in Western societies and the examples from education is also from universities or schools within this area.

How is it possibly to understand production and consumption regarding to households, families and individuals?

'Housekeeping means: To use what you have in order to get what you want'. This sentiment was expressed around 100 years ago by the famous Danish home economist Magdalene Lauridsen. It described what good housekeeping was, and

perhaps is, all about and what should be taught. People should be taught to economise, to make good use of all materials in the most prudent way. To act prudently implies many things: knowing, thinking, doing, acting in a way, which makes one able and capable of managing a household, 'to home economise'.

Household life in modern Western societies nowadays deals to a great extent with consumption: indeed, for some people it seems to be the overall mission of their lives. To survive and stay alive it is necessary to consume. The modern consumer society or, as Giddens puts it, late-modern society we are part of today has a major impact on our lives as individuals, families and households. (Giddens, 1991)

Despite the emphasis nowadays being on the consumer and her consumption behaviour, it can be postulated that we are also, to a certain degree, producers. We are not just passive consumers but as we consume we act, react and interact. How, why and when we carry out these actions depends on who we are, our needs and attitudes towards consumption and action and our skills or abilities to 'produce'. As Orvar Lofgren points out, there is a need '*for seeing consumption as cultural production and consumers as actors rather than objects.*' (Löfgren, 1990)

Although we as consumers sometimes feel like defenceless objects for the business and marketing, also because the foods and goods have changed a lot. In former times the consumer knew all there was to know about the product. The material used was well-known and had proved its usefulness over many years, users knew all about the quality and how to keep the tool in good shape, they knew what food it would be used for and how to use up every scrap of the food in question. Nowadays, world wide, thousands of different new materials and foodstuffs are on sale and used in households in the reflective modern world. It is quite impossible to be 'a prudent, knowledgeable consumer'. Foods can be split into micro-units and put together in quite new ways unknown in earlier times. Today's society is, as Giddens and Ulrich Beck have called it, a '*risk society*'. (Giddens, 1991, Beck, 1992) In addition to the risks we experienced in the past as citizens or consumers, there are now new risks. Our foods may be genetically modified, polluted or filled with unknown additives: the consumer has to cope with all of this. We have to deal with 'the dangerous consumer society'. (Graae, 1970) How can we confront those dangers at personal, institutional and societal level?

It is useful here to consider three or four paradigms in relation to the consumer society. The first three are derived from political, economic and consumer policies and philosophies.(Jensen, 1984, 1982, Steffens, 2000) The first

paradigm is grounded in liberal economic thinking, and states that consumers are sovereign. You could call this the consumer-regulated society paradigm.

The second paradigm says that neither consumers nor producers are superior. Therefore we need a legalised society, which sets the regulations for producers as well as providing legislation to protect consumers, because consumers and producers do not operate at comparable levels.

The third paradigm sees all power is in the hands of the producers, nowadays the multinational companies or WTA (World Trade Association), who chooses and thereby determines the market. This means the producers are superior and decide what we can buy and how to consume.

The fourth paradigm is an utopia - an ecological or oiko-political model where both partners act in considerate ways within the framework of global legislation meeting basic needs for all, now and for the next generations. It's a paradigm where the consumer influence is optimum.

How does the responsibility emerging from the role as households influence on the understanding of consumption at the market?

To return to reality, our society encompasses homes and households which display the following characteristics according to Giddens, Mitchell and Ritzer (Mitchell, 2000, Ritzer, 1993). These are

- McDonaldization
- globalisation
- privatisation
- deregulation

The characteristics demonstrate that the first three paradigms mentioned above are represented in society today, and all of these tendencies are part of *'the dangerous consumer society'*. In the three paradigms it is the connexion between producers and consumers that matter. And this connexion has an impact on private households or homes, the places where consumers live and consume on the one hand. On the other hand, consumers also act as producers within their homes. They can produce quite complex products from basic materials. For instance, they can grow potatoes, harvest them, prepare them as a sophisticated meal, or they can store them to use later by preserving them in some way. Also if they buy the potatoes at the market they afterwards prepare them in a household production. In other words, individual consumers also produce on a smaller or larger scale. 'Out' in the (risk-) society the same people act as consumers with greater or lesser success, either actively or passively. The point of this differentiation is to clarify the relationship between the role of consumer

and the role of producer connected to both home and society, to *oikos* and *polis*, if you draw on the concepts from ancient Greek society as used by the American home economics researcher, Patricia Thompson. Thompson's model for this theory shows *oikos* as isolated, but related to *polis* or society. (Thompson, 1992)



Figure 1: Connection household-society and consumer-producer (Benn, 2000)

If we use the terms as defined by Habermas(1981), homes and household are embedded within society, or the life world is surrounded by the system world. This is illustrated in Figure 1. Here, society or *polis* must be understood as all those different spheres or levels surrounding us, with governmental or political institutions and the market as well. A further discussion of the *oikos-polis* theme can be found in the work of Thompson and of Benn (primarily in Danish), (Thompson, 1993, Benn, 1996). Seen from the individual's perspective, he or she acts as consumer outside the home in society, at the market, and acts as producer and/or consumer within the home. The household production is connected with consumption. For example when you are cooking the food, you are a producer and afterwards when you eat it you are a consumer. This double perspective is also essential for consumer education.

In figure 2 we try to get this double perspective on consumption and at the same time the interaction with the producers, organisations and the public authorities. This interaction is of course also an interaction with many stakeholders in an increasingly globalised world.

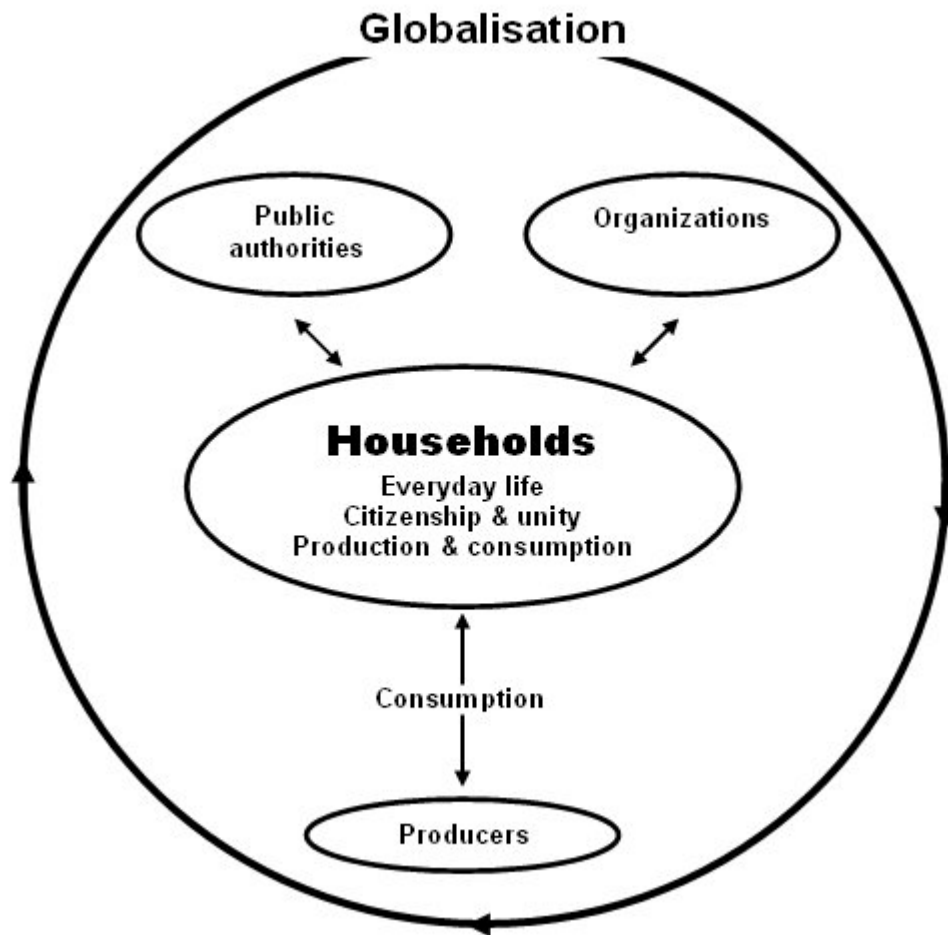


Figure 2: Household and Interactions with Surroundings (Juul Jensen, 11/10 2003)

In the households and in the local area a lot of activities are taking place. In Denmark an increase in network activities in the civil society took place in the nineties, often supported by the government or the municipalities (Juul Jensen 1997). The innovation was diffused (Rogers 2003) through media and network communication, and a lot of these activities were related to consumption in a wider sense, both to environment and health. Exactly in this connection the most important societal discussions arise. We look at these activities as a kind of practical consumer education from below outside the institutions (Juul Jensen 2003). And in a reflective modern world it is the single person who chooses the kind of unity that he or she wants to deal with.

Which ethical challenges do the family and individual have to cope with?

In the family or home the main task or aim is care; therefore the ethics of care is a daily part of the lives in the family and the individual. It is a latent and present claim in everyday life, perhaps not outspoken but tacit. Patricia Thompson, an American home economics researcher has made the model of *two systems for human actions*

Thompson's figure shows that values and aims are differing in the two spheres the private and the public, although the late-modern society has overtaken a lot of tasks formerly carried out in the family or households. The ethics of care in a home or family is concerned with caring for one's own family members and might be carried out without any recognition of other families needs in the local or global surroundings. But in teaching this ethics of care can be questioned and widened if the teacher is aware of this. Eleanore Vaines has in her description of philosophical orientations of home economics' teacher's elaborated 3 different orientations

- ego-centric
- eco-centred
- not committed (Vaines, 1990)

Within an egocentric position you are oriented to teach students to make the best solutions for themselves without caring for the neighbours, whereas the eco (oikos=household in Greek)-centred position is aiming at living in a caring membership in the living system. In a uncommitted position you present research and facts and leave it to the students to decide.

There are no proper answers concerning ethical questions but there are many questions to be raised, this is the important part in consumer decisions in private life and in consumer education.

How can formal consumer education contribute to a broader understanding of consumerism and raise critical awareness and responsible action, as consumption is related to health and environment?

Formal consumer education has mainly been aiming at educating the prudent, rational consumer through information of rights, responsibilities, labels and laws. This educational project of the school opposes to consumption in everyday life and stands so to speak in the tension between "consumership" and "citizenship". Aims of critical consumer education are care, consciousness and action competence/empowerment.

Schooling, and consumer education or consumer information in the younger age groups must take into consideration the consumer life of pupils and people outside the school in the real world and of all aspects of consumption. The perspectives of being in an "eco-centred and egocentric" position must be included. These expressions, which are used and explained by Eleanore Vaines as philosophical orientations for home economics teachers, can be helpful in developing consumer education. In an eco-centred position you show care and concern both for yourself, for the family and others, plus the environment, in

contrast to an egocentric position, which is focused on fulfilling your own needs without any concern for the consequences. As with all models these ideal types. Real persons are not *either or* but rather *both and*, as consumption is related to context and age or time, place and social environment, as the ethnologists explain.

An eco-centred position requires competency to act. This concept was developed by researchers at the Danish University of Education and is quite closely connected to empowerment and citizenship as described by Tones and Tilford (1994) and McGregor (1999, 2002). Action competence requires, as Bruun Jensen (2000) describes

- insight
- engagement
- visions
- acting experiences

Insight means to acquire a broad action-oriented understanding of the problem raised. Engagement is the wish and capacity to involve in changes of conditions. Visions cover the ability and wishes to think creative and visionary. At last the action experiences are concrete experiences in acting individually and collectively.

It means that teachers in consumer education have to offer these opportunities for their students. Furthermore, action competence demands knowledge of, caution, strategies, effects and alternatives. The concept of action competence offers an educational ideal, or some visions for consumer education especially the part related to citizenship; but the ‘consumership’, which may be seen as the personal, expressive and aesthetic part has to be taken into consideration as well. This is a challenge for future consumer education.

Which educational questions does consumer education raise – consequences for practice?

The discussion ‘consumership’ or citizenship raises dilemmas concerning the global and ethical perspective, which is not easy to handle in education. If action competence is to be developed then the key issues are the role of the teacher and the curriculum devised, either by themselves or by national governments. The teacher will need to adopt strategies, which will allow the child to develop knowledge and skills to ensure that action competence is developed. Rogers(1969,1983) with his view of pupil or person centred learning which sees the student as an important partner in learning not just a vessel in which to pour knowledge . Friere (1998) restates the importance of teachers being involved in the practice of critical teaching ‘a dynamic and dialectical movement between

‘doing (*teaching*) and reflecting on doing’ to identify the qualities needed to ensure that the citizenship curriculum is communitarian in nature. Communitarian citizenship education, which is progressive in nature, aims to strengthen the democratic and participative spirit within each individual, to balance the social good of the community against the good of the individual.

Within the UK, for example, the government has adopted a communitarian approach, making citizenship education compulsory for the first time. For children aged 5 – 16 citizenship is part of the non-statutory framework of personal, social and health education and citizenship and schools a legally required to teach citizenship education from ages 11 – 16 from 2002. The pupils aged 11 – 14 should for example gain knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens, develop skills of enquiry and communication and the skills of participation and responsible action. How these are taught is not prescribed. Although schools are intended to devote 5 % teaching time to citizenship, they may choose how to achieve the learning outcomes.

The UK government in compiling the citizenship curriculum relied heavily on the results of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) Civic Education Study (known in England as the Citizenship Education Study) The results of this survey of 14 year olds in England (Kerr et al 2002) showed that in terms of civic knowledge English pupils scored on or about the international mean but had difficulty in answering questions on knowledge of democracy and government on topics such as political representation and elections, suggesting that there had been limited opportunities to learn about, experience and understand these aspects of civil and political society either in school or in the communities in which they live. The fourteen year olds generally believed that working together, either in formal or informal groups, can enhance the school and help to solve problems that may arise. Young people experience the school as a social and political system and school efficacy- the extent to which young people can influence decision making in school, was identified as an important factor in future political behaviour. Schools that model democratic values and practices are most effective in promoting civic knowledge and engagement This approach was not the norm for English schools.

Students in the majority of countries reported that an open classroom climate for discussion was uncommon. The norm in England was reported as an approach which emphasised teacher talk, the use of textbooks and memorising of facts, dates and definitions. ‘Interestingly, those countries that have experienced considerable changes in civic or citizenship education in the past ten years appear to have a less open classroom climate for discussion. Attention in these

countries has been focused on training teachers in content, rather than developing their ability to foster an open classroom climate.’ (Kerr 2003)

The Department for Education and Skills set up a longitudinal study to of citizenship education over eight years to evaluate the effective practice in citizenship education so that such practices could be promoted widely. The report of the first year (Kerr et al 2003) has provided baseline information and has identified problems that impacted on the introduction of citizenship education has had in schools. It has revealed that there is considerable difference between school leaders’, teachers’ and students’ attitudes, and experiences, of citizenship education. Students were much less positive about their experiences than teachers, and teachers were less positive than school leaders. This gap is probably due to the fact that most school leaders had drawn up the plans for citizenship education with little or no consultation with teacher or students. An opportunity missed in the development of the school efficacy identified as important in the IAE survey.

The teaching strategies that are likely to be most effective in developing active, critical consumers and citizens are the same. Telling pupils what to think as opposed how to think is the key issue. Knowledge alone will not make for active consumer citizens. Take the example quoted by Lawson (2001) of discussion on child labour in India in a citizenship lesson.

- Teacher* What can we do as consumers to improve the situation?
- Pupil* We shouldn’t buy the footballs but the reality is that we won’t stop buying footballs or stop playing football. I know it’s selfish. It’s as bad on the streets as it is in the factory
- Teacher* Are you saying that a certain amount of child exploitation is inevitable?
- Pupil* Yes.
- Teacher* How many of you realised that Nike trainers were made in these conditions?

One or two say that they did.

- Teacher* How many of you will buy Nike trainers now that you know the conditions they are made in?

Nearly all pupils put their hands up. (Lawson 2001)

As the above extract shows, knowledge and awareness do not necessarily lead to action. To ensure that action takes place then students need also to know how to bring pressure to bear on organisation, and a desire to act collectively. The teaching strategies that will allow this to happen, as group work, open classroom discussion, experience of school efficacy are, according to the ICE survey, not

common in Europe. Therefore it is no surprise that students cannot withstand the onslaught of the marketing of goods and the social pressures of their peers. There is therefore an issue for teacher education and development based on teaching and learning strategies rather than content.

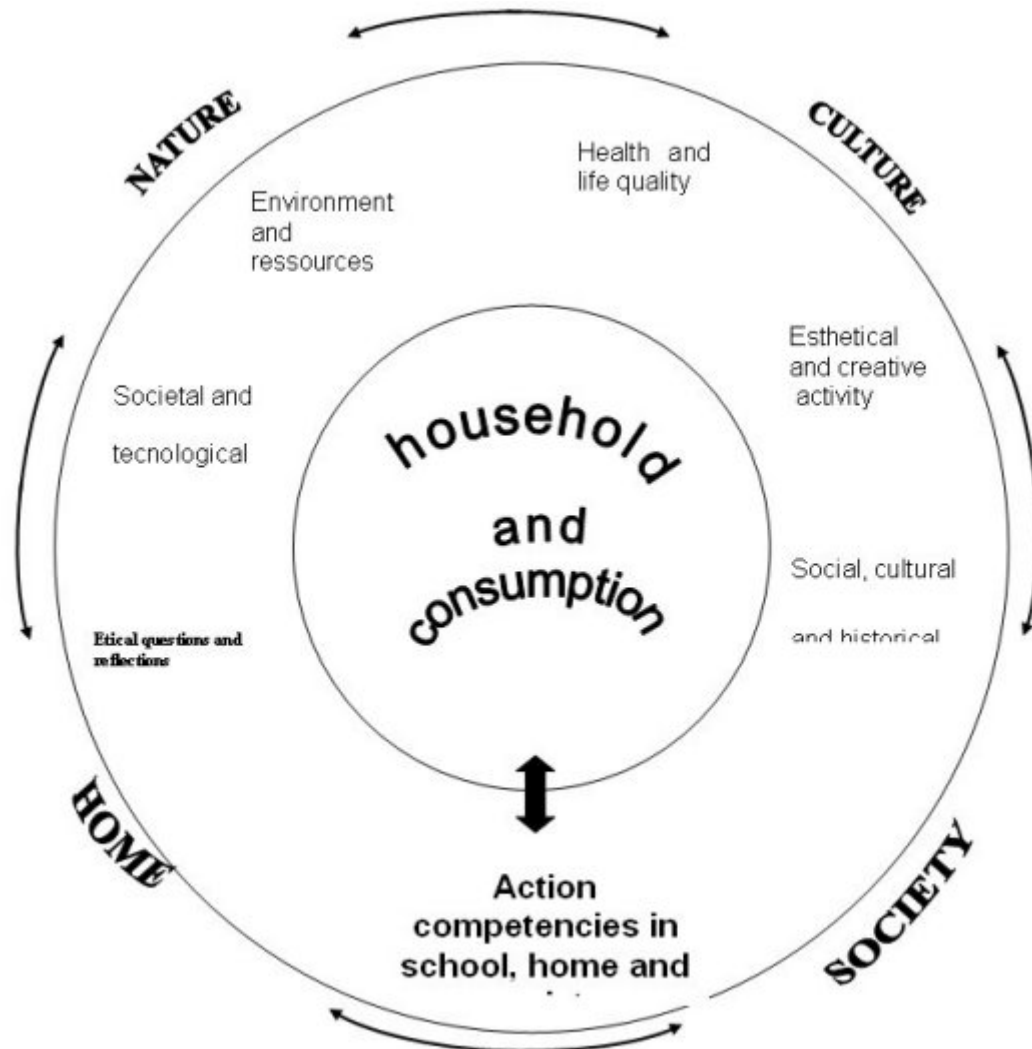


Figure 3: A model for reflections in consumer education (Benn, 1995)

Conclusion and perspectives

Consumption has become part of the way in which children are brought up and their socialisation, and thus has an impact on their identity and self-perception. There is a contrast or a dichotomy between the commercial world and its offers of miracle products and easy solutions, and consumer education, which has action competence or empowerment as the ultimate goal. Consumer education stands, so to speak in the tension between consumership and citizenship and

therefore consumer socialization and consumer education are central themes to be considered and researched, especially for home economics educators.

The ethical and global questions can be expressed as a sailing between 'consumership' and citizenship. Where 'consumership' (a self-constructed concept) is egocentric, going for one's own needs, citizenship is eco-centred, which means it involves acting in a *caring membership* (Vaines, 1990).

With consumer citizenship we try to catch the new role where you are a citizen and a consumer at the same time. It is necessary not only to see at the single consumer/household, but also to look at the possibilities for unity if the consumers shall influence the surrounding world. When it's a responsible action as a household, which takes in the consideration to the common good, we talk about a political household (a self-constructed concept), which also include actions at the market as a political consumer. With this concept it is possible to catch the meaning of the everyday life, the household work, the process of experience and the social interaction behind the consumption. It also gives the possibility to catch a critical view on the products from the producers. But the future for education must also be considered from geographical, cultural and historical viewpoints. Teachers educated in the last century need to consider how to educate pupils for coping with the 21st century. Consumer education must be a part of subject areas and cross-curricular projects with '*empowerment of the consumer, ... as the ultimate objective of consumer education.*' As Goldsmith and McGregor have said, this can be seen '*as an enormous challenge in the global electronic marketplace.* But consumer education has to take into account what is possible and what is desirable, why and how. The single individual has a lot of barriers to act as a political consumer on his or her own, and to make home and society a harmoniously caring place to live in. So the fourth paradigm mentioned earlier, is an utopia, but as all good utopias, there are some footprints in the existing society as illustrated in Figure 3. This demands effort not only at individual level, but also collectively and globally. But this is necessary if there is to be a future for coming generations.

In conclusion, let us return to the first quotation '*Housekeeping means: to use what you have in order to get what you want*'. This ought to be changed to '*Housekeeping means: To question what you need and to 'ecologizes' in order to get what you in unity with others might want*'.

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Values and their meaning for the formation of lifestyles

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In Latvia in the 1990's as in all post-socialist countries changes have been observed in the economic as well as social spheres. Slowly but inevitably human value system changes too. The change of values is closely related to the conditions in economy. Countries experiencing rapid economic changes also face more rapid and contradictory changes in their value system. This is proven by the data of many surveys obtained in Latvia during the last few years. The data indicate that people's opinions about values are very contradictory and that it is quite difficult to speak about definite tendencies in values change. Periodical changes in social order and prevailing views in the society of Latvia have not let any generation develop and bring up the next generation in a stable system of social norms and values.

Entering the new millennium, changes have been occurring in the attitudes of society towards values and hierarchy of values; the difference in the usage of the category of value and the category of need disappears. The ideas expressed by prominent persons prove that many people have been thinking about values and these values have altered along with changes in politics, economics, society and individuals (see Table 1).

Table 1: The Essence of Values in Scientists' View

Author	Interpretation of values
Philosopher F. Bacon	Freedom, strength, knowledge, truth, education, power, duty. These values are based on striving for the truth [5].
Rationalists	Mind
I. Kant	Virtue, duty, humanism, civil decency.
Kirgegor	Unique individual having a special value.
K. Marx	Substance because everything existing in the world is only substance. Everything occurring in the world is nothing more than development of substance [10].
M. Scheler	Representative of material values ethics which deals with the following basic problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ the essence of values and peculiarities of their exploration,▪ hierarchy of values,▪ reality of values and peculiarities of moral values,▪ human freedom [6].

<p>F. Niche (the beginning of the 20th century) A. Rikert (neokrantist) Ancient Greek philosophers</p>	<p>Values are relative (changing, time-shaped) as they are created by an individual himself/herself. Values completely depend on the evaluator as value itself appears only in evaluation. Asserts that value is a meaning being “outside” any existence.</p>
<p>G. Olport, P.E. Vernon, G. Cinzey, E. Shcpregner</p>	<p>Individuals usually prefer the permanent and try to avoid the troublesome and problematic. Individuals put their life into order under the influence of values starting from the biological level and ending with the highest levels of cultural and spiritual life.</p> <p>Indicate the criteria determining values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ free, understandable and well-considered choice, ▪ choice is made by choosing one of several alternatives and considering the opportunities and offer of each alternative as well as comparing them, ▪ evaluation and testing, ▪ public approval and expectation of approval from others, ▪ action according to one’s choice, ▪ repetition of these considerations in connection with anything you want to call <i>a value</i>. <p>Values express the attitude towards everything what is happening. Only a human being can acquire and create values recognizing their importance.</p>
<p>Allard</p>	<p>Values can be divided into five types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ learnt values, ▪ general values, ▪ constant values, ▪ goal-oriented values, ▪ choice-based values [11].
<p>Charles Morris</p>	<p>There are three basic dimensions of the value systems connected with various different cultures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dionysian: an inclination to enjoy life and free oneself from the pressure of needs, ▪ Promethean: an inclination to influence the world and change the existing order, ▪ Buddhist: an inclination to concentrate on one-self and consider one’s desires.

Analyzing the values from the point of view of the 19th-20th century scientists-philosophers it is seen that philosophy considers a group of three values to be on the highest level of the hierarchy [9]:

- good (the moral)
- truth
- beauty

In addition, other values are mentioned similar to the basic values in the field of morality, cognition and beauty.

The basic spiritual values block mentioned above is followed by the social values and practical performance values block which is comprised of the following value groups:

- material creating activities (technological, economic)
- social activities (love, communication, etc.)
- health and personal welfare (dissatisfaction with work, material welfare, etc.)
- self-actualization and self-realization (personality culture, lifestyle, education, etc.)

These value groups are oriented towards corresponding practical goals or means for attaining these goals [9].

Corresponding to Inghelhart's value theory of the social sciences [7,161] based on vast empirical material, in the end of the 20th century in the Western world there had occurred a gradual change of values—a transition from material (mainly economic material values and safety values) to post-material (so called life quality) values.

Table 2: Values in Latvian Scientists' View

I.A. Student	<p>Values differ only in their content, but their form is unchanging. Values are divided according to the following features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ unambiguity, ▪ eternity, ▪ constancy, ▪ necessity for fulfillment [13]. <p>On the value scale formation of personal ethical features has a primary importance. They are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ sense of duty, ▪ sense of responsibility and freedom, ▪ piety and humbleness, ▪ love of the closest people, ▪ truthfulness and justice, ▪ sense of self-value, ▪ persistence and strength, ▪ heroic spirit and courage.
Z. Maurina	There are values which are significant to the whole nation and to the whole humankind.
D. Uznadze	Value orientation scheme: need--value—readiness—value orientation.
A. Karpova	The value hierarchy is formed gradually in individual's life experience.
I. Tunne	<p>If a value becomes a part of personality structure, we can speak about possible correlation between the cognitive level of value orientation and behavior.</p> <p>Values determine what we believe in, what we will think and how</p>

- we will form our life. Understanding, analysis and choice of values broaden individual's world outlook and views on opportunities in life [14,104].
- I. Zogla Values have a subjective character, that is important in individual's development and complicates the teaching-learning process—it is difficult to discuss on values in a homogenous teaching-learning process, but it is even more difficult to do it in classroom in the environment of activated varied cultures [15].
- M. Vidnere The essence of values is in their significance but not in their actual existence. Norms based on values put culture in order.
- I. Plaude Value is defined as behavior orientation or an ideal norm [16, 53]. Values are ideals fixed in society that become a non-personal standard in everyday communication and ensure rationality.
- V.V. Klive Value itself is a goal or object of human being's interests and desires. It is something we strive for due to different reasons, something we want to obtain or attain [4, 51].
- R. Garleja Values are specific social characteristics of the surrounding objects, conscious significance for the society and the subject that is expressed in the attitude [3].

The issue of values has been discussed a lot in education, however, the educational philosophy has no unambiguous interpretation for “What is a value?” The dictionary of psychology terms points out that values are objects ensuring permanent confidence about priority of action or goal in comparison to any other aim or kind of action. Axiology is a field of philosophy dealing with the nature of values, their place in real life, e.g., with the interrelationships between values, relations with social and cultural factors as well as structure of personality. It deals with philosophical issues relating to general “issue of values”: the meaning of life and history, goal of human being's action and its justification, relations between an individual and society, trend and basis of cognition, etc. [2]. The understanding of values refers to material, social, ethical, aesthetical, cultural and other values.

In consumer culture putting emphasis on individuality and high living standard there are highlighted Dionysian values. In other cultures all three dimensions are considered to be of equal importance. An individual, who participates in social activities, for example, in voluntary charity activities, represents Promethean values. Different combinations of these dimensions indicate a different lifestyle [7, 10]. When the society faces rapid changes, both old and new values, customs and norms exist parallely and/or one prevails. Values show individual's interest in the surrounding world that is determined by the significance of different world aspects in a specific individual's life. A specific value orientation system ensures individual's stability, too. Value orientation, goals and plans are a stage of individual's activities subjective regulation. Society in general offers a broader value range than individual's opportunities, therefore it is necessary to

have an individual's value orientation system that would enhance determining priorities and trends, realization of goals (see Fig. 1).

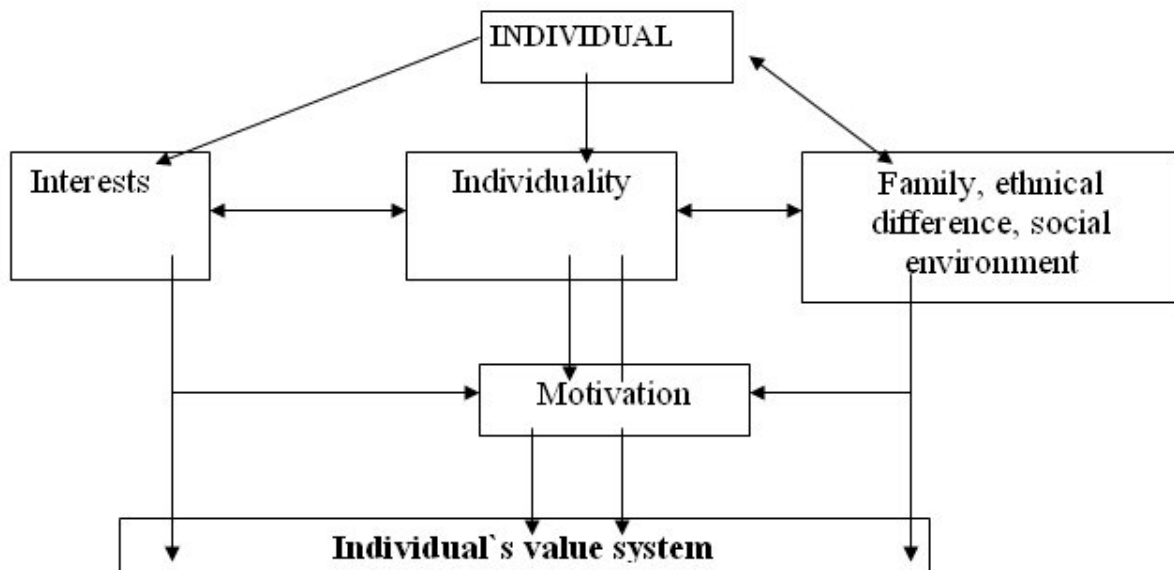


Figure 1: Factors influencing individual's value orientation

It is of high significance to have a harmonized and unambiguous individual's value system, which is also a basis of harmonized and well-arranged goals and plans in life. An individual can know the direction of his/her life, his/her sphere of activities, but sometimes s/he has no definite goal in life. The inadequacy of goals in life and abstractness of plans for life can be expressed in different life situations. If the goals in life are set inadequately, it is impossible to reach them; these failures have an impact on the further life [12]. The values an individual prefers determine his/her overall life orientation—it is the meaning of his/her life. The meaning of life is a future projection of significant social forces; it includes the most important things comprising individual's value orientation [1, 12].

The meaning of life is also a resumptive value, which includes various goals, ideals, and strives looking for the most important and relevant aspects, which relate these phenomena with a higher goal, idea, frame of reference [8, 114]. The meaning of life, explanation of the secret of existence “Who am I?” is participation in solving the tasks of society, creative work and activities changing the society. As a result, there are created prerequisites for development of individual's intellectual, emotional and other abilities. Only such life activities have an objective value and meaning. Position and choice in human life are relative and changing because they depend on peculiarities of historical tasks on every stage of processes in society.

Culture is an important element in value orientation. It is a socially conveyed information system, which is a basis of individual's views and belief. Culture is the basic reason determining individual's values, needs and action. Any culture includes smaller components or subcultures, which allow its members to identify and communicate with other more specifically. Big societies are groups of representatives of one nation having specific taste and interests, specific lifestyle, geographical location etc. Belonging to a definite social layer, which is formed basing on occupation, lifestyle, income, welfare, is of a great importance.

Consumer's lifestyle is an expression for the life conception; the final image is a result: life culture and individual situations and experience, which include everyday existence. It is a sum of the past decisions and future plans, which include several factors shaping life.

RHEI Arts and Crafts and Basics of Economics teacher specialty students of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th year took part in a survey. The total number of respondents was 50 students. The 2nd year students had already had the courses "Basics of Economics", "Microeconomics", "Business in Household", the 3rd year students had had a course "Macroeconomics" and the 4th year students had had a course "Consumer Science" in addition. These students had acquired the terms "needs" and "values" in the psychology and pedagogy study courses as well, however, the term "consumer's lifestyle" is acquired mainly in the study course "Consumer Science" and partially also in the economics-oriented study courses mentioned above. Answering the question "What values can you name?" the answers were diverse. One of the values mentioned here is health. Material and spiritual values were domineering in respondents' answers; moral values, education and culture were also mentioned. Besides, family was also considered as a value, but 3 respondents could not name any value (see Fig. 2).

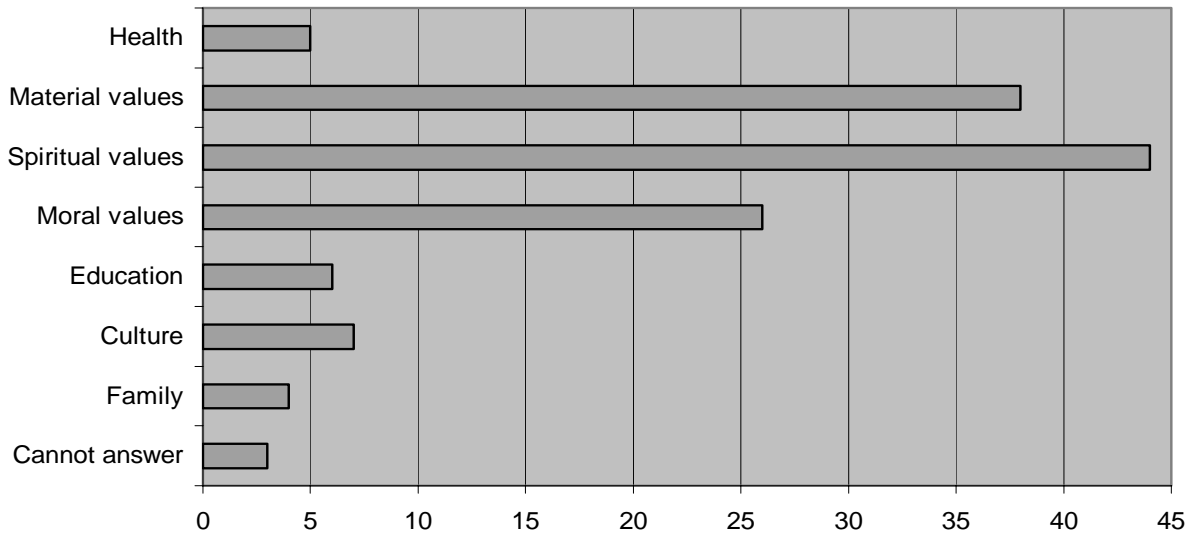


Figure 2 Values named by respondents

Answering the question “Do culture and social environment determine individual’s needs and values?” all students responded that both culture and social environment influence the structure of individual’s needs and values. The answers given to the question “What is, in your opinion, included in the notion “consumer’s lifestyle”?” are very diverse: some students answered that it is what they buy; others responded that the lifestyle depends on the amount of available money. The respondents mentioned money, individual’s needs, desires and possibility to choose. Only a few students named individual’s habits, behavior and work schedule (see Fig. 3).

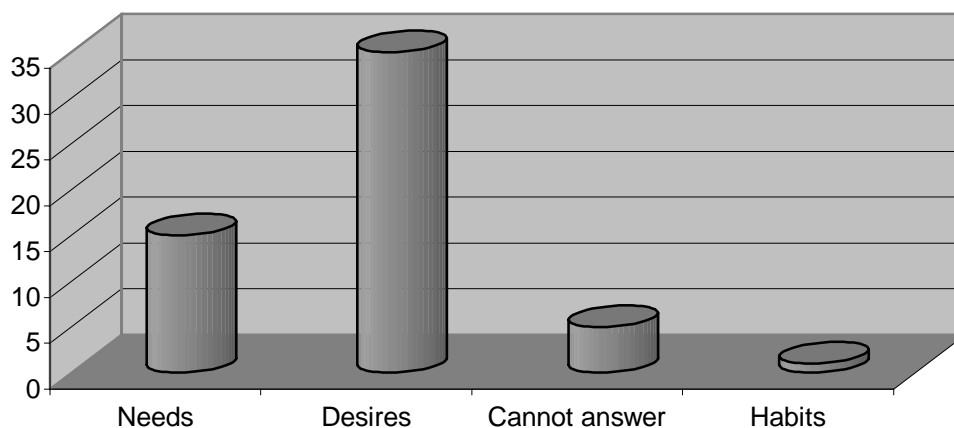


Figure 3 Factors included in the notion “consumer’s lifestyle” in students’ view

Answering the question “What values, in your opinion, are dominant in creating a consumer’s lifestyle?” students mentioned cultural values, education as well as

material values and family welfare. Several respondents could not answer this question (see Fig. 4).

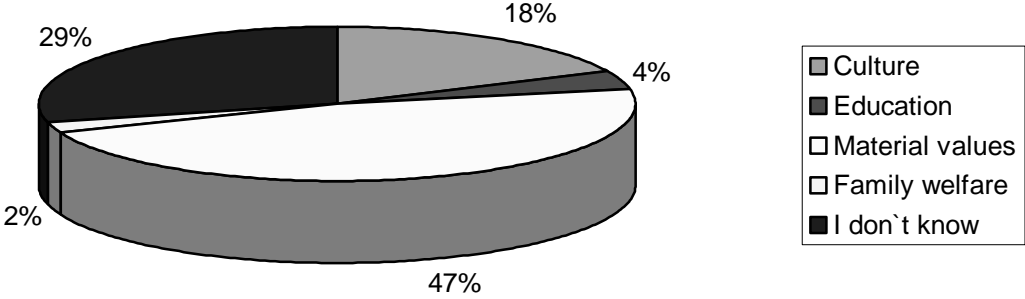


Figure 4 Values creating a consumer's lifestyle

Answering the question “What role do values and needs have in creation of a consumer's lifestyle?” some students consider that needs have a primary role, but others believe the values and needs, the more individual style. One more opinion—if there are no values and needs, there will be no human being. Many students consider that needs and values have a significant role, but they cannot ground their opinion. Furthermore, many respondents believe it depends on a definite individual (see Fig. 5).

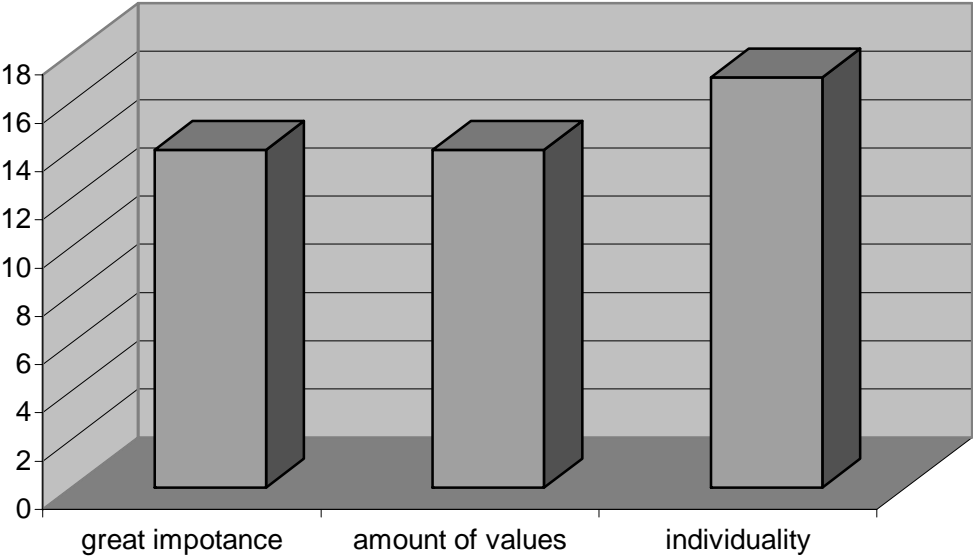


Figure 5 The role of values and needs in formation of a consumer's lifestyle

Analyzing separately the answers of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th year students, it can be concluded that the 4th year students connect the values and needs more with life

skills, consumer's lifestyle, adaptation of a consumer in modern social-economical environment, but the 2nd year students have been able to provide answers to some questions. Overall, the conducted experiment showed that not only in scientists' views, but also in students' views there is observed a transition from the material life quality values; it determines the consumers' lifestyle nowadays. When the social order changes, there are observed rapid changes in individuals' mutual relationships, their world outlook, their goals and ideals. The value self-evaluation process as a reasonable result of individual's life dialectics is currently present in the whole society, and it is contradictory and dynamic. Under the new circumstances the role of an individual as a subjective factor is increasing. In order to ensure functioning of the whole society, there are put forward new requirements for an intellectual, spiritually rich, progressively thinking individual. The conditions of the market economy put forward a requirement for a creative, educated, skilled and highly qualified specialist, who is able to offer himself/herself in the labor market and survive under the conditions of the market economy.

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Consumption and health: how people negotiate with habitus and agency¹

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Introduction

Consumer behaviour is usually associated with sustainability, this means, with the health of the environment. But food and drinks, sport and gymnasiums, cars and streets, cigarettes and so on, are not only economic resources or environmental factors. They are goods that fulfill people's needs and influence the health of individuals. Therefore consumption has implications on the health of populations.

The World Health Organisation (1986) defines health as a resource that people should care for by choosing healthy lifestyles and participating in community choices. This normative definition has spread over all social institutions and addresses day-to-day attitudes and practices of individuals impregnating individual consciousness, as Foucault (1976) described for social regulation. But lifestyles are choices but are not 'pure' choices. They are shaped by 'habitus' in accordance with the position of individuals in social structure (Bourdieu, 1979) even if the individual is not confined to a previously constructed way of being. He or she is an agent with the capacity to transform the structured patterns of behaviour (Giddens, 1989). In this sense, lifestyles are deliberate choices. Modernity radicalises the mobility of opportunities and of information forcing individuals to be aware of choices (Giddens, 1990).

Healthy lifestyles refer to individual practices associated with health risks such as eating habits and exercise, tobacco, alcohol and drug consumption. They are presented as rational choices for the production of self-health, natural informed choices that individuals would make. But in fact they also demand effort from individuals to check the available products, to look for healthy products not always easily available, to invest time and even money, to resist publicity and so on. Mainly, they demand individuals to be conscious of risk in all their practices instead of being careless persons. (Crawford 1977). The rational choice

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approach ignores the social conditioning of life both in the sense of socio-economic circumstances and of symbolic needs. The healthy behaviour is socio-economic, gender and age diversified (D'Houtaud, 1989; Calnan e Williams, 1991; Blaxter, 1998).

The research

Our research takes place in Portugal, a country where pre-modernity co-exists with post-modernity, in accordance with its recent past of authoritarian and non-industrialised poor state (Santos, 1994). Democracy, industrialisation, open market and the welfare state are quite recent (since 1974). Since then, life conditions have greatly improved, namely by consumption of material goods. This means that Portuguese society has some specific features that are significant to our purpose: people have only recently accessed the free market consumption; the national health system is strongly medicine dependent, focusing on the cure and the prevention of disease and only scarcely integrating active health promotion into primary care services; and civil society is weakly organised with very few people investing in NGO's or participating with a sense of collective responsibility. Statistics show that, as a whole, the population doesn't seem to be aware of the consequences modern habits can have on health, namely regarding modern habits of food consumption and sedentariness: 20 % of adults are obese (Carmo et al, 2000); the majority of Portuguese adults don't practise regular physical exercise (Ministério da Saúde 1997). Statistics also allow us to hypothesise that there is a small sense of collective responsibility for the promotion of individual, collective or environmental health: Portugal has the European highest mortality rate by car accidents (Eurostat 1998/99); only 21 % of the population participates in the recycling of domestic waste.

Our research aims to understand the point of view of people regarding their day-to-day practices connected to the official notion of healthy lifestyle. Through interviews we have explored the notion of being healthy and the main areas officially associated with healthy lifestyles (food, exercise, alcohol, smoke, waste recycling, prevention of disease). In this paper we will focus the practices more directly connected with consumption. In fact, we analyse the discourses about the practices and not the practices themselves. Discourse can reveal the intimate logic that sustain the behaviour, no matter what real practices can be.

Interviews have been conducted in a quite non-directive and open method. An open guide for the interview has been constructed by the six interviewers. Instructions for interviewers included not only the guide but the main methodological attitude: the interview is a conversation where the interviewee is made to feel our interest in understanding him or her and is happy to collaborate with us. The guide has been constantly discussed. As research progressed the interview guide was modified to make questions more in-depth. The interviews

were divided into groups for which the introductory question was always the same.

We interviewed each person twice. There was a minimum time lapse of a month between interviews. The first interview began by asking how the interviewee evaluated her or his own well-being. After exploring that notion, the interviewer asked information about day-to-day life asking about the detailed occupation and activities of the day before the interview and of the last weekend. This introduction gave complete freedom to the interviewee to talk about the aspects she or he considered of relevance. Only then would the interviewer introduce questions about the themes that have been previously decided: food and drink, exercise, body care, tobacco, condom, driving and litter. The interviewer tried to get more information about the themes that were referred in the previous answers and about those the interviewee hadn't mentioned. The questions were always addressed to the persons themselves, not asking for opinions but for information about their way of living. A final part of the interview asked for expectations about ageing and suggestions for the improvement of life in the town or village of the interviewee.

The second interview began with an open question about health "is health a matter of concern in your life?" and then explored the relationship with health and illness. The interview guide themes were the perception of the body, illness and its causes, forms of illness prevention and treatment, medical services, mental health and alternative medicine.

Results

For this paper we have made a preliminary analysis focusing specifically the data concerned with consumer habits. Basically, it appears that people, in general, adopt the more disseminated informations about healthy behaviour and integrate them to their day-to-day lives in a pragmatic way that avoids them from going against tradition, changing their habits or disturbing their comfort.

All our interviewees assert the importance of eating healthy food. But their notion of healthy food is quite different from the one of the professionals of health sciences. People believe they eat healthy when they eat traditional home made food, mainly if it is cooked with home grown produce Home-cooked food is natural in the sense that it is not manipulated and that you know what it is made of: "I grow my vegetables without chemicals". They explain that, in fact, they only use the "necessary" chemicals for potatoes conservation, for corn growing without plagues, and so on. Being necessary and their use being decided and controlled by themselves, makes those chemicals turn into a home product and will not transform nutrients into unhealthy food. This mechanism reminds us of Lévi-Strauss' explanation of cooking as an 'incorporation of

culture' by human effort and time. In a similar way, buying food obeys to a logic of "good quality" where quality means fresh looking food bought from a trustworthy person. Those persons who don't grow their own vegetables and fruit or raise their own animals, or whose relatives don't supply them with them, are obliged to go shopping. They go to big supermarkets to buy all kind of things except meat, fish, vegetables and fruit. These are bought in local shops, from trustworthy persons that are the guarantee of freshness and healthiness. For the purpose of this research it is not important that this is not completely true as fresh products are widely sold in big supermarkets. What matters is that this is the vision people have about what good quality is and that they are convinced they apply that vision to their lives.

They often say that it is healthier to eat fish then to eat meat, or that people should eat vegetables. But, in their case, they explain, they mostly eat meat because their family doesn't like fish, or that they usually don't eat vegetables because their preparation is time consuming. Those who eat much fish justify it with the fact that they simply prefer fish. Taste and tradition appears to be the main criteria for the choice of food. It is well known that meat has a better status than fish and that salads are not usual in traditional Portuguese food. Cooked vegetables are usual in soups or some other dishes, in relatively small amounts. Taste and tradition appear also in the cooking methods with persons saying that they are more prone to boiling, grilling and stewing, but that yesterday they ate fried sardines because that 'is' the way of cooking them. As regards fast-food restaurants, the main attitude is "I go there from time to time. Why shouldn't I?". Implicit is the notion that this attitude is 'politically non correct' but that it is rubbish. People consume fast food if they like it, when it suits them or when they are willing to, if they can afford it. Financial reasons, together with taste, can be given for the little use at home of pre-prepared food stuffs. No expressed 'healthy' quality reason appears justifying this choice even if we can suppose it is associated to taste "I use fresh vegetables that taste incomparably better".

Our interviewees also say that physical exercise is necessary, mainly those who have urban sedentary lives. But indeed, all they do is walking a little in summer evenings or during weekends. Because, they say, they are not able to organise their lives in order to take time for physical exercise. Working and enjoying family life are more relevant priorities for well-being. The exceptions come from men who quite often play football once a week and from those, men or women, who enjoy a particular activity like football or hunting, fishing or gardening. The assumption is "I don't oblige myself to do exercise. I do it because it's pleasant". The availability of gymnasiums or swimming-pools, is often referred as the first cause for justifying their lack of exercise, a fact that is later contradicted. "In reality, there is a gymnasium... but the timetable doesn't adapt to my time schedule... in other words, I don't want to force myself to go. I

prefer to come back home and play with my daughter. I take her there twice a week." Habit and comfort seem to be priority factors in these statements, together with a day occupation centred on work and family life.

The notion that healthy lifestyles can improve health is known. But it doesn't seem to be assimilated. The attitude towards ageing reveals the paradox sustaining the logic of healthy lifestyle. Ageing is somehow a result of the way we live but the way we live doesn't guarantee well-being in old age. "Getting old? I prefer not to think about it. I just hope I will not be dependent on others." "Well, ageing well is related to having a good life and to taking care of the way we live. But there isn't much that we can do about it, is it?". Destiny works as a good excuse for not facing the contradictions between real life with its limitations and opportunities and the normative life that points to you as responsible for the quality of your future life. "We may take some care of our health... but we mustn't let it command our lives!".

Managing life demands a capacity of adaptation to the present that in a certain way compels to avoiding facing the future in a realistic way. "I will do a lot of travelling with my wife; that is what I would like to do now but, for the moment, it's not possible". The main idea related to preparing for old age is financial: having the right to a retirement pension as well as having savings.

As regards recycling of waste, personal comfort and tradition are concerned again. Almost all our interviewees separate bottles and other glass for recycling. Some of them do the same with paper because glass and paper are commodities which they consider a shame to waste. But only the majority of those who have recycling bins near their homes do it. Distance from the recycling points is the main reason for not collaborating with recycling. Plastics and other containers go usually in the litter bin, with very few urban interviewees separating them. For those who live in rural areas, the main preoccupation which they are proud of is the small amount of litter they produce, because: "It's a shame, people dirty the hills with all kinds of things. The litter goes through the earth into the water and that's horrible!". So, they recycle all they can use for compost and for animals food and they burn the rest, e.g., paper, plastics and all kind of other containers. "It makes a very dark smoke. It is probably not very good for the health... but it only lasts for a little while!". We can see how the information about environmental risks is reformulated in order to adapt to the traditional way of doing. Portugal has recently had a lot of media coverage on the subject of incineration. The majority of people are informed about the risk involved in burning plastics and other non-natural materials. A similar logic appears when well informed experts justify their lack of recycling with the fact that "anyhow, everything is polluted nowadays, so recycling domestic waste is useless". No

interviewee has related the choice of products to buy with the notion of reducing the amount of domestic litter.

Concluding comment

Our results confirm that the rationality sustaining healthy behaviour or responsible consumption is very different from the rationality of scientific knowledge. As Massé (1995) has perfectly synthesised regarding health and illness attitudes, lay rationality is a cultural system that, different from science, integrates values and norms with previous experiences and it admits contradiction. Contradiction, in fact, is found when we only consider the knowledge about the dominant healthy discourse (the officially 'correct' one). But contradiction 'disappears' if, together with that knowledge, we take account of the other forms of knowledge. These forms are tradition, taste, management of day-to-day time, money and occupations, etc.

It is that cultural system that interferes with information and education aimed to changing attitudes. This means that promoting health, healthy lifestyles and responsible consumption needs to be faced as a cultural action rather than a merely informative one.

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Consumer citizenship for life quality in Latvia

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Introduction

Since the renovation of independence in Latvia in 1990, many urgent tasks have been done: a democratic state system has been established, the liberal and open market economy is functioning, and Latvia has successfully achieved the integration process within international structures. Although the economical development of Latvia has been rapid enough, nevertheless there exist some development restrictive factors in Latvia economy, which can obstruct the economical progression in the future. Accordingly, to ensure integrated and sustainable development, one of the main tasks of the government is to minimize the disproportion, which has formed up to now, and to exclude the increase of such disproportions in the future. A low level of using qualified human resources and manufacturing production with little added value characterizes Latvia economy. Such a model is not able to provide satisfactory income accumulation, to make capital investments and to assure the rate of dynamic development of economy. Consequently it doesn't contribute to achieving a high level of well being in the future.[1]

The situation is complicated in Latvia. Higher education, which has experienced a quantitative jump with the increase in number of students, is not able to provide respective qualitative indicators. New specialists have not enough links with the labour market and they are not in accordance to market demands. There is a necessity to continue working for the improvement of the quality of education and to integrate applied and fundamental research to promote the innovation process and development.

Regional social-economical differences exist in Latvia nowadays- nuances of nature and cultural environment, differences in traditions and local economical activity, diversity of incomes. Regional evaluation is unbalanced; local preferential is not used expediently. Latvia becomes a state with a fragmented administrative system. Social economical and political unhomogeneity hinders the integration of the Latvia society. Additionally objective economical problems lack self-awareness, susceptibility and belief in themselves and the government for a part of the society of Latvia is high significance. The people feel helpless and they are not able to change their life, adapt to new

circumstances. The demand for high-qualified human resources, what are able to quickly detect innovations and to acquire them, increases. The expectations increase in the labour market for young people with good education. [1] Sustainable development is oriented to the people and its aim is to develop living conditions, preserving nature and environment. A question arises about the life quality, not only the existence level. The Latvia society would like to join European Community as equal partners with certainty.

Nowadays significance is given to consumer rights and their protection based on the understanding of the structure of democratic authority of a civilized society. During the fifteen years long occupation regime in Latvia, it was forbidden to speak about civil society. Therefore the meaning of democratic processes essentially came in only in the last century at the end of eighties, when the Soviet Union crashed and Latvia recovered its independence. It is necessary to consider these circumstances when analysing and estimating the protection of consumer rights in Latvia in the existing situation. The following aspects are important:

- legal provision of consumer rights protection in Latvia legislation;
- understanding attitudes toward consumer rights and mechanism of guaranteeing it, possibilities and meaning in anyone's life;
- readiness of state structures and companies and entrepreneurs of different services and manufacturing to respect and implement protection of consumer rights.

There are different questions integrated in Latvia consumer rights and protection area: legal, social-psychological, educational, pedagogical and economical. An aspect of legal- lawmaking is overall coordinated according to the European Union normatives in Latvia. The task of this article is to survey educational and social-psychological aspects more detailed.

Methods

Research in how consumer education influences the life quality was made in the Institute of Education and Home Economics. There were 60 students of home economics teachers and social science speciality from part time studies involved in the research. A questionnaire about students interest of lifestyle different aspects and following life quality was done twice- at first in the first semester and then in the 6th semester.

Results and discussion

Household has a special meaning in the context of sustainable development. People are living around their house and materials and energetic processes and rotating around. We can't imagine the existence of a human being without using

natural resources and environment. These processes must be well balanced between needs of people and maintenance of environment. It is one of the life quality criteria. Everybody can influence to self-life-style using resources and in such a way contribute for sustainable development. Natural circumstances, the demographical, social and economical situation determine the chosen way of changes in families in households and in wider meaning. [2]

The improvement of human well-being requires strategy changes of priorities of development (IUCN etc.1991.) [3]:

- accessibility of recourses for acceptable life standard, keeping demands of sustainability;
- level of health and food, which ensure long lifetime and healthy life style;
- availability of education, what allows to realize the individual potential and to contribute for the society well-being, for each personality;
- possibilities of paid employment.

All these priorities are very important for development of human well-being in Latvia.

The main global tendencies of changes in the world are: increasing population, drastic growth of food consumption, flying urbanization, degradation of nature resources, pollution of environment and possibility of global warming. The vision of the future is in social stability, liquidation of poverty, and equality of rights, maintenance of environment. It is achievable by sustainable development. The analysis of the Latvia changing position with the situation in the world is given in Table 1 by the side of the dominating problems. The overall Latvia situation within sustainable development is more than positive than in the whole world in many parameters.

Table 1
Comparison of the dominating problems [2]

Problem	In the world	In the developed countries	In Latvia
Provision of food	deficient, part of inhabitants starve	enough, healthful , accessible	enough, but part of inhabitants have difficulties to access
Food quality	low	high	satisfactory
Life style	unwholesome	healthy	incorrect

Individual interests	survival	common interests of society	to improve elementary conditions of life
Demography	excessive birth-rate	controlled birth-rate	birth-rate critically grown down
Urban conditions	inhabitants migration to the cities	rural area as life and rest area	relative stability
Influence to nature	extensive	intensive	diminished
Key resources : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • earth • water • woodland • biological variety 	degraded lack decrease decrease	impure enough to remain intact efforts to maintain	wasteland fullness increase to remain intact

There are preconditions, which provide the possibilities for conformable economical, social and environmental development in Latvia.

Different conditions and criteria influence the life quality. Those choices sometimes depend not only on personal aims and priorities but also on the system in which the society lives. Education is one of those very important criteria, what determine the life quality- attitude toward themselves, selection of friends, society and environment. That is why consumer citizenship for the life quality is surveyed exactly from the educational aspect. We have not yet defined understanding about consumer citizenship in Latvia. There is civic education on all educational levels and consumer education integrated in several study subjects. Latvia society is at the crossroads between cultural creator and consumer society. Many people, especially young people are not believed to be able to influence the state processes. That is why special attention is paid to creating citizenship understanding in schools.

“On the bases on citizenship education is the idea of free, creative and responsible personality development in family, in school and in the society in Latvia. There will be self-dependent thinking, creative, social responsible individuals, to whom the Latvia’s future and independence are important, as the result of citizenship education. Citizenship education must help pupils to orientate within the processes in national economy, politics, culture and ethnical

traditions of Latvia inhabitants.” [4] Different influences on the pupils within citizenship upbringing are described in Figure 1. The pupils have many different influences from different sides such as: state, local society, peers, mass- media, educational establishment, professional skills, foreign experience influence, culture and traditions.

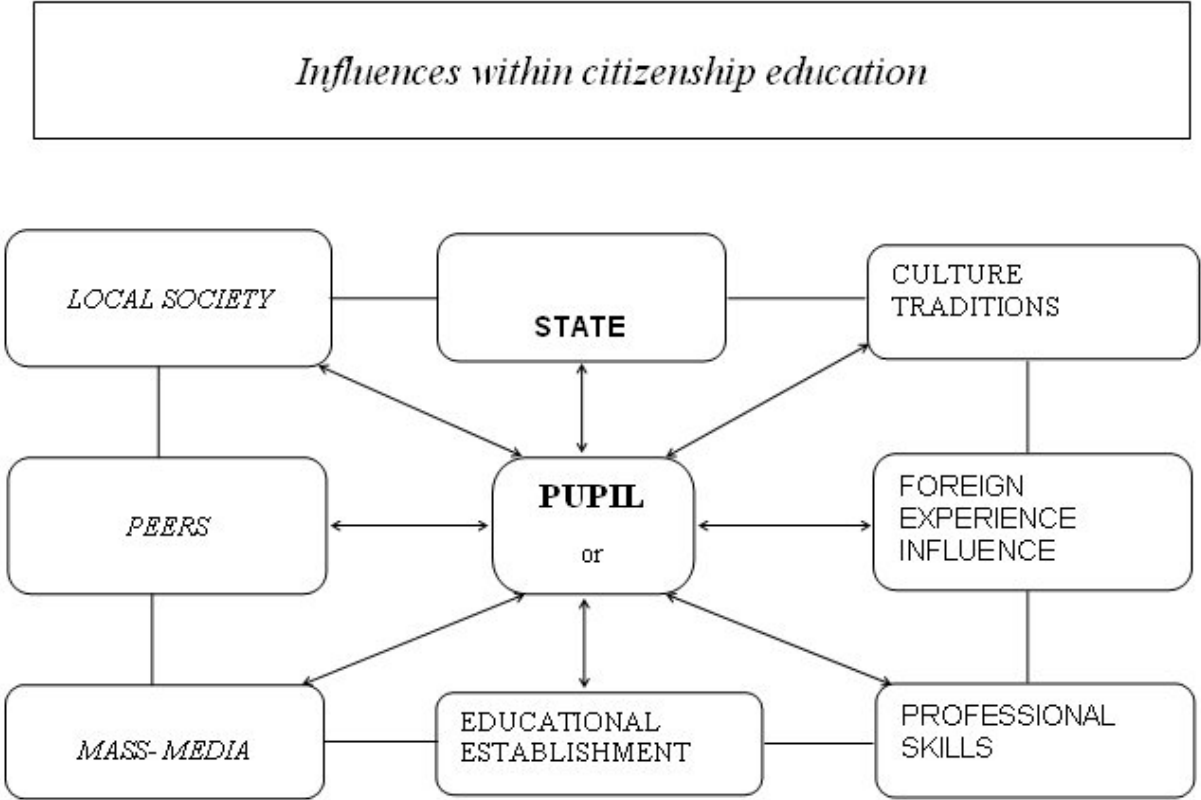


Figure 1. Different influences within citizenship education [4].

This understanding is very close to the European definition of Consumer Citizenship: “Consumer citizenship is when the individual, in his/her role as a consumer, actively participates in developing and improving society by considering ethical issues, diversity of perspectives, global processes and future conditions. It involves taking responsibility on a global as well as regional, national, local and family scale when securing one’s own personal needs and well-being”. [5]

Human- consumer is a person who knows how to cohabit with nature and science in the way that nobody is a loser. There we can speak about contiguity of nature and human being culture, because only in this case life will achieve the best quality. We must educate our children and ourselves for a non-stop learning process in different life areas. Nowadays we have a necessity for knowledge in security, social and economical environment and health.

The aim of consumer education is to give the possibility for everybody to be able to control his/her life. One of the long-term goals is to acquire the knowledge for young people to be well-informed, prudent and responsible consumers.

Consumer education nowadays in Latvia is not organized as a separate subject in schools. The knowledge about consumer education is integrated in many school subjects as economy, social science, home economics, household, biology, sociology and others. [6]

On the University level there are also not special separate study subjects, but consumer education themes are integrated in different other courses. At the Latvia University of Agriculture (LLU) consumer science is taught in economy theory for all students of the LLU, in household economy for home economics teacher students and in food quality for food technology specialists. Consumer education is developed in several higher educational establishments in Latvia, for example, in Rezekne Higher School. Further education possibilities are on the way of developing.

Consumers have responsibilities as well as rights. They should be competent to communicate their satisfaction when things go right and their dissatisfaction when things go wrong. Consumers should have intelligibility about their own needs and desires and they must also feel sure that their actions may have far-reaching effects. Consumer responsibility also comprises more global things. For example, here are local possibilities to produce ecological food for nutrition of inhabitants of Latvia and it could be very gainful for developing the living standard of the local farmers, workers and everybody. But it is our responsibility to understand why things sometimes go wrong and to act adequately to raise the standards of life. Rights and responsibilities are closely related to responsible consumer behaviour. It is absolutely necessary to know the most important laws and to have basic knowledge of the organizations, which exist to offer consumer advice to protect consumers from unscrupulous and unsafe trading, because sometimes the complexity of the nowadays marketplace can make consumers extremely vulnerable. [7]

Analysing social-psychological aspects of consumer education there are several problems in Latvia:

- high increasing amount of information within consumer rights and responsibilities, what are rising up because of essential increase of the rights area in Latvia comparing with the recent Soviet times;
- depression of a big part of the society, what is rising up because of economical factors;

- the learning process of democracy in Latvia is not easy. Every day on TV we have information about different kinds of illegality in the state economical and administration processes.

The attitude of the society towards consumer science is very different.

Research work about students' interest in the life quality in the Institute of Education and Home Economics in the Latvia University of Agriculture has been done. The estimation criteria were taken from the European Module for Consumer Education [8]. There were included the following aspects: political, cultural, environmental, economical, biosocial, legislation and obligation for the consumers and psychological aspects.

Table 2
Students' attitude towards different aspects of lifestyles

Aspects of lifestyles	1st semester	6th semester
Political aspects: political strategy rules and regulations in education	25 %	92 %
Cultural aspects: - cultural heritage - different needs and lifestyles - interdependence between housing, eating habits, health and lifestyle	74 %	89 %
Environmental aspects: - sustainable use of resource - environmental ecology	58 %	76 %
Economic aspects: - managing own finances - individual economic needs - state economic level -economical stability	82 %	100 %
Biosocial criteria: -how many children in a family	69 %	51 %
Legislation and obligation for the consumers: - general principles of consumer rights - general aspects of advertising - consumer organizations responsibilities and obligations of a consumer	46 %	97 %

Psychological aspects: - satisfaction with own' life - lifestyles and their influence on health - stress management - communication in family and in work - love- unalienable component of life - free time activities, hobbies	37 %	83 %
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Research results about students' attitude towards different aspects of lifestyles are shown in Table 2. Judging by the research results it is obvious that at the beginning of studies students have middle interest about lifestyles different aspects, but after three years of studies their attitude has been changed. They have got more information and experience within consumer education and many other study courses and now their opinions are more clear and convincing. We can say that consumer education has a straight influence on lifestyle and life quality.

Finally we can concretise consumer citizenship education (CCE) needs in Latvia:

- developing unified understanding of CCE;
- acceptance of CCE on the state level;
- to create CCE programs similar to the Europe level;
- preparing specialists who will be able to realize these programs;
- developing further education within CCE.

Conclusions

The following aims for sustainable development within Latvia households are: enough quality nutrition; healthy, environmental friendly life style; good education; and paid employment. Sustainable development, which is the basis of our country's politics, is possible based on the development of consumers' habits and the quality of production.

There is a lack of teaching aids and materials and guidelines for teaching consumer education at school. A better situation exists on the university level; there consumer education is integrated in economics and household economics and nutrition – food quality study subjects can be found in several higher educational establishments in Latvia. Study possibilities for further education of students within consumer science are not available at all. We must create such a kind of education module, which stimulates qualitative professional education, what includes consumer sciences for all educational levels and provides efficiency and competitiveness.

Latvian society's awareness of consumer education is insufficient, except on the higher educational level and amongst professionals working in the consumer education field, but it is necessary to strengthen the conceptual initiation of consumer citizenship in Latvia. The concept of consumer rights and responsibilities is contextually widened and it approaches the European understanding.

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Personal responsibility for ethical consumption – a challenge to education for a sustainable future

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Introduction

The most challenging problem of the society in the beginning of 21st century will probably be management of global processes and bringing sustainable development to life. Whenever a man is facing a dilemma, requiring entirely new approach, he/she goes back to the very beginning, to the rethinking of those concepts which underlie all subsequent decisions. So, if Sustainable Future will only have a chance when the decisions of highest political forums turn into an everyday behavior of people and organizations, before going into more details about consumer behavior we need to return to the fundamental concepts of human behavior and management.

If management is a myth, what is guiding society?

Some ideas are so unbelievable (or dangerous) that could be presented only in humorous way. One of them is the famous Murphy's law saying that "The first myth about management is its existence". (Bloch, Arthur, 1991) For a long time already the theory of self-organization is trying to convince us that human systems couldn't be managed in a classical, directive style, because a man, and also the organizations and the society have the ability to choose their behavior instead of being in a state of subordination to their environments. Thus, if our goal is to increase the chances for the purposeful influence on the behaviour of individuals, organizations, and society, the first question to be answered is "How the individual chooses his/her behaviour?"

Only a few people would challenge the thesis that human life is an infinite series of choices directed towards satisfaction of our needs. We have innate instincts for physical survival but actions of others are exactly what turn the primary physiological drives into system of needs, adding through learning new kinds of needs. Every action of others emanates to the child messages for the preferred objects or types of behaviour. In that way storage of information is accumulated in mind, which in a certain moment brings to the creation of first "cognitive map", with one of its most important elements being the value system. Through interactions with others the child generates notions about 'important – unimportant', 'right - wrong', 'nice – ugly', 'good – bad' etc., i.e., creates its criteria for behavioural decisions. That is exactly the value system which

includes *beliefs, attitudes and values*. Beliefs and attitudes allow people to interpret – logically or emotionally – the world, but they don't attribute valuations to things according to their importance to the individual. Everyone, however, has in mind the hierarchical picture of 'things of life', showing what place we assign to different objects, phenomena, and events according to their importance to us. The development of that hierarchy is a result of criteria which in their totality are named *values*. It is the value of different groups of needs that orders human behaviour.

What happens when people set up an organization? Different people have different values, of course, so in the very beginning, when the organization has just been created, the gathering of individual values appears, which is some how chaotic. Later on, a very important process of 'superposing' of personal value systems is taking place under which 'zones of coincidence' emerge. This is the way for a common, organizational value system to appear. The closer value systems of members are, the more 'zones of coincidence' will appear and if those 'zones' could be turned into the basis of the official organizational value system, the behaviour chosen by management will be treated by members as personal choice and not as imposed from outside. Collective value system, therefore, could be viewed as the basis for management while the management itself could be defined as the process of "creating, maintaining, changing and using the collective system of beliefs, attitudes and values". (Uzunova, F., 2000)

Individual's values, according to M. Rokeach are two kinds – terminal, which are criteria for choosing the terminal human goals, and instrumental, which are criteria for choosing the ways of goals' fulfilment. (Rokeach, M., 1968) Terminal values form the hierarchy of needs, i.e. order them depending on their importance and answer the question 'What am I living for?' But the vast variety of human needs could be satisfied only with the participation of other people, who also are trying to satisfy their needs. Because of that instrumental values appear as a compromise between personal free will and the necessity to take into consideration other people needs. They answer the question "Which are the permitted ways of satisfying my needs within the society?" Such dividing of values could be found in collective value system as well. Being a result of 'zones of coincidence' it could play a part of criteria for choosing 'common organizational goals'. But the organization has to take into consideration interests of other members of society.

Thus, management, understood as an achievement of fully predictable behaviour of people and organizations through force and instructions may really be a myth, but it is possible to gain our purposes using values to stimulate motivated behaviour.

Global responsibility because of global interdependence

So, man and organizations are choosing their behavior on the basis of values and the development of collective value system makes the management of organizations and society possible. People agree to limit consciously their personal free will only because they depend on each other in the process of needs' satisfaction. This interdependence could be explained through one of the most interesting characteristics of self-organizing systems named autology. The literal translation of autology is self-knowing. In that case, however, the question is about a broader characteristic of systems, indicating the fact that the observer (one who defines, examines and eventually manages the system) appears to be an element of the system as well. Autology generally speaking is a "feature of those concepts that can be applied to themselves" (Von Foerster, H, 1984), and in some cases are a necessity for their own existence. The highest level of complexity in a social world is society as a whole, which is playing the part of environment for the rest of the social systems. Both the individuals and social groups, including organizations are its elements. The fact, however, that these elements are self-organizing systems themselves and have the ability to choose their behaviour, leads to a new understanding of the very concept of environment, i.e. social systems in fact create by themselves their environment and being the biggest self-organizing system, the society is both the result of and the prerequisite for the functioning of smaller self-organizing systems – organizations, social groups and individuals. And these smaller self-organizing systems through the choices of their behaviour both 'create' their environment and react to its influence. Here again, the principle of autology and the situation when every end is a beginning could be observed. Practically society, organizations, and individuals constantly mutually adapt to the changes in their complexity and that happens through the choice of behaviour.

The more society develops the more people are getting dependent on each other which forced the creation of the world collective value system, specified in the concept of sustainable development.

Between the dream and reality

Although to reach the agreement on the concept of sustainable development as the agenda of 21st century was a difficult task itself that was an easier part of the way. Much more efforts will be needed to bring it to life. Unfortunately, a lot of people still don't believe in success considering contradictions in interests almost insuperable. Is it possible indeed and how to achieve such a goal if people are so different? Individual's value system is unique and is a personal ideal of 'well being' (terminal values) and of 'ideal patterns of behavior' (instrumental values). Individual's value system, however, is a dream which have to be turned into reality. That means the environment to contain all the

necessary conditions for a man to survive and develop in accordance with personal abilities and efforts. But the environment itself is dependent on human actions. Our aim, therefore, should not be understood as creating one and only ideal of ‘good life’ and its reproducing in all people. Our aim should be to reach the system of collective values, which being a basis for choosing the behavior will ensure an environment for every man allowing personal ideal to be created and fulfilled without entering in conflicts with other people. And having in mind that this collective value system should be used for taking different kinds of decisions it should be specific, i.e. should contain standards of behavior and quantitative parameters. The totality of behavioral standards will form laws, which will become the ground of management and judgments. The totality of quantitative parameters is what we name ‘quality of life parameters’ and what should be the minimum level of economical and environmental conditions which society grants to every man as a starting point to his/her life’s prosperity. The following system of collective values could be drawn from the concept of sustainable development, which may later be specified:

- *Terminal values of society*: the right for every man to live and progress depending on personal abilities and efforts; minimum living standard for everyone; healthy living environment for present and future generations.
- *Instrumental values of society*: safeguarding the diversity of all kinds; ensuring the right of every man to take part in decisions; personal responsibility for sustainably responsible behavior; responsibility of institutions and organizations for sustainably responsible behavior.

We will elaborate further on personal responsibility due to our understanding that the dream could be turned into reality only if individuals undertake their ‘part of the way’ to that vision of society, i.e. if they recognize their responsibility.

Personal responsibility for ethical consumption

In our opinion personal responsibility corresponding to the idea of sustainable development could be sought out in the following directions:

1. Personal responsibility for consumer behavior conformed to the criterion for the efficient utilization of resources.
2. Personal responsibility for consumer behavior conformed to the criterion for environmental protection.
3. Personal responsibility for ‘being a citizen of the world’, i.e. for engagement in social activities and seeking the possibilities to influence decisions at all levels towards sustainable values.
4. Personal responsibility for accepting the diversity of values, cultures and behaviors and for refusing to decide problems by force.
5. Personal responsibility for handing down mentioned above values to the future generations.

The behavior which falls within the framework of the first two directions could be defined as *'ethical consumption'*, while the behavior corresponding to all directions may be named *'sustainably responsible behavior'*. The last three directions, even very important, fall outside the problem area of that paper, so we will concentrate on ethical consumption.

We propose the following working definition:

Ethical consumption means consumer behavior stemming from turned into personal values understanding of interrelated social, economical and environmental issues of the present day and the future and leading to self-restrained consumption in respect to its amount and environmental soundness.

The efficient utilization of resources is a problem, connected with two parallel realities of our time. The first one is the fact of exhaustion of un-renewable resources and the second one – the increase of over-consumption based on the present model of economical development through stimulation of consumption. One of the most serious problems related to sustainable development is the natural resources utilization and particularly the un-renewable ones. Its importance is particularly big with regard the opportunities of future generations to be guaranteed. But as it is well known, along with the increase of living standards in the developed countries, a situation arose which was documented very vividly by Sir Terence Conran: “There was a strange moment around the mid-1960s when people stopped needing and need changed to want ... Designers became more important in producing ‘want’ products rather than ‘need’ products, because you have to create desire.” (Whiteley, N.1993) One research shows that “Over 80 % of Americans believe that they consume far more than [they] need.” (Merck Family Fund, 1996) This senseless and needless over-consumption, however, causes the waste of natural resources (a big part of them non-renewable) for the production of unnecessary products. If sustainable development aims to reach the efficient and conformed with the future needs usage of resources and to ensure a minimal living standard for all the people on the Earth; it is a must then consumption patterns to be changed. The question is ‘How?’ What should be understood by ‘normal amount of consumption’ in society where the basic measure for ‘quality of life’ is exactly the amount of consumption? In our opinion, it is not possible, nor necessary to set standards for the amount of consumption. Again individual values should play their part here as self-imposed limits. The process of ‘normalization’ of consumption will not be an easy one, because it is not only the income which exerts influence on personal choices. The income may not even be the leading factor for buying in most of the cases. This phenomenon could be observed now in Bulgaria and probably in other countries as well. A family, for instance, may not have enough

income to provide itself including children, with healthy food but at the same time may have a car, usually second hand, and spend money for petrol even if the car is not a necessity at all. It is a long time already since the consumption became much more a symbol than only the need. So if we want to change consumer patterns we need to change symbols, which mean to change values. In contrast to the amount of consumption, the way of usage of products/services as well as their disposal is subject to clear definition with respect to efficient utilization. A lot has been done in many countries in that direction already concerning power and water usage, separation of wastes etc.

The second aspect of ethical consumption is connected with the ensuring of healthy living environment. Individual can meet that requirement by consuming 'green' products/services and by confirming his/her behavior to the demands of environmental protection. It is the responsibility of business, of course, to put into practice Design for Environment or Integrated Product Policy, i.e., to design the whole product's/service's life cycle – production of materials, in-factory production, distribution, use, and disposal of the product – with respect to environmental protection. No lesser, however, is the responsibility of consumer to give preference to those very products/services in spite of his/her present and possibly fixed consumer habits. Very promising in this respect may appear to be close relationships between business organizations and their clients. One of the most challenging schools in management today is knowledge management according to which in a complex and dynamic environment organizations should get more and more opened to it in order to obtain enough information and to reach quicker respond. One of the most important aspects of that openness should be to the clients. Having in mind that they don't have sufficient knowledge both to understand thoroughly the usefulness of 'green' products/services and to make a distinction between the different markets offers, producers have to turn into educational institutions for their clients. This kind of education, however, has nothing to do with pseudo-education pouring from commercials now. Clients' education should allow them a possibility to gain insight into the entire process of eco-design with special emphasis placed on the stages in which clients are taking part – usage of products/services and their disposal. On the other hand clients should 'educate' organizations either. They have to take active position and help in development and improvement of products/services. The means to reach such communications could be traditional – through direct contacts. A lot of chances, however, provide Internet as well.

Sustainable education' for sustainably responsible behavior

The next important question to come is what shall we start with in order to change things and achieve the vision of the future – Sustainable Society? Bulgarian writer Todor Vlaiikov had said a century ago: "People should be educated. Any nation, no matter as much and no matter what rights it has,

deprives itself of them if people are not educated”. Because only through learning and education could the instrumental value named responsibility be created, i.e. understanding about the importance of personal behavior, about the connection between personal efforts and satisfaction of needs, and the realization of necessity of mutual support, i.e. global responsibility.

The only acceptable possibility we have, therefore, to achieve change is to seek for a change in values, and the only adequate tools for that are learning, education and persuasion, through which to build in sustainable values in any present and new-born man. That is a task of great complexity, because it requires simultaneous and non-contradictious influence on people from a lot of aspects and levels – family, schools, system of law, producers, local and state administrations, universities, religion societies etc., etc. Special importance that very task has to countries like Bulgaria, where the vast majority of people still had never even heard of sustainable development, or if they had, that probably was only from headlines of world events. The task gets even harder due to the enormous amount of problems people are facing, and the lack of energy and willingness to spare time for such kind of education. That is why, the most efficient way in our opinion to start doing things in our country is to develop a system model for managing the change in each of above mentioned fields with aims, objects, target audiences, sources of resistance, corresponding changes in other areas, agents of change and so on. We also think the effect will be greater if we start from schools and universities. Teachers should be trained; curricula and teaching materials have to be developed in order from the first to the last year of studying ethical consumption and sustainable development to be discussed in different courses. In all other courses where it is appropriate additional topics should be added as well. What we need to reach through the education is not only to make students familiar with goals of sustainable development and parameters of sustainably responsible behavior but first and foremost to give them proofs that every man counts in that process and carries his/her responsibility, that every act of buying or not-buying is ‘voting’, i.e. taking a part in decisions or direct politics towards the future. (Beck, U., 1999) In that way, starting with children and students we will trigger the change exactly in that very important moment when the first ‘cognitive map’ creates and the first value system as well.

Sustainable Future could be more a dream than achievable reality in the eyes of many people. But let us not forget what Martin Luther had said so many years ago: “Everything that was done in the world had passed through our dreams”.

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3. THE INFORMATION SOCIETY AND CONSUMER CITIZENSHIP

ABSTRACTS

Semiotics of consumption – signs of consumer identity

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Consumer awareness is a field to be studied by many disciplines. *Semiotics* is the *science of signs* in communication in general and those signs used in cultural contexts in particular. A sign then is an entity that represents meaning in specific contexts. Signs are *interpreted* by their users in order to gain and produce new meaning. Signs are also changed in the course of their usage. This process of sign interpretation and sign production is called *semiosis*. For *cultural semiotics*, especially goods, fashion, and social behaviour have sign qualities.

On the basis of this scientific background, the individual consumer can be seen to move in a world constructed of signs, and each consumer decision will alter or enforce the individual's place in this world. The consumer as a sign carrier and in the same moment as a sign producer as well as sign processor is not merely subject to advertising campaigns and superimposed group identities. Many aspects of his or her life, namely personal background, professional training, family, local heritage, ethnic group, etc. will have influence on the constitution of the consumers' interpretative horizon, which is the limit of understanding the individual can have on the basis of the entire collected experience.

Hence, semiotics does not see phenomena such as consumerism as isolated, but as networked in the general maze of signs of society. Applied semiotics can trace and identify sign processes and thus help to find the originating points of consumer behaviour.

The right to privacy and modern methods of communication

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Differences in culture lead to different methods of communication. So the meaning of “privacy” differs in American and Europe, due to differences in culture. Europeans, especially British, prefer interpersonal relations while Americans are more willing to have their private life open to outsiders. Europeans point out potential damages that might be done to the consumer by receiving excessive amount of data while Americans, in the name of profit, make unlimited use of databases. The European Commission introduced a significant project for the protection of consumer data based on four important principles: prohibition, personal information, compensation, secure transformation. Although the “right to privacy” is variable, the fact of its existence remains constant. There is the trend for paying more attention to privacy in cultures of developed information societies. Organizations control human life in almost every field of their life and the excuse for it is that the collecting of information is for the employee’s and the consumer’s benefit! Development of technology leads to innovative ways of customer control, and thus to conflicts among organizations and their employees and costumers.

Marketing messages overload

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In most market oriented economies the consumer citizens are facing the problem of marketing messages overload. Also in Slovenia, a »transition« country, consumers are bombarded with invitations to buy, consume, spend, they are blinded by the innumerable consumer goods that are available to them. However, they are not equipped with the necessary tools which could ease their purchasing decisions, help them find relevant information and introduce them to their consumer rights. Our research examines consumers’ attitudes towards certain marketing communication tools. Similarities and differences with similar researches, conducted in »western« economies, are established. In the part of the research that focuses on students as consumers we try to investigate their attitude towards »information« mediated by marketing (advertising) messages and students' knowledge of their consumer rights. We focused on the following issues: whether students perceive the abundance of different marketing messages as an overload; where they find relevant information concerning products they purchase most often; what is their attitude towards advertising

messages they encounter daily in different media (do they find them annoying, superfluous, misleading, amusing, useful, etc.); whether they find (and how do they recognise) any relevant information in these messages; whether they know which are their consumer rights and which institutions in Slovenia protect consumers' rights.

Understanding consumer citizenship through learning clusters

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Recognition of learning as a process of communicative action requires new thinking about the nature of, and relationship between information, knowledge and behaviour, and the transmission and dissemination of knowledge within the social and organisational context, such as the enterprise or the community. The collective learning is understood within the organisational framework at any levels of society as a complex of interactions between tacit and explicit knowledge actualised through commitment to a particular socio-cultural context. In spite of the monolithic view of the global economy, it does remain built up of and through territorially bounded communities of different socio-economic and socio-cultural spaces. The economy is considered as alliances of local organisations - firms, public institutions, NGOs, service centres, educational organisations - not just of those conventionally labelled as 'economic'. These create the settings in which most of us, citizens-consumers spend our lives, and as such, they have profound influence on our behaviour. These local aggregations often take on the characteristics of clusters. Thus, we consider such clusters as learning organisations, and examine the factors influencing the learning process: structure (networks of interpersonal relationships), culture (shared understanding and collective awareness), cognition (sensemaking), and politics (influence by the state, social forces, religions, etc. on clustered institutions). The process of cognition seems to intertwine the other factors through entailing comprehending, constructing, pursuit of mutual understanding and patterning. Perceiving the cognitive dimension of economic origin from the social point of view, enables one to recognise how interacting organisations evolve shared understanding around issues of common interest, and develop a sense of collective 'we' in human behaviour and learning. Taking such a cognitive perspective of economic alliances allows one to analyse them in terms of mental models and how they lead to a particular interpretation of common interests. It identifies also the difficulties in forcing a new collective and dynamic representation of mutual sustainability awareness, whether through coercive, nemetic, or normative means.

Grasping the future – challenges for social involvement

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The goal of this paper is to examine the opportunity to transfer one of the most important tools of social involvement and citizen's power– the Foresight, from highly developed Western countries to less developed Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC) without losing its particular advantages. The adaptation of the foresight as a "public debate forum" or a "social experiment, aimed at raising of the awareness of a common long-term future" in the field of consumerism and sustainable development is not without challenges. The success of the foresight exercise depends on many social and cultural conditions, often tacit and hidden. These conditions were existent in the most advanced countries, but they are not necessarily apparent in less developed countries. For example team working and the art of discussion belong to one of the most important civilization “Achilles’ heels” of the citizens at the CEEC. The paper discuss some ways to improvement of this situation in Bulgaria with the help of knowledge (education) and participation (networking).

PROCEEDINGS

Semiotics of consumption – signs of consumer identity

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1. Introduction

Consumer awareness is a field to be studied by many disciplines. *Semiotics* is the *science of signs* in communication in general and those signs used in cultural contexts in particular. A sign then is an entity that represents meaning in specific contexts. Signs are *interpreted* by their users in order to gain and produce new meaning. Signs are also changed in the course of their usage. This process of sign interpretation and sign production is called *semiosis*. For *cultural semiotics*, especially goods, fashion, and social behaviour have sign qualities. On the basis of this scientific background, the individual consumer can be seen to move in a world constructed of signs, and each consumer decision will alter or enforce the individual's place in this world. The consumer as a sign carrier and in the same moment as a sign producer as well as sign processor is not merely subject to advertising campaigns and superimposed group identities. Many aspects of his or her life, namely personal background, professional training, family, local heritage, ethnic group, etc. will have influence on the constitution of the consumers' interpretative horizon, which is the limit of understanding the individual can have on the basis of the entire collected experience. Hence, semiotics does not see phenomena such as consumerism as isolated, but as networked in the general maze of signs of society. Applied semiotics can trace and identify sign processes and thus help to find the originating points of consumer behaviour.

In this paper, I will first give an overview on the diversity of values attached to products from a semiotic point of view. Next, I will sketch how semiotic theory – and here, particularly the triadic model of the sign by Charles Sanders Peirce, can be applied to the study of consumer citizenship.

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2. The semiotic diversity of values

2.1 *Opposing values*

It was Karl Marx, who, in his *Kapital*, performed an implicitly semiotic analysis of goods as signs. I am not basing this work on Marx, still, his perspective on goods as having a twofold value is very interesting for this project. According to Marx, goods have a value in regard to their *usage*, as well as a *commercial* value. Marx goes on to specify how the commercial value is attained by workforce, which we may ignore here. Meanwhile, we should keep in mind that the value of goods can vary; this is also valid for the values active in consumption.

A pessimist perspective on consumer goods as signs is sketched by Baudrillard. His criticism is nurtured by the thesis that “consumption” is not always aimed at acquiring goods for *usage*, but mere *display*. Hence, products are loaded with connotations of “status, prestige, and fashion” (Baudrillard 1981: 64). This display value dominates the usage of the product more often than not. The only remaining difference between various products of the same class is then their difference in status, not in their optimal usability.

Symbolic consumption (cf. Hirschman & Holbrook, eds. 1981), which is closely related to this criticism of conspicuous consumption, aims at communicating some message by consumption. The consumer will allow others to draw information from display of the product (Belk et al. 1982: 6). In discussing Peirce’s model of the sign, we will see later what sign values are active in such behaviour.

When questioning the “values” according to which consumers choose products, the diversity of values that are carried by products seems an important issue. But are usage and status, usability and symbolicity really two different aspects? Sahlins (1976: 169) suggests that all values are symbolic. Douglas & Isherwood (1979: 62) agree and emphasize that beyond the physical needs that are met by certain products, all of the commodities serve for creativity in thinking. Consumption hence becomes a cultural activity in all of its dimensions. *The diversity of values is a necessary byproduct of cultural diversity.*

2.2 *Multiplicity of values in products*

Roland Barthes (1964: 63; 1967) first undertook a semiotic study of products and the market. In products, there can be equal, different, and opposing features. The smaller the difference in the products of the same class by various producers, the more it will be subject to advertising. Equality, difference, and opposition can be mapped in the three dimensions of the sign, namely their syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic relations.

2.2.1 Syntactic relations

The syntax of signs describes the rules by which signs may appear in combination with other signs. In languages, e.g., the rules of grammar represent the syntax of a language. Combination of goods appear in clothing (“language of clothing”, Barthes 1964: 63) and food in a menu (cf. Herzfeld 1986), or furniture in a house. Product lines (Kehret-Ward 1987) are also combinations which then influence consumer behaviour. Without doubt, we may also speak of a stylistics of consumption when the combination of goods from various classes is concerned. The style of consumption may appear in the level of expenditure, the quality of goods, their time relation (i.e., their modernity vs. antiquity) etc. This stylistics of consumption is especially interesting in regard to the forming of consumer identity.

2.2.2 Semantic relations

The semantic relations of a sign are those between a sign and its meaning. As every sign means something, every product has a meaning, being a sign. Meanings can vary. There are “core” meanings and “extra” meanings, meanings which will remain the same; the former are on the denotative level of the sign, the latter on the connotative level. Also, there is individual experience in every user/consumer which adds to the multiplicity of meanings. The interesting fact for us is that some meanings may be changed, such as the status of a product, while others cannot be changed, such as basic usability of a product.

2.2.3 Pragmatic relations

The pragmatic relation illustrates the sign in its usage. Clearly, the different degrees of usage all attain an equal status here. Usage of a product to fulfill a physical need, e.g., shelter, or transportation, is basically equal to fulfill the requirement of producing status, or identity. I do agree here with the opinion given above that *all* usages of a product are symbolic. In a society, all acts mount up to signification of symbols. In order to illustrate this, we may even think of the example of absence of conspicuous consumption: a consumer who acquires only products of a basic level, which fulfill primary purposes but do not feature luxury, willy-nilly displays *absence* of luxury. This may then mean either lack of funds, or consumer awareness. In either case, it is a display of symbolic values.

3. A pragmatist perspective on consumption

Pragmatism is a branch of modern philosophy, which originated in the writings of the American universal scholar Charles Sanders Peirce. Pragmatist semiotics is the most influential tradition of semiotics for the time being. It concerns itself most with the processes of sign creation and change.

3.1 Triadic relations of consumption

The semiotic model of Peirce's shows triadic relations on all its levels. I will not go here into the details of this model, for which an entire presentation of its own would be necessary. Suffice it to say that the three apices of the model (see figure 1), the *object*, the *representamen*, and the *interpretant* are all together forming the sign, and at the same time are part in the process of cognizing signs.

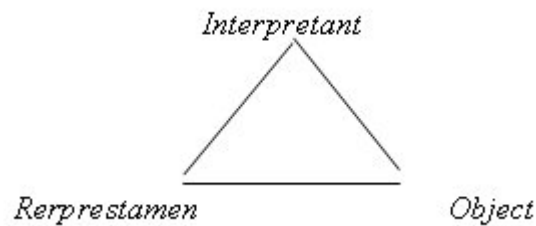


Figure 1: Peirce's model of the sign

The object forms the basis of every act of signification. It comprises, so to speak, the past of the sign: everything we know about it, all our past experiences. The representamen is, according to Peirce, the "perceptible sign". In other theories, it is also called the sign carrier. The perceptible sign of course is its visible, or touchable shape. The interpretant is, according to Peirce, the result of the signification process. It is the outcome of using the sign. Whereas the representamen may also be called the present of the sign, the interpretant is its future.

The process of semiosis, or creation of signs, is illustrated in this model. In regard of consumption, an example could be the acquisition of a new car. The object of the car is whatever the consumer knows about cars, their technology, their history, their usage, etc. Also, his individual experience is part of the object. The values that are attributed to particular kinds of cars by the community he lives in are also part of it. The representamen of the sign "car" is then the perceptible, usable car. To each, the consumer will attribute different experience and knowledge, which means that every single car will have its own object, also. The interpretant of the act of consumption, here, buying the car, is then its outcome. The car will be part of the consumer's life, it will mean something different to him than before buying it.

The interpretant of consumption is influenced by many factors. Signification, or semiosis, is not an isolated activity. The experiences flow into another, numberless interpretants are formed in the mind of consumers continuously. In the example of the car, the values and standards of the society the consumer lives in are influencing the interpretant. The aim of consumption then is

represented in the interpretant, which also forms the sum of values active in the meaning, or, the semantics, of the car.

3.2 Identity and consensus

How does the consumer know about the values? How do we attain perspectives on products, or lifestyles? Pragmatist semiotics views these processes also as acts of signification, however, not by an individual, but by a group. We have already seen that any sign is part of an intricate network of signs. Naturally, these do not come into existence in the mind of a single person alone. Many signs are perceived from the example of other persons; semiosis is a social activity.

Hence, the individual consumer contributes to the societal standards by his own experience. Every act of signification which is perceptible by others will influence their semiosis. On a large scale, signs then travel and grow within a society (and also across its borders to other societies). The question then is, when does a sign become “significant enough” to form a value, or a standard or norm? The answer lies in the public consensus. In terms of signification, consensus rests on a sufficient appearance of signs in contexts where the sign was valid. Let us go back to the example of the car: Given that a certain shape of car, combined with a certain quality, and exclusiveness, will attract people’s admiration in an empirically measurable amount of times, then obviously the display value of this car is fixed. This is the case with Bentley, Rolls Royce, Porsche, Bugatti, etc. The countless appearances of the Volkswagen Beetle have formed another value, which has actually changed over time: from a propaganda product, to the accepted workhorse of a young republic, to the cheap car used by students. Here, usage changed, and by amount of appearances of the sign “beetle” in different contexts, also the meaning and hence the value of the car changed.

If the activity of individual consumers forms the values of signs, then every single act of consumption contributes to the life world of the consumer society. There is obviously no division between the sphere of living, and the sphere of consuming: such spheres do not exist, these activities all merge in the single sphere of culture. Consumption in this regard becomes a social activity. The consumer is influenced by the consumption decisions of others, and he sets standards himself. Hence, the society which produces both consumption as advertising and marketing becomes a self-organizing system. The signs active in this system are shared by all actors, and they form the basis for all future decisions in regard of consumption.

4. Creating the future by choice of usage

It seems we have reached a dead end: How can consumer citizenship education take place in a society where values are so fixed and rooted in the semiosis of the past? Is the future predefined by the acts of the present?

Obviously, the individual in a society has the option of choice. In Peirce's theory of the sign, two important aspects are predominant here. First, he mentions the aspect of the potentiality of the sign. Signs grow and change in their meaning, but to what extent and into which direction, is not given. Also, obviously the multitude of acts of signification at the same time does not allow for a statistical estimation of how a particular sign may evolve. The second, even more important aspect is that of "pure chance". According to Peirce, in every act of signification there is the uncertainty of how it may turn out. The interpretants are hence not predefined, rather, freedom of signification prevails.

These facts represent the possibilities of consumer citizenship education: The consumers *can* act independently and change the dominant value structures in society, if their awareness is strengthened in the education process. In order to quote the title of the conference here, consumers do not merely use, choose, or create the future. Since they are also involved in the past and present, and form part of the self-organizing network of society, they *create the future by choice of usage* of products and acts of consumption. Consumer awareness hence does not mean only "which products to buy is a good act, which is a bad act", but consumers must be aware of their being a part of a larger system. The consumers' identity can be governed by rules of selfishness, or by rules of empathy. It can be governed by ethical values or status values. We must understand then that these are no black and white scenarios: Any member of a society strives for status, just as they will attest to ethical values. We can not replace one by the other, consumer citizenship education must rather aim at analyzing the value structures active in society and individual lives and combine them to a network of signs which is acceptable both for the individual consumer as for the global society as a whole.

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The right to privacy and modern methods of communication

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The definition of privacy of an individual to a certain individually, socially and culturally conditioned area of confidentiality reduces the sphere to some social relatively interchangeable norms. These norms are determined by methods of socialization of individuals in particular cultures. Ways of socialization vary, depending on the culture. They always, however, delimit an individual's socially conditioned area of privacy. What an individual considers as his/her private sphere depends on his/her background and the style of upbringing. It has been corroborated by sociological analyses indicating the influence of social conditioning on changes in attitudes toward privacy. In this respect, British and American cultures represent two diametrically opposed models. In British culture, interference with the sphere of privacy is considered extremely reprehensible. Reserve, restraint and maintaining interpersonal distance are being held in high esteem; taking advantage of data from one's personal life and using it against him/her is unacceptable. On the contrary, an average representative of American culture would be more willing to keep his/her personal affairs accessible to be looked into by outsiders. The discrepancy existing between British and American cultures with respect to their attitudes toward privacy is, according to Shils, the result of plebeian character of American culture and aristocratic traditions of its British counterpart.

Liberal American approach in the treatment of the right to privacy also remains in confrontation with restrictive European attitude. The conflict revealed itself most distinctly while elaborating the project on the protection of consumer data by European Commission. The plan, according to American companies, would hinder their economic activity in Europe and subsequently, in the United States as well. The project was based on the following general principles:

1. Using data with no authorization on the part of persons whom the data concerns (data subjects) is prohibited.
2. Data subjects are supposed to be personally informed on who receives the information and for what purpose.
3. Data subjects are granted the right to demand compensation in case the data is used improperly and may cause personal damage.

4. Data relating to European Community may be transferred outside only when the country receiving the data secures the same level of data protection as it is the case within EC.

The implications of point 4 would put on the USA the responsibility of employing legislative protection concerning privacy as restrictive as in Europe. American Direct Marketing Society holds opinion that the form of protection suggested by European Commission is excessive and severely limits opportunities for direct marketing. Americans stipulate making unlimited access to and use of databases, unless it violates the law or becomes immoral. Europeans, on the other hand, point out at potential damages that might be done to the consumer by receiving excessive number of data. The reason for such standpoint is clear-cut: among massive piles of data genuinely valuable and useful information simply vanishes. European Direct Marketing Society suggests introducing a principle according to which person who expressed his/her consent to making use of his/her data, may withdraw the approval at any given time.

The scope of the sphere of privacy is also marked by such variables as times, professional or social groups. The perception of questions concerning erotic life, religious experiences, political preferences, as being either personal and interfering with one's private area or vice versa, depends on those variables. Although the range of the right to privacy is alterable, the very fact of its existence in any society or community remains constant. The phenomenon of paying increasingly much attention to privacy in cultures of developed information societies becomes general and observable trend nowadays. Rand even resorts to the argument that civilization advancement can be identified with aiming at reaching the status of the society of privacy.

Introduction

In our contemporary world, organizations play most crucial part in the life of every individual. It is organizations which, taking advantage of the crafts of their employees, produce goods or provide services ultimately aimed at satisfying the customers' needs. They pre-arrange all dimensions of human life and activities, setting up the rhythm of our daily routines. They are also entitled to controlling the members of an organization; including its employees and customers. The objective of such control, as far as employees are concerned, is increasing the effectiveness of the production process, as well as disclosing the workers' abusive practices. The basis for employee control is the information collected and stored by particular companies in their appropriate banks of data. Such information happens to be vital for the assessment of an employee advancement, staff management policy, and for the administration of pensionary benefits and health insurance. The well-founded right of companies to exert control over their

employees more and more often remains contradictory to the individual's right to his/her privacy.

Organizations also use the argument that claiming their rights to possess complex information concerning their customers is necessary for perfecting the methods of satisfying customer needs and expectations, which can be simultaneously used as a reinforcement in the company's marketing techniques. Numerous conflicts between organizations and their customers, who reject the idea of being inert objects of such manipulation, arise on this plane. The scope and frequency of reappearing conflicts among organizations, their employees and customers is on the increase, speeding up its rate every year, due to the rapid development of technology.

The forms of employee control in Poland

The existing attitude toward the concept of protecting employee data can hardly be characterized as unanimous during the period of system transformation taking place in Poland nowadays. There exists a firm belief that, from the legal point of view, employees in Poland are being well protected from endeavours on the part of their employers to assemble all available data concerning them. On the other hand, daily practices show that it is much easier to lay down a particular act on paper than put it into force.

The protection of employee data – legal & theoretical perspective

The Bill on the protection of personal data, issued on August 29th, 1997, clearly defines cases and conditions in which personal data can be processed, i.e. collected, stored, altered, put into public use, or removed from files using traditional methods of storing data in card-indexes, registers, books, etc., or in computer systems. In accordance with article 23 of the Bill, no personal data processing is acceptable unless the following conditions are fulfilled:

- the person whose data is the subject of processing, consents to it (except for cases when the data is only to be removed);
- it is not in conflict with the existing law;
- it is essential for a person to meet his/her obligation of the contract to which he/she is a party, or at his/her own wish, if it is necessary to take up some kind of activity, before signing up the contract;
- it is essential for performing certain tasks specified by law, realized in order to ascertain public good;
- it is essential for the achievement of justifiable goals for subjects processing the data, due to their professional, profit-oriented, or statutory activities; and the data processing does not interfere with the civil rights and liberties of the person whose data undergoes some kind of processing.

Based on legal foundations

An employer who, according to the bill, becomes the administrator of data of his employees, acts on the basis of Labour Code and the order of Minister of Labour and National Service, issued on May 29th, 1996 about keeping records concerning the character of employer-employee agreement and administering employees' personal files. An employer has also an obligation to comply with all statutory regulations about processing personal data of employees, except for the requirement of submitting databases to registration.

Only to a limited extent

The extent to which an employer is allowed to process data is regulated by a general rule, stating that data administrators can only process information essential for performing their professional, profit-oriented and statutory activities, and data processing does not collide with rights and liberties of the person whom the data concerns. The bill introduces the principle of data adequacy for its being processed. It implies restrictions on excessive data collecting, unless it is absolutely necessary and suffices for fulfilling the objectives of data processing.

Always keep the goal in mind

According to General Inspector for the Protection of Personal Data, one has always keep in mind the ultimate aim of collecting information. An employer, for instance, is free to collect data essential for selecting most appropriate applicant to do the job during recruitment procedure. However, after the selection process of would-be employees is over, the data of rejected candidates should be removed, since the objective of its having been collected ceased to exist (unless the persons in question express their consent to further processing of their data for other purposes).

Sensitive data

It is against the law to process so called "sensitive data", i.e. the sort of data revealing one's religious or ethnic background, his/her religious, political or philosophical beliefs, affiliation with a particular political party, trade union organization or religious denomination, as well as data concerning their physical state, genetic code, addictions or sexual preferences. Only in exceptional cases, a selected group of subjects are allowed, according to the bill, to process such data. It is also possible for employers, if it is necessary for performing their duties in the recruitment process of new employees, and the scope of using the data being processed is specified in the bill.

Legal anchor is inevitable

Some mandatory restrictions concerning affiliation with political parties apply to certain professions. For example, judges, prosecuting attorneys, civil servants, some representatives of military and police departments have to retain non-party stance. Thus, their prospective employers' interest in such personal areas of their lives is quite justifiable. The contingency for data processing pertaining to employees' affiliation with trade unions is regulated by Trade Unions Bill from 1991 which states that in individual cases concerning the character of the employment contract, the regulations of Labour Code inflict on an employer the requisite of co-operating with the company's unions – the employer is required to apply to the trade organization for information about affiliated employees, enjoying the right to the union protection.

In relation to certain categories of workers their employers are allowed to demand information about their physical and mental condition. Police officers, for instance, are expected to possess certain psychological predispositions necessary for good performance of their duties.

Practical application of the tools of employee control

Opportunities offered by rapid development of computer techniques are being used by companies in Poland on massive scale. They are being applied to all kinds of activities directly connected with production process. However, they are often used as a method of employee surveillance.

A simple electronic gadget attached to fax machine is capable of storing in its memory all messages being sent in and out. Code-number ascribed to each employee enables them to make free use of the company's copying machine and, simultaneously, it allows for collecting information about who, when, and for what purpose was using the device. It is also true in the case of communication systems operating within companies, in which the register of all in- and out-coming calls is kept. Not only the time and record of dialled numbers are subjects of monitoring; even the contents of telephone conversations can stay under control. The fact that e-mail and company internet accounts are under perpetual surveillance by the head of the company's computer department has become common practice in Poland, and is no longer a surprise to Polish employees. It is only a matter of using appropriate computer programme. One of most commonly used systems of air-tickets reservation, keeping record of every click on the keyboard, with easily available information for the employer about the length of periods when the keyboard was out of constant use, or how many times during one's shift he/she struck a key, might stand for such an example of employee control.

A programme called “Intellimouse” goes even further in the process of gathering information about employees – it measures the distance which computer mouse crosses during the work period. Sixty-second period of using computer time is assumed to be equal with at least four-meter-distance of the mouse device movement. An employee unable to face up to such standards of evaluating his/her work efficiency, may soon find him/herself on the straight route leading to his/her dismissal.

Keeping the register of alarm-calls, contacts with banks and brokerage houses has become a norm in Polish companies. Big firms are more and more often equipped with systems of call registration (or even their recording). Nowadays, not only computers monitoring telephone calls or visual transmission technologies become aids for maintaining the company’s secrets, or helping them to wield some kind of control over its employees. Widespread use of ID cards with microchips attached to them, office credit cards, etc., add to the list of employee control devices. They can provide any kind of knowledge about an employee: names of his/her acquaintances, drinking habits, or favourite types of entertainment. Such forms of exerting control were bitterly experienced by the personnel of a hospital in Starogard Gdański, where fingerprint readers connected to the register of every leaving or entering the premises have been installed upon the order of managing director. The mere lines upon the fingers provided massive collection of personal data, seemingly unconcerned with the direct staff’s performance of their daily routines.

The customer right to privacy in Poland

According to the information obtained by industrial intelligence units, average Polish citizen has his/her file in at least 52 commercial data banks storing personal data. Particular companies are interested in such information, when it comes to the birth of a child in a family, or, when after a couple of years of being employed, a Mr Smith can afford to buy his first car. It is a paradox, that apparently free and democratic Poland after 1989, seems to resemble the Orwellian vision of total control over society much more than it was the case in the sad reality of the late People’s Polish Republic.

Forms of customer surveillance – a precedent case

In April, 1999, a fresh married couple from Warsaw decided to buy a flat. In order to negotiate a mortgage loan, they turned to LG Petro Bank. They submitted an application form with detailed information about their financial status and life conditions, including their home address, together with a copy of pre-contract, where the address of the flat they intended to purchase appeared. After a month, however, they decided to give up the bank’s services. Only then they were informed that returning all the submitted documents was not possible.

A bank clerk explained that it was impossible to retrieve forms filled in on papers with the bank's logo on them. On hearing that, Mr and Mrs D. Asked for not mailing them any papers on their new address; and demanded that all documents concerning their data be destroyed at their presence. Surprisingly, it happened to be impossible, since paper shredder was next to the treasury – in a room no stranger is allowed to enter. The clerk promised, however, that she would see to the removal of all documents concerning the D. couple

Unexpectedly, on 9th July, Mrs Renata D. took out from the mailbox in the new flat a card saying “Happy Birthday to You” which had been evidently sent by the bank. She sent then a written application to the bank, sharply demanding it to stop interfering with her right to privacy and using her data. She asked for PLN 100,000 compensation. The bank sent written apology to her and promised never to send her any kind of greetings again. Mr and Mrs D. found the apology insufficient and complained to the Bureau of General Inspector for the Protection of Personal Data. It ordered a thorough control of the bank, which resulted in issuing a statement that the data of Mr and Mrs D. had been used improperly, contrary to the initial purpose (intended by Mr and Mrs D., while submitting documents with their personal data). It was decided, however, that the case should not go straight into the court. The control determined that the disputable card had been sent by mistake – simply because the message of Mr and Mrs D. decision to terminate their co-operation with the bank never got through to the bank headquarters from its local branch which handled Mr and Mrs D. application.

Then, the couple decided to claim their rights in the court of law. The court admitted that their claims were justified, supporting its decision with the statement that every individual has the right to privacy and to retaining his/ her anonymity to as much an extent as it is possible. The ultimate verdict announced that the bank should stop its processing data concerning Mr and Mrs D.; send them a written letter of apology, and pay them PLN 20,000 compensation.

Forms of exerting control over customers in Poland

The case described above has remained as a precedent in such situations in Poland for the time being. It opened the eyes of Polish citizens, however, to the fact that they can claim their rights concerned with the protection of their personal data and expect positive results from the court verdicts. Since the time of issuing the verdict, one out of every three letters addressed to the office of General Inspector, responsible for the protection of personal data, not only explains the circumstances of the law infringement but also includes demands for financial reimbursement for violation of regulations of the bill concerning the protection of personal data.

Since cell-phone networks operators, the administration of Medical Care Funds and banks are organizations which regularly break the law concerning the protection of personal data, they should be the competent addressees of such complaints. It is a common knowledge that cell-phone networks operators most often commit illegal acts of interfering with personal data protection laws, since they copy all documents submitted by their clients. General Inspector for the Protection of Personal Data proclaimed such practices illegal. In September, 1999, it ordered that the information stored in their databases obtained in such way should be removed (except for most essential data, such as name, surname, and individual statistical number – PESEL).

Another example of an illegal procedure by cell-phone operators is limiting the access to “roaming” service (or to long-distance, international calls, for example) to a customer who does not consent to submitting his/her “marketing data” for free use by the company. The refusal is equal with having to lay down a substantial deposit in cash. This is how Centertel – one of major cell-phone operators in Poland – gains access to information about the year of production of its clients’ cars, their periods of employment, or to the number of their family members.

Medical Care Funds are also hungry for any kind of information about their patients. Doctors affiliated with Wielkopolska Kasa Chorych are required to send it the data of their patients, together with information about the character of their ailment, as well as with the details concerning their treatment. Medical Care Funds also demand lists of patients including classified information concerning AIDS victims or HIV carriers. It results in an easy access to medical data for administrative personnel of Medical Care Funds who may use the data for any purpose, depending entirely on their whim. Thus, not only the bill of protecting personal data but also the professional secrecy of medical trade remain subjects to law infringement.

Conclusions

The existence and activities of modern companies utterly depend on their having access to adequate information, concerning both their customers and employees alike. Not all methods of collecting information about workers and clients of a company are justifiable, even if the ultimate aim of their having been stored in data banks is considered acceptable in general perspective. The very act of collecting and processing data in vast majority of cases is being conducted using the means of modern computer technology. It is worth remembering, however, that it does not constitute an ordinary set of tools, reinforcing only human activities. An instrument by itself cannot be regarded as either ethical or unethical . It is the man who decides, whether to make proper or wrong use of it, in the second case depriving us, members of an organization of our inherent

right to privacy. The machinery is being set in motion by somebody searching for a particular kind of information; it merely assists in the act of data storing and processing. The final goal of data collecting and processing can be determined by people only, and it is human factor which is solely responsible for setting the standards of compliance with the employee and customer right to privacy.

Students as consumers: Their attitude towards advertising and awareness of consumer rights and responsibilities

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Introduction

Ads are omnipresent. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to avoid them. They are our loyal companions; they accompany us from the morning paper to the last television news. They try to catch our attention by being almost everywhere we go. They even travel by the same bus as we do. The numerous flashing neon lights, writing out the names of the latest products or the names of the famous companies, and illuminated giant billboards, presenting the newest indispensable consumer gadgets, are the first (and often the most) eye-catching "attractions" of every bigger town in the so called developed world. The messages are sending pictures of abundance and prosperity, no matter how far from reality these pictures might be.

Not so many years ago this would not have been a picture of a typical Slovene town but rather of a town "across the border". Passing the Italian or Austrian border, there were the highway billboards first telling the travellers from "non-market" oriented economies what "good life" was like: the innumerable consumer goods were available to every individual - you just had to pick the one you wanted. You were *free* to choose. As John Berger said three decades ago (in his known book *Ways of Seeing*): "The great hoardings and the publicity neons of the cities of capitalism are immediate visible sign of 'The Free World'. For many in Eastern Europe such images in the West sum up what they in the East lack. Publicity, it is thought, offers a free choice." (1972, 131). Discussing the "death" of communism, Bauman said that "choice has turned into a value in its own right: the supreme value, in fact. What mattered now was that choice be allowed and made, not the things or states that are chosen. And it is precisely for *choice* that Communism, this dictatorship over needs, could not and would not provide - even if it could provide for the needs it itself dictated." (1990, 188).

Living in the consumer society assumes that making choices is an everyday practice. Advertising itself is trying to convince us of the importance of freedom of choice in today's society (*'Advertising. Right to choose'* was the slogan of the series of advertisements paid by the Slovene section of the International

Advertising Association).⁴ As Bauman says, the consumers "can, after all, refuse their allegiance to any one of the infinite choices on display. Except the choice of choosing between them, that is - but that choice does not appear to be choice" (1999, 84).

To sum up, we cannot avoid making choices. Many authors would argue that it is not just the product the consumer is buying, it is his whole identity he is seeking at the market place. By picking up a particular product he is sending a message of what kind of a person he is or would like to be. And to "help" him pick up a product, there is a whole range of marketing information directed at him, inviting him to buy, spend, consume. In Slovenia, a "transition" country, the omnipresence of this information was the first obvious sign of a change of the economic system. In the late 80s and at the beginning of the 90s different marketing messages proliferated and at the same time new media transmitting these messages appeared. However, the consumers, blinded by the innumerable consumer goods available to them, were not equipped with necessary tools which could ease their purchase and help them find relevant information. There was not a lot of talk about consumer rights, let alone consumer responsibilities. Slowly, things are changing.

A great proportion of marketing messages is aimed at young consumers. They are a vulnerable target group, on the one hand lacking experience and knowledge about the market place, on the other hand being very active in constructing their identities (also) by making choices at the market place. That's the reason why we focused our research on young (student) consumers. The goal of this research is to investigate students' attitude towards advertising (marketing) messages, to find out where they find relevant information concerning products they purchase most often and what is their knowledge of their consumer rights and responsibilities.

Consumer attitudes

Consumer attitudes are learned predispositions to behave in a consistently favourable or unfavourable way with respect to a given object (Schiffman, Kanuk, 2000, 200). Attitudes have motivational quality, that is, they might propel a consumer toward a particular behaviour or repel the consumer away from a particular behaviour. They are relatively consistent with the behaviour they reflect, but they are not necessarily permanent, they do change. As learned predispositions, attitudes are formed not only as a result of direct experience with the object but also from other sources and forms of information that might influence an individual: mass media, reference groups as friends, family

⁴ Berger would probably comment this by saying that "publicity turns consumption into a substitute for democracy" (1972, 149).

members, public figures, work groups and other formal or informal social groups. For young people, every form of formal or informal education is undoubtedly a very important source of information, on the basis of which they create their attitudes and values, which play an important role in their present and future behaviour and life decisions. The relationship between an attitude and behaviour is influenced also by the particular situation or circumstances in which the individuals act, therefore it is important to consider the situation in which the behaviour takes place, or we can misinterpret the relationship between attitudes and behaviour (Schiffman, Kanuk, 2000, 200-201).

Educational system in Slovenia and sustainable development

As it has already been pointed out school and other forms of education play important roles in shaping the behaviour patterns of an individual and the society. By analysing the school system and school curricula in Slovenia we wanted to find out more about the nature and the extend of the involvement of the school in the development and the formation of an environmentally conscious, informed and responsible citizen- consumer who will act according to the principles of sustainable development and sustainable consumption.

In Slovenia, compulsory education is referred to as 'basic' education" and it takes place in elementary schools. According to a school reform in 1996 the 9-year compulsory school was introduced instead of the 8 year-elementary school. The general objective of elementary schools is to provide pupils with basic knowledge and preparation for further schooling and for their professional and private lives. Elementary school gives pupils an understanding of the basic laws of nature, society and man, develops their linguistic culture and curiosity, a need for ongoing education, good relationships, interests and abilities and forms habits (www.mszs.si/eng/education/system/basic.asp).

Secondary schools and some "people's universities" offer secondary education courses. From the school reform in the school year 1998-99, secondary schools offer the following curricula:

- general education: 4 years;
- vocational-technical education : 4-year (or 3 years + 2 years) curriculum from different areas;
- short-term and secondary vocational education: 2-and-a-half year and 3-year curriculum;
- post-secondary non-tertiary vocational courses: from 6 months to 1 year curriculum.

Secondary education in Slovenia caters for young people from 15 to 18-19 years of age and is free of charge. After finishing the compulsory 'basic' education course, the pupils can enter any of the secondary education courses, which last

from 2.5 to 4 years and lead either directly to the labour market or to postsecondary vocational, higher professionally oriented courses or to academic courses.

The school reform also led to changes in the fields of topics, goals and methodology in school curricula. By examining all the school curricula we noticed that the new educational courses also include study topics and goals connected to sustainable development and sustainable consumption. In Agenda 21 for Slovenia it was pointed out that this goals are not introduced in schools in the consistent way due to the lack of interdisciplinary teacher's training.

Besides formal education Slovene elementary schools and kindergartens also take part in the Eco-School programme. This is the EU programme for environmental management and certifications, and sustainable development education in schools. In Slovenia already 200 schools are involved in this programme and the pupils are encouraged to take an active role in practical steps to reduce the environmental impact of the school. Eco-Schools also extend learning beyond the classroom and develop responsible attitudes and commitment both at home and in the wider community.

Methodology

We designed our research as a survey. The data were collected by means of a self-administered five-page questionnaire. It was completed by a sample that included 315 last grade secondary school students (app. 18 years old) of the three general and/or vocational secondary schools in the town of Koper, Slovenia.

We first conducted an explorative study, where we interviewed a small group of students to gather more information and highlight the issues to be studied. Before the main survey, the pre-test questionnaire was completed by 30 students, which helped us make necessary modifications of the questionnaire.

Results

Attitude towards advertising and relevance of advertising information

The section of the questionnaire, concerning students' attitude towards advertising in general, contained 15 favourable and unfavourable statements about social perceptions of advertising. Respondents were asked to react to each statement on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

The proportion of students who said that they liked advertising (the two categories, 'strongly agree' and 'agree' were combined) was slightly bigger (40 %) compared to the proportion of students who disliked it (again, the two categories on the other end of the scale were combined), namely, 37 %. The remaining students (23 %) were neutral.

Although the proportions of the opposite groups are similar, we found interesting differences in proportions of the students that chose the 'like' and 'dislike' answers, coming from the three surveyed schools. Students coming from the Grammar School⁵ showed more negative attitude towards advertising, compared to the other two schools⁶. 45 % of students of Grammar School disliked advertising and 36 % of them expressed positive attitude towards advertising. Almost opposite are the results from the other two schools (because there were not great differences, the results are combined): 43 % of students liked advertising as opposed to 29 % who disliked it.

The ambivalent attitude was also noticed when students were asked to react to the statement 'I often feel amused by advertisements'. 43 % of respondents felt that ads often amuse them as opposed to 42 % who felt the opposite (15 % were neutral). We also found significant, although modest, correlation between the likableness of advertising and students' perception of ads as amusing ($r_s = .218$, $p < .0005$).

The majority of students, namely 82 %, regarded most of the ads as misleading and 87 % of the respondents disagreed with the statement that advertisements present a true picture of the product advertised (only 3,5 % thought the opposite). Only 10 % felt that they can trust advertisements (73 % thought that they can't) and 77 % of students agreed that there is too much advertising. 67 % of the respondents felt that the omnipresence of advertising is disturbing (only 19 % disagreed).

In spite of the fact that the majority of students thought that there is too much advertising, 62 % of the respondents agreed that advertising should not be eliminated (compared to 19 % who thought that advertising should be eliminated). The Spearman rank order correlation coefficient indicated a substantial negative correlation between the attitude towards the elimination of advertising and likableness of advertising ($r_s = -.475$, $p < .0005$).

⁵ It is the secondary school with the most exacting (general) curriculum and therefore the highest admission conditions for the students.

⁶ Both combining general and vocational curricula, but less demanding than the Grammar School.

Most of the respondents (69 %) agreed that advertising is an important source of information about products offered at the market place, but, on the other hand, only 23 % of respondents thought that advertisements inform them sufficiently, as opposed to 43 % who felt that advertising information is not sufficient for making their purchasing decisions.

We can see that results are contradictory; on the one hand most of the students feel that advertising messages are an important source of information about products at the market place, but on the other hand most of the students find it misleading, misrepresenting the object advertised, untrustworthy and they perceive the omnipresence of advertising information as disturbing.

Although they acknowledged the omnipresence of advertisements, advertising functioned as the third most prevalent source of product information behind the advice from friends and advice from parents. However, it was considered less trustworthy (ranking behind trustworthiness of parents, friends and sellers). This is consistent with the above finding about the contradictory view of advertising information.

We also found out that students whose parents are higher educated tend to have more critical attitude towards advertising (the correlation coefficient indicated a significant, but modest negative correlation between likableness of advertising and parents' degree of education; $r_s = -.201, p < .0005$). There was no correlation found between students' attitude towards advertising and the school they are attending or between their attitude towards advertising and their average grade. We assumed that socialization into the consumer citizen still remains in the private domain – in the domain of home and family.

We were interested in the behavioural component of their attitude towards the marketing messages they receive at home per post- more exactly leaflets and catalogues. It has been proved that 10 % respondents never read leaflets and 7 % of those who receive catalogues at home never read them. We can assume that our respondents are interested in those tools of communications as 41 % of them read more than half of leaflets, and 52 % of respondents read more than a half of received catalogues. A comparison with the research made on the representative sample of the whole population of Slovenia is interesting as the latter established that 16 % of respondents never read leaflets and never read catalogues (Snoj, Vrčon Tratar, Podovšovnik 2002, 12). It seems that the percentage of those who are attracted by those kinds of marketing messages is even higher among students population. In a similar research in Great Britain it has been established that 22 % of respondents do not read direct mail (Jay 1998,49). We have also found out that the percentage of the students who read more than half of leaflets and catalogues is very similar to this same percentage when taken the whole

population of Slovenia into consideration- 44 % read more than a half leaflets and 50 % read more than a half catalogues.

Students' awareness of consumers' responsibilities

In our research we wanted to find out more about the respondent's awareness of environmental and related sustainable development issues, with an emphasis on the situation when they act as consumers. We asked them whether they, in the majority of cases, require or ask for information about the ecological characteristics of the products they buy. Only 10 % of respondents require that information in the majority of cases. Others are not interested in this kind of information. We also asked them whether they would change a product which they buy regularly for an eco-friendly substitute, which is slightly more expensive. 52 % of respondents would probably make this substitution, 17 % of respondents would probably not change the product they buy and 31 % are undecided. Those who are willing to change their product for an ecological one are prepared to pay an average of 17 % more for it. In the next question we have tried to additionally verify the ecological awareness of our respondents by using the five point Likert-type scale. We found out that 53 % of respondents think that consumers can influence on the producers. Almost all respondents- 93 % agree that the consumers must act ecologically responsibly, but only 41 % of respondents consider themselves as ecologically conscious consumers.

In addition we inquired which source of information concerning the responsible consumption prevails. We asked them whether they have discussed the fact that the consumers, with their consumption choice, can contribute to the preservation of natural environment: with friends, with the members of the family or in school. We found out that the most important reference group concerning this topic is the family- 24 % of respondents talked about these topics with the members of the family in the last month, while only 13 % of respondents talked about this in the school and 11 % with friends. In spite of the fact that the quarter of respondents talk about responsible consumption at home, only 16 % of respondents know which ecological products are regularly bought in their family.

In our inquiry we showed to our respondents the sign which stands for recyclable packing and asked them whether they know the meaning of it. Only 3.5 % of respondents knew the exact answer, but 61 % of them gave partly correct answer as they mentioned the word recycling. The fact is, that this sign is similar to other signs expressing the ecological nature of the products, so it's easy to mix them.

Students' knowledge of their consumer rights

In the next stage of our research we wanted to know more about their knowledge of consumer rights. We asked them to list the organizations, which help the consumers in case of violation of their consumer rights. In Slovenia we have two organizations dealing with this problem:

Slovene Consumers' Association and Consumer Protection office. Besides those the Market Inspectorate and the court take measures according to their official duty whenever charges are brought against somebody.

The great majority of our respondents – 71 % are not acquainted with any of the four possibilities listed above. The 27 % of respondents mentioned only one of these organisations. The most often it was mentioned Slovene Consumers' Association - by 12 % of respondents.

In addition three every day life situations were presented to our respondents in which the consumer could assert his or her consumer rights. In each situations we wanted to know whether they knew their rights in a particular situations and whether they would be active in asserting their rights. On the basis of these three situations we can established that on average 27 % of respondents know their consumer rights and the additional 18 % of respondents only partly know them. In spite of the lack of knowledge, the majority of our respondents on average 56 % would be active in asserting their consumer rights. We also found out that in many cases, due to the lack of knowledge, they wouldn't act in an appropriate way. We also established that the proportion of active respondents is higher in the case of more expensive goods, which is quite normal.

In the end of our inquiry we showed them another sign, which represent the stick for a mail box, which forbids the postman to put any unaddressed post in your mailbox.

Only 24 % of respondents knew the meaning of this sign, 35 % didn't know it and 37 % did not answer the question. According to our opinion the results are the consequence of the fact that the sign is relatively new in Slovenia- only a few months and they haven't got acquainted with it.

Conclusion

The main finding of our research was that students' consumer education/ socialization stays in the private domain. In spite of the fact that students are daily exposed to different media (for instance, in our research students reported watching television on average more than two hours daily) and therefore receiving a great deal of data/information concerning their purchasing decisions from the mass media, they still report that the most relevant information came from their parents and friends.

Although they did express some degree of awareness of ecological problems of consumption and most of them felt that as consumers they are bearing responsibility for preservation of natural environment, most of the respondents couldn't name one eco-friendly product that they were buying. However, among the students who reported discussing the ecological problems of consumption within their family, the percentage of those who did name the eco-friendly product was significantly higher. Again, it seems that the family plays more important role in educating an ecologically conscious consumer than the school does. But still the results of our research are far from satisfactory and there is a great need for the education system to take more active role in educating a consumer citizen.

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Understanding consumer citizenship through learning clusters

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Introduction

Consumer citizenship in learning clusters is a theme with at least two concepts that need clarification. In brief, there is a widespread agreement that the production and distribution of knowledge are increasingly significant processes in the determination of sustainable development. The latter has been defined¹ as a process whereby future generations receive as much capital *per capita* as – or more than – the current generation has available. Traditionally, this has included natural capital, physical or produced capital, and human capital. It has now become recognised that these three types of capital determine only partially the process of sustainable development in a knowledge-based economy, often referred to as ‘new economy’, because these overlook the way in which the broadly understood economic actors interact and organise themselves to generate knowledge, and thus innovation and consequently, the growth. The missing link is a pool of structural capital - that complements human capital to knowledge capital - and social capital that facilitates the rise and flow of the previous one. The pool of these capitals remains deeply embedded in a particular socio-cultural context and varies from region to region. The notion of *region* refers here to a sub-national unit with borders defined politically at the meso-level between the local (micro-level) and the supra-national (mega-level), and geographically through the economic concept of clustered industries and firms. In the scale of ‘new economy’, the ‘regional’ correlates to ‘global’, just as the ‘local’ relates to the ‘national’.

The notion of *learning cluster* refers here to the ‘smart’ regional aggregation of innovative systems interrelated through the *interactive learning* ties with a particular milieu of social actors responsible for sustainable development and equitable distribution of economic benefits. With the concept of *regional innovative systems*, the social construction of supply-side (production, management) of industries and firms may be comprehended. While the broader concept of learning clusters demonstrates how the same reciprocally interactive

¹ I. Serageldin, *Sustainability and the Wealth of Nations: First Steps in an Ongoing Journey*, Environmentally Sustainable Development Studies and Monographs no. 5. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1996

ties between social actors and innovative systems influence the *social structure of demand and supply* simultaneously, for these are complementary ingredients of the knowledge and social capitals residing in a particular region. In other words, intensifying *consumer citizenship* through interactive learning resulting in the enforcement of ethical ‘rules-of-the-game’ on *learning markets* does not hinder the growth of wealth, but it may add up to it.

Learning and Economic Growth

Innovation is undoubtedly considered as the most important driving force for economic wealth. It can pertain to any industry or economy sector and represents more than just the initial “big idea” or the end product or service that results from it. Innovation, in contradiction to the stereotype as related to the high-tech industries, is more accurately defined as a process through which knowledge may be translated into new creations: products, services, or an increase in productivity through new production and organisational methods. In this sense, all the innovations embody “*in-demand knowledge*”. Innovations may also create new demand, as in the case of product innovations geared towards the satisfaction of previously unrecognised needs and wants. There is now a substantial body of research which shows that the innovation is a systemic rather than a linear process, and that the linear process of innovation is the exception rather than the rule². The processes through which innovations emerge are to be understood as closely intertwined with the emergence and diffusion of knowledge elements as well as with the “translations” of these into new products and processes. They are characterised by complicated feedback mechanisms and interactive relations involving *science, technology, policy, production and demand*. Thus, perhaps more significantly, innovation processes embody complex forms of knowledge and learning. *Knowledge* itself may be regarded as a commodity of rather peculiar characteristics. It is a “stock” concept, while *learning* may be perceived as a “flow” process. The result of learning process is the dissemination of existing knowledge or the production of new knowledge.

Individual learning refers here to the acquisition of information, understanding and skills by individual people, through participation in any form of education and training. The result of individual learning is the stock of *human capital*, which, in turn, is a form of *knowledge capital*. In particular, individual learning is weighted towards the forms of knowledge which are referred to³ as *know-what* and *know-why*. At varying levels of complexity and sophistication, these kinds of knowledge may be codified and communicated quite readily (*explicit knowledge*). Therefore, to a considerable extent, individual learning involves the

² *Knowledge Management in the Learning Society*, OECD Proceedings, 2000

³ B. A. Lundvall and B. Johnson, *The Learning Economy*, Journal of Industry Studies, No 1, 1994

dissemination of existing knowledge, even though it is new to the individual acquiring it. The forms of explicit knowledge constitute necessary, although not, of course, sufficient prerequisites for innovations of all kinds. The forms of formal learning are complemented by the informal learning that is generated in the course of normal everyday activity, including economic activity. In particular, individual “learning-by-doing” is a key process for production of the type of knowledge known as *know-how* or *practical knowledge*. To a much higher degree than formal individual learning, “learning-by-doing” provides a basis for the generation of new knowledge. The relatively tacit character of know-how is closely associated with the embedding of it in a particular social context, and consequently, it causes difficulties in the development of strategies aimed at promoting “learning-by-doing” in order to increase a pool of practical knowledge. Outside “learning-by-doing”, the production and dissemination of *know-how* is facilitated to a more significant extent by “learning-by-interaction” or *interactive learning*. This means, that individuals are able to develop what they have learnt through “learning-by-doing”, as well as through formalised means, by face-to-face communication and exchange with others. Hence, interactive learning provides a means by which non-codified (as well as codified) knowledge may be transmitted.

The concept of *learning organisation*⁴ describes such an organisation as the one which stocks and develops *knowledge capital*. This covers *human capital* and *structural capital* that is retained by the organisation independently of the presence of particular individuals. The core component of this *sticky knowledge* generating structural capital is embodied in tacit knowledge created through “learning-by-doing” and “learning-by-interaction”. The process of *organisational learning* depends and builds upon individual learning and in particular on interactive learning upon which the *sticky knowledge* is produced up to a significant extent. It “... amplifies the knowledge created by individuals and crystallises it as a part of the knowledge network of the organisation. This process takes place within an expanding *community of interaction* which crosses *intra-* and *inter-organisational* levels and boundaries”⁵. Consequently, organisations can appropriate existing knowledge from outside or create new knowledge either inside it or in interaction and collaboration with other organisations. Crucially, organisational learning involves the creation of new knowledge to a much greater extent than individual learning. It is precisely the *interactive nature* of organisational learning that permits this to occur. Since the essence of knowledge perceived as a base resource of economy lies in its

⁴ P. Senge *The Fifth discipline: The Art and Practice of Learning Organization*, Doubleday Currency, New York, 1990

⁵ I. Nonaka and H. Takeuchi, *The Knowledge Creating Company*, Oxford University Press, 1995

infinity, unlike other hard resources that used to drive economy in the past epoch of manufacturing in line with the logic expressed as: *the more I have of it, the less you have of it*, the soft resource of mental-factoring era has a very different logic with its fundamental rule: *the more we share of it, the more we have of it*.

Equitable and Sustainable Development in Learning Regions

We may conceptualise an *innovative system*⁶ as a set of organisations involved in the development, diffusion and use of innovations, together with their reciprocal ties where interactive learning plays a crucial role. The sustainable innovative performance is strongly dependent upon their permanent existence. Hence, the *sustainability of innovative systems* rather naturally absorbs the concept of *continuous* interactive learning. In this sense, innovation entails also social and environmental dynamic. The interactive learning relationships are profoundly shaped by the social rules, cultural norms, routines and conventions which regulate them. These “rules-of-the-game” stuck into a system of innovation may either constraint or improve interactive learning, and consequently the process of innovation and growth.

The conceptualization of *regional innovative system* corresponds with the two sub-systems⁷: the knowledge application and exploitation sub-system, principally occupied by firms with vertical supply-chain networks, and the knowledge production and diffusion sub-system, ‘glued together’ with the reciprocal interactive ties among the organizations within and between the two sub-systems. Thus, the regional innovative systems embody the ‘third generation’ system resulting from the evolution of industry clusters into the regional innovative networks on the way to increase their innovation capability and competencies. They possess all three dimensions which distinguish *regional smart systems*⁸ of economic success: concepts, connections and competencies. These, in turn, may be perceived as *learning regions*, providing that they encompass and mobilize not only the innovative systems, but also all other regional organizations (i.e. regional authorities, well-being and educational organizations) responsible of economic benefits— employment, income, standards of living – *equitable distribution of commodities* between different social groups. The enhancement of smart region to learning region, through the development of reciprocally interactive ties between ‘economic’ and ‘social’ actors lessens the possibility of generation of new social exclusion patterns

⁶ B. Lundval, *National Systems of Innovation: Towards a Theory of Innovation and Interactive Learning*, Pinter, London, 1992

⁷ P. Cooke et al., *The Governance of Innovation in Europe. Regional Perspectives on Global Competitiveness*, Pinter, London and New York, 2000

⁸ S. A. Rosenfeld, *Regional Technology Strategies, Creating Smart Systems. A guide to cluster strategies in less favoured regions. European Union-Regional Innovation Strategies*, Carrboro, North Carolina, USA, 2002,

caused by the denial of access to the different forms of learning opportunities, and consequently knowledge.

The norms, values and beliefs which are shared in everyday interaction within social networks and which enable each learning region the proper coordination of actions to achieve its desired goals of sustainable economic growth, social cohesion, and fulfillment of personal potential of citizens, form the *social capital*⁹ of the region. Each regional community accumulates their own stock of social capital over particular paths of economic, social and cultural development. The social capital may be specified¹⁰ along two dimensions: societal (global)/communal (regional) and inward/outward connectivity. This specification tunes up with the typology of mega/micro clusters¹¹ where each mega cluster may be perceived as a heterogeneous “cluster-of-clusters”, and each individual cluster has different characteristics and plays a different role in the economy. The constellation most conducive to the regional goals is where regional communities are concurrently strongly *integrated* with powerful intra-community ties, and also have effective *linkages* to the wider world both through individuals, as well as organizations. At the regional level optimal conditions are where the macro structures have strong synergy with community, but remain autonomous and ‘economic’ and ‘social’ organizations exhibit high degrees of competence and capability to undertake effective action. At both levels, interactive learning between organizations is greatly facilitated where network relationships are characterized by high degree of trust.

Learning Markets as Socially Responsible Markets

With the previous concepts in mind, when we refer to the ‘new economy’ that is understood as *knowledge-based economy* where knowledge is considered as an only commodity, we think it equivalent to *learning economy* where interactive learning plays a crucial role to facilitate the flow of knowledge. These are thought to be different viewpoints on the same concept. For simplicity, in further considerations, we use a letter *L* to indicate any concepts related to the *learning economy* that may be schematically written down as:

- L-economy = creation of knowledge (□) application of knowledge, where (□) stands for the interactive learning ties.

The single L-commodity may be ‘physically embodied’ in commodities through the process of innovation. The interactive L-commodity creation-application

⁹ see e.g. J. Coleman, *Social capital in the creation of human capital*, American Journal of Sociology, 94, 1988

¹⁰ see e.g. *Cities and Regions in the New Learning Economy*, OECD Proceedings, 2001

¹¹ see e.g. *Innovative Clusters. Drivers of National Innovation Systems*, OECD Proceedings, 2001

concept draws a parallel thought to the broadly elaborated *stakeholder theory*¹². However, the L-market mechanism specifies the *consumers (stakeholders) oriented behaviour*¹³ as the result of interactive learning process, and consequently indicates the learning policies as an interactive mechanism supporting rise (or fall) of the consumer and corporate social responsibility. In order to ‘translate’ the L-market into the ‘old-economy’ market terms we may perceive the L-market as a three dimensional system:

- L-market = L-supply (↔) L-demand, where (↔) stands for the interactive learning ties.

The first dimension correlates with the industry and business clusters and the interactive learning ties within and between them (commodity supply), the second one refers to the ‘knowledge clusters’ that involve the organizations responsible for knowledge production and diffusion together with the interactive learning ties between and within them (commodity demand), and the third one relates to the interactive learning ties between the two.

The L-market may be projected onto one of the surfaces related to the L-production and L-consumption of commodities. Thus, the projection of L-market onto the L-supply surface may be written down as:

- L-supply system = industry and business cluster (↔) ‘knowledge-for-industry & business’ organizations, where (↔) stands for the interactive learning ties between them.

This may be re-written in the terms of commodity market as:

- L-supply = commodity supply (↔) knowledge-for-industry & business application

The ‘knowledge-for-industry & business’ organizations are equivalent to those organizations of the innovative system which are responsible for knowledge production and diffusion for the industry and business organizations’ purposes (i.e. regional authorities, R&D institutions, educational actors). Hence, on a basis of our previous concepts, we may put it as:

- L-supply system = regional innovative system = regional smart system

Accordingly, the projection of L-market onto the L-demand surface looks as follows:

- L-demand system = households (↔) ‘knowledge-for-households’ organizations.

The households are thought to represent the system of smallest social organizations that consume commodities, and the ‘knowledge-for-households’ organizations embrace non-profit organizations (i.e. regional authorities, well-

¹² see e.g. R.E. Freeman, *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*, Pitman, Boston, 1994

¹³ see e.g. M. R. Greenwood, *The importance of stakeholders according to business leaders*, *Business and Society Review* 106(1), 2001; J.M. Logdson and K. Yuthas, *Corporate social performance, stakeholder orientation, and organizational moral development*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 16(12/13), 1997

being (= social) organizations, educational actors) responsible for knowledge production and distribution for households' purposes. Since we discuss regional market, then:

- $\sum \text{households} = \sum \text{consumers} = \sum \text{citizens}$, and the interests of consumers are matching the interests of citizens. Hence, we have:

- L-demand = commodity demand (\leftrightarrow) knowledge-for-citizens creation.

So, finally, we have the concept of L-market expressed in the terms of a commodity market in the following form:

- L-market = (commodity supply (\leftrightarrow) knowledge-for-industry & business application) (\square) (commodity demand (\leftrightarrow) knowledge-for-citizens creation).

As it is clearly visible, the regional authorities and educational actors make a cut of the L-demand system and the L-supply system, for they belong to both of them. This underlines their important role they play on L-markets, as the *organizational linkages* between the commodity L-supply and L-demand systems.

In the 'old economy', the consumer tastes and preferences constitute the final intervening factor through which the other factors must act in order to create demand. The theoretical approaches to consumer demand fall into two broad categories. From the supply-side perspective characterized mostly by marketing theory¹⁴ that assumes the exogenous origin of consumers' tastes and preferences, with a key factor of corporate business marketing strategy. The demand-side perspective, exemplified mostly by neoclassical economic models and consumer behaviours theory¹⁵, assumes the endogenous origin of consumers' tastes and preferences, with a key factor of autonomous wishes of consumers.

Drawing upon our previous concepts of L-market, we may write the L-value of commodity in a form of the following interactive learning function:

- L-value = F (L-supply, L-demand) = F (commodity supply (\leftrightarrow) knowledge-for-industry & business application, commodity demand (\leftrightarrow) knowledge-for-citizens creation).

Hence, it may be re-written as:

- L-value = f {commodity (supply (\square) demand) value, (knowledge-for-industry & business application (\square) knowledge-for-citizens creation) value} = commodity value $\langle \square \rangle$ knowledge value

¹⁴ see e.g. D. M. Kreps, *A Course in Microeconomic Theory*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1990

¹⁵ see e.g. H. Assael, *Consumer Behaviour and Marketing Action*, Kent Publishing Co., Boston 1984

, where <□> indicates a recursive interaction resulting from the interactive learning ties between the L-supply and L-demand systems. The *commodity value* is a value resulting from the interactions between commodity supply-demand actors involved in the transaction, what correlates with the ‘old-economy’ marketing theory values assuming the exogenous origin of tastes and preferences. The interactive ties facilitating the sell-buy transaction may be ‘physically represented’ as a two-way interactive process: the *distribution of commodities* – the direction from commodity suppliers to commodity consumers, and the *re-distribution of commodities* – the direction from commodity consumers to commodity suppliers.

The notion of *knowledge value* assimilates ethical and aesthetical factors resulted from the interactive learning within and between all knowledge creating organizations on one hand, and all knowledge applying organizations on the other. To simplify our considerations, we will focus exclusively of the ethical factors of knowledge value, which we refer to as *ethical value*. The interactive ties facilitating the ethical knowledge creation-application process may be perceived as a two-way interactive process: the *distributive flow of ethical knowledge* – the direction from the ethical knowledge-for-consumers creators to the ethical knowledge-for-industry & business applicators, and the *re-distributive flow of ethical knowledge* – the direction from ethical knowledge-for-industry & business applicators to the ethical knowledge-for-consumers creators. Thus, the ethical value is facilitated through these both: distributive and re-distributive flows of ethical knowledge. They may correlate with the notions of *social consumer-citizen responsibility*¹⁶ and *corporate social responsibility*¹⁷ accordingly.

To summarize, we may say, that the L-value of a commodity is higher, when its ethical value component is also higher, or in other words, when the interactive learning ties between knowledge actors on L-market are stronger and better established. However, we cannot forget that all the ties between actors on L-market are of an interactive nature. Thus, the L-value with a high commodity value component and a low ethical value may equal the L-value with a low commodity value component and a high ethical value. The first situation coincides with the well-established interactive learning ties facilitating distribution-re-distribution of a commodity and poor ties facilitating the

¹⁶ see e.g. M. Kingswell, *The World we Want: about citizenship in a global society*, Penguin, London, 1998; R. Friedland & A. F. Robertson (eds), *Beyond the Marketplace: Rethinking Economy and Society*, Aldine de Gruyter, New York, 1990

¹⁷ see e.g. *The well-being of Nations: The Role of Human and Social Capital*, OECD Proceedings, 2001

corporate-consumer social responsibility, and the second one relates to the other way round position.

And here comes the essence of *L-market model* that is functioning somewhere between the two opposite concepts: the *socially irresponsible market* (commodity value = 1, ethical value = zero) and the *pure social market* (commodity value = 0, ethical value = 1), is equivalent to the market where the ethical value of a commodity becomes substitutable for its economic value up to some degree (between 0-1). The better are conditions for effective process of continuous interactive learning between knowledge creation-application organizations facilitated by the *learning policy*, the higher social responsibility of the market. Hence, the question is: *how* to appropriate the balance between the economic and ethical values through correlation of learning policies with governmental rules on one hand, and application of learning policy to all other policies that routinely belong to different sectors. The latter must take the first step in policies that enable markets to *unlearn* inappropriate ‘old-economy’ logic principles left over from the markets performance of manufacturing era.

Grasping the future - challenges of social involvement

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Introduction

The challenges of scientific and technological advance, globalization with its economic and social dilemmas, climate reversals, the increasing consumerism - all these forces are driving enormous changes which will impact like a tidal wave over the next years of the new century. The future has never been more uncertain than it is now. But the need to understand the future has never been greater. We are looking for ways to resolve the problem– to predict or to build the future.

Successful prediction conveys power. But the understandable desire to "predict the future" is in direct conflict with understanding of people as active agents and makers of reality. Successful prediction however would render us as passive observers. Fortunately such full-scale "Foreknowledge" is not available to us. But we as humans have build-in need and capacity to direct, control and construct our life and our environment [5]. We have the ability to set up our future.

The Foresight is one of the most important innovation tools of social involvement and citizen's power for building of a sustainable future [2]. It was established in highly developed Western countries (HDWC) as a transdisciplinary, systems-science-based approach to considering alternative possible futures and planning to create a preferred one. Foresight emphasizes the concept of alternative futures: the idea that "the future" cannot be predicted, but alternative futures may be imagined, explored, and assessed for plausibility and probability. These alternative futures arise out of the trends of change and emerging issues we can observe in the present; we can explore them by extrapolating the extent of their growth as well as their potential impacts on the environment.

The opportunity to transfer the Foresight from HDWC to less developed Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC) without losing its particular advantages is very problematic. The adaptation of the foresight in the field of consumerism and sustainable development is not without challenges. The success of the foresight exercise depends on many social and cultural conditions, often tacit and hidden. These conditions existed in the most advanced countries, but they

are not necessarily apparent in less developed countries. The paper aims at improving of this situation in Bulgaria through utilization of knowledge (education), participation (networking), and the help of new (more informed) consumers.

The Foresight as a key approach for setting up the future

We are consumers, but first of all we must be citizens. "Consumer citizenship is when the individual, in his/her role as a consumer, actively participates in developing and improving society by considering ethical issues, diversity of perspectives, global processes and future conditions. It involves taking responsibility on a global scale when securing one's own personal needs and well-being" [6].

It was able to examine the "Consumer citizenship" as an aspect of emerging knowledge society [2]. But the main tool for setting up the future of knowledge society is the Foresight [2], [3]. As citizens we must adopt the Foresight in our community and country.

Foresight involves bringing together the key agents of change and sources of knowledge, in order to develop strategic visions and anticipatory intelligence [3]. Foresight is often explicitly intended to establish networks of knowledgeable agents (firms, governments, business sectors, voluntary organisations, citizens) who can respond better to policy and other challenges.

Foresight involves five essential elements [2]: anticipation, participation, networking, vision and action. There are three main organisational dimensions in any Foresight activity that need to be considered: its formal structure (roles and responsibilities), the decision processes (management style), and resource procurement (sponsorship). A number of formal and informal roles can be discerned in an Foresight, including promoters, stakeholders, sponsors, steering committee, project team, champions, experts, process experts, monitoring groups, etc. Formal roles and responsibilities require careful definition and consultation so that players know what they need to do and when. Consultation gives participants and stakeholders a sense of ownership of the process and its outputs.

Foresight exercises seem to consist of a "hard core" of concrete techniques and "soft surroundings", with goals, aims, expectations, motives, attitudes, managerial skills and capabilities that are difficult to define. It is said that in foresight, the process itself is more important than its outcome; but the process is more difficult to measure. That is why contrary to other policy tools, foresight does not have any clear performance indicators. Techniques are relatively easy to transfer from one country to another; but success of foresight depends mostly

on the presence of these more difficult to measure and more hard to transfer factors.

Like almost all intellectual inventions, Foresight has its own life history: a period when it is conceived and it is refined and developed; another one, when it becomes topical, widely diffused and effective; and the last one, when it declines, first in the world centre, and next, at the world periphery. Seen from this point of view foresight enters the second stage; we all are witnesses of its enormous success, diffusion and acceptance.

Adoption of the foresight in less developed countries

It is known that almost all technologies lose their productivity and efficiency while being implemented in less developed countries. Does foresight contradict this general rule? What are the basic conditions for successful adoption/adaptation of foresight? Why has foresight emerged and gained such wide acceptance?

We will try to describe some general reasons or trends, which reflect successful implementation of the foresight in the HDWC. All these trends are often related with one another. The question is “Are these trends are equally presented in less developed countries and if not how this might influence the adoption of foresight?” The main reasons or trends for emergence of the foresight are as follows [2],[5]:

(1)The shift from the industrial to the information society. The oil shock of 1973 in the Western world accelerated the transformation from energy, labor and natural resources-intensive industries towards the knowledge economy, based on services, on telecommunication and electronics and the development of foresight. The structural indicators of recent CEEC economics resemble with some decades delay that of the more advanced Western countries. The globalization introduced some shared economical conditions for successful foresight implementation in less developed countries. But the presence of economic reasons for foresight is not enough.

(2)The shift from past-oriented to future-oriented world, from traditional to post-modern society, from routine to innovation. This long-term process has transformed the society. The world of the repetition, tradition and faith in the wisdom of ancestry has declined and a new world of the cult of novelty, invention, innovation, discovery and originality has emerged. In the HDWC the “turning point” occurred between 1880 and 1918.

In Bulgaria and in other CEEC the transition from a feudal rural community to a modern society occurred much later. CEEC followed a different path of

economic and social development starting from the 16th century. The so-called second serfdom, stagnation or downfall of towns and weak bourgeoisie were the reasons for the nations of CEEC to become either peasant or noblemen nations at the end of World War. As a consequence, in CEEC still there is a lack of attitudes, competencies and institutions necessary for an efficient modern society – “civilisation competence” (including enterprise, civic, discursive and everyday culture). For example we don’t have enough discipline, tolerance, pluralism, respect for opponents, compliance with the majority and the like. Communism froze a lot of past-oriented attitudes; with the exception of the younger generations we are still more past-oriented than Westerners.

Since the industrial revolution innovations turned to one of the basic elements of the new capitalist economy. Because of the anti-innovative nature of the communist economy, there is still a delay in understanding the importance of innovation by entrepreneurs, economists, policy-makers and the public in post-communist countries.

(3)The shift from short-term to long-term thinking, from static to the process concepts. Thinking in a long term started at least with Kondratieff’s long waves theory. In CEEC short-termism still prevails. It seems to be a reaction to the socialist planning and to the feeling of being a passive subject (rather than a player) of historical processes.

(4)The shift from administration to management, from hierarchies to networking. The introduction of the management techniques in Western public administration improved its efficiency and effectiveness. The secret of efficient public administration in HDWC lies in the fact that both officials and politicians know and automatically apply certain basic reasoning and action procedures. The ABC of effective behaviour is taught in secondary schools (decision-making, the art of giving speeches, discussion and arguing rules), during administrative and political studies, it can be also learned from managerial games as well as from practical experience.

This historical shift was scarcely initiated in CEEC both in the public R&D sector and in public administration. Governmental departments are still very far from standards observed in HDWC. The patron-agent relationships are not clearly defined. The political cycle lacks the necessary expertise. Political institutions undertake tasks that should be performed separately. In the absence of a well defined economic and social developmental strategy, science, technology and innovation policies are relatively vague.

Political instruments, used in CEEC are mostly general, passive, incomplete, redundant and having conflicting purposes. The absorptive capacity for

introduction of new political tools is still relatively weak. In research laboratories and universities the utilization of modern management techniques is going slowly.

Team working and the art of discussion belong to one of the most important civilization “Achilles’ heels” of the CEEC.

(5)The shift from a representative to a participatory democracy and from a linear to an interactive model of the policymaking process. Foresight with its emphasis on wide participation and negotiation between stakeholders could also be cited as an example of this transformation. Foresight could also be treated as policy analysis instrument and from this point of view its emergence could be considered a sign of the development of broader policy analysis arsenal.

(6)The shift from petrifying to self-learning systems. This shift is retarded in post-communist countries. At the level of organizations, the structural logic of vertical bureaucracies was made obsolete by the informational trend toward flexible networks, similar as to what happened in the West. But, unlike in the West, the vertical command chain was at the core of the system, making the transformation of large corporations into the new forms of networked business organizations much more difficult. This lack of ‘reform itself’ ability – learning from experience, learning by learning, learning by monitoring and innovating - survived in CEEC in almost all spheres subordinated to the state.

Foresight also could be interpreted as an illustration of the techniques of thinking and thinking about doing . Lateral, creative, critical or system thinking, decision making techniques like SWOT, PEST, brainstorming, the Delphi technique, as well as team management tools are now taught in HDWC at all levels of education. Almost all of them were used in foresight. Up to the end of communism the *know what/ that* training and literature prevail over the *know how* approach; now this trend has changed but the delay is significant.

The challenges to future development for Bulgaria

The uncertainty of the future is very considerable problem in Bulgaria, when we make preparation to join with the EU-countries. Reforms implemented in Bulgaria have a significant effect on the economic development. In the recent years, the country has become one of the fastest-growing economies in Europe. As a result we have market conditions and lots of consumers. But we must also remember the lower level from which growth has started. There are investigated sectors as well as "black holes" combining significant gains with important but ignored aspects of a social system. The citizenship as a pattern of social identification, commitment, involvement and responsibility in democracy was emerged very slowly. As a result, the appeal addressed to everyone - to

creatively participate in the development of Bulgarian dimension of Europe - does not constitute an inspiring factor for transition yet. A citizen's mind identifies a lot of cages where his/her interests, orientations, endeavours, including potential to social involvement, are trapped in. Many individuals believe that - as decades before, no one is striving to open the cages in order to go forward.

A great number of Bulgarians are both proud of joining the EU and also afraid of a new citizenship, since they do not understand exactly which prospects and options are available for them and not only for the ruling strata in the enlarged Europe. Our society faces a daunting dilemma: how to identify the goals of the European strategy that is imperative for sustainability. Sometimes it appears that the ruling elite do not recognise the distinguishing characteristics of the knowledge society as true variables. The core of our backwardness lies not in the lack of identifiability of elements and issues of the knowledge society, but, instead, of unwillingness to manage transition towards a sustainable society.

In a medium - term future, a challenge for an individual will be the identification, understanding, and interpretation of a set of characteristics of the knowledge society (including consumer citizenship) for his/her own every day's needs and activities.

On the threshold of accession to the EU, many Bulgarians have come to the conclusion that their economic and social situation, compared with that of the Members and other candidate countries of the EU, is a quite unpleasant one. However, from the analysis and economic scenarios performed in 2003 a futurist can conclude that there are three main ways out of the situation. Actually, these could be designed by the Bulgarians themselves, and these are "to be the servants," or "to be the cheats," or to be the innovative and re-skilled humans in an emerging knowledge-driven world. Our aim will be to help for mobilization and focus of the social energy on the way of innovations.

Bulgaria remains almost the only country in the enlarging Europe without national foresight. Responsible persons and institutions do not follow the kind invitation from EU for Bulgaria to become involved in such type of activities. National foresight - thinking, debating, and shaping the nation's future - should be considered as an important approach towards the information society. We use foresight in some branch investigations (information technology, tourism, consumerism etc), but not in the regional development.

Since the end of the 19th century, Bulgarians have ranked themselves among well-educated nations. But in this agile world we are in arrears. For example, Long-Life Learning (LLL) is not well-known as a concept and not widely used

in Bulgaria. LLL supports the economy and the society at the same time, it benefits individuals as well as the community, helps people to cope with social changes and labour market demands, as well as to improve job prospects, to enjoy full and satisfying lives. These opportunities should be provided in a variety of ways to suit their differing backgrounds, needs, and preferences. We believe that LLL for people in Bulgaria will be an essential part of the process aimed at building the sustainable future.

Approach to the knowledge society (including consumer citizenship) as a reality for Bulgaria should receive legitimisation in minds, open discussions, creative activities and systematical education of individuals, companies, and governmental structures.

The emergence of the New Consumer

The consumer has traditionally been considered a pawn in a game of social acceptance, influenced greatly, if not entirely, by advertising and commercial pressure. Others claim the consumer is a global dictator on the world stage and controls by his/her market choices the growth of the market and the direction of global development. Whether dictator or pawn, the consumer is a social force to be reckoned with on the international scene as well as in local and national arenas [4].

Recently the new powerful driving force in the economy is the emergence of consumers who use information far more intensively to meet their economic needs. These new consumers are influencing a spectrum of business and economic decisions and transforming a variety of societal precepts. In its simplest definition, the new consumer is someone who has higher educational qualifications; who lives in a household with discretionary income; who has access to new information technologies. In Bulgaria the population of new consumers is about 10-12 % of adults, but in the Western countries this is about 35-40%. They are creating a much more diverse and fragmented society. New consumers use information differently [5]: they search for information in more channels; they refer to information more frequently; they prefer information for which they initiate the contact; they like interaction; they use information to experiment more often.

By using richer sources of information and enjoying the potential for more interactions with businesses, the new consumers are also learning the value of their own personal information. They are increasingly looking to build relationships with businesses that understand how to provide greater value in exchange for that information. These new consumers are also beginning to seek outsophisticated agents, both human and electronic, whom they can trust to help them manage the increasingly complex set of life's tasks. Some traits were

identified that typify new consumers' behaviour in the marketplace [5]: (1)Prefer choice; (2)Demand tailored information and communications; (3)Sceptical of brands; (4)Willing to experiment; (5)Value convenience; (6)Expect superior service.

The new consumers are also influencing the labour market not only because of their demand for services at all times and places, but also because, as workers, new consumers are defining new relationships in the workplace. And, as they get more information, they are more confident about taking risks. For example: switching careers, borrowing to pay for more information. New consumers accept greater personal risk if it means more control.

New consumers are replacing the ``old'' consumers, who tend to be less educated, less affluent, less informed, and less demanding in their purchasing activities. The new consumers are a heterogeneous social group, but they are more prepared to involving in the foresight exercises. We must help with the education and motivation of the new consumers.

Conclusions

1. In CEEC still lack attitudes, competencies and institutions necessary for an efficient modern society (not enough discipline, tolerance, pluralism, respect for opponents, etc).
2. The patron-agent relationships are not clearly defined. The political cycle lacks the necessary expertise. Political institutions undertake tasks that should be performed separately. In the absence of a well defined economic and social development strategy, science, technology and innovation policies are relatively vague.
3. The vertical command chain was at the core of the system, making the transformation of enterprises into the new forms of networked business organizations much more difficult.
4. We believe that LLL for people in Bulgaria will be an essential part of the process aimed at building the sustainable future.
5. The New Customers are more prepared to involving in the foresight exercises. We must help with the education and motivation.

One of the most difficult problems CEEC could face when implementing foresight is how to re-arrange it and/or to develop all the necessary and additional assets lacking, to make it a tool that will help to conceptualize their own most important issues and aspirations. Approach to the knowledge society (including consumer citizenship) as a reality for Bulgaria should receive legitimisation in minds, open discussions, creative activities and systematical education of individuals, companies, and governmental structures.

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4. CONSUMER CITIZEN'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ABSTRACTS

Who really is the “consumer” and what are the consumer’s responsibilities?

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The term “consumer” is used with different meanings in different contexts and by different kinds of subjects, and also by different subjects working in the same field. It may indicate a range of roles from just the buyer(s) of a product to an individual person in its whole. By this way a wide range of very different reasonments and consequences as for the consumer’s behaviour and attitudes may be derived.

At present, confusion about these differences may be observed in any field, from the academic to the marketing approach, and may explain the very diverse activities consumer organizations are actually carrying on – often by contradictory positions among them.

We wish to explain the way by which only some of these meanings may properly comprise the solidarity-responsibility issues and justify they are integrated in practice and be taught at any level.

That kind of discourses where (especially global) solidarity is envisaged needs an explanation about “externalities”. That may be given or should have been previously acquired by the listener, in order the concept is clear enough as for its general meaning and especially its economic meaning when related to consumption.

ACU Associazione Consumatori Utenti is a consumer organization committed with ethical consumption by statute, and the AEC Association of European Consumers *socially and environmentally aware* (the European level association

ACU has been co-founder of, whose Secretary General the present writer is) committed itself with Responsible Consumption. Having faced the upper problem practice and partially at the theoretical level (comprising a short inquiry) we hope our contribution may be useful to the CCN network.

A link between rights and obligations?

Thor Ø. Jensen

University of Bergen, Norway

The paper will discuss the nature of the consumer interests in political terms, and use different theoretical contributions in the debate. Two small empirical cases will be referred to: 1. Norwegian data on political party programs 1880-2003 will be used to study the political role of consumer interests. 2. Basic consumer rights will then be used to analyse public service, according to own research on consumer experiences in Norway. From these results the discussion on links between rights and obligations are taken a bit longer. The basic hypothesis is that consumers seldom is seen as an actor in their own right. Paternalism and cooptation will be used to explain the paradoxical status of consumer interests in Norwegian politics

My concluding arguments are:

1. With some important exceptions the principle of “rights & duties” are as paternalistic for consumers as for human rights, the idea that only humans wich meet certain criteria are worthy human rights are old and bad tasting.
2. Consumer rights are important to the construction of the individual as a political actor in the postmodern era,
3. They seem to fill that role with rather sensible values.
4. Classical political culture, and the public sector at least in Norway, strongly points to a paternalistic culture that hampers consumer action and organisation.

Consumers rights and responsibilities

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After a panoramic view over international activities on sustainable development at the Conference of Stockholm in 1972, where the Environmental Programme of United Nations (UNEP) was born, to the summit of Beirut in 2003, the author focuses on European consumers rights and responsibilities, above all on:

- foodstuff
- transport
- home

- usage of energy
- the problem of financial management (investment, loan)

The result of this research shows that despite the fact that in last thirty years consumers have gained importance, acquired more and more contractual power and more consciousness, still their rights are not homogeneous in EU States and the gap might well increase by the enlargement of European Union to 25 States.

Consumer citizen's rights as elements of the competitiveness of small and medium sized enterprises

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Transition to market economy brought a fierce competition on the socialist type monopolized markets. The liberalization of the formerly state controlled imports made it even more intense. Within a few years a whole spectrum of the possible actors appeared on the Hungarian markets from self employed entrepreneurs to multinational companies, from small retail shops to hipermarkets. Paralel with this process there is also a big change in the minds of the consumer citizens and entrepreneurs.

On the basis of our research activities which have been carried out from last year, we would like to analyse the impact of the new Low for the Protection of Consumers on the consumer citizen's behaviour and at the same time on the competitiveness of SME's.

Perhaps it is quite unusual to speak about the competitiveness of SME's in the context of consumer citizen's rights, but according to the results of our research it has relevance. The SME's have to keep up with the multinational companies by fulfilling the same conditions, but this puts an anormous burden on their shoulders. More then 70% of the owners of SME's we asked on the elements of their competitiveness, complained about the unbearable difficulties the necessity of meeting the requirements of the Low of the Protection of Consumers causes them. Taking the accession to the EU into consideration they are even more pessimistic. They say, mainly food producers, that rules are not for the protection of the consumers, but just against the small companies.

Social security insurance as an emerging area of consumption in post-communist countries. Experience from Estonian welfare reforms.

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The majority of current welfare reforms are concerned with cost-containment and targeting of programs. At the same time, public pressure for universal coverage and social citizenship rights remains. In Central and Eastern Europe this dilemma is more complicated because of leftist tradition in social policy. Public expectation towards comprehensiveness and guaranteed access to welfare is still strong. The majority of households do not include social insurance contributions or users fees in their long-term family budgets. People are not used to taking personal action to manage their welfare plans or to make choices in the emerging social insurance markets. At the same time welfare reforms have been designed and radically implemented under new right governments. Thus the official reform agenda strongly stressed individual efforts, personal savings and private insurance contracts.

Today one can analyze the first impacts of these reforms on social cohesion and sustainability. On the one hand, it is necessary to encourage citizens to take care of their personal well being and to move away from the paramount paternalism of Soviet period. On the other hand self-reliance and personal contributions tend to promote anti-solidarity attitudes and increasing tensions between different consumer groups. The Estonian experience of health and pension insurance shows that citizens' active participation in insurance schemes is correlated with the transparency of returns. The nexus between popular support and solidarity is by far more complicated. People have high expectations towards universal welfare schemes but are not personally eager to contribute to them. These assumptions will be illustrated by concrete cases in different reform areas and policy debates in Estonia.

Food safety: a primary goal of consumer citizens

Stoyan Tanchev and Ts V. Prokopov

The primary aspect of food safety is microbiological food poisoning. Three main aspects of the food safety are generally accepted:

- Biological aspects which includes: microbiological factors (pathogenic and toxicogenic microorganisms, molds, viruses) and macrobiological (protozoa, cestodes, nematodes, trematodes) factors.

- Chemical aspects: it includes the natural toxicants in food, insecticides, fungicides, food additives, anti-nutrients, allergens, some components of polymers, food packaging materials, environmental pollution, industrial incidents, chemical substances formed during food processing, etc.
- Physical aspect: it includes pieces of metal, glass, wood, stones, shells, etc.

PROCEEDINGS

Who really is the “consumer” and what are the consumer’s responsibilities?

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Specific wording is an important tool, for precise concepts may be examined and communicated in a culturally complex environment as our European society is. New words and new meanings for existing words are brought into the current common language: they need to be from time to time reflected upon, as the framework where they were first originated will be long carried on by discourses, and have a durable influence on people’s way of thinking to those given issues the words represent. That framework, though, may become obsolete over time - or too strict for new or additional meanings people may need to bring in due to their societal evolution.

Addressing people as “consumers” is a linguistic innovation, that was brought in since about a hundred years parallel with growing industrialization processes; especially the post World War II mass-production increased its use. The reason to distinguish such a category of people is that industrialization processes disassociated production from the combined activities a traditional society carries on, creating a separate “world” having its own internal logics by technological necessity - the “black box” moving independently towards energy sources. In this world’s in-out scheme, time was re-organized in different phases following the product’s production-consumption cycle, space was meant as the geographical support; as a consequence, people participating to production became “workers” and people outside production became “consumers” especially in parallel with growing “market” institutions. Workers first started to build own representative institutions, and consumers in recent times (consumers’ rights UN charter was edited in 1985).

On the basis of this pattern of interpretation an amount of new studies was stimulated, building up economic and social theories that diffused that term at any level, so that by now when consumers are named one will naturally picture to himself just “normal people”.

Rightly, the very fact that human beings are alive means that they somehow “consume. The general definition of “consumers” we currently - though by some

differences – accept at present, is *an individual purchasing goods for private use*: a *role* in a market monetary transaction frames its proper meaning, that just a synecdoche – a figure of speech that in this case represents the whole by naming a part of it - would extend to indicate the person. The human being, moreover, is envisaged independently from his/her relations with the others, so that no ethical problematics are intrinsically pertinent to that kind of discourses where consumers are named. In the origin, citizenship including the ethical issue, no need was there for the production speeches to take them into consideration: individual rights as a way to emancipate people from all-inclusive local society protection are a recent innovation.

The “consumer” concept, therefore, has little bearing on situations where self production is widespread and markets are mostly local, or where a limited range of products are requested by the stable consumption pattern of a community, or where people live at subsistence level and only a small élite has access to choice, or simply where people don’t want of the “Western way of life”. Such situations exist, and only in part are comparable to our own countries’ before the industrial revolution: if they are not highlighted by own and appropriate wording, discourses about them or just including them indifferently may be misleading., dragging in a hidden *economic* and *ethnocentric* vision in spite of good intentions. In a discourse, what is not *named* simply does not exist: new visions on economy, that are being elaborated, should face and find solutions to this problem.

At present, the term “citizen” is being added in various ways to the term “consumer”: the scope by that is clearly an aim to overcome its historical framework’s limitations and bring back into production-consumption issues the many societal issues that in the reality pertain to them. All people are citizens, whatever their production and consumption, so the idea seems appropriate in order that people’s reciprocal relations may be taken into consideration, good behaviours may be agreed upon and a way to identify them is imposed.

“Citizen” though, as “consumer”, is only a role people may play in given conditions, one aspect of a person: therefore, a similar to the before synecdoche is ongoing, when we mean the whole person by it. We usually notice that figure of speech less than the other, because we have been accustomed to picture to ourselves “normal people” as citizens over a much longer time.

The framework of the term “citizen” is a non-avoidable *belonging condition*, that is first of all based on territorial borders that need from time to time to be specified. Here, the territory has a near-to-ethological significance: a land that is owned by its inhabitants and that needs to be defended by other people’s intrusion. The time dimension is highly qualified by customs following tradition.

The group is outstanding, in comparison with the individual: protection is to be first expected - as said - rather than the individual rights' enforcement. *Prescriptive* ethics are set, in general, either by religious convictions - that in laical states may be different though co-existing - or by group situational morals. Solidarity, together with constraint, is built on the territorial belonging basis, in it.

One may put any word together with any other and agree on a given meaning, that eventually will stay clear in the language. "Consumer-citizenship" is a term that in itself may represent a distinct, independent concept. The problem, when putting those two concepts - citizen and consumer -together, in present times, is that they are basically irreconcilable by their background framework, the one needing for territorial borders, the other needing no territorial border be put to the global market; the former needing to consider the group as first, the latter considering just the individual. In reality, only in traditional, isolated societies those roles are undistinguishable. We, on the contrary, need to preserve the culture that has been elaborated through them.

"Global citizenship" may be addressed, so to get rid of the territorial constraint: as a *claim* for solidarity be implemented towards any people, many young people in fact name it. On the other side, some may be naming it for the sake of lowering the rich concept's pregnancy to a minimum common denominator: a threat to diversity that happily has little chance to be made effective, but one must envisage.

Everybody is observing that struggle going on day by day in the reality: two kinds of power - economic vs. political power - trying to take (or keep) hold on people. For both of them, opportune supporting communication is essential. Each one is therefore increasing efforts for their own totalizing vision be prevailing in discourses, i.e. each one's cultural categories are employed as if persons *in their whole* were this or that.

A first liberating step should be emphasizing that both "consumer" and "citizen" are just *roles* a real person may play, by two different standard interpretations of his/her prevailing *aspects* in given circumstances. Standard interpretations are needed, for a human group to communicate: that means that frequently occurring situations are given a pattern where roles exist for people's behaviour, and roles are given names. A man in a shop picking up an apple will be called a *client* if he pays for it, a *thief* if not.

Communication being a collective matter, some power is at stake for an interpretation pattern be accepted: "client" is enforced by the market, "thief" by right. Another liberating step should be taking into consideration the many

alternative kinds of power (moral persuasion or common consensus, among the others) may be active, and patterns may differ by selection of the aspects and priority that is given to them. A Catholic priest will say his *brother-in-God* is in his moral right, if the man is poor and hungry.

Any person may be ascribed (or ascribe to himself) numberless kinds of roles, depending on what the observer (or he/she) minds the situation is about. That is what people normally do by *individually* reasonable behaviours the standard interpretations name anomalous. Individually reasonable behaviours enforced by common consensus may however set new *standard* interpretation patterns. That is in fact what “Consumer-citizenship” should be about: a way out of the re-formulated Antigone’s dilemma and its tragic epilogue.

To do that, and in the same time to avoid the risk to inadvertently support what we don’t want to, we need to

- exit any totalizing vision (there are more than those two we mentioned),
- be clear about expected goals, as only a sub-set of “good” goals may (and should) be taken into consideration by the “Consumer-citizenship” (next standard) interpretation,
- very carefully – only when opportune - adopt categories deriving from the “consumer” and the “citizen” frameworks,
- highlight currently non-considered aspects that still represent people’s reasonableness, and examine their original framework(s)
- group them differently on the base of the real situations that are addressed
- and give them priorities that are respectful of the people that are involved,
- invent new categories, roles and names,
- be clear about the motivation each one has for undertaking such a lot of work

A link between rights and obligations?

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Rights without obligations are democratic progress!

The link of rights with obligations may seem sensible and may look like the construction of a “natural balance”. As parents we do that to our children, teachers do it in schools and contractual law are based upon the balancing of rights and obligations. Towards consumers we also easily think that they should behave responsible, being clever informed customers helping the economy to be efficient and also take a lot of social responsibility and right choices to help the environment and the global balance. If we think they will do that, we also think that they should be granted “rights”.

But the example of treating children and pupils reminds us of the basic paternalism in such a balance. Most universal rights have in fact started as paternalistic and elitist constructions and then gradually developed towards “rights without obligations”.

The right to vote was, in most countries, a privilege for rich men, such as landowners or nobility or educated individuals that one way or another seemed to have “deserved their rights” as it was seen at the time. The right to vote was balanced with obligations in a social acceptable way. Gradually the right to vote was granted new groups: women, young people, working class, ethnic minorities in a process that dissolved the underlying principle of the balance, that the right to vote was conditioned by social obligations or achievements. Today most will accept that the right to vote is fundamental and should not be conditioned by anything other than basic citizenship. This is further enhanced by the now universal voting arrangement with voluntary, individual and secret voting. This arrangement has gradually grown out of other principles for organizing the voting linked to open discussions, paying for votes and mandatory voting. The present arrangement is as far from linking obligations to the voting as one reasonably can go. Different strains of democratic thoughts have defended universal rights to vote position in different ways. It should be admitted that variants of “developmental democracy” in the tradition after both J.J. Rousseau and J. S. Mill argued that the right to vote should be given to all citizens because they would learn and grow in social responsibility when given rights (Held 1987). This kind of argument has a flavour of basic paternalism, natural to these thoughts being dominant around 1800. Actually there are not many classical

models of democracy that builds upon participatory rights that is fundamental and without conditions or background reasoning. Different versions of direct and participatory democracy, however, have this emphasis of fundamental rights, but more important is that this view is more or less universally accepted today and both the new left and the new right stresses individual political rights (also in the form of consumer rights !). (Held 1987)

In the development of modern welfare states we can see a kind of parallel development. Social security and health rights can be linked to direct payment through insurance or other arrangements (the US model), this being a very direct “right & obligation” arrangement. Such rights may also have a softer and more indirect linkage to obligations, where our rights are linked to membership in more or less obligatory and state-backed schemes through work (the continental model). And again there are arrangements that are only dependent of being a citizen (the scandinavian model). Esping-Andersen (1990) sees this as different levels of “commodification” of citizens, meaning that their welfare needs are treated more or less only according to their paying power and market value. He argues that the traditional Scandinavian welfare state models represented a kind of “decommodification”, where citizens gained value “as citizens” according to having rights without (market-like) obligations.

Maybe most important, but somewhat less formal and then more difficult to explain, is the cultural development of human rights in political culture and in media. In short, the argument is that problems regarding human rights did not use to be regarded as a serious problem if the relevant persons were outside the understanding of “worthy citizens”. Problems regarding prisoners, drug abusers, peripheral minorities or full time handicapped clients did not hit headlines easy. But, as a slow process, human rights have trickled down to all humans, and now headlines are easily filled by scandals of clients or minorities that have their rights provoked. The modern news market and the less ideological and more easily moved “task-and face-oriented” media consumers are also more easily moved by news about suffering and lack of respect for fundamental human rights (Lipovetsky 1994). The cultural process that expands human rights are connected to the several centuries-long process of individualization (Burchardt 1860 /1995).

On all these arenas, the tendency is that rights are gradually less tied up to “obligations”, they are fundamental, becoming values in their own right. My point is that there are many examples showing the process of untying the link between rights and obligations as a process of democratic progress. Rights without obligations are not only lack of balance, in many cases such “imbalance” just means that the rights in question are regarded as important in themselves, they are not a tool for some other purpose and not the object of

some paternalistic game. Usually the development of less obligations linked to rights are seen as more democratic and more respectful to the individual.

The actor perspective. Rights are tools.

One important aspect of basic rights is that the individual are constructed as an actor. The rights are tools that will be used in several steps to create the citizen in her own picture and in the eyes of others as active subject, an actor in her own life. The main classical traditions in social science will most often be rather insensitive to the fundamental need of the individual to be an actor (Touraine 1988, 1995) and try to explain behaviour and values in terms of groups (the marxist tradition) or in terms of simple models and mechanisms, assuming that the individual basically can be seen as a simple rational calculator of “utility” (the liberal tradition). If we introduce the human need for, and the basic democratic value of, having the ability to be an actor in our own life, our analytical efforts must also see rights as main tools for acting. Again, and linked to the processes discussed above, we can see a cultural shift that have stresses the importance of individual authentic self. The “1968” revolution can be seen as mostly cultural where educated young people moved away from picturing themselves as useful cogs in a great machine and on many arenas stressed creative pluralism and individuality (Paglia 1992, Touraine 1995)

In this perspective it is fundamental to have rights relevant to the important arenas of life and the consumer role are moved into focus as one of the most important roles for many reasons (Bauman 1998). A richer society with better-off citizens creates more consumer possibilities. A more market-based and internationally oriented society places more important items and decisions on the market and hence in the consumer area. Other life-arenas like family, professionalized welfare state and local society are weakened. More complex and culturally based explanations are probably the most important; Reduced belief in experts and simple “rational” and stable solutions, partially dissolution of the ideological firmness found in religion, nation, family roles and social class specific cultures, all press individuals to build their lives and “selves”, their individual identities with the help of the consumer role.

The basic consumer rights that are tools in micro-politics have a stronger tradition in other political systems and it is no surprise that the liberal tradition began early. With John F. Kennedy’s 1962 “Consumer Message” these rights are:

- The right to protection (from side effects, risks etc)
- The right to information
- The right to choice
- The right to complain/have a second opinion
- The right to have a voice

Some of these rights are fundamental as tools of constructing the individual as an actor, and they have at the same time distinct anti-paternalistic properties. The right to be informed is a right that goes beyond the more or less technical “need” for information. Consumers here have the right to know the content and origin of products regardless of what some authority might think they need. They should also know dangers presented by products and still have the right to choose. There should be no superior evaluation of what kind of information they need or is able to absorb or evaluate. And they have the right to get a second opinion and try to complain even if no wrongs are done. And their right to have choices goes far beyond ideas of “correct choice”. Their status as actors are created by such rights, these rights recognises them as subjects. These rights are also fundamental in the process that make the citizens able to take responsibility and have “problem ownership” (Peyrot 1982, Jensen 1988,1990).

So, far the argument have tried to establish the idea the basic rights for consumers should be seen as rights of citizenship, basic values and basic for the ability to be a genuine actor in the forming of own life and also in the forming of society. In the next paragraph we will indicate that citizen rights and power to consumers are not social destructive factors.

Consumers are nice Citizens

Which *values* will the new consumerized citizen press forward in their struggle to be authentic individuals? In our line of arguing we easily will find that consumers want pluralism, freedom to choice and dynamics of fashion to serve their need for individualism and change (Lipovetsky 1994). And they want goods and services to have authentic qualities (Taylor 1989); to have design, history, origin , also making them items of personalization.

When it comes to more traditional values, there seems to be a general opinion that the value systems under the new consumer roles is linked to selfishness, materialism and decline of cultural standards and political responsibility. I strongly oppose this view. In my opinion this pessimism is in itself a value statement (about human character) and not empirically grounded. In the cultural area the decline have been predicted since 1947 (Horkheimer/Adorno 1947/1995): How cinemas for the people would destroy theatres, TV destroy reading and cinemas and mass printing destroy fine arts etc. The underlying assumption is that ordinary people in their consumerized citizen roles will choose the least challenging and the lowest cultural level available. This did not happen. Consumption of culture items and use of culture media have increased in all areas, they sell more books, magazine sales are exploding, newspaper reading is stable, TV use have been rising, cinemas and theatres are not disappearing, opera have new customers. Gregorian chants are sold at gas station, Alessi design at shopping malls. More and more art galleries sell more

and more to ordinary people. There are details and things to discuss under this broad picture, but it is not at all a situation of cultural decline and social dissolution, the general picture is more culture of many kinds. The critique regarding shopping is well known: a hedonistic and selfish activity. Empirical analysis (Miller 2000) show that the process of shopping is serious routine work and usually deeply rooted in altruism, the inner dialog during shopping activities is mostly about “love” and family needs; husband, girlfriend, children, grandchildren, health, safety and economics are common topics, (but allowing for small personal “treats”.)

If we, on a more practical level, try to find the traces of values inside consumer behaviour it is not difficult to find rather nice values. Safety, health, anxiety for environment, family values and culture lies obviously among the motivation for the patterns of consumption that are observed (Blindheim et al 2002) underlining that purchase is value-driven (Etzioni 1986) and that the values involved may be socially acceptable.

A modern value like protecting the environment is easily seen in how a lot of product have to make environmental promises and how the anxiety of modern consumers on behalf of nature makes it difficult to sell read meat after the Mad Cow Disease or furniture from certain trees when rainforests are threatened. Ecological products are preferred if the price difference can be handled. A fresh Norwegian study (Madland 2002) finds that consciousness among consumers are relatively high, but they feel problems with reliable information and the motivation to take high prices differences or complicated acessability are modest

Ordinary consumers are at least not consistently the irresponsible party, always pushing in the opposite direction of social responsibility. Business elites, political parties, trade unions or consumers, it can not, to put it mildly, be concluded that the latter is the irresponsible party among them. The organized consumer movements are weak, but characterized by rather high social responsibility and they are quite fast to care about new items and challenges. It seems, however, that established elites and current political culture in most European countries are rather negative and have great distrust in the value content and political possibilities inside the consumer role.

We will discuss two cases regarding Norwegian political culture and public sector.

Consumers in political culture. The Norwegian Paradox

Norway is a puzzling and instructive example in our context. On the one hand all the tendencies discussed above are easily found; individualism, the urge to be authentic, new values, buying power and buying consciousness , changing

political culture and a starting consumer activism on most of the areas mentioned above. There are even observers (Inglehart 1998) that argues that some of the fundamental changes in values should be stronger in countries like Norway, combining high education, protestantism , welfare state and strong democracy with a solid economy

But on the institutional level there are surprisingly few traces of these changes (with the exception of some legal changes on rights and complaint arrangements). There is not any longer a Ministry with “consumer” in its name, there are no consumer-oriented political parties. The Consumer Council is state owned and not much visible in political discussions. Consumer institutions was reorganized last year according to principles of “New Public Management”, probably it will be more formally independent from government and cheaper to run, but the reorganization was in no visible way linked to consumer politics. In the last parliamentary election no party mentioned consumer politics in their election-program

There are many reasons for this situation. The protestant-christian state religion underlines duties and production, the socialist tradition also sees consumption as low in priority and the idea of expert rule and formal planning will not see values or genuine actors in the consumer area. Norway is high in all these three aspects. The patterns of political parties was formed 1880-1925 and are (except for a protestant-christian party) almost totally formed by production-side interests of workers, owners and primary-sector producers. The other strong political mechanism in Norway, the corporate-pluralist system is even more dominated by production-side interests.

A closer analysis of all programs for all political parties in the whole period 1880-2003 give the following impression (Jensen 2001, 2004)¹

- Consumer matters are seldom mentioned, are not among the important topics for any political party, not treated systematically.
- From 1911-1930 mentioned by socialists under ”cooperatives”
- Some parties have a chapter on consumer matters after 1970. The Social Democrats have the most detailed and serious chapters
- Most times consumers are mentioned it is as ”coopted interests”, they are used in argumentation for other purposes and in other chapters
- Some conservative parties/governments give individual rights an emphasis that also seems important for consumers
- Consumer rights were an issue in the conservative government 1982-85
- From late 1980’s the right wing uses consumers as arguments for market freedom

¹ Both based on a CD-ROM service from NSD, Bergen

- The modern left wing often sees consumers and consumerism as a danger to society.

The main picture is still that consumer matters are not taken into politics in a systematic and serious way and that this has become a serious paradox during the 1990s. Consumers' organizations seem even weaker and are still state owned. The political culture, including the intellectuals, underlines this paradox. The word "consumer" is mostly used as negative, meaning cultural decline and democratic problems. The perspective of the consumer role as an important form of citizen role is almost totally lacking.

Consumers' experience with public bureaucracy

During the long period 1979-1992 we² arranged a large number of surveys that with different methods were aimed at registering consumers' experiences with public service. The total number was around 200 and the health sector were most often the target, but also taxation, building regulation, social service and (for comparison) some private service providers. Most projects were funded directly by a conservative government in the 1982-85 period (see above). Main results :

- Consumers trust their service providers and are in general pleased
- Opening hours do not fit consumer's daily life
- Information are viewed as incomplete or not given
- Information and culture regarding client's rights were especially problematic, especially in the welfare sectors

One basic conclusion was that the consumers were not respected or viewed as actors, the most problematic results was regarding information and rights, items that seem important if the client is viewed as an actor. This pattern was most extreme in the health services where patients were most pleased with the staff in general, but had most dissatisfaction with items that related to their actor status.

Some reforms are implemented and it is at least not anymore provocative to ask consumers about experiences, which was the situation in the early 1980's. The reforms make it possible to file a complaint in more cases and some possibility of choice is introduced. Many of the reforms are part of a broader reform movement "New Public Management" that introduces some consumer choice, as part of an attempt to make the system more efficient.

² "We" means a long series of projects with different purposes and different staffs, but usually run by me as project leader.

Citizenship through consumer roles

Consumer citizenship can be seen as one important step in a long process starting in Italian renaissance where the individual (and gradually all individuals !) are entitled to, and feel entitled to, being actors that are in command own their own life and being part of a complex process that form society.

The present situation (at least in Norway) seems to be paternalistic towards consumers. Old political forms (parties and formal committees) does not include consumers. Political culture and political elites seem negative and suspicious. Existing political discourse do not include the consumer role as an actor. This situation also include almost no independent organizations for consumers and little representation. But outside the formal institutions the picture is quite different, indicating an important and rather responsible consumer role. In the newly formed political systems (like EU) this is at least partly indicated also in the formal systems.

One of the key questions now seems to be how consumers will organize in the future. Would it be comparable to the workers' movement of the 1900's? Would it be linked to ideologies? Would it be an arena of a complex web of small actions? How would it link to other (and older) facets of the citizen role? The workers' organization process indicates the huge powers that may follow formation of ideology, collective organization and suitable action forms. The last word will be from a textbook on new fundamentals for politics:

“The new social movements, especially ecological movements, has already worked out a a conception of environmentally conscious consumption to which socially and politically conscious consumption has been added. What may have begun as a drive towards consumer sovereignty in advanced capitalism can also move in the direction of consumer citizenship in which individuals constitute consumption as an active political, social and ecological practice.” (Isin & Wood, 1999 p 158)

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Consumer protection in Europe

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"Man is what he eats" (Feuerbach) Consumers are what they buy. Our projects aims to focus on a more conscious consumer, who cares increasingly more about the environment, who is more respectful towards other peoples' rights and who is more aware of his own rights as well.

Introduction

In order to identify the first references to the consumer, it is necessary to look at the **Treaty of Rome of 1957**, the deed establishing the European Economic Community; in paragraph number 2, within the essential aims of the Community. There one finds a declaration about the goal of improving life and employment conditions of citizens. It is also specified that EEC has to promote harmonious development of economic activities, a continuous and balanced expansion, better stability and faster improvement of our standard of living. A reference to the consumer can be discovered also in paragraphs 85 and 86 of the treaty, which deal with the discipline of competition; "The limitation of production, outlets or technical development which could cause damage to consumers" is set as an example of reactions expected to unlawful practices.

In 1973 the Advisory Assembly of the European Council passed the **resolution n. 543 of 1973**, which presents the definitive text of the **European Consumers Protection Charta**. In the Charta for the first time the definition of the consumer is given. The consumer is considered to be "each person, physical or moral, to whom are sold goods or are provided services for private use".

In the Charta the consumer rights were enumerated for the first time:

1. the right of consumer protection and assistance. (ensuring the consumer against economical and material damage caused by goods and guaranteeing easy access to justice, in order that recognized rights become real)
2. the right of compensation for damages that affect the consumer (because of the circulation of defective products or on account of the diffusion of deceitful messages)
3. the right to information and education;
4. the right of representation.

Afterwards, through the **resolution of the Council of Ministers on 14th of April 1975** (OGCE, C 92/1, 1975) the EEC defined a preliminary programme for a consumer's protection policy, identifying lines of action and assembling consumers rights in five major categories:

1. The right to health and safety protection;
2. The right to protection of economical interests;
3. The right to compensation for damages;
4. The right to information and education;
1. The right to representation.

The problem was that the resolution lacked political-institutional recognition. Therefore it was necessary with an intervention of institutional Treaties in order to legitimize activities and programmes.

In the Treaty of Rome there was no mention of consumers. The Recording of the **Single European Act**, through which integrated and modified the Treaty of Rome, especially paragraph 100A, foresees that the Commission in its proposals on matters of health, safety, environment and consumer protection, will adopt "a high level of protection".

Afterwards, **The Treaty of Maastricht**, signed the 07.02.1992, foresaw a proper article dedicated to consumer protection. By title XI, paragraph 129A the Commission was attributed specific competences. It is written that the European Union "contributes to achieve an elevated level of consumer protection through measures adopted in accordance to paragraph 100A and promotes specific activities of support and integration of the policies of the member States, in order to protect the health and the economical interests of consumers and to ensure them an adequate information".

If the Treaty of Maastricht recognized consumers protection on a higher level, the **Treaty of Amsterdam** (02.10.1997) developed this aim further and moved forward in order to adopt measures in the favour of consumers. The article 153 of the Treaty of Amsterdam did in some ways rewrite paragraph 129A of the Treaty of Maastricht by affirming that "for the promotion of consumers interests and in order to ensure them a higher level of protection, the Community contributes to the protection of the consumer's health, safety and economic interests and to the promotion of their rights to information, education and organization for the safeguarding of their interests ". The Community "contributes and promotes": this is the definitive step of the European Union in favour of consumer protection. In fact, in the Treaty of Amsterdam European Union does not just set rules, but acquires a propulsory role.

Since then, the European Commission has adopted lines of action and sectional normative interventions in order to regulate specific ambitions or even to standardize sets of rules existing in various States of EU. The last triennial action-plan (2002-2006) focuses on three priority lines:

1. a higher common level of consumers protection;
2. an effective application of consumer protecting laws;
3. an adequate involvement of consumers organizations in community politics.

Legislative interventions in favour of consumers: the problem of the variety of national disciplines, the tools used to legislate and the necessity of a single corpus of rules.

In the European market there exist common rules in order to allow citizens and European consumers to circulate freely and to benefit from one single market, particularly after the introduction of the common currency. In matters regarding consumers the EU mostly legislates by means of directives that need a national legislation act in order to acquire validity as law inside each individual State. The choice of the directive-tool allows to adaptation of the law of the individual member States, by giving to each State some margin of action, even if limited, in adopting several approaches.

Paragraphs 100 and 100A of the Treaty of Rome constituted the juridical base of the community directives on matters of consumer protection. Without pretending to be of complete as the legislation, the set is quite extensive. The following should be noted:

- the directive 84/450 in matter of deceitful advertising;
- the directive 85/374 in matter of responsibility of the producer for damage caused by defective products
- the directive 85/577 in matter of consumers protection in contracts dealt out of commercial rooms;
- the directive 87/102, modified by directive 90/88, in matter of credit to consumption
- the directive 87/357 concerning products which , having another appearance as they really are, compromise consumers health and safety;
- the directive 89/359 and 89/396 concerning labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuff products.
- the directive 89/398 concerning foodstuff destined to a particular alimentation;
- the directive 90/314 concerning travel, holidays and “all inclusive” circuits;
- the directive 92/59 about general safety of products;
- the directive 93/13 in matter of unlawful clauses;

- the directive 94/47 in matter of time-sharing,
- the directive 97/7 in matter of contracts on distance;
- the directive 97/55 in matter of comparative advertising;
- the directive 99/34, which modified directive 85/374, extending responsibility of producer to primary agricultural products;
- the directive 99/44 about some aspects of warranties on consumption goods.

On the initiative of DG Sanco, during the next months it will be realized a compendium and a comparative analysis of the Community corpus of laws in matter of consumers protection. I should stress that the tool of the directive will be substituted by the community regulations each time it will be necessary to secure uniformity within the discipline of a specific sector. Such is the case for the foodstuff sector.

Some specific sectors

Foodstuff

During the last years, there have been several crisis in the field of foodstuffs (PVB, dioxin, BSE, etc) which reduced the trust of European consumers in the ability and will of the foodstuff industry and public authorities to warrant the safety of foodstuffs. Therefore the European Commission decided to become involved in foodstuff safety. This became one of its major priorities. The White Book of Foodstuff Safety of 12th January 2000 shows the general frame of a policy which is much more concerned with prevention: it is a modernization of legislation in order to obtain a coherent and transparent system of rules, enforcement of controls “from farm to table”, increase of resources and ability of the scientific consulting system.

Strategic priorities of the White Book are:

- To Create a European alimentary authority.
- As concerns alimentary legislation, to favour a more firm “farm-table” control.
- To establish a principle according to which the producers have the primary responsibility in the field of foodstuff safety; member States must ensure surveillance and control in this sector and the Commission has to verify through inspection the fulfilment of the control and the competence of member States.
- Promote information and dialogue with consumers.
- Ensure an international dimension by taking on an active role inside the international organisations.

Essential elements of the White book are:

- To warrant a high level of consumer health and protection: global supplemented approach, primary responsibility of the producing sector, traceability of food and ingredients, analysis of the risk, use of the precaution principle.
- To collect information and analysis: monitoring and overseeing, controlling by alarm systems, researching and cooperating in a scientific way.
- To create a European alimentary authority.
- To establish a new legal code by which a coherent and transparent law system can be created.
- To favour an accurate overseeing on food for animals.
- To favour health and wellness of animals as essential warranty of quality and consumers safety.
- To favour a coordinated and global approach for what concern the hygiene of foodstuffs.
- To favour a communitary harmony in establishing maximal limits of polluting and residual substances (pesticides, veterinary medicinal, etc....) and monitoring them.
- To regulate the “new food”.
- To approve an up to date legislation on additives, spices, compresses and therapeutical irradiations.
- To approve a law to take quick safeguarding measures in order to face up real administrative crisis.
- To make proceeding-start easier in order to ensure a major efficiency, transparency and rapidity.
- To succeed in satisfying several requests for control.
- To improve the diffusion of risk-communication through an interactive dialogue with all stakeholders.
- To modify directives about labelling, making them more informative for consumers.
- To increase the consideration of nutritional value of food and develop directives concerning dietetic food and alimentary interacting.

These initiatives must be integrated on an international level in order to respect a key principle: imported foodstuffs and food for animals must safeguard health demands, established in equal way in respect to what the Community established for internal products.

Energy

The liberalization of public services is very important for consumers as the opening of the market provokes a competition of several operators that could bring benefits to final consumer in terms of lower rates with the warranty of

maintaining high standards of quality for the supplied services. The furnished electrical energy has become a compulsory service in every day life and because it is a universal service, the green book COM 2000-79 defines the aim of liberalization of this sector, fixing as goal the competition between several operators in order to allow to the consumer the choice between competitive and accessible prices. The contracts for the concession of the supply of the universal service should contain strict sanctions in case of violation of the standards for access, safety and continuity of the service of general interest.

It is necessary that from this liberalization also consumers could benefit. This means that those who use energy for family consumption and not only big industries should be able to choose between different operators as is the case for example for telephony. The advantage for consumers must be evident in the costs and the transparency of the invoicing. We must also evolve towards real competition and not only contribute to the shift from a monopoly to an oligopoly. Assuring quality and competition of price will move us towards a liberalization process which must be supported and accelerated. There must be particular attention to the weakest consumers (old and ill people, handicapped person). Access to public services is essential for consumers also in terms of human dignity because often it ensures them a dignified survival.

It is clear that all liberalization proceedings must warrant a universal service. By universal service we mean a whole set of measures directed to warranting the access to some basic services according to the following conditions:

- 1) Access in terms of prices and geographic location.
- 2) Quality and transparency of information about the service.
- 3) Continuity of the service.
- 4) Contractual transparency.
- 5) Safety of the service.

It is compulsory that the European legislation ensures the respect of application of the universal service standard from each operator.

This liberalization results in three areas of general-interest activities; these correspond to a different juridical regime:

- **Services of public utility** (of common law countries), which are the most comprehensive and include all activities such as trains, electric energy etc.; these activities are ensured by public or private subjects in competition;
- **Public Services** (far away from French “service publique” for extension and juridical regime) are a subset of services of public utility bound to the general interest which is defined by community.

- **Universal services** are an eventual subset of public services and correspond to a minimum of good quality services, which must be offered everywhere and to all subjects at accessible prices. The universal service is directed by the same rules of continuity, equality of treatment and adapting to needs, but must be offered also in areas and to subjects which, in current rates, do not allow coverage costs. Universal aims are ensured by a reserved or liberalized administration, which is also responsible to do so.

In connection with the project *The Consumer Citizenship Network* it will be useful to also study the deregulation processes of the energy-market that will take place, or is taking place, in different European Countries and which may point out the correct application of the law-set established by the European directives drawing particular attention to the duty of public services imposed on enterprises in favour of socially or economically disadvantaged citizens.

Transport services

The White Book 2001 produced by the European Commission introduced an activity plan in order to improve the quality and efficaciousness of European transports, looking also out for resources in order to separate the gradual increase of mobility demand from economical growth, and this way reducing pressure on environment and congestion. The proposed measures, about sixty, are intended to development transport politics so as they become a service for European citizens.

Here are a synthesis of the principal steps of intervention:

1. Protection of passengers (ex. indemnity for flight overbooking).
2. Increase of street safety
3. Sustainable mobility (clean fuel, sensible zones).
4. The institution of a harmonized duty on fuel for professional use for street-transport.
5. Warranty of transport quality.
6. Realization of big infrastructures.
7. Control of globalization by increase of the role of EU in international organisations.

Financial administration

The issue of financial administration, as it concerns consumers, acquires more and more importance in the framework of Internal Market Policies and Consumers protection policies. In particular, it is necessary to point out that there is still a lot of work to be done to set up efficient tools to assure consumers rights connected to clear information, fair loans, warranty-efficiency, and the

establishment of authority that will take charge of controlling the financial and bank-system, to safeguard consumers.

During the CCN project the following topics will be analysed in details:

- Consumer Credit.
- Home Loans.
- Payment systems.
- Distance marketing of financial services.
- Pensions, insurance and investments.
- The Euro and the price increase after Euro.
- The Bank-system.
- Safeguard tools for the consumer.
- Tools for financial conflict resolution.

Meanwhile it is important to add that in 1999, the “**Dow Jones Sustainability Index (Djsi)**”, was established, the first global share index of Sustainability, into Financial Markets. In 2003 the Italian firms became more sustainable, more ethical and respectful of the environment: they reduced water and energy consumption, gas emissions and garbage production; the score of the environmental performance has been 23 on 100, compared to 18 of the last year (the European average is 35). But also the Corporate governance of the Italian firms grew, with a score of 58 on 61 of the European average and in 2003 grew to 15-20% the number of firms that have department concerned with sustainability. The last December, thanks to Luiss University, the Permanent Forum, Sam (Swiss Society of financial analysis) and the Socially Responsible Italy (marketing society), born the OSIF, the first Italian Observatory on the Sustainability of the Firm and Finance that works jointly with the Djsi. The next April, for the first time, some firms are going to sit down together with the Syndicates, Environmental associations, Consumers associations and Volunteers associations to discuss how to render the Italian industry more concerned with sustainability and environment.

The first place of the Djsi 2003-2004 sustainability list, sector of consumers electronic, is occupied by the firm “Philips Electronic”, that has reduced of the 8 % the gas emissions, of the 9 % the water consumption, of the 4 % the energy consumption and of the 36 % the refuses bad for the environment.

Housing

The right to have a home is important in European policies: about 70 million people have bad accommodations, cohabitate or live in unhealthy lodgings; over 3 million people are homeless (migrants, women, old and young people). The Community laws corpus increasing emphasizes housing-policy (duty, public competition, quality of the product, services of general interest, etc.),

considering the house as a good, with a controversial impact on the model of social cohesion that the European Union tends to assert. Respecting the EU accordance criteria, without appropriate community precautions, could lead to negative effects on national and local social policies (privatization of the social sector, liberalization of rent), in particular on housing-policies which are in precarious conditions.

The European Parliament pointed out several times the necessity to conceive laws and policies at the European level as regards the right to have a house:

1. (June 1987) "... that the right to have a home has to be warranted by legislative texts, that the member States recognize it as a fundamental right"¹.
2. (May 1996): "invites EU to include immediately the right to have a home in all Treaties and Chartas that regulate the activities and aims of EU"².
3. (May 1997) "invites EU to include the right to have a home in Treaties and in the IGC (Inter-Governmental Conference)"³.

The access to a home is one of the eight priority aims of the action plan of EU against poverty. However, the draft for the future European Constitution provides only the "right to living assistance" which, if recognized, would mean a step backwards if compared with the right to have a home already recognized by the International Convention on Economical, Social and Cultural Rights and by the legislation of several European countries.

Will the enlargement to 25 weaken the Community Laws corpus?

The strategy adopted by the EU and the aims of the enlargement will not weaken the whole of Europe. This is not a statement, but a specific duty for all involved actors. European politics is already aware of the presence of other States that will be members very soon. Electrical energy policies and infrastructure policies are a clear example of this awareness. The majority of the countries that from May 2004 will enter the new enlarged European Union have already adopted Community legislation on consumer's protection. A lot of work must be still done to harmonize the entry of the new States. In Latvia, as in European Countries, there has already been established a corpus of laws concerning toys safety, though to be sure only safe toys will reach the market, a specific control system on imports must be efficiently established. Other examples are of laws already acquired by Latvia concern labelling of foodstuff and consumers contract for consumption credit; for both examples the corpus of laws to which they refer is the European set of laws. If we look at the panorama of the new

¹ www.unioneinquilini.it

² www.unioneinquilini.it

³ www.unioneinquilini.it

entry European Commissioners, the applicant of the Czech Republic, Milos Kuzvart, founded with other people a society for sustainable life; moreover, the applicant of Latvia, Sandra Kalniete, was ambassadress to UNO from 1993 to 1997 and represented her country at UNESCO.

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Consequences of consumer citizen's rights for the competitiveness of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises

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Transition to market economy brought fierce competition to the socialist type monopolized markets. The liberalization of the formerly state controlled imports made it even more intense. Within a few years a whole spectrum of possible actors appeared on the Hungarian markets from self-employed entrepreneurs to multinational companies, from small retail shops to hypermarkets. Parallel with this process there is also a significant change in the minds of the consumer citizens and entrepreneurs. On the basis of our research activity we would like to analyse the impact of the new Law for the Protection of Consumers on the consumer citizen's behaviour and at the same time on the competitiveness of SME's.

Perhaps it is unusual to speak about the competitiveness of SME's in the context of consumer citizen's rights, but according to the results of our research it has relevance. The SME's have to keep up with the multinational companies by fulfilling the same conditions, but this puts an enormous burden on their shoulders. More than 70% of the owners of SME's who we asked about aspects of their competitiveness, complained about the unbearable difficulties the necessity of meeting the requirements of the Law of the Protection of Consumers forces on them. Taking the accession to the EU into consideration they are even more pessimistic. They (mainly food producers) go even so far as to say that the rules are not for the protection of the consumers, but just against the small companies.

Evaluation of Consumer Protection in Hungary

Consumer protection regulations form an independent system in conformity with continuously changing demands. The regulations deal with the basic obligations of the manufacturers and distributors of goods and services, rights of the consumers, they contain the official procedures and the possibilities for the solution of disputes. In Hungary the most important legal source of regulation is Act on Consumer Protection (Act CLV.1997). Consumers' interests are also protected by the rules on Competition Law, which involves a ban of unfair competition. Even the Criminal Code protects the interests of customers by stipulating warnings for actors in business life. As far as the official side of consumer protection is concerned, the highest authority in this field is Chief

Consumer Supervision. They provide professional guidance and control over regional supervision offices. As a further step in the development of Hungarian institutional system of consumer protection, chambers of commerce arbitration boards were established from January 1999 as an alternative for the settlement of disputes.

Harmonisation of Consumer Protection Law before accession to the EU

Consumer protection has always been given outstanding emphasis in the European Community. After the accession of the new member states a high level of protection has to be provided for nearly half billion EU citizens. Without consumer protection the desired single market is unthinkable. The free movement of goods and services needs common legislation, the application of which is an important component of competition. Companies complying with the consumer protection requirements may strengthen their positions on their markets, but other group of firms who are not capable to keep up with these rules may even entirely loose their markets. ITDH, the International Trade Development Agency of Hungary, defined the following actions to be taken to make enterprises competitive even in terms of consumer protection:

- knowledge of consumer protection legislation and laws
- compliance with consumer protection legislation
- production and distribution of safe goods and services
- establishment of appropriate relations with the authorities and the civil associations providing representation for consumers
- strengthened consumer protection approach within the business
- participation in training and further training on consumer protection.

As far as the accession negotiations are concerned, consumer protection got a separate chapter. Hungary adopted and harmonised most of EU's consumer protection rules. It was mainly done on the basis of the principle of minimum harmonisation, which allows countries to apply stricter regulations in their own legislation. In Hungary first the Act on Product Liability was announced in 1993. It was followed by the Act on the Prohibition of Unfair Market Conduct and the Restriction of Competition in 1996 and the Act on Business Advertising Activities in 1997. In the framework of the Act CLV of 1997 on Consumer Protection all important consumer protection issues were adopted from EU's regulation. After the adoption of the a.m. Act, pieces of legislation have been drafted which represent the adoption of EU directives. As a result of this process the number of adopted rules concerning consumer protection increased to around one hundred.

In achieve Hungary's obligations to harmonise laws, Act IV of 1959 on the Civil Code of the Republic of Hungary as well as Act XXXVI of 2002 on the Amendment of Certain Act in Relation to Consumer Protection for Harmonisation-of-Law Purposes align consumer protection rules to the requirements of the European Union. The latter package comprises five areas, implying changes to the Civil Code and the acts on consumer protection, business advertising and product liability. In the Civil Code, provisions related to warranty, guarantee and delay as well as late charges change. The warranty period increases, and may not be shorter than two years for the better part of the industrial goods, and it is up to the parties to agree on the duration and terms and conditions of the warranty. Following Hungary's accession to the EU, late charges to be payed in transactions between business organizations will be higher, and will be equivalent to the central bank base interest rate as defined by the European Central Bank as valid for the last day before the calendar half-year concerned by the delay plus seven percent. Other changes include that it is the manufacturer who will have to prove that it is not liable for a fault within six months after the sale, that, under the Acts on Product Liability, the value limit will change to EUR 500 in line with EU regulations from HUF 10000. According to a further amendment to the Civil Code, distributors will be bound by conditions announced in a public offering, and the quality and other characteristics of products shall correspond to the characteristics shown on the label of the goods or in advertising. A part of the amendments, such as the value limit for product liability damages, will come into force at the time of Hungary's accession, the warranty rules of the Civil Code are applicable from 1 July 2003, while the provisions concerning reconciliation bodies in consumer protection are applicable as of 1 January 2003.

A new chapter of the government Decree No. 79/1998.(IV.29.) on the safety of goods and services and the related market supervision procedure on market deals with supervision control of customs goods. According to this, if goods arriving from abroad do not have documents and permits meeting the Hungarian product safety requirements or the required conformity marking is missing from them, the customs authority shall notify the market supervision authority without delay, which in turn shall respond to the inquiry within three days or, in urgent cases, within 24 hours of accepting the declaration ont he goods. Starting from 1 January 2003, if customs goods with missing documents do not meet the Hungarian requirements, the market supervision authority will prohibit their marketing in Hungary. The coming into force of this provision allowed for setting up a market supervision system on the borders that correspond to EU rules.

Some modifications have been made to the Act on Consumer Protection in the framework of Act LXIV of 2002 on the Amendment of Certain Acts Concerning

the Money and Capital Markets affecting the concept of financial services and pension fund services and granting an authorization to start a lawsuit in certain defined cases against persons whose activities in violation of the law concern a broad group of consumers or causes detriment of significant size. In line with the legal harmonisation programme adopted by the Hungarian government additional elements of consumer protection laws will also be harmonised by the date of Hungary's accession to the Union. The government's second medium-term consumer protection policy will be drafted on the basis of the EU's current, 5th consumer protection strategy and action plan, and there will be a specific action programme related to the consumer protection policy concerning the years 2003-2006 included the development of the institutions for consumer protection market supervision.

Research on consumer protection and its influence on the competitiveness of SMEs

In our research, we wanted to get a picture of the awareness of the Hungarian small and medium sized entrepreneurs of the consumer protection legislation and their opinion on how the Hungarian Law on consumer protection influences their competitiveness.

Out of the 296 questioned entrepreneur (owner or manager of an enterprise) 107 gave us answers by filling in the questionnaire we made or answered by phone. We classified the enterprises by the number of their employees according to international standards, and we did not take into consideration the annual revenue or other possible figures.

In our sample the small and medium sized enterprises were overrepresented. In Hungary out of the whole mass of enterprises 95,7 % is micro, 3,6 % is small and the rest 0,7 % is medium sized, while the distribution out of the answering enterprises 89,1 %, 6,3 % and 4,6 %.

In our first question we inquired for how long are they exist in the entrepreneurial sector. The majority exists for more than one year but less than five years. The absolute beginners' ratio is 10,7 %, while those who succeeded in remaining on the markets for more than five years is 21,7 %. As a second question we wanted to know from what kind of settlements are they from. 39,7 % came from Budapest, 21,1 % from bigger cities, 13,4 % from smaller cities and the rest is from villages. 78,1 % does not have direct connection with multinational companies, while others directly deliver their goods or provide their services to multinationals. 27,8 % of them is retailer, 22,2 % works in the production sector, all others offer some kind of services.

Our first substantial question was concerning consumer protection legislation aim the entrepreneurs knowledge of consumers protection history. „ For how long has consumer protection existed in Hungary?“ Out of the possible three answers 5,1 % chose that it has been existing for the Socialist Era. Other 7,2 % knew exactly the date of Consumer Protection Act. All others dated the existance of the consumer protection after 1990.

In our next question we wanted to know if the entrepreneurs know what acts or other rulings regulate the consumer protection. 13,5 % gave more or less precise answer, 33,6 % has some acceptable knowledge , others have heard about the Act.

We also asked from what sources their knowledge comes from. 17,2 % stated that he reads the Official Journal, most of the others have read about it in some newspaper, for some entrepreneurs the basic source of information is some other colleague.

The fourth question is the centre of our interest. „ Does the keeping of the rules of the consumer protection act and other rulings cause difficulties for you? Less then ten percent stated that it does not cause problems for his enterprise. Out of those who said yes, more then 70 % felt that the keeping of the rules make them serious difficulties.

For the question „In what form do these problems occur?“ more then eighty percent said that the administrative procedures they have to go through cause them at the same time financial difficulties. Guaranteeing the required quality is not easy itself, but the auditing system is very complicated and costly. Most of the entrepreneurs emphasized that equal treatment with the multinational companies is not fair. They said „We are unable to concentrate all the time on the written requirements, we have to work. We cannot employ a whole staff the task of which is to work out and maintain a system for meeting the changing requirements. It would cost us more then we earn.“ Mainly micro entrepreneurs, the most of which are self employed, are not in the position to be well informed. For the question „ Do you need consultancy services?“ most of them did not answer or made a comment which should not be cited.

Consequencely, it can be stated that for small-and medium sized enterprises the task of meeting all the requirements concerning rules of consumer protection is a heavy burden. Some of the enterprises are simply unable to stay up-to-date, for others it causes unproportionate financial difficulties. A kind of solution for most of them could be if they could receive consultancy services at low prices or subsidised by the state.

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Social insurance as an emerging area of consumption in post-communist countries: Experience from Estonian welfare reforms.

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Introduction

The majority of recent social welfare reforms in EU countries are concerned with cost-containment and targeting of programs. At the same time public pressure remains for universal coverage and social rights as a citizen. In these circumstances policy-makers have to make difficult choices between cuts in anti-poverty programs and enhancement of contribution-based social security schemes. Citizens as consumers of policy outcomes are increasingly pushed toward personal choices in social insurance markets where private sector providers have become common partners to the traditional welfare state.

Post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, regardless of their different political histories, face basically the same problems. In these countries the dilemma of universal or contribution - based coverage in social welfare has become more pronounced. CEE countries inherited from their socialist past a leftist tradition in social policy. Thus public expectations toward comprehensiveness and guaranteed access to social security are still strong. At the same time many post-communist governments designed and implemented welfare reforms according to the market oriented New Right ideology. This approach powerfully advocates for individual welfare efforts, personal savings and private insurance contracts. Citizens in post-communist countries are not used to taking personal actions in welfare management or to make choices in the emerging social insurance markets. These issues are explicitly related to the socio-economical status of households. Those with better education and income level are also more empowered in social welfare consumption.

Previous research

The balance between solidarity, equity and efficiency is one of the classical issues in the welfare state theory. Prominent scholars have studied the nexus between labour market and work incentives, de-commodification capacity of different welfare regimes and impact of social insurance contributions on social solidarity (N.Barr, G.Esping-Andersen, R.Goodin, P.Pierson). G.Esping-Andersen argues that social insurance can be efficiently married with the

commodity logic of liberalism. Insurance pegs benefits to employment, work performance and contributions and thus strengthens work incentives and productivity (Esping-Andersen, 1999). T.Marshall and R.Goodin stress that market losers can be negatively privileged by the welfare state if it relies too much on personal contribution and contribution-defined formulas of benefits (R.Goodin et al. 1999).

Nevertheless, recent welfare reforms across Europe all advocate greater responsibility on the part of citizens in ensuring their own well-being. This policy logic has shifted the research toward citizens' knowledge and empowerment as necessary premises to tackle increased responsibilities. Andersen and Tobiasen found a positive correlation between political consumerism and political trust and suggest putting consumer behaviour into broader context of political participation (Andersen, Tobiasen, 2004). Analyses made on the large international scale (Rider and Makela, 2003) or with special focus on post-communist countries (Fultz and Ruck 2001, Kirch, 2000) conclude that citizens lack knowledge to make informed decisions in health services or pension insurance. Sociological surveys carried out in Estonia demonstrate high criticism toward equal access to health care and skepticism about private pension insurance (ES Turu-uurinate AS 2000, EMOR 2001, Ariko Marketing 2002). These data show evidently that welfare area is becoming a marketplace where citizens play the role of consumers. What remains unclear from previous research is to what extent variance in consumer behaviour can explain the success of different reform efforts and what will be the impact of increasing consumerism in welfare upon social integration.

Purpose

Analysis of first impacts of post-communist welfare reforms on social cohesion and sustainability gains increasing importance. On the one hand, it is necessary to encourage citizens to take care of their personal well-being and to move away from the paramount welfare paternalism of Soviet period. On the other hand self-reliance and personal contributions tend to cause anti-solidarity attitudes and tensions between different consumer groups. The Estonian experience of health and pension insurance tells that the nexus between public support, participation and solidarity can be manifold varying from strong attitudes toward universal rights to individual risk behaviour.

The aim of this paper is to explore how market-oriented social insurance reforms in Estonia have shaped and reshaped public attitudes toward social security. The following questions will be addressed:

- Does the legal framework of social insurance favor solidarity or individual consumption?

- Are citizens aware about consumer rights and responsibilities in the welfare area? Can we distinguish winners and losers among welfare consumers?
- Why different insurance schemes (pension and health) perform differently in terms of public participation?
- What is the impact of consumers' behaviour on policy development?

Basic characteristics of Estonian welfare system

Building of the new social security system was one of the fundamental components of transition to democracy and market economy. The former comprehensive tax based system was gradually replaced by the insurance-based social welfare, which combined both Bismarckian and neoliberal principles. Health insurance and unemployment insurance were organized as a compulsory contributions of employers to the semi-public insurance funds, whereas pension reform was implemented according to the World Bank three-legged model. The first pillar of pension insurance is financed out of mandatory social insurance contributions and serves for financing benefits of current old age pensioners. The second fully funded pillar combines contributions from employers and employees and it is mandatory for those born after 1983. Thus almost all of today's employees are free to choose whether they join this scheme. Second pillar is administered by private sector, insurance plans are contracted individually and insurer has the right once per year to switch from one pension plan or insurance company to another. Additionally there is also the third pillar – voluntary private pension insurance, which is subject to income tax exemption.

Minor government intervention into funded pension insurance and the principle of individual contracts increase the need for citizens to acquire information from markets to make appropriate choices. Both voluntary and mandatory funded schemes have been functioning less than five years, which is too limited period to conclude whether shortcomings of pension privatization reforms in Poland and Hungary will be repeated in Estonia. Experience of Hungary and Poland, but also UK and Chile shows that private management will be costly due to the reduced economies of scale, compounded by the switch-over and advertising costs in a multiple private management system (Fultz, Ruck, 2001). The question arises, whether these costs will be beard by all citizens via increased government subsidies or by clients of each insurance company depending on its market performance. Awareness about these costs and possible financial losses is almost nonexistent among the public.

Unlike pension insurance the health care provision has remained in the public sector. Insurance contributions are paid entirely by the employer and managed by the Public Sick Fund which signs annual contracts with non-profit hospitals and GP-s. All insured persons, children and old-age people have the right to free

services, but long waiting periods have become a chronic problem for the health care system. The main response to this has been in line with reform efforts of M.Thatcher who tried to promote entrepreneurship in hospitals and permitted patients to opt out of waiting lists by paying for the service. Although voluntary private health insurance is legislated in Estonia, very few make use of it. Private medical services can be found in dental care and quiet modestly in gynaecology.

Despite these varieties in division of tax burden and administration patterns both insurance schemes share important common challenges and problems. The overall social tax burden in Estonia has already reached higher than the average EU level -36,5 % of payroll. Because employers have to carry heavy portion of the tax burden (33,5 %) they became reluctant to create new jobs or to fulfill tax-paying obligations. Strong labor market institutions could enhance solidarity but unfortunately this is not the case of contemporary Estonia. Employers' organizations are still weak, which is amplified by the dominance of micro-enterprises (77 % of enterprises have below 10 workers) and expansion of self-employment (13 % of workforce). In the insurance-based welfare systems like the Estonian, above-mentioned characteristics play important role in securing citizens' access to benefits and services. Those outside the labor market are deprived unless they meet strict qualification criteria for legal status of the unemployed. Inside the labor market the level of social guarantees depends on the employer (whether he pays contributions) but also to a great extent also on employee's ability to stand for his social rights and to make appropriate choices in welfare consumption.

Prevailing support to the pension insurance reform

Are citizens aware about their consumer rights and responsibilities in the welfare area? Can we distinguish winners and losers among welfare consumers? Security in old age and free health services were guaranteed for everyone in the former Soviet period, thus the introduction of personal contributions or necessity to make choices between various welfare providers created a completely new situation. Therefore it is not surprising that partial privatisation of pension insurance did not enjoy broad public support in the beginning of the reforms. An opinion poll carried out in 2000 revealed that 83 % of respondents saw the government as responsible for old age benefits body, 9% supported self-reliance and just 7 % put responsibility on employers (ES Turu-uuringute AS. 2000). 55 % believed that state benefits will be non sufficient for the normal living standard, nevertheless the same share of respondents would not transmit their savings into private pension insurance.

Despite of the strong support toward public pensions, government implemented the market-oriented World Bank model. Like in Hungary and Poland, commercially managed individual saving accounts turned to be very soon by far

more popular than estimated (Fulitz, Ruck, 2001). Within two years since enactment of the second pillar 63 % of Estonian population in age of 15-64 years has signed individual pension contracts, 11% has additionally joined the voluntary insurance (the third pillar).

When the pension reform was still pending, one of the widespread public arguments against funded schemes was lack of personal financial resources to make contributions. Because income level in Estonia is still low (40 % of EU average) but the Gini index high (0.38) one must ask, whether support to the funded pension schemes differs across income groups. Somewhat surprisingly we found that the mean income of those who joined the second pillar does not exceed the national average. Rather belong to the upper income groups clients of voluntary private pension schemes having their mean income about 30 % higher than the national average.

What explains such a success of personal contributions despite public reluctance some years earlier? Three kinds of arguments can be raised here. First, significant income equality has become legitimate amongst people of post-socialist countries (Gijsberts, 2002). Secondly, absence of an active pensioners' lobby that would resist the World Bank model, and growing public trust toward private banking sector has contributed to the successful intervention of financial institutions into pension reform (Toots, 2003). Commercial banks and insurance companies who got the right to administer second pillar contributions organised a powerful advertisement campaign. As a result the number of persons who joined the second pillar was twice as high as expected. Thirdly, the popularity of funded pension schemes relates to the transparency of returns. Programs where those who contribute will also be beneficiaries tend to be more popular (Bonoli, 2000). Personal accounts and the possibility to follow the performance of pension funds made pension insurance more attractive than health insurance where correlation between contribution and medical consumption is not so clear-cut.

Because private enterprises were very much interested in getting new clients the advertisement campaign took a purely commercial shape. The promising sides of insurance were promoted only, whereas possible risks remained unmentioned. Thus insurers lacked the knowledge and skills to make an informed decision when choosing between different companies and saving strategies. In most cases they simply agreed with option provided by the bank teller. As G.Bonoli points out, misadvice of clients turned out to be a considerable problem even in UK pension privatization reform despite of remarkable traditions in insurance behaviour (Bonoli, 2000). It is interesting to note that better government monitoring of private pension companies in Estonia would not increase the share of workers ready to make an insurance contract (ES Turu-uuringute AS, 2000).

In addition to that, a majority of admitted insurers have chosen the high-risk insurance plans. This illustrates clearly how minimal the citizens' awareness is about possible financial risks. Quick adjustment of consumer behaviour to the policy reform options significantly contributed to success of funded pension insurance. But there are negative sides of the reform outcomes also. The government has to tackle difficult problems of emerging deficit in funding current pension payments and to ensure that private insurance options would not be conceived in narrow terms of actuarial fairness ("one gets what one pays for") simply (Giaino, 2001).

Reluctance and criticism toward health care system

The foundations of the current Estonian health system were set already in 1992 but partial reforms are still continuing. Unlike the pension reform, citizens were not given here a chance to play an active role in managing their welfare. The system uses GP-s as gatekeepers; in rural areas options to choose a doctor are almost absent due to the limited number of providers. There is a single insurance system, which pools all good and bad risks. This is not new at international scale and various research provide evidence of cost-efficiency and high solidarity of this kind of arrangements (Giaino, 2001). Estonian Sick Funds suffers regularly from the lack of resources, which causes even postponement of operations and medical services in the end of financial year. One of the reasons for that is the large share of uninsured persons (10% of population) who still have the right to emergency services. Thus many employers do not pay contributions for their employees and the latter are not able to enforce them. 66% of respondents in opinion poll survey found that employers do not care about health conditions of their workers (ARIKO MARKETING, 2002).

Unlike the case of pension insurance, money matters a lot in the public eye in terms of access to the health services. In the abovementioned survey, 86% agreed that health care is less accessible today because it has become partly fee-paying. No significant variance according the level of education or income has been found, which speaks for existing attitudes toward solidarity. It must be noted that dissatisfaction is even increasing when compared with earlier surveys (EMOR, 2001). Once again we see an opposite trend compared to the attitudes toward pension insurance.

Awareness about consumer rights in the health care is modest, in some issues even low. 1/3 complains that they do not have necessary medical information; most of respondents rely on mass media only for getting informed. A clear illustration to the situation is the fact that only 25% of population in age of 15-74 years know that an insured person has the right for free medical care (EMOR 2001). Thus the tightening of eligibility criteria for free access to the health care

is in public stereotypes amplified by the media images where negative coverage about health services dominates.

Conclusions

Two social policy areas – public-private mixed pension insurance and public health insurance, have provided interesting examples of interplay between the public consumerism and policy intentions. Fully funded pension insurance administered by the commercial sector gained fast popularity due to aggressive advertisement campaigns and individually oriented actuarial approach. Public health insurance instead deserves high public criticism and employers reluctance to pay contributions.

What is different in the two cases is the role of citizens. In pension plans they can to a greater extent create their own future (and this belief is strongly promoted by insurance firms). The health care system leaves citizens the role of passive service users. Efficiency and quality of services will not depend on their personal actions unless they pay additional out-of-pocket money which actually means opting out of the public health insurance system.

What is common for both policy cases is lack of balanced, socially oriented information for consumers. The banking sector in pursuing new clients is interested in positive and short-handed information only. The semi-public health sector regards broad awareness rising campaigns as waste of money in a situation of financial scarcity. Both experiences tell us that even if some public services or programmes are outsourced to the non-governmental providers, consumer education in social welfare remains the responsibility of government.

These cases also tell us that citizens as consumers can significantly promote or devote success of policy reforms. Reforms will move faster when citizens have information, choice and voice.

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Food safety: a primary goal of consumer citizens

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Introduction

The entire human life is marked, consciously or subconsciously, by two activities which are of primary importance to man's health and longevity: sleeping and eating. They are rhythmical in nature and essential to man's health and longevity and for the efficient performance of every type of activity in man's life.

Sleeping seems to be one of the human activities which comply with the global solidarity criteria regardless of the stage in the historic development of human civilisation and factors such as geographical and social conditions, age, race, education, ethnic group, etc.

Eating occupies a far more unfavourable position than sleeping with regard to the globalisation criteria. It could even serve as a point of reference for non-compliance with these criteria.

Globally, food science and nutrition have accepted that human consumption per annum should consist of various foods, the total weight (mass) of which should be about 10 times as large as the consumer's mass. It would be beneficial to health to divide these foods into groups as follows: 23% of vegetables, 21% of milk and dairy products, 14% of animal products (dairy products excluded), 11% of fruit, 10% of sugar and sugar products, 9% of cereals and cereal products, and 12% of the remaining foods, which are quite a few in number and type. Undoubtedly, these figures are not constant since the quantities for each food group vary within a wider or narrower range depending on the geographical region, age, eating traditions, religious, ethnic, dietetic and other factors.

A modern criterion for healthy nutrition is the construction of the so-called food pyramid, which is specific for individual geographical regions and nationalities, religious etc. The food pyramid aims to present in broad outline the quantities of each food group that need to be consumed by the average consumer in order to

ensure the reasonable quality of life in the eating aspect. However, this criterion is rather inconsistent with global solidarity for two main reasons: the limited financial resources of a large number of consumers and/or insufficient consumers' knowledge of the rational nutrition criteria, food safety, etc.

Unfortunately, it is estimated that as many as 2 billion people do not have enough to eat and that perhaps about 40 000 die every day from diseases related to inadequate diets, including the lack of sufficient food, macro- and micronutrients.

Biological aspects of food safety

Microbiological aspects of food safety

The contamination of foods by disease-causing microorganisms has been known and studied since around 1880. The incidence of such food-borne illness in USA is much higher than many would expect. Between 1983 and 1987 there were 91 678 confirmed cases. This probably represents only a small portion of the actual cases because of the lack of strict criteria for classifying cases and failure to report cases when only one or two individuals were affected. Approximately 92% of these cases were due to pathogenic bacteria. Industrially processed foods are implicated in only a small fraction of these incidents.

In 1993, hamburgers containing undercooked ground beef were served in a fast-food restaurant which resulted in several deaths. The causative bacterium was a type of *Esherichia coli* bacteria known as 0157:H7 and associated with raw beef. From 1955 till 1985 cases of salmonellosis in USA increased permanently from 4 cases to 100 000 population to about 28, but after 1993 cases reduced to about 17. The same year in Great Britain 27 people were diagnosed with botulism, with one death from consumption of yogurt containing hazelnut preserve. Fish has been implicated in number of botulism cases.

Acute illness, usually gastrointestinal, is mainly caused by toxins produced by *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Clostridium botulinum*, etc. Food containing these toxins may not appear spoiled.

Mycotoxins are produced from some types of moulds. Aflatoxin B₁ produced from the mould *Aspergillus flavus* is a liver carcinogen. Eating rye or oats infected by a mould affects the central nervous system as well as the peripheral vascular system.

Some virus carriers (hepatitis A, Norwalk agent and Rotavirus) are shelf fish and shelf fish salads, raw fruits and vegetables, raw milk are some of the.

For most food-borne diseases, a small proportion of the cases comes to the notice of health services. It is believed that in industrial countries less than 10% of cases are reported and in developing countries the percentage is less than 1% of the total cases. For industrialized countries the reported cases are about 350 times less than real ones for certain diseases. Annually some 1 500 million episodes of diarrhea occur in children under 5 years of age and of them over 3 million die as a result. About 70% of diarrhea episodes may be food-borne and the others are mainly from contaminated water. Various pathogens have been identified as a cause of this disease but *E. coli* causes up to 25% for infants and children.

In recent years the annual incidents of food-borne disease range from 10% to 30% of the population, including in industrialized countries. Infections from *E. coli* 0157:H7 have been reported in Australia, Canada, Japan, USA and many European countries.

In 1996 in Japan, 6 309 school children and 92 school staff members were affected from *E. coli* 0157:H7. The outbreak resulted in two deaths. In Scotland for three months (1996/1997) 400 people were affected and 20 elderly people died.

Hepatitis A is a common food-borne disease all over the world and some 10-50 persons per 100 000 are affected annually. An epidemic of shelf fish borne hepatitis A in China in 1988 affected some 292 000 persons with 32 fatalities. Many cases of hepatitis A are known to be restaurant-estimated.

Apart from the acute effects, food-borne diseases may cause serious and chronic health problems. Some food-borne infections may lead to chronic conditions such as joint disease, immune system disorders, cardiovascular disease, renal system disorders and possibly even cancer.

The infective dose for *Salmonella* is 50-60 cells per 1 g in contaminated chocolate but less than 10 cells per 1 g in Cheddar cheese. For most pathogens higher numbers are required to cause illness. In the case of toxicogenic bacteria, at least 10^5 number cells per 1 g or 1 ml can produce significant toxins in food to cause illness.

Industrially produced food causes a very small portion of food-borne diseases.

Microbiological aspects of food safety

A large number of pathogenic organisms such as protozoa, viruses and helminth worm etc., may gain access to foods and enter the body of humans and animals to cause a well-defined disease. Some of them are as follows:

Cestodes are flatworm, tapform parasites which enter the organism with underprocessed meat and fish. They can be destroyed by cooking at over 60⁰C or storing for 10-15 days at -15⁰C.

Nematodes cause trichinosis in man. These parasites can be killed of meat by treatment at over 77⁰C or after 30 days at -15⁰C, or 20 days at -23⁰C, or 12 days at -29⁰C, but after 56 days at -6,7⁰C.

Trematodes are a large number of parasites, which cause disease in man. Their larvae are in fish and can be destroyed for 15 min at 50⁰C.

Protozoa are the cause of the disease known as toxoplasmosis, which is located in the brain and different tissues, including the skeletal muscles.

Infections due to helminths are a worldwide public health problem which mainly affects the developing countries. Askaroids are estimated to affect some 1000 million people. Trematodits such as *Clonorchis spp.*, *Fasciola spp.*, *Opisthorchis spp.* etc., infect some 40 million particularly in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Chemical aspects of food safety

Natural toxicants, antinutrients and allergents

Natural toxicants in foods may have adverse or toxic effects if the food is consumed in larger quantities but the amounts normally present in foods are usually harmless. Such are the cases when: potatoes become green which indicates that the toxic alkaloids solanins are synthesized; neurotoxic poisoning; honey produced from bees feeding on rhododendron etc. Normal potatoes contain about 7 mg of solanin in 100 g. Potato poisoning is very rare but there is information that 78 boys were affected, 17 of whom were admitted to the hospital due to fever and circulatory collapse and three of them showed symptoms of neurological disturbance and hallucination. Some of the potatoes were found to contain 33 mg solanin per 100 g.

There are consumers who are abnormally sensitive to wheat gluten (celiac disease), broad beans (favism disease) or are allergic to a particular food, e. g. cheese reaction.

Several sea water fish from the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea have been reported to cause food poisoning, producing acute neuromuscular disorder with weakness and sensory changes.

A large number of fish species are poisonous, some always whereas others at certain periods of the year.

Some compounds naturally present in food can act as antinutritional factors by preventing the absorption of vitamins or by destroying them in the gut. Pulses contain toxicants such as cyanogens, hemagglutinins, saponins, favism agents etc. Cereals and potatoes may contain protease inhibitors which can reduce protein digestion. There are such inhibitors in soya bean. By heating soya bean at 100°C and a higher water content, these inhibitors will be destroyed. Spinach and asparagus contain saponins. Most foods contain proteins that may act as allergens in sensitive individuals. The oxalic acid content of rhubarb, spinach and beet may cause poisoning in some individuals.

An “allergy” to foods or food additives or beverages may cause a wide range of distressing physical and psychological problems and chronic disabling diseases. A detailed account of allergic phenomena classified about 400 diseases associated with foods.

Cow’s milk protein intolerance causes intestinal damage with malabsorption. This can also occur with soya, chicken, rice, fish and egg intolerance. Lactose is milk sugar. In the absence of the specific enzyme, the consumption of milk, in some groups of people, may produce diarrhea and abnormal pain.

Food additives and chemicals formed during food processing

Mutagens and carcinogens are produced during grilling, roasting or frying meat, fish, potatoes and other foods. The intentional additives used in food processing are considered safe by the food authorities. The standards of safety are rather strict, for pure synthetic chemicals used in foods, even more strict than for some substances which present naturally in foods.

Residues of agricultural and veterinary chemicals and drugs

Several chemicals such as fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides, fungicides and bactericides, and also growth hormones are used during the production of plant crops to increase the yields and to extend the postharvest life of many products but significant quantities of their residues may be found in the food products. This is also valid for the drugs and hormones used in veterinary practice.

Pollutants from food packaging materials

Some problems arise from plastic food packaging materials which contain added chemicals, soluble in water or oils and fats.

Industrial problems

Industrial accidents are common in many technological societies. For example, a fire-retardant chemical was once delivered to the feed mill instead of a mineral nutrient preparation, magnesium oxide. Over 30 000 cattle, 1 500 000 chickens, 4 600 000 eggs, 400 hogs and thousands of pounds of cheese and also a lot of ducks and pheasants were contaminated. The “cooking oil” incident caused the deaths of 259 people and made over 20 000 seriously ill. An enterprising firm had incorporated denatured rapeseed oil intended for industrial use and reprocessed it for human use in order to have a higher economic benefit.

The World Health Organization Golden Rules for Safe Food Preparation

These rules are:

1) Choose foods processed safely; 2) Certain foods eaten raw (fruits, vegetables, etc.) need thorough washing; 3) Cook food thoroughly; 4) Eat cooked food immediately; 5) Store cooked foods carefully; 6) Reheat cooked foods thoroughly; 7) Avoid contact between raw and cooked foods; 8) Wash hands repeatedly; 9) Keep all kitchen surfaces meticulously clean; 10) Protect foods from insects, rodents; 11) Use pure water.

Why consumers have lost confidence in the food industry?

The consumers' level of coning food producers is too low because of two factors: practical experience and common sense. The first factor includes the witnessing of contradictory messages from authority persons in the industry, the governments and scientific advisers, including seeing products withdrawn from the market following safety problems; the witnessing of environment pollution by food producers or of exploitation of vulnerable work force; the overzealous marketing of dubious products and even the occasional revelations of corruption and wrongdoing by members of the food industry.

The seller's motives differ from those of the purchasers. The seller requires a good rate of return on the capital and awareness of the competitors on the market. The purchasers may ask for simple, safe and wholesome food but the seller is concerned with minimizing the production costs, maximizing the market share and continually creating consumer demand.

The consumers feel that the aims of food producers and sellers are in conflict with the consumers' interests concerning health and the family budget.

Consumers distrust additives. In a 1988 review of 299 additives other than flavoring, 25 had been found to pose a chronic hazard to public health. Another good example of distrust is the genetically engineered food products.

Economic and social impacts of food contamination

The economic and social consequences of food contamination can be catastrophic for countries with limited resources. Food-borne diseases cause loss of income and manpower and also medical care costs.

A lot of food has to be rejected if the contamination exceeds the permitted limits. The country's bad reputation may cause a decrease in trade and in tourism.

The epidemic of cholera in Latin America (1991) started from Peru and the country lost about 700 million. The tourism industry was also affected.

Conclusions

All information on the current status of the food safety problem demonstrates that the food safety principle "from the farm to the fork" is not yet implemented throughout the food chain. That is why the CCN project's philosophy provides a reason for the food and eating pyramid perfection. This idea has been demonstrated in fig. 1, which indicates that food safety is the primary future of the food pyramid. All food included in the food pyramid should be "filtered" through the food safety criteria. One way of achieving this is by acquainting consumer citizens with the food safety criteria so that they could make responsible decisions concerning nutritive and safe foods. The basis for this new awareness could be created by providing consumer citizens with adequate training in food safety criteria.

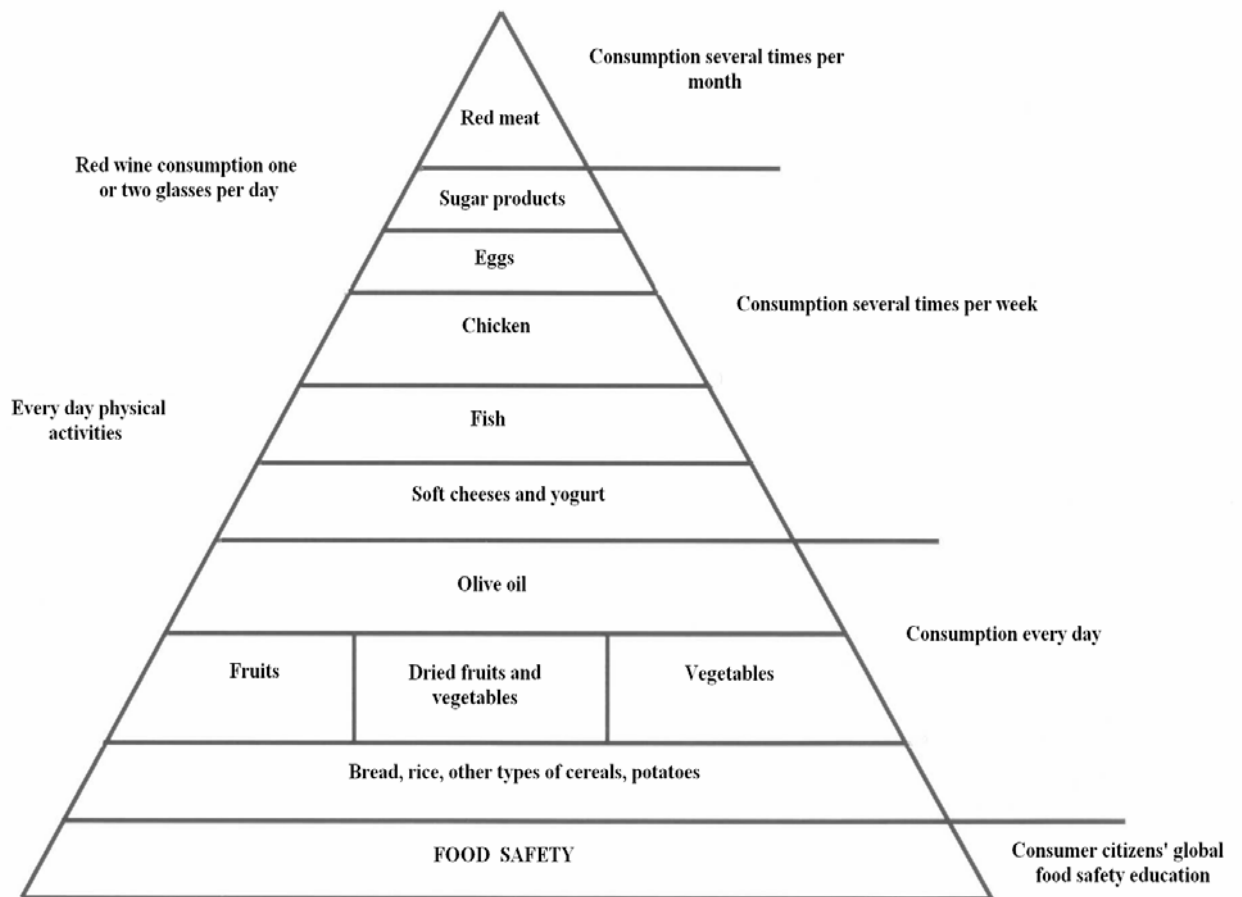


Fig. 1: Food pyramid valid for the Mediterranean region supplemented with food safety criterion

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5. GLOBAL SOLIDARITY AND CONSUMER CITIZENSHIP

ABSTRACTS

Science and values as complementary foundations for consumer citizenship

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The achievement of sustainable development requires both major changes in consumption in the North and addressing poverty in the South. Consumer citizenship is fundamental to the European contribution to more sustainable development, both through modifying excessive consumption, and through creating awareness of the wider social, economic and environmental impacts of that consumption. These impacts are largely demonstrated through scientific evidence and statistics, requiring a larger role for science in consumer education. The scientific approach should be used by every enlightened consumer: thinking in terms of process, cause and effect, experiment and analysis, can help to guide consumption and lifestyle choices. Yet science without values leads to unsustainable materialism. Science and values (including culture, religion, and other forms of spirituality) are two complementary knowledge systems that provide the foundation for consumer citizenship, and both should be part of any educational programme. Scientific evidence, when properly interpreted in a framework of values, can be a powerful motivating force for changes in behaviour. Values for sustainability, such as justice, moderation and solidarity, can themselves be rationally justified. The coming UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) will provide an opportunity for widespread efforts to build consumer citizenship in support of sustainable development.

Global solidarity or global apartheid? The environmental footprints of uneven global consumption

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The main question of the Global Solidarity thematic group is: *What contributions can the European consumer citizen make towards the eradication*

of poverty in the world? This presentation will address the important aspects of uneven global consumption, its ecological footprints and consequences for sustainable development. The presentation will show how ‘over-consumption’ of resources in the North creates one set of environmental problems (e.g. global warming), while ‘under-consumption’ of resources in the south creates another set of environmental problems (e.g. land degradation/ loss of biodiversity). The presentation will focus on how these problems are inter-woven in the global economic structure, and that they should be approached as two outcomes of the same economic process; resource extraction from south to north. In this context a theoretical framework called *third world political ecology* will be introduced. The presentation will also show how these aspects can be addressed didactically in teacher education and schools, and how western consumers can act within this system.

Internationalisation in education

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Internationalisation is to be introduced as an integrated and synergetic ingredient of the education systems because of the need to create permanent awareness and understanding, to change the mind-frames and to provide instruments to students and teachers. It is a vital part in the development to become active consumer citizens.

Therefore the transformation of the individual from “Local” to “Cosmopolitan” as defined by Gouldner, Merton and Hannerz is to be encouraged. Where “Local” represents parochial attitudes, causing e.g. stagnation, “Cosmopolitan” aims at the broader contexts. The terms “Local” and “Cosmopolitan” are used in a number of meanings ranging from pure consumerism to international citizenship. Political, social and cultural involvement are at the core of this development. Internationalisation, regionalisation, and glocalisation are not just political issues, they are the consequence of the new media and ICT, which have become avant-garde and rather unsuspected tools in the process.

In an educational environment internationalisation is a development engine in four major areas: political, cultural, development of the human potential and structural development. This should be a constant factor, rather than a coincidental one. Internationalisation at Home (IaH) is to be introduced on every level. IaH is the term coined by Bengt Nilsson and takes the internationalisation process beyond mere mobility and focuses on six target areas: curriculum transformation, campus diversity and international students, context of

international higher education, management and institutional changes, teaching and classroom and the use of the internet and ICT. IaH is one of the major assets in educational change to turn people from locals into cosmopolitans and therefore helps form active consumer citizens.

Preservation of soil fauna biodiversity – still undervalued in education for sustainable development

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The general knowledge about the soil fauna biodiversity is very poor. Why we have to convince the public of its importance? How to make soil an issue of general interest so that it results in an increased care for the creatures living in it? We should introduce a variety of projects connected with environmental education and didactic work with people of different age groups and different professions: kindergarten children, primary school pupils, high school and university students, farmers, agricultural advisors and teachers. We should popularise the meaning of protozoan, earthworms, enchytraeids, mites, spiders, soil insects and other soil animals, to farmers and pupils of local schools. Promotion of the knowledge about the influence of soil fauna on the soil fertility is important, because the preservation of soil fauna biodiversity is still not enough appreciated in activities for sustainable development.

By giving a short description of soil animals and their role in the food chain, paper aims at the popularisation of these issues. The author also wants to show how, in practice, soil animals can be used in solving ecological and agricultural problems. In this way she wants to prove that, even if we know very little about the soil fauna, it deserves preservation as it can turn out highly useful in the nearest future.

As a member of Polish Subcommittee of ISO (Soil Biology Commission in Warsaw) the author also presents the present state of the commission's work on creation of unified standards for studying the tolerance of soil animals to pollution resulting from human industrial and urban practices.

Conservation of soil biodiversity cannot wait. The aim of this paper is to challenge soil biologists, governments and environmental bodies to include the soil biota in national strategies for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

PROCEEDINGS

Science and values as complementary foundations for consumer citizenship

Arthur Lyon Dahl

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The achievement of sustainable development requires both major changes in consumption in the North and addressing poverty in the South. Consumer citizenship is fundamental to the European contribution to more sustainable development, both through modifying excessive consumption, and through creating awareness of the wider social, economic and environmental impacts of that consumption. These impacts are largely demonstrated through scientific evidence and statistics, requiring a larger role for science in consumer education. The scientific approach should be used by every enlightened consumer: thinking in terms of process, cause and effect, experiment and analysis, can help to guide consumption and lifestyle choices. Yet science without values leads to unsustainable materialism. Science and values (including culture, religion, and other forms of spirituality) are two complementary knowledge systems that provide the foundation for consumer citizenship, and both should be part of any educational programme. Scientific evidence, when properly interpreted in a framework of values, can be a powerful motivating force for changes in behaviour. Values for sustainability, such as justice, moderation and solidarity, can themselves be rationally justified. The coming UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) will provide an opportunity for widespread efforts to build consumer citizenship in support of sustainable development.

Introduction

Despite repeated commitments at the highest levels since the 1992 Earth Summit, the world has not advanced very far towards sustainable development. The environment continues to degrade globally (UNEP 2002). A significant proportion of the world population continues to live in extreme poverty, and the gap between rich and poor within and between nations continues to widen. The signs of social and cultural decay even in the most industrialized countries, and the rise of fanaticisms of various sorts, are symptoms of the increasing stress in an unsustainable world system.

It is not scientific understanding or resources that are lacking. What is missing is political will at the governmental level, and a willingness to change behaviour and lifestyles at the individual level. To achieve sustainable development in the North, the populations of industrial countries must change their patterns of consumption. Poverty reduction in the South will require a significant shift in resources, reinforced by improved governance and empowerment at the local level in order to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

Consumer citizenship is fundamental to the European contribution to more sustainable development, both through modifying excessive consumption, and through creating awareness of the wider social, economic and environmental impacts of that consumption. The present educational system has failed to prepare the citizens of Europe for the fundamental changes that would allow European society to shift from an unsustainable trajectory towards a more sustainable one. As the keynote talks in this conference have pointed out, we need a more fundamental change than anything attempted to date, bringing together both science and values. This paper explores the roles of these two as complementary foundations for any programme of consumer citizenship.

Science

The role of science has too often been neglected in consumer education. Science is perceived by the public as a complex body of technical knowledge divorced from practical everyday concerns. Yet the environmental, social and economic impacts of unsustainable development are largely demonstrated through scientific evidence and statistics. Everyone uses an indicator like GDP (Gross Domestic Product) even though it is in fact a very poor indicator of development. Unemployment statistics make news headlines. Environmental impacts are reflected in hectares of natural forest lost to development, levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, and concentrations of pesticides in foodstuffs. It is possible to define indicators for many aspects of sustainable development (Moldan et al. 1997), and these can in turn build public awareness. Yet a basic scientific literacy is necessary to understand and respond to such information, requiring a larger role for science in consumer education.

There is also a tendency in Europe to leave scientific issues to the specialists. This may be convenient for a bureaucracy that does not want the public to make life difficult for it, or that prefers to cover up problems. It does, however, exclude the public from significant debates of direct concern to their health and welfare. Indirectly, it also bars their access to scientific knowledge that might motivate changes in their consumer behaviour.

Even more than basic scientific literacy, the scientific approach should be used by every enlightened consumer. There is no reason why the scientific method should be restricted to technical experts with advanced degrees, or should require a complex vocabulary of specialist terms. The basic approaches of science are accessible to everyone if they are taught in the right way. Learning to think in terms of process can give people the means to understand the dynamics of natural and human systems. The principles of cause and effect can help a consumer to understand the consequences of his or her actions and purchases. There is even wide scope for the public to undertake its own experiments, say on the performance of various consumer products, and to analyse the results as a guide consumption and lifestyle choices.

This is not just true for the inhabitants of wealthy countries. The poor can also benefit from access to science and technology, as it can empower them to innovate and explore their own paths to development. Traditional cultures are rich in knowledge acquired by careful observations of the environment over generations, processes inherent in the scientific method. However because the information may be understood and interpreted in another intellectual and spiritual framework, it has often been labelled magic or superstition by missionaries, colonial administrators and teachers, and subjected to active efforts to discredit or stamp it out (Dahl, 1989).

Values

More scientific knowledge of pollution levels, resource depletion and future environmental trends can be powerful arguments for changes in consumption. However science by itself is not enough. As our present industrialized society demonstrates, science without values leads to unsustainable materialism. Science and values (including culture, religion, and other forms of spirituality) are two complementary knowledge systems that provide the foundation for consumer citizenship, and both should be part of any educational programme. The present educational systems in Europe tend to exclude religion and other sources of values from the curriculum. If humanity is acknowledged at all to have a spiritual as well as material dimension, this may only be with reference to past ages and foreign cultures. While there may be good historical reasons for this, the gross ethical failures regularly uncovered in business and politics suggest that this exclusion is itself causing fundamental damage to society. One goal of education should be to help each individual to build her or his value system. This would not only help to form more discriminating consumers, but would also help to guard against fanaticisms and other forms of extremism that threaten society today.

Values are the basic determinants of social interactions. If a person is prejudiced, he will not want to build relationships with those outside his

framework of acceptance, resulting in a reduction in social capacity or potential. Whereas in biological terms, evolution is driven by mutations in the genetic code that change the information stored there and may open new potentials for adaptation and progression, social evolution is driven by changes in the basic rules by which society operates as encoded in its values. Consumer citizenship inevitably has a significant ethical component, and changes in consumer behaviour must be founded in an appropriate set of values such as justice, moderation and solidarity.

Integrating science and values

The challenge for Europe is to find ways to integrate science and values in its educational systems. This should include ways to discuss religion and spirituality objectively and without proselytizing, allowing each individual to investigate truth independently. Religion can be explored with the rational tools of science, just as science can be judged within moral and ethical frameworks, recognizing their complementarity.

Scientific evidence, when properly interpreted in a framework of values, can be a powerful motivating force for changes in behaviour. This should be at the heart of education for consumer citizenship. An agreement on essential values for sustainability such as justice and moderation can also lead to questioning the basic assumptions of Western material civilization, such as Adam Smith's invisible hand of self-interest, that are at the heart of many unsustainable characteristics of the present economic system (Dahl, 1996).

Ethical concepts and values for sustainability, such as justice, moderation and solidarity, can also be rationally justified. Changing consumption requires sacrifices, but people will not sacrifice if they suffer the costs and someone else benefits. Justice is an essential prerequisite to cooperation in the common good. Moderation in consumption is necessary to stay within environmental limits. A lack of solidarity may lead ultimately to terrorist action.

Integration can also come through the wider use of systems thinking and information theory, which can help to demonstrate the behaviour of complex social and environmental systems, and to show how values operate to modify the functioning of such systems (Dahl, 1996)

The coming UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) will provide an opportunity for widespread efforts to build consumer citizenship in support of sustainable development. The International Environment Forum held a conference in Florida in December 2003 to assist North American communities to plan activities for the decade, including many facets of consumer citizenship (<http://www.bcca.org/ief/conf7.htm>). It is time to start

stimulating the development of similar national programmes in Europe, bringing many organizations into partnership. Such partnerships should include not only educational, scientific and consumer organizations, but also the faith-based organizations that can contribute to a deeper consideration of values. As a variety of inter-faith activities have demonstrated over a decade or more, sustainable development is an area where all the religions agree on the ethical principles concerned. It will take some courage in the European context to open a dialogue with religious groups, but they can also be powerful advocates for consumer citizenship.

In conclusion, changing consumption patterns in Europe will only accelerate if scientific and value-based approaches are combined in educational programmes. Given the threatening crises in the years ahead from our unsustainable lifestyles, do we have any other choice?

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Global solidarity or global apartheid? The environmental footprints of uneven global consumption

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Introduction

“The environmental crises we confront have many causes. They include poverty, negligence and greed —but above all, failures of governance.” Kofi Annan, Millennium Report

The main question is: *What contributions can the European consumer citizen make towards the eradication of poverty in the world?* This presentation will address the important aspects of uneven global consumption, its ecological footprints and consequences for sustainable development. The presentation will focus on how ‘over-consumption’ of resources in the North creates such global environmental problems as enhanced greenhouse effect and loss of biodiversity, while poverty and ‘under-consumption’ of resources in the south create another set of environmental problems such as land degradation, deforestation and desertification, which again contributes to biodiversity erosion. The presentation highlights how these problems are inter-woven in the global economic structure, and that they should be approached as two outcomes of the same economic process; resource extraction from south to north.

Ecological Footprints (EF) is a measure of the consumption of renewable natural resources by human populations. According to the WWF’s Living Planet Report (2002) the ecological footprint of an average African or Asian consumer was less than 1.4 hectares per person in 1999, the average western Europeans footprint was about 5 hectares, and the average North American was 9,6 hectares. In 1999 the EF of the world average consumer was 2,3 hectares per person, or 20 % above the world’s biological capacity of 1.9 hectares per person. According to WWF future projections based on likely scenarios of population growth, economic growth and technological change, EF is likely to grow 200% of the earth’s biological capacity by the year 2050. For a visualisation of ecological footprints see maps and statistics on: <http://www.globalis.no/?840>

These figures make it obvious that the limits to what our ecological system can carry are being challenged. The most pivotal global environmental problems we are facing are depletion of the ozone layer, enhanced greenhouse effect, and loss of biological diversity. To deal with these problems the world society faces great

difficulties. One of the biggest problems in international environmental matters is the lack of superiority and control over global resources. The ozone layer, a stable climate in the atmosphere and the world heritage of biological diversity can be classified as resources belonging to the entire human kind in which no one has the right to overexploit. These resources can be termed as *commons*¹ on a global scale and must be dealt with in that manner. Gareth Hardin (1968) describes in his now classical *The tragedy of the commons* how unregulated common resources tend to be overexploited when the actors have free and unlimited access to the resource and the costs of deterioration are widely spread. During the sixties and seventies people became aware that our global environment is not unlimited and that regulations need to be established so that we can avoid a global tragedy of the commons which will affect every living creature on this planet.

North-South issues and environmental problems

The world is very broadly divided into a rich north and a poor south. These two parts of the world generates different environmental problems as a result of uneven economic development. In the rich north one can argue that the biggest problem is a very high level of economic development (overdevelopment?), which is based on mass consumption of goods and services. This has the effect that these countries occupy and consume a large proportion of the world's resources and produce a large proportion of the polluting emissions to air and water. At this point in history one can say that the problem of enhanced greenhouse effect and depletion of the ozone layer are caused by the lifestyle and mass consumption in the countries of the north.

This addresses the problem of over-consumption of global resources. However, the problems in the less developed southern part of the world are entirely different than the ones of the developed north. In the south the biggest environmental problems are due to lack of economic development which again contributes to various forms of land degradation such as deforestation and soil erosion. Bearing in mind that between 50-90% of the world's biological diversity exists in tropical forests, one can assume that a formidable threat to biodiversity is poverty and underdevelopment in the south. The capitalist world system with a privileged over-consuming North and a poverty stricken South has been described as the global version of the now abandoned Apartheid

¹ Commons can be defined in a variety of ways for instance; *resources for which exclusion is difficult; are needed by all but whose productivity is diffuse rather than concentrated; jointly-used resources whose use by one person may subtract from the welfare of the next, and which are thus potentially subject to crowding, depletion and degradation.* (The Ecologist, 1993, p. 8)

system of South-Africa (For more on global apartheid see Eriksen 1998, Bond 2001, Alexander 1996)

According to much of the mainstream environmental writings poor people are forced to deplete resources to survive and this degradation of the environment further impoverishes them. When this reinforcing downward spiral becomes extreme, poor people have to move in increasing numbers to ecologically fragile lands. This puts further pressure on the ecosystems that constitute the threatened biological diversity in which people are dependent. Based on this thinking technological solutions such as modernisation, privatisation and birth control are the most important measures to hamper poverty and environmental degradation in the south.

This way of thinking about poverty and environmental degradation is convenient for the prevailing neo-liberal economic paradigm that dominates thinking among policy-makers in the North. The blame is mainly put on the poor and deprived for their own situation.

Political ecology

However, another analysis of the causes and effects of poverty and environmental degradation might be applied. An emerging theoretical framework called *third world political ecology* addresses these issues from another perspective. The political ecology approach aims at linking environmental consideration into theories of regional growth and decline. The concerns of ecology are combined with a broadly defined political economy which encompasses the constantly shifting dialectic between society and land-based resources (Blaikie & Brookfield 1987). Greenberg and Park (1994: 1) state that the two theoretical thrusts that have had most influence on political ecology are:

‘... political economy, with its insistence on the need to link distribution of power with productive activity, and ecological analysis with its broader visions of bio-environmental relationships.’
(Greenberg and Park 1994: 1)

Political ecology focuses on the context of local history and locally specific ecologies set in a regional, national and global framework. By drawing on historical and structural explanation for poverty and environmental degradation, political ecology usually joins analysis of place-based aspects such as deforestation, desertification and soil erosion to *non*-place-based factors such as economic structures and international discourses. Thus it is an interdisciplinary theoretical framework more than a coherent theory. Table 1 (modified from Bryant, 2001) captures the most prominent tenants of political ecology and

shows how it has evolved during the past 30 years. The most important change that has occurred is the shift from a neo-Marxist to a post-Marxist phase where feminist literature and discourse analysis play a more significant role.

	Early political ecology	New political ecology
Period	70s and 80s	90s and →
Theoretical referent	Marxism Dependency theory	Feminist theory Foucauldian discourse Post-structuralism
Critique	Neo-Malthusianism	Neo-Marxism Neo-Malthusianism
References	Blaikie (1985) O'Brian (1985)	Peluso (1992) Escobar (1996)

Table 1. Political ecology

Political ecology leans on the established field of Dependency theory which explains how economic surplus appropriates from South to North; how centre-periphery relations leave the third world subordinate and disabled; and how ‘the development of underdevelopment’ is a part of the global economic capitalist system (Potter et al 2004). Political ecology takes the economic analysis of the dependency school further and shows how the economic underdevelopment of the south is at the basis of environmental degradation in this part of the world. This way a link between over-consumption in the north and environmental problems in the south is established, and the global ecological problems can be treated as the outcome of one process - the global capitalist system. Figure 1 shows how surplus profits flow from the periphery to the metropole via a network of local and regional satellites.

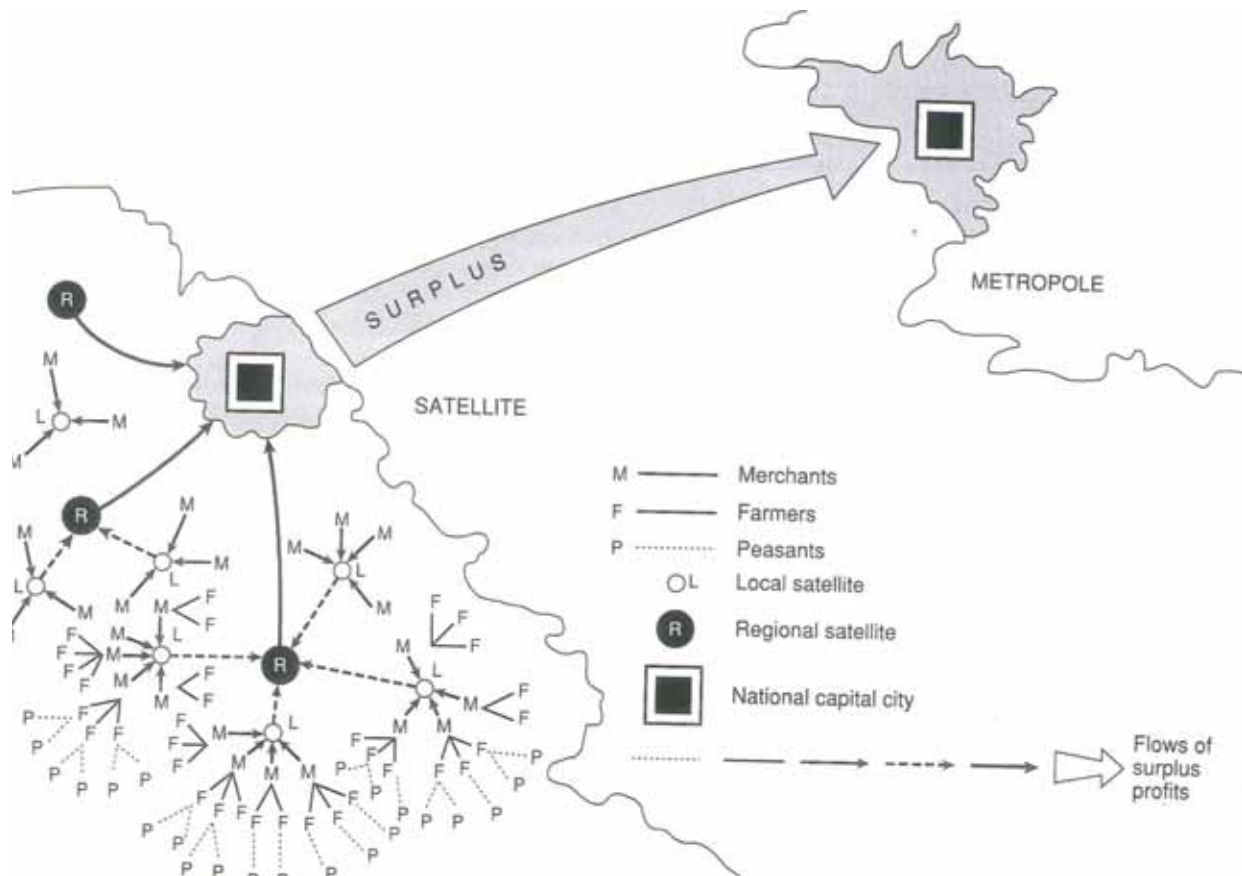


Figure 1. Dependency theory (Potter et al 2004)

Scholars employing political ecology approaches apply this thinking, and in addition to resource extraction from the periphery to the centre they focus on how impulses from the global and national level impinge on the local level, with special reference to how they impact on the local ecology. One example of how this process works is through ‘structural adjustment programmes’ and their local implication. Structural adjustment programmes were forced upon many African states from the beginning of the eighties by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Along with cuts in tariff barriers, devaluation of currency, and cuts in public spendings, this implied emphasis on the production of cash-crops as a way to pay off debts to the donor countries. However, these dictates may have a wide range of effects on the local environment, ranging from soil-erosion caused by single-strand cropping to falling commodity prices for raw materials, which again may threaten food security among rural people.(see for instance Blaikie 1995). Figure 2 shows how the ecology is affected by impulses at a wide range of levels from the global to the local.

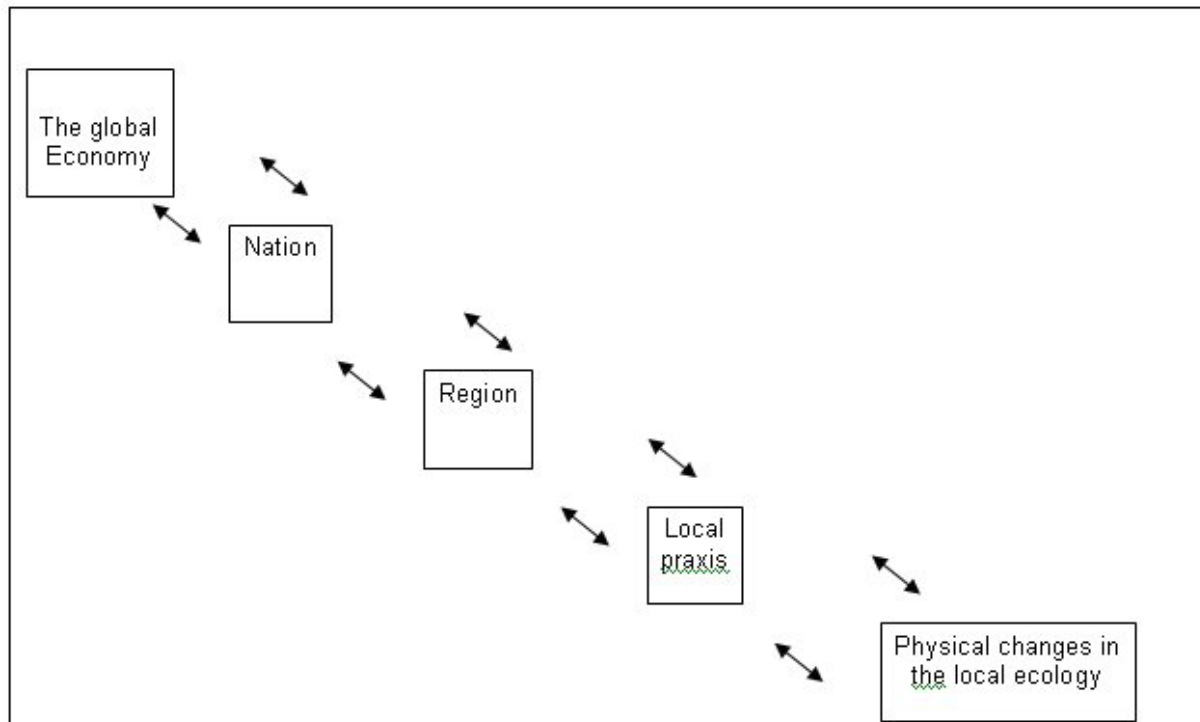


Figure 2. The chain of explanations in political ecology

The sustainable development discourse vs political ecology

The reason for introducing the political ecology framework at this CCN conference is to contribute with a critical perspective against the ‘business-as-usual’ thinking that dominates much global policy making.

The sustainable development discourse as described in the WCED (1987) and further highlighted at the UN conference on Environment and Development in Rio 1992, focused on the mutual interests of environmental and economic goals. Environmental problems could be resolved by technical solutions, market mechanisms or through coordinated actions of the international community (Berkhout et al 2003). This could be recognised as a programme for ‘business as usual’, serving the economic interests of those already in power. What this discourse failed to address was the critique from political economy and dependency theory that many of the environmental problems in poor countries were rooted in the inequalities that the very same economic system produces. While sustainable development emphasises poverty and population growth as reasons for environmental degradation in the south (WCED 1987), it only superficially addresses the structural reasons for poverty. Sustainable development sees these problems as a result of internal causes, and thus its solutions can be sought in a modernisation theory framework. This is very close to the actions proposed by the Bretton-woods institutions which are heavily influenced by neo-liberal thinking. Political ecology provides a counter discourse to the business-as-usual thinking of the ‘sustainable development’

discourse. In this view external historical and structural causes of poverty and the negative social and environmental effects of neo-liberal policies are highlighted.

It seems fairly obvious that some people benefit from cheap raw materials and low wages in developing countries; the interests of the rich countries are not the same as the interests of the poor ones. Hence a conflict analysis as provided by political ecology seems more appropriate if one really wants to grasp the complex issues of global environmental problems.

The way ahead

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, 2002, it was recognised that poverty eradication, changing consumption and production patterns, and protecting and managing the natural resource base are essential to obtaining sustainable development. Further it was pointed out that the divide between the rich and the poor countries is increasing and poses a major threat to global sustainability. However, how this challenge should be met is more uncertain. The call for strengthening multilateralism, the reconciliation of environment and trade regimes, and strengthening the UN Charter and international law is the most direct answer (UN 2002). This is not an easy task. Especially when the world's dominating economic ideology is the 'Washington consensus' of neo-liberalism. Within this frame of thinking economic growth both in North and South is essential; otherwise the whole economic system will collapse. The central question remains: can the ecological system cope with extended economic growth in the already over-consuming developed part of the world?

According to the 'sustainable development discourse' we are all in the same boat. Are we really? If so, then maybe it is the third world which is doing the rowing while those from the North are just sailing carelessly along?

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Internationalisation in education

Convert students and teachers from locals into cosmopolitans, internationalise schools by internationalisation at home.

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Shifting Identities?

How do we identify ourselves, how do we identify other people, and how do we perceive our relationship with the world? With the term “perceive” we mean: “*to attain awareness and understanding of*”. To use an easy image, basically we are the hub, the core of a number of concentric circles, and each of these concentric circles, pretty much like it is the case with an onion, adds another layer to our personal identification and our world, bringing along opportunities, chances, rights and responsibilities. The problem, however, is that many people do not (or cannot) identify with a number of these layers, they do not seem to be able to get in touch with their whole world. This is very regrettable, and especially so in the post-cold-war world which is being globalised at full throttle causing many disturbing dilemmas, contradictions and in the end, balanced choices which have to be made.

And there is another issue; people tend not to cope very well with change, especially if these societal and therefore personal transformations happen rapidly. This is not only true for individual persons; it is also the case for whole societies all over the globe. We are even witnessing the tragic problems of traditional societies that cannot follow the evolution and that cannot adapt to the changes. A good description in the two-lane evolution in the societies can be found in Thomas Friedman’s book on globalisation: “*The Lexus versus the Olive Tree*”, though maybe expressing a little too much the American point of view.

Also interesting to note is that political approaches per se do not offer adequate answers. Power shifts have become evident in the last few years, with the real power going to (international) economy and science, the globalised media and, locally, the judicial forces that sanction new behaviour in a new society. In his latest book, “*Over Politiek*”, the Flemish sociologist Luc Huyse writes about the most recent developments in society and politics and it is his conclusion that politicians who operate within a mere regional or national layer or circle, no longer can exert any real influence on the society they work for. Macro systems have taken over. Until recently the consensus was that our politicians, who no longer could live up to the status of “statesmanship”, were acting as “fire-

fighters”, rather, or as “plumbers”. Now, Huyse says, they are turning into weather boys and girls, who only can tell the general public what it going on and maybe they can do a bit of precarious forecasting. But again, they no longer wield the power to have any real influence on what is coming or even on what is happening; like it is the case with the weather. To name but a few examples: international virtual money that travels 24 hours a day, and the ecological problems Kyoto would want us to patch up.

But then, societies will change, they always have, and what our society now needs is grassroot systems to educate and train the people and turn them into conscious consumers and citizens of this rapidly changing world. As consumers we make use of what our society has to offer us, but as citizens we are made responsible for that same society. This is not a straightforward and uncomplicated task, and our society must provide tools and instruments for the people to become conscious consumer citizens. Not only here, in the West, but this is certainly also the case for the societies in the East and South. The question may rise whether we already live in the frightening “Global Village” Marshall McLuhan predicted, or even a European variety of it. It is certainly moving that way and for the EU there is a major challenge in helping the new countries, where the system changes must be experienced as even faster and presumably with consequences that are more far-reaching than what we are experiencing in Western Europe.

Awareness: a little knowledge is dangerous thing

The ancient Greek “Know thyself” still holds true, and you can only begin this process by becoming aware of a number of things. Awareness building is therefore of major importance, and sets us a very important task. Since awareness building should be an integral part of our education we are going to look at the question how internationalisation as a tool is to be introduced throughout our educational system. This might prove more difficult than one would imagine. And the saying rightly goes that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, so we must make sure that the competencies we want to obtain will be thoroughly defined and structured.

The educational system in many countries is not just a system in which knowledge and competencies is transferred; in a number of countries is an institution for “socialisation”, integration, assimilation and nation building even, just think of the models in the USA or France. Many education systems tend to focus on the knowledge factor, and on the system of their traditional local society. In religion-related schools (political or spiritual), there is a third leg, the ideology or religious educational project.

Internationalisation needs to be introduced as an integrated and synergetic ingredient of the education systems, though, because of the need to create permanent consciousness and understanding, to change the mind-frames and to provide instruments to students and teachers. This means internationalising the schools. It will be a vital part in the development to create active consumer citizens. Therefore the transformation process of the individual from “Local” to “Cosmopolitan” as defined by Gouldner, Merton and Hannerz is to be encouraged. Where “Local” represents rather parochial attitudes, causing provincialism and stagnation amongst other things, the “Cosmopolitan” will be inspired by the broader contexts. The terms “Local” and “Cosmopolitan” are used intuitively in a number of meanings influenced by the contexts they are used in. Political, social and cultural involvements are at the core of this development.

In a managerial context the term is used to describe two types of employees. The “local” one is someone who completely identifies with his position in the organisation, rather than with his whole personality or being. Let us illustrate this by means of an example. Someone who read law at university is employed by a school where he or she teaches a number of courses. Someone in a “local” mind-frame will then identify himself as a teacher and define his tasks - and to some extent even his personality- solely as teaching and working in a school environment. These people then tend to get out of touch with the professional and scientific development outside the classroom. They will often be dedicated teachers, but they also have a propensity to be very conservative and cause their organisation to lose contact with what is happening outside the organisation. They do not look for evolution, growth or even inspiration. They withdraw, into the innermost of the concentric circles that define them. It is clear that in a learning organisation one just cannot afford to have too many of these “Locals”. “Cosmopolitans”, on the other hand, do not merely identify with job descriptions or mission statements. They will look over the fence and embrace new developments. The risk even might exist that they set goals outside these “inner circles” and eventually make their way to greener pastures and leave the organisation. All in all a good organisation should possess both locals for a certain stability and cosmopolitans for progress, development and vision, but cosmopolitans are to be preferred in any learning organisation worth its salt.

The terms internationalisation, globalisation and regionalisation are being redefined these days and new terms crop up such as localisation or glocalisation. There is a very important cultural and even ethical angle to the issue, such as the impact of the new media and ICT, which have become avant-garde and rather unsuspected tools in the process.

In an educational environment internationalisation is a development engine in four major areas: political, cultural, development of the human potential and

structural development. This should be a constant factor, rather than a coincidental one. These issues need to be defined in new educational competencies, which are to be introduced at all levels and in as many aspects in the mainstream issues of our educational system as possible. This should not be a half-cocked enterprise, since it should be a focussed exercise.

Internationalisation at Home will keep you in focus

Internationalisation at Home (IaH) is a specific initiative and the last five years it has spread far and wide. As a term, IaH probably was probably used by people, but the concept IaH was really coined by Bengt Nilsson from Malmö University in Sweden in the 1999 Spring issue of EAIE Forum. Bengt Nilsson resolutely wanted to take the internationalisation process beyond mere mobility schemes. In many schools the internationalisation process is defined as a set of mobility programmes, which basically takes the internationalisation process outside the school walls. It was found that too little was done and experienced on the own campus. Diversity and multicultural issues were not taken into the equation of internationalisation. On the whole, the EAIE Special Interest Group developing the IaH concept began to understand that although a lot of money and work was being poured in international programmes, this did not actually lead to real internationalisation of the schools and universities. There was no deliberate policy to use the international component as a kind of sourdough in the formation process, which would lift up the curriculum and transform the school into an internationally oriented learning organisation training students to acquire the specific competencies by which they could transform from local into cosmopolitan citizens and consumers. Of course in all universities there were and are many international contacts, in research and nowadays in course development. Virtual networks have been started up and the technology, ICT, has brought along a new set of parameters giving rise to new paradigms.

All the more reason to contemplate what a university – or any other school, for that matter, should be doing in order for them to be transformed from a “local” school to a “cosmopolitan” one. Another concern was that the international educational markets are changing too. The requirements of a number of countries, Asian and African, cannot be met by the local education market, which causes small migrations. We find these people in the USA, the UK and Australia. Competition has become an issue too. How much of a key element this will become in the educational universe needs to be shown in the future. But in a way it is clear that this issue was duly recognised in the European Space, where we saw the emerging of a European Educational Space, with bold new Sorbonne and Bologna agreements, definitely transforming the higher education systems all over Europe. Quality management will be playing a very important role in all this, and what is more, this quality system will be international, or not.

Flanders and the Netherlands have already joined into a single Accreditation Agency for the two countries (NVAO, Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditingsorganisatie, *Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation*). So it is clear that the internationalisation process, again focussing on the four pillars of development: Structures, politics, culture and human potential, needs new guidelines. These guidelines may be found in the IaH-paradigm. The first description of the paradigm was published in a EAIE position paper: “Internationalisation at Home”.

The IaH paradigm exists of six areas:



These six focus points are really the macro, meso and micro levels of the international experience. The presence of ICT as a separate issue may be a bit debatable, but it is proving such a powerful tool on all levels and all activities, that the conclusion inescapably is that because of the advent of ICT the internationalisation issue has really been taken forward by bounds. It is such a good tool since many users do not even recognise any longer that by entering cyberspace they are unconsciously being transferred to an international space, probably using Basic English as a lingua franca.

The idea of IaH caught a lot of attention and the Journal of Studies in International Education published a special issue on Internationalisation at Home as its Spring issue 2003 and later that year a IaH conference was organised in Malmö to establish what is what in IaH. The conference website with a number of excellent papers can be found at <http://www.mah.se/iah2003/default.htm>.

New Challenge for IaH

Now the time has come, however, to take the project a step further, or rather some steps. Many people in the field are convinced that IaH must be the tool to internationalise their institutions, but they are clamouring for instruments, tools and examples of good practice.

On the macro level there are the international frameworks. The EU Socrates programme will be redefined in the near future and the question may be asked what the commission programmes will do to include the IaH catechism in the programmes. For some reason this still is a bit of a problem because IaH is not easily defined within the EU programme paradigm. There have been summary talks with people such as David Coyne, Director for Education, European Commission - Directorate General for Education and Culture, who even was a keynote speaker at the Malmö conference. But the follow-up is difficult.

The implementation of IaH in the organisation of a school also proves to be difficult. In Flanders a conference was organised to discuss these issues. Again, with many interested participants, but also bringing to light difficulties. The organising agency, VLHORA, Vlaamse Hogescholenraad – Flemish Council for Hogescholen) published a very interesting booklet on the matter in which a number of the problems are listed. In the reactions during workshops, conferences and following articles, one thing became clear: people are looking for working models on which to base their own efforts in introducing IaH in their organisation.

Second Phase of IaH: Competency Descriptors and Indicators

What we urgently need to do now is to discuss the necessary “descriptors” for the definition of the competencies that are essential if IaH is to be introduced in the educational reality. The word competency is very important in this context, and though it is a technical term it is often defined differently. When we mean competencies here (Flemish/Dutch paradigm) we mean the sum total of :

- all knowledge acquired (general and specific),
- the skills by which the knowledge is translated from potential into action/activity,
- the ensuing attitudes that are needed, personal, social and professional and to top it up,
- the insights that will come from the combination of the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes.

I invite you to participate in this discussion: we need general and specific descriptors to define these competencies against the backdrop of your specific

situation. Besides these general descriptors we need very specific indicators that will show, when developing a new course or when we are restructuring organisations and we benchmark them in the scope of quality management, that the IaH processes in all six fields are implemented and used as quality indicators for the whole enterprise.

The descriptors and the indicators should be described in broad terms to cover the organisation itself, but then have to be honed and fine-tuned to comply with the specific needs of the individual courses and indeed the individual requirements of the learners themselves; not to be forgotten: the change agents and the teachers.

Once we get these instruments, it will become a little easier to consciously transform our institutions into international, say cosmopolitan, operations. Because the international aspect will be present on all levels, our teachers and students, the citizens of tomorrow, will be transformed into conscious, active and cosmopolitan consumer citizens of an exiting society.

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Preservation of soil fauna biodiversity—still undervalued in education for sustainable development

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Introduction

In recent years we can observe an intensification of studies in the field of soil biology and zoology in comparison to any other scientific research carried out all over the world. This has been a result of the general need to gain knowledge on the influence of soil properties on productivity in agriculture, horticulture and forestry, in addition to the need for the determination of tolerance of all soil elements and components (including all living creatures) to human industrial and urban practices.

There are regular meetings of soil zoologists devoted to this issue. The last meeting was held in Ceske Budejovice in the Czech Republic (August 21-24, 2000). The Colloquium is held every 4 years and is the main scientific meeting of the Soil Zoology Sub-commission of the International Society of Soil Science. The previous meeting, XII Colloquium held at University College in Dublin on 22-26 July 1996, also deserves to be mentioned. The overall theme of it was “Soil organisms and Soil Resource Management”. 270 oral and poster presentations, on many aspects of soil biology and ecology, were made in the five sessions of the Colloquium. The main topics addressed were the biodiversity of soil biota, its role in ecosystem processes, influence on soil properties, response to agricultural and other forms of land use and their role as bioindicators of environmental impacts. The papers accepted by the Colloquium Editorial Board appeared in a special issue of *Applied Soil Ecology* (Volume 9, 1998, 1-546).

The XII Colloquium produced fruitful debates, exchange of experience and research results. Its participants also drew up an appeal for the conservation of biodiversity of the soil fauna and microflora, which form an important part of ecosystems used by a man. It was also concluded that the issue of the conservation of biodiversity had to be an important supplement of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

In view of the above statement, the propagation of knowledge about the edaphon (soil organisms), together with the unification of standards for the examination of the effects of pollution on the biodiversity of the soil fauna, are of vital importance. This becomes even more important in the view of surveys concerning the knowledge on the organization and biology of the soil environment. The surveys, conducted in different countries, show that an average citizen considers soil as “black space” that can be used for storing waste and poisons, and pressed by growing piles of rubbish. These practices cause the destruction of the soil structure. Such a state of knowledge and negative emotions contribute to different aspects of soil degradation. Many of them, including the degradation caused by the waste storage, have not yet been solved.

Soil is not only the basis of agriculture, but also one of the most important components of our environment. It fulfils different functions: it acts as a filter and buffer, and stops the excessive flow of pollutants to other elements of the biosphere. However, the soil can fulfil the above functions only as long as there is a balance in its biogeochemical functions.

The process of soil formation is very slow. In the humid climate it takes 500 years to build a 2.5-centimetre layer (Held 1998). Soil degradation can be caused by numerous, rapidly increasing factors, such as water and wind erosion, soil exhaustion, toxic substances or systematic reduction of agricultural and forest areas for the benefit of urbanization, transport, coalmining, industry etc. According to FAO, the soil degradation is caused by geological, climatic and biological factors, and human activities. This may contribute to physical, chemical and biological degradation of potential soil resources, including destruction of biodiversity and may threaten favourable living conditions for people. Taking into consideration the role of soil animals in the environment, the soil cannot be perceived as merely a ground for plants, but first of all as the main reactor, container and supplier of water and greenhouse gases, as well as the habitat for the edaphon. In this respect, soil degradation means not only worse crops, but above all, violation of the system of global changes on the earth.

The degradation of the abiotic soil factor may have different forms: 1) impoverishment of the soil and violation of the ion balance, 2) soil acidification or alkalisation, 3) pollution with toxic elements, 4) soil salinity, 5) excessive humus loss, 6) adverse moisture conditions, 7) excessive humidity, 8) erosion, 9) changes in structure, 10) changes in relief, 11) mechanical destruction or violation of the humus layer, 12) mechanical pollution.

All these forms of soil degradation change the living conditions of its inhabitants – soil fauna. Soil colloids and organic elements increase the soil resistance to

degradation. Therefore, sandy soils and soils with little humus are very susceptible to degrading factors.

Soil – the habitat of soil fauna

Soil consists not only of mineral elements, organic elements, air and soil water, but it also contains a number of living creatures – edaphon (fig. 1, tab.1), forming a complex network. They determine not only the correct matter cycle and energy flow, but also physical and chemical properties of the soil (fig. 2). We cannot forget that a big earthworm *Lumbricus terrestris* has an influence e.g. on soil irrigation with rain water. The earthworm can extend its body and let the water flow along the burrow, or it can retract the body and block the burrow, so that water will have to find a side-passage.

Basic functions of all representatives of the soil fauna (burrowing through the soil, locomotion, digestion, disposal of the metabolic by-products to the soil) have, without doubt, an effect on the physical and chemical processes occurring in the soil and thus, a vital role in productivity and speed of soil reclamation.

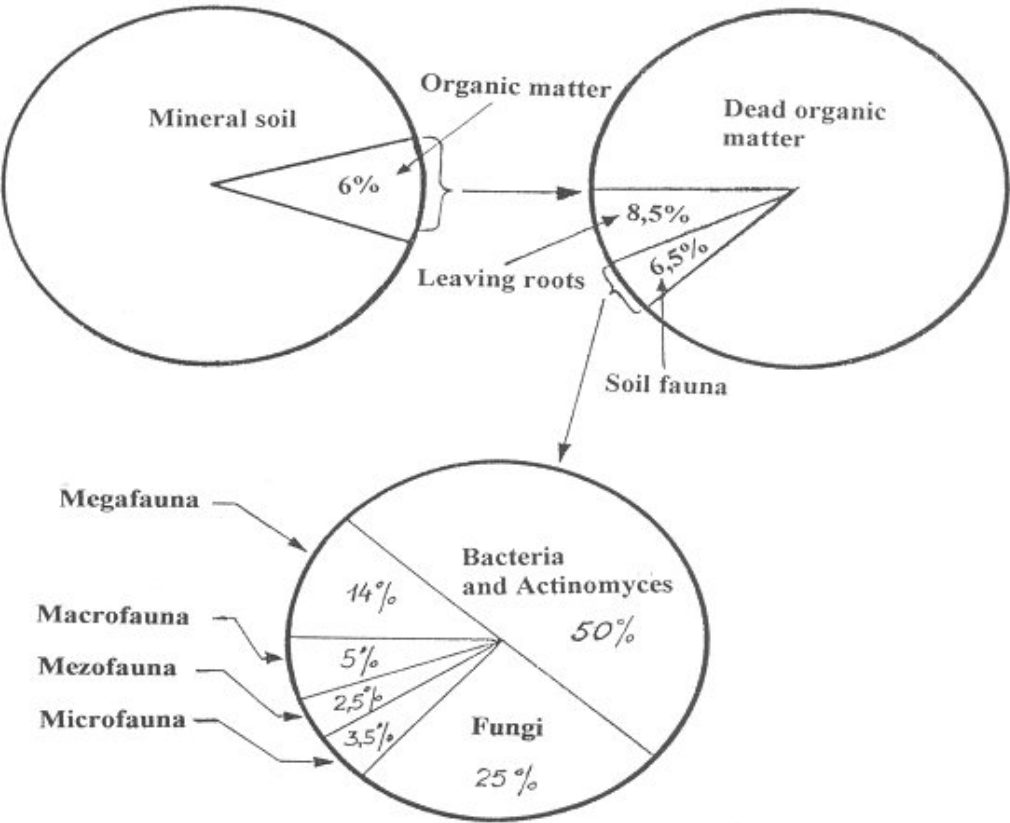


Fig. 1. Gravimetric contribution of soil organisms in surface level of forest soil with humus of the mull type (after Dunger 1964)

All edaphon groups have close relations with one another and form complex food chains. Plants together with photosynthetic blue-green algae and algae, which occur in the upper soil layers, form a group of producers, while herbivores, predators and detritivores, which feed on dead organic matter of different type – form a group of consumers. Fungi and bacteria belong to reducers.

It has to be stressed that in spite of strong destructive processes, soil is still inhabited by numerous representatives of nearly all systematic groups (tab. 1), and nowhere in nature are species so densely packed as in soil communities (Hangar 1998).

Table 1. Soil animals are usually classified according to their body size (Górny 1975, Górny & Grüm 1981)

Classification o	Size	Systematic group
• Microfauna	0,02 – 0,2 mm	<i>Protozoa, Nematoda</i>
• Mesofauna	0,2 – 2,0 mm	<i>Collembola, Protura, Acarida, Pseudoscorpionidea</i>
• Macrofauna or (Macro and megafauna)	2 – 20 mm > 20 mm	<i>Enchytraeidae, Amphipoda, Isopoda, Insecta, Mollusca, Lumbricidae, Insectivora</i>

Why preserve soil biodiversity and propagate knowledge about the soil fauna?

There are three main reasons for preserving soil biodiversity:

- *Ecological reasons:* decomposition and soil formation are key processes in nature and represent ecological services for the rest of the ecosystem. Soil organisms also represent the base for several above-ground food chains,
- *Utilitarian reasons:* soil biodiversity forms the basis of agriculture, some medicines and research in ecology and other disciplines,
- *Ethical reasons:* all life forms can be said to have an inherent value; many groups of soil organisms are very old in evolutionary terms.

Soil biodiversity must be included in the national strategies for long-term preservation of biodiversity to be developed following the Rio-Convention on Biological Diversity. This implies both pure conservation measures and sustainable use of soil (Kostecka & Butt 1999, 2001).

Conservation measures must include identification and protection of sites with unique, endemic or threatened soil communities. Other targets could be rare soil

types or intact soil profiles. Soil biodiversity is generally high in forests which may represent hot spots in agricultural landscapes. Measures for sustainable use must aim at keeping the biodiversity of agricultural and forest soils as high as possible. Chemicals and other treatments, which reduce soil biodiversity, should preferably be avoided. Conservation of soil biodiversity is a new and challenging field for soil biologists, conservation biology, and local, national and international authorities. There is a great need for strengthening both basic and applied soil biology, including taxonomy, and soil biologists should start the process by publicising the role, great complexity and threats to soil communities (Hagnar 1998).

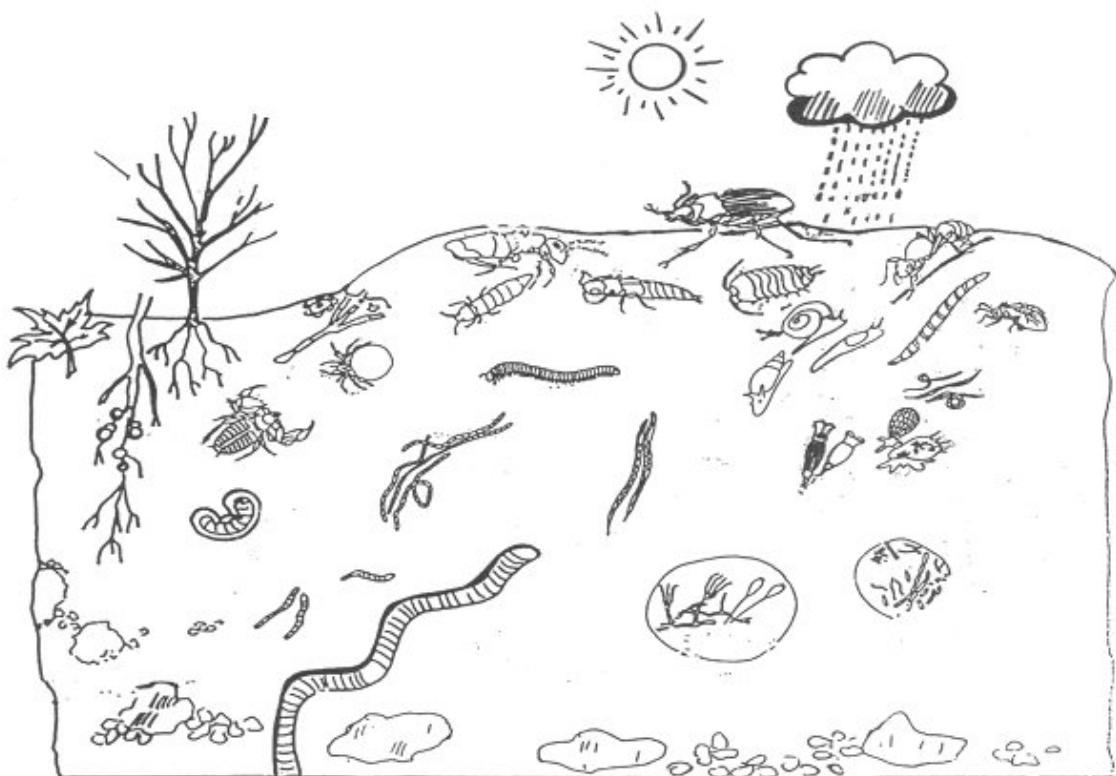


Fig. 2. Chosen soil animals

Ecological reasons:

The important ecosystem processes of energy flow, nutrient cycling, water infiltration and storage in soil are mediated by the soil biota, i.e. soil biota contribute to the maintenance of ecosystem integrity. The key role of decomposition represents an ecological service for the whole ecosystem, as 60-90% of terrestrial primary production is decomposed in the soil. If soils suddenly became sterile, all terrestrial ecosystems would collapse rapidly. Furthermore, soil represents a necessary substrate for a large part of the globe's biodiversity. Even the majority of terrestrial insects are soil dwellers for at least some stage in their life cycle. In this way, soil contributes indirectly to pollination for example, and directly or indirectly, the biodiversity of soil feeds a

number of above-ground food chains. Also within the soil itself, many species and groups have clear functions as important links in food chains. Symbiotic micro-organisms make digestion possible in earthworms and termites, and mutualism is generally important for soil biodiversity. Mycorrhizal fungi on tree roots make forest ecosystems possible at high latitudes, and more than 1000 actomycorrhizal species may occur in northern coniferous forests.

It is dangerous to think that we do not have to conserve the biodiversity of soil organisms, because many species may be redundant and can be lost without any consequences to the system, as long as the keystone species are maintained. It is a risky attitude in nature conservation, because we know too little about the role of single species. The precautionary principle in the Rio-Convention stresses that all doubt shall be in the favour of biodiversity; during temporary or permanent ecosystem stress, certain species may become important to retain ecosystem processes; and in the long-term species which seem redundant or which are very rare today may achieve important ecological functions or represent valuable genetic material for future evolution.

Utilitarian reasons:

The ecological arguments can to a certain degree be considered as utilitarian, since mankind requires the general function of nature. In agriculture, we rely upon many of the processes mentioned above. Soil is our most precious non-renewable resource. Certain species may even serve as bioindicators for classification of soils and detection of disturbances and pollution. Besides feeding the human population, soils contain organisms which are useful in pharmaceutical production: penicillin and cyclosporin are two well-known fungal products. The search for medicines from soil organisms is only beginning. Soil organisms also detoxify many of the waste products of human society, allowing use of the soil as a recipient as long as we do not simplify or stress the community too much.

Soil invertebrates are useful in solving different problems. Intensive management of their populations was started in 1950's, when the Americans began earthworms breeding, on a commercial scale, for different purposes. Thus, a new biotechnology – vermiculture, arose. The term vermiculture denotes breeding dense earthworm communities on organic waste. In this way:

- the organic waste is utilized and turned into manure, so called vermicompost, which, depending on its sanitary conditions, can be used for many purposes,
- earthworms are a rich source of protein, and, depending on its composition, it can be used for feeding aquarium fish, animals at zoos, poultry, pigs or fish in artificial ponds,

- dense communities of earthworms can be introduced to soils in order to accelerate the soil reclamation and increase its fertility; in some countries there are proposals of substituting heavy equipment with dense communities of chosen species,
- there are experiments in the field of biotechnology in which anti-cancer medicines are produced; earthworms bodies are a source of enzymes used in cosmetic, wine, brewery and textile industry.

At present more and more countries are interested in the utilisation of waste by means of earthworms, which is natural and simple. It has been proved that vermicomposting can be used for the management of: sewage sludge, waste from brewery and paper industries, from supermarkets and restaurants, animal manure (poultry, pig, cattle, sheep, goats, horses and rabbits) and residues from the mushroom industry. In France the search for new applications of vermicultures resulted in vermicomposting of urban organic waste. In Mexico, vermicompost is produced from residues from coffee production. In Cuba, vermicompost is produced mainly from cattle manure. However, pig and goat manures in addition to residues from coffee production, harvest residues and others also gain popularity.

In 1984 the *International Society of Vermiculture* was set up during the *International Conference on Earthworms in Waste and Environmental Management* in Cambridge. At this conference whole new perspectives on the development of compost production with the use of the earthworm *Eisenia fetida* were pointed to. Knowledge about the issue in question is spread by means of international meetings of lumbricologists and ecologists. They have been organized regularly since the 1960's. The *5th International Symposium on Earthworm Ecology* took place in the USA (Columbus, Ohio) in 1994. The last meetings were held in Vigo (Spain) in 1998, and in Cardiff University in Cardiff, Wales, UK, in 2002.

In Poland the knowledge about earthworms and their influence on soil fertility and utilization of organic waste is propagated by means of conferences entitled "Ecological and economic importance of earthworms". They were held in Rzeszów in 1994, 1996, 1998 and 2000 (see 1st , 2nd, 3rd and 4th National Conferences (1994, 1996, 1998, 2001)).

For faster composting of waste we can also use dense communities of diptera larva. However, studies on this issue are at present less advanced than on the issue of vermiculture. Soil invertebrates can be used not only for increasing soil fertility and acceleration of this process, but also as a biological tool against pests and protection of plants against diseases.

Ethical reasons:

Acting in the sense of sustainable development should apply to each and every human activity. Needs of the present generation should be satisfied in such a manner that future generations can also have their needs satisfied. The sustainable development should become the objective of activities, not only in agriculture or forestry, but also in various branches of industry, civil engineering or motorization. An important aspect of it is a broadly understood protection of biodiversity, including the biodiversity of soil life.

Current studies on quantity and quality ratio within the soil fauna

Functions of particular representatives of zoedaphon can be studied in different ways. Certain groups of organisms may be placed in sterile soil and their impact on such processes as e.g. organic material mineralization or humification is analysed. Alternatively, we can exclude the presence of a given group by means of biocides. Thus we can measure effects of the groups' absence. We can also study the dynamics of certain groups of soil animals by correlation of their activities with given processes occurring in the soil.

In classical experiments showing the effect of physical breakdown of organic matter by soil animals on the speed of its decomposition, nylon bags of different mesh sizes filled with discs cut from leaves were used. The bags were buried in the soil. The size of mesh differed, so that organisms of different size could enter the bag (tab.1). The results of experiments showed what follows: when mesh size was large (7 mm), and thus all micro-organisms and most of invertebrates could reach the leaves, the decomposition of leaves was more rapid than in the case of 0.5 mm mesh, when only micro-organisms, mites, *Collembola* and other micro-arthropods plus nematodes could enter. A disc cut out of a leaf, placed in a bag with 0.003 mm mesh (only micro-organisms could reach it) was left intact for about 9 months, it is as long as the experiment was conducted.

The results of the above experiment are an important complement to studies on the role of bacteria and fungi in the decomposition of organic matter. They clearly show the vital role of mesofauna and macrofauna breaking down plant residues as well as the importance of this process for activities of micro-organisms and consequently for the speed of matter cycle (Wood 1995).

Activities for conservation of soil fauna

The International Standard Organisation (ISO) is a worldwide federation of national standard bodies (ISO member bodies). It also contributes to conservation of soil biodiversity by constituting international standards for studies of the tolerance of soil fauna inhabitants to human degradation practices.

The first standard in this group applies to earthworms, who are perfect bioindicators of soil “health” in different ecosystems. Earthworms are relatively big, numerous and easy to find and identify. They are widely distributed in soil and rather motionless. They are in full contact with soil and inhabit it and use as a source of nutrition.

Toxic substances can contribute to the death of soil fauna inhabitants or influence the speed of their growth, maturation, reproduction and behaviour. They can be accumulated in earthworms’ bodies. This holds true for heavy metals, pesticides, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, dioxin, diesel oil, leaded petrol, oil-like substances etc.

Due to previous studies e.g. on the effect of different pesticides on earthworms, we not only have specific results but also methods, very close to natural methods, for studying acute toxicity as well as for studying the effect of pesticides and other toxic substances on reproduction and development of given species. Nowadays such studies are carried out in universal “artificial soil”, in which we can also study the negative influence of the substance under observation on soil animals through their epidermal tissues and digestion system.

A standard issued by ISO in 1993 enabled the determination of acute toxicity of *E. fetida*, using artificial soil substrate. After a long break, in the years 1993-1998 its second part was worked out: Determination of effects on reproduction. In 1999 the third part appeared: Guidance on the determination of effects in field situations (tab.2). In the same year a *Collembola* standard for tolerance studies was publicised.

Thus we can conclude that the issue of conservation of soil biodiversity has gained respect. At present national commissions of participating countries are dealing with the assessment of standards concerning *Enchytraeidae* and insects. In the very near future, tolerance standards for snails and nematodes, which are equally important for the proper functioning of soil, are to be worked out. The intensification of work on standards for studying the tolerance of soil fauna inhabitants to pollutants, that can be observed after 1998, may be a result of petition issued by soil zoologists in Dublin.

Table 2. Effect of work in ISO on an international standards

The title of International Standard	Number on list in ISO Standardization Documents
Soil quality — Effects of pollutants on earthworms (<i>Eisenia fetida</i>) — Part 1: Determination of acute toxicity using artificial soil substrate	ISO 11268-1:1993
Soil quality — Effects of pollutants on earthworms (<i>Eisenia fetida</i>) — Part 2: Determination of effects on reproduction	ISO 11268-2:1998
Soil quality — Effects of pollutants on earthworms — Part 3: Guidance on the determination of effects in field situations	ISO 11268-3:1999
Soil quality - Effects of pollutants on Collembola (<i>Folsomia candida</i>) – Determination of effects on reproduction	ISO 11267:1999
A/ „Soil quality – Effects of pollutants on enchytraeidae (<i>Enchytraeus</i> sp.) – Determination of effects on reproduction”	ISO/TC 190/SC 4/ WG 2 N 102 – ISO /WD 16387
A/ „Soil quality – Effects of pollutants on insect larvae (<i>Oxythyrea funesta</i>) – Determination of acute toxicity using artificial soil substrate”	ISO/TC 190/SC 4/ WG 2 N 157 –NWI
A/„Soil quality – Snails”	ISO/PWI 17125/ WG 2 31213
A/„Soil quality – Nematodes”	ISO/PWI 17147/ WG 2 31221

This document is not an International Standard. It is distributed for review and comment. It is subject to change without notice and may not be referred to as an International Standard

In spite of the recent progress in activities for the conservation of soil biodiversity, it must be stressed that there is still much to do. In addition to constant propagation of proper methods of land cultivation, we should pay special attention e.g. to the problem of incompetence of engineers controlling different kinds of work on the ground. Many works are carried out against the rule of careful management of soil fauna. Soil is translocated and nobody remembers that it is inhabited by numerous organisms. We cannot forget that both the soil under the new piece of construction work and its live content deserve preservation.

The document setting rules for expanding the airport in Manchester is the example of an attempt to develop more effective methods of protecting the soil fauna during the translocation of soil. The document has been described as “the most comprehensive programme for eco-development in UK” and it may serve as a stimulus for considerations and sound solutions in other construction works all over the world (Kostecka & Butt 1999). During construction of the second runway at Manchester Airport, environmental awareness was at the forefront. Top soil was being collected for use elsewhere on site, and species- rich grassland turves have been translocated gently to the adjoining sites. One major concern was for colonies of amphibians, themselves relocated away from areas where air traffic would soon take-off and land. In order to ensure adequate food for newts, and even for a badger colony, Manchester Airport were obliged to assess earthworm populations over a range of habitat types affected by the runway development. Researchers were approached, and have conducted an initial survey of 4 translocation sites. Results show that earthworm community structure, number and biomass are strongly influenced by the technique of translocation employed and the habitat created. Monitoring of existing earthworm communities will now continue at the airport over the next decade. Also, introduction of earthworms into grassland beside the new runway is set to occur and will itself need to be assessed (Butt 1998).

Biodiversity can also be protected by means of monitoring of earthworm populations in different environments changed anthropogenically, e.g. during restoration of landfill sites (Kostecka & Butt 2001).

Conclusions

1. Soil biodiversity must be included in the national strategies for long-term preservation of biodiversity following the Rio-Convention on Biodiversity. This implies both pure conservation measures and sustainable use of soil.
2. Since preservation of soil fauna is still undervalued, it is important to promote knowledge about the influence of soil fauna on soil fertility as well as global processes of matter cycle and its flow. People of all age groups have to be taught about the issue simultaneously and from now on.
3. Protection of biodiversity can be more effective by means of general monitoring of the most important groups in soil fauna. It also has to be stressed that everybody is obliged to the protection of biodiversity, and in particular during activities leading to the destruction of soil. When moving the soil we cannot forget that both the soil under the new piece of construction work and its live content should be preserved.

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6. SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT AND CONSUMER CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

ABSTRACTS

Cases as tools to create sustainable awareness

Prof. Ezio Manzini and Phd student Annamaria Formentini

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The paper will investigate how awareness and social involvement can be stimulated in the consumer citizen by looking at cases of success stories and best practices as tools to promote sustainable behaviors. The underlying assumption and the driving concepts of this paper are connected with the SSA EMUDE (*Emerging User Demands for Sustainable Solutions*) under the 6FP and with the collaboration between Politecnico and UNEP DTIE.

The use of cases has been widely recognized throughout the academy but lately also among companies and international organizations. More than ever, cases are seen as effective tools to communicate and to facilitate the growth and spread of good practices. Their potentiality in bridging the positive message of successful initiatives, projects or behaviors is substantiated by their role of models and examples for replication. This is particularly true when we talk about sustainable consumption related to citizenship.

The starting assumption that the consumer citizen might gain awareness on sustainable consumption by looking at existing cases originates from the idea of extrapolating promising signals that society emits, reinforce them and give them visibility. Thus, a collection of visions on how a sustainable pattern of consumption could be is considered to be a powerful tool for consumer citizens who want to change their lifestyle towards a more sustainable one. In other words, a set of stories of how people so far have been innovating towards more sustainable behaviours or towards practices that can be sustainably promising.

An example of collection of stories and cases could be made according to some specific functions of daily activities, which have been clustered in the following categories:

- Food: how/what to eat?
- Things: how to manage the household?
- Energy: how to provide energy?
- Work: how to work and study?
- Mobility: how to get around?
- Green: how to manage green in town?

These function-oriented themes delineate a platform where success stories of everyday life and sustainable behaviours are collected and show how people are moving towards sustainability. And they do such within the scope of the social learning process that the transition towards sustainability is calling for.

Debt prevention – a future workshop

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Where and how does today`s youth learn money management? How can they be steered towards coping with potential debt creation? Schoolchildren must learn and experience considerably more in education about money matters than simply receiving information about the credit business, instalment payments, insurance, etc., since the competence and skills that are required go above and beyond cognitive learning alone. What is required above all is meditation of a conscious awareness of their own desires and wishes for the future, which are all too often associated with (the acquisition of) material good.

An important component of the activities related to (teaching) an preventing debt creation is to track and bring light the associations between possessing and desiring material goods. After all, goods and possessions are utilized to make the individual`s life more comfortable and to gain recognition from society. In our search for a suitable method by which to offer students the means to develop an awareness of their attitudes towards consumption and to share and increase their knowledge in a group setting, we came across Robert Jungk`s concept of a future workshop.

The future workshop of debt prevention contains methodological game components and information building blocks structured into four work phases which will be explained in the presentation.

Social awareness and responsibility: An assessment and recommendations for teaching methodologies

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This paper deals with an assessment and evaluation of social awareness and responsibility as well as recommendations for teaching methodologies in the field of sustainable consumer behaviour and consumer citizenship. The objectives of the study were twofold: (1) to investigate and evaluate the status quo of social awareness and responsibility in Bulgaria in order to determine their drivers and inhibitors especially for young people and students; and (2) to develop initial methodological framework or format for teaching sustainable consumer behaviour at university level, which can be used further as a practically applicable curricula as well as a tool to promote attitudes toward social responsibility and develop knowledge and skills in the field of consumer citizenship education. The research will be done on several consecutively linked stages. As a first step a sequence of focus group interviews will be carried out in order to determine the research problem areas. Then questionnaires aimed at different target groups (students, lecturers and teachers, consumers) will be developed. During the second stage the field work will be done to collect the necessary information. The most important is the third stage. During it the collected information will be analysed and evaluated. Then a conceptual model of drivers and inhibitors of social awareness and responsibility will be established. The proposed model will be partly tested for further operationalization. As a final result of the study an initial methodological framework for teaching sustainable consumer behaviour and consumer citizenship at university level will be provided.

The conceptual mapping of Consumer Sciences in the United Kingdom in Higher Education in relation to Consumer Citizenship

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Issues of consumption from provider and consumer perspectives and aspects of citizenship have become areas that Consumer Sciences courses in the Higher

Education Sector in the United Kingdom have needed to take note of, although some would argue that they have always been an intrinsic part of the area from the heritage of Home Economics. As the subject field of Consumer Sciences has developed the question as how course design has responded in relation to these issues has been in need of study. In order to track these changes in the UK, research is currently being undertaken to develop appropriate concept maps.

The aim of the current research has therefore been to analyse the subject field construction at Higher Education level for degree and post-graduate courses in the UK in the last four years, using prospectus, handbook and official data in terms of stated subject study areas. In addition semi-structured interviews with members of staff involved in the construction and delivery of these courses is currently being undertaken and analysed to produce comparative concept maps. It is also expected to relate the research as to how consumer citizenship is perceived as a significant area.

Initial analysis of the subject field indicated that in the last four years there had been a period of relative stability in terms of course content and emphasis, but with an increasing focus on the consumer particularly as an individual, not necessarily in the context of a family. It need to be considered how far citizenship, consumer education and personal, social and health education are perceived as being an intrinsic part of the interpretation and concept map for Consumer Sciences or whether the approach is more fragmented.

Consumer citizenship education in the comprehensive school in Finland

Kaija Turkki

The aim of the basic general education in Finland is “to try to help the students become balanced, fit, responsible, independent, creative, cooperative, and peace-loving people and members of society. The comprehensive school is to educate its students in morality and good manner that gives the student those skills which are needed for the development of the student’s personality in a diversified manner and for training them for the society.” These are the citations that fit well to describe the idea of consumer citizenship too. On this grounds it is relevant to ask *how* and *where* it is supported and practiced during school years. In this presentation the focus will be at the level of the national curriculum in Finland that has been under the renewing process during last years.

The aim of this paper is to make comparisons between the present (accepted in 1994) and the new (since Autumn 2004) curriculum regarding the presence of

consumer and citizenship issues. The main emphasis will be paid on the general framework of the curriculum including intercurricular issues, and on some selected subjects as home economics, history and social studies, and health studies. Some conceptual analysis will be made to find out the concepts used, the emphasis made, and to reveal the contexts in which consumer-citizenship is introduced. Some proposals for new frameworks in understanding the consumer-citizenship education will be discussed. The research may also reveal some requirements to prepare supporting material for teachers to make consumer-citizenship issues more visible and understandable. The material is needed to help teachers to produce the local curricula at school level.

PROCEEDINGS

Cases as tools to create sustainable awareness

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A shared vision on sustainable consumption

As we read in the last issue of the Worldwatch Institute “we need more examples to show that we have the means to apply the cleaner production concept, to let consumers make informed choices and to demand and provide environmental information” (Worldwatch Institute, *State of World 2004*).

Starting from this assertion, the paper wants to demonstrate how the use of good and best practices can contribute to the social learning process that the transition towards sustainability calls for². And it aims at doing so within the scope of the *Consumer Citizenship Network* that works to understand how the consumer can contribute daily to sustainable development.

To adopt more sustainable patterns requires first to become aware and to be informed about what can be changed and how consumers can really take action in the everyday life. Therefore, a shared vision on sustainable consumption has to be developed and promoted. This can be done by providing visions of what is actually happening in the consumption system and by creating scenarios of sustainable ways of living.

Cases of sustainable behaviours can be used as a tool to create a social imagination on sustainability, therefore a tool to catalyse change. The underlying assumption is that best practices work as models for replication and are able to build a bridge between empirical solutions, research and policy.

² “The transition towards sustainability will be a social learning process in which human beings will gradually find out (...) how to live well consuming (much) less while regenerating the quality of the environment that is both the global ecosystem and the local context in which they happen to live” (Manzini E., Jegou F., 2003).

Design and scenarios

The proposed work originates from a strategic design approach, where the importance of a common vision is fundamental for the development of those visions and scenarios. Thus, taking some promising examples of on-going sustainable solutions around the world, we study how they can be used as cultural prototypes and initiatives promoters for the generation of a new culture, that is the base for the transition towards forms of more sustainable consumption.

In this framework, the role of the designer is the one of who produces not only artefacts, but also scenarios of daily life and new ideas of wellbeing. It is also to contribute to give visibility to these ideas, by encouraging a social design process, to which designers with their disciplinary tools might contribute as facilitators. To make scenarios means to detect the promising signals and clarify how they could turn to reality. By doing this, choices towards a more sustainable future are facilitated and promoted. Moving from the awareness that the transition towards sustainability in its daily life dimension would mean billions of people redefining the projects of their life, and moving from two key questions “how can people redesign their consumption behaviours?” and “how can people change and innovate towards more sustainable lifestyles?”, the role of design appears to be crucial: what can be designed is the result of an interpretation of images and ideas that have been socially produced. How the supply system can change its current models can potentially be determined by the demand system itself (Manzini E., Jegou F., 2003).

Thanks to a new global concern, new consumption patterns and new drivers are arising, though they are not so evident and within everybody’s reach. To extend the information on what is happening around and to make isolated success stories become widely known, a common communication method has gained attention and is often in use as a powerful tool for changing values and catalysing action: the use of case histories and best practices collections and databases.

Cases as tools for change

Among the various research methodologies, case studies were formerly used in the academic domain especially in the law, medical and social sciences, to extend later in the business and management disciplinary areas and even later across many other fields, such as design (Yin R. 1994). The increasing use of case studies took place even further and nowadays many institutions utilise them either as outputs of their investigations or as the core topic of their project³.

³ See for example YouthXChange cases, the MOST clearinghouse Best Practices, the NASCA web database, the Eco.Cathedra eco-design products database.

The uses of case histories and best practice collections vary a lot according to the objective, the methodology and the targeted public. Though, one common trait can be found when they are used within the sustainability area: the will of raising awareness and bridging the correct information in order to promote and catalyse change for action.

Given that the transition towards more sustainable consumption patterns calls for a change in the consumer behaviour, globally the process that is underway when realising case histories on good practices mainly follows three steps:

- tell the consumer WHAT has been done (what?),
- tell him HOW it has been done (how?),
- give him the tools to actually CHANGE (act now!)

Even if from one side it is considered as a way to spread westernised and consumer-driven lifestyles, the globalisation of communication and the information society can also be seen as an opportunity for these awareness-raising processes. As a matter of fact, the communication of sustainability related concepts seems to rely quite often on these tools and methods.

Promising signs in the consumption patterns

Driven by these first assumptions and borrowing some basic concepts from sociology of consumption, there is a global accordance upon the recent empowerment of the consumer, due to major changes in society. As Heiko Steffens points out, “today’s paradigm is of the conscientious consumer citizen who ‘civilises the market economy’ and contributes to sustainability” (Thoresen V. 2003).

Furthermore, grass-roots initiatives and forms of bottom-up innovation are significantly reshaping the demand system. Since globalisation and the information and communication technologies spread out, civil action has increased its power in networking, developing strategies and putting them into practice in a way that has never happened before.

Consumption is of course in part a social challenge that will require effective use of government regulations and fiscal policy to achieve the common good. But more so than most issues, changes in consumption practices will require millions of individual decisions that can only begin at the grassroots (Worldwatch Institute, *State of the World*2004).

It is globally recognised that some actions towards more sustainable consumption patterns are occurring and though some environmental trends seem to be alarming, on the other hands there are many signs that a number of

individuals and organisations around the world have begun the transition towards a more sustainable consumption.

It is by looking at those signs and at how they are communicated and used as success stories that can help in the awareness process to make the consumer more aware and conscious about his power of change of the production/consumption system.

EMUDE: promoting and orienting a social learning process

The following scheme represents the “virtuous cycle” that cases of social innovation might activate to re-orient the societal actors towards a more sustainable consumption. The scheme has been realised for the SSA (Specific Support Action) **EMUDE**⁴ (*Emerging User Demands for Sustainable Solutions*) within the 6FP.

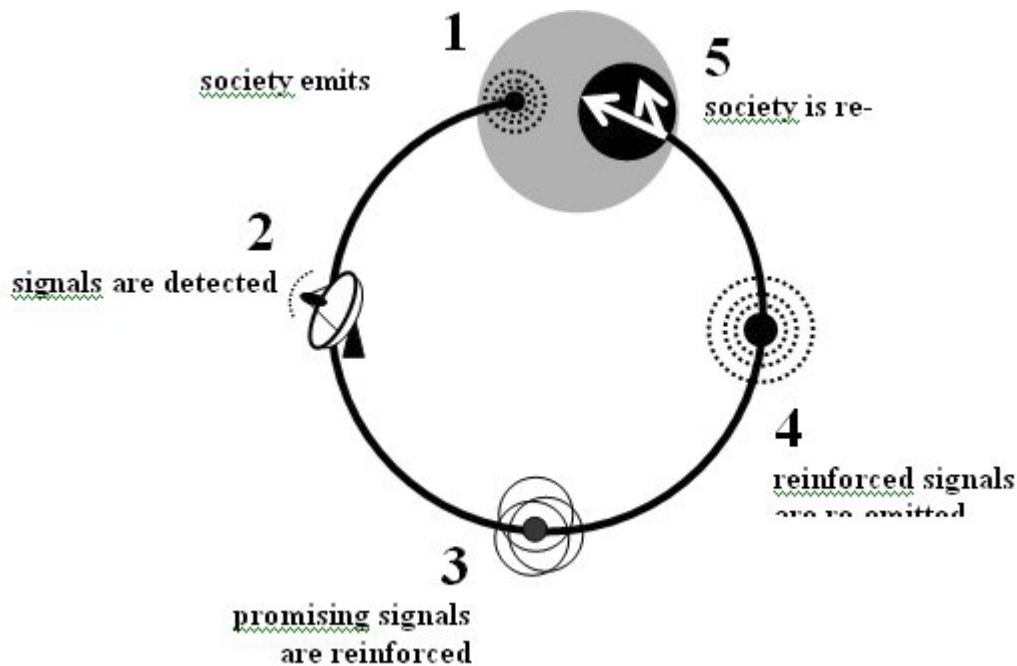


Fig. 1. Scheme of social innovation virtuous cycle

The underlying assumption of the project is that to see the emerging users demands and to recognize their implications are the first necessary steps towards the definition of new industrial and consumption approaches. And this is what EMUDE is collaborating to. The problem is that emerging demands and bottom-up innovations are not easily visible and recognizable. To overcome this

⁴ EMUDE (*Emerging User Demands for Sustainable Solutions*) is a Specific Support Action within the 6th Framework Programme. It is a consortium of 10 partners and a network of 8 schools of design, coordinated by Politecnico di Milano.

problem EMUDE utilizes an original methodology, the information hunting (a methodological transfer from the fashion industry) and an original group of sensitive observers, the Antennas (that are based in 8 schools of design of different European –members and candidate- countries). Given their local dimension, these new emerging phenomena are “invisible” at the global scale and through the traditional statistical enquiry. In fact, being related to minorities, they escape statistics; being radically innovative, they appear where people is not looking at (at least if they are looking to society in a traditional way); being driven by a variety of reasons, they cannot be recognized on the basis of their explicit motivation (and we cannot discover sustainable demands simply asking to people if they are behaving in a sustainable way and /or if they are willing to have sustainable solutions) (EMUDE, *Description of Work*).

To be able to see “the new” that is emerging, what we have to do is to look at the micro-scale, to see what locally is happening and to be able to select, in the complexity of the present society, the cases that, for some reasons, appear as “promising” and to give to them an higher visibility. To get these results we have to organize a network of sensitive observers, the Antennas, that, for their position and expertise, may be particularly reactive to the emergence of “the new and promising”. In fact, to see it, it is necessary to use a methodology based on the direct observation. In other words: the methodology that has to be adopted is similar to the one used in the fashion sector to detect the new emerging “street styles” in the cool places, called “cool hunting”. Transferred to our field of activities, we will call this methodology information hunting: a way of gathering information based on a network of sensitive observers (EMUDE, *Description of Work*).

Facilitating the “virtuous cycle” of social innovation

EMUDE deals with demands that express breakthrough changes in behaviors and, consequently, ask for breakthrough strategies on the supply side. Facing these phenomena what EMUDE does is to observe, collect and select “signals” of breakthrough innovations (both on the demand and on the supply side) and, moving from here, to operate to reinforce them, i.e. to make them more visible and clear, and to re-introduce them in the society—through some selected stakeholders.

In other words, EMUDE aims to facilitate a “virtuous cycle” inside the on-going, wide and contradictory social learning process towards a sustainable system of production and consumption.

More precisely, the virtuous cycles that EMUDE intends to facilitate is the following: (1) society emits some (weak but promising) signals of innovation (in our case: sustainable behaviors and promising bottom-up innovation); (2)

promising signals are detected (in our case, the info-hunting activity, i.e. the collection of the promising examples); (3) promising signals are reinforced (in our case: the info-shaping activity, i.e. the selection of these cases and the improvement of their visibility); (4) reinforced promising signals are re-emitted (in our case: the info-communication actions, i.e. the dissemination as a program of communication targeted to well-defined stakeholders, decision makers and opinion leaders); (5) society evolution is re-oriented (in our case: RTD, managerial strategies and final users perception and demands are informed/inspired/influenced by the proposed scenario and roadmaps).

Facing this question, the EMUDE assumption is that, in the complexity of contemporary society, emerging users behaviors and bottom-up promising innovations are appearing. In particular, for what regards these emerging behaviors they frequently express new demands of products and services. I.e. demands that are expressed in different ways and with different levels of awareness, by people that, having sharply re-oriented their behaviors, express (radically) new demands of product and services.

It may be observed that, dealing with this issue, there are at least two main trends: one “tradition-oriented” and one “innovation-oriented”. The first one uses models and tools from the past, and its tendency to withdraw from the modern society. The innovation-oriented one, on the contrary, develops new models and tools (a way of doing that may be defined as “sustainable modernization”).

Examples of promising cases

Adopting the functional thinking approach definitions they may be defined as: food preparation, house keeping, communication and distance work, local mobility, caring for people, home heating and cooling, entertainment and body care. Some well known practical examples of emerging users behaviors are: to choose organic sustainable food and products that are delivered in the framework of a fair trade system; to share or to pool cars and domestic appliances (as for instance the washing machines); to adopt new concepts of mobility; to enter in a co-housing initiative; to participate to a local exchange trade system (LETS); to adopt sustainable behaviors in relation to heating and cooling the home; to adopt new concepts of working and learning at home or in the neighborhood.

The following examples are selected cases from *Sustainable Everyday. Scenarios of Urban Life*⁵ and they are described according to 6 function-oriented areas:

1. Food (how do you prepare food?): ex. organic and seasonal produce
2. Things (how do you take care of things and the house?): ex. new barter organisations
3. Work (how do you work and study?): ex. distance working centres
4. Mobility (how do you move around the city?): ex. use cars better
5. Energy (how do you produce and use energy?): ex. sustainable cities and districts
6. Green (how do you look after vegetation?): ex. community gardens

1. Organic and seasonal produce

Some organic fruit and vegetable home delivery organisations offer solutions that enable farmers to establish direct connections with the urban end user, providing a delivery service for seasonal fruit and vegetables. In practice, they supply the subscriber with a weekly crate of fruit and vegetables, the contents of which vary according to the season and what has actually been harvested. This is the case of *Odin* in The Netherlands (www.odin.nl), *Le Campanier* in France (www.lecampanier.com) and *Aarstiderne* in Denmark (www.aarstiderne.com). A similar service is also provided by *Handan Organic Vegetables* in China.

2. New barter organisations

New forms of barter are appearing all over the world. Organisations that advocate such dealings are known by various names: LETS (Local Exchange Trading Systems, www.ithacahours.org), SEL (Système d’Echange Local, www.selidaire.org/logitheg/intal/sec.htm), BdT (Banche del Tempo, www.comune.fe.it/bancadeltempo/bankitalia.htm), but they are based on the same principle, i.e. solidarity, reciprocation and exchange (of goods and services, but also time and skills). These organisations constitute the contemporary, metropolitan evolution of the mutual help that neighbours have always given each other to accomplish everyday life activities of taking care of the house.

3. Distance working centres

The spread of Information and communication technology is changing the way we work and the places where we work. This has led to a request for new support services. Consequently, we see the opening of the neighbourhood offices (tele-cottages) and support services for people who work from their own

⁵ *Sustainable Everyday. Scenarios of Urban Life* is an exhibition and a book realised by Ezio Manzini and François Jegou (www.triennale.it/triennale/sito_html/quotidiano/index.html). Scenarios of what life could be like while carrying out everyday activities are presented and supported by real cases.

homes. Examples come from *Mizen Telecottage* in Ireland (www.westcorkweb.ie.mizen/tc.html), *Proxima* in Italy (www.asnm.com/proxima) and *Virtual Office* in Brazil (www.virtualoffice.com.br).

4. Use cars better

Car sharing (a way to optimise the use of cars) and car-pooling (a way to optimise each car journey) are initiatives that have developed in the field of alternative mobility over the past few years, giving rise to a real international movement. Just to give an idea of the size and the scale of this movement we can name *Stattauto* in Germany (www.stattauto.de), *I Go* in Chicago (www.i.go.cars.org), *City Car Club* in Finland (www.citycarclub.net), *Autoshare* in Canada (www.autoshare.com), *Mobility* in Switzerland (www.mobility.ch), *ICS* in Italy (www.icscarsharing.it).

5.

Many cities have developed plans to exploit various renewable energy sources and construct bio-climatic buildings. The Kronsberg case in Hannover can be quoted as a first example: on a neighbourhood scale, it integrates solar panels, wind generations, co-generations systems and bio-climatic building with high standards of environmental performance. Other similar examples are in Vauban, Freiburg (www.vauban.de); Goteborg in Sweden (www.goteborg2050.nu); Vikki in Finland, Las Gaviotas in Colombia and Pefki in Greece.

6. Community gardens

The local answer to the lack of vegetation can be seen in self help organisations that aim to recuperate run down or marginal urban areas and turn them into shared gardens. In these gardens, residents have the opportunity to cultivate allotments of land and while doing so exchange expertise and share gardening experiences. In Great Britain alone, there are 1.200 cases of community gardens, members of the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (www.farmgarden.org.uk). However, it is possible to name many other examples e.g. Alice Griffith Community Garden in San Francisco, Clinton Community Garden and Green Guerrillas in New York, US and Orti del Tempo Libero in Milan, Italy (www.cantierisola.org/bio/altre/schede/boscoincitta.htm). Further, the Canadian association Evergreen (www.evergreen.ca), which develops programmes for the naturalisation of urban areas with direct citizen participation, should also be included in this perspective.

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Debt prevention – A Future workshop

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Where and how does today's youth learn money management? How can they be steered towards coping with potential debt creation?

Schoolchildren must learn and experience considerably more in education about money matters than simply receiving information about the credit business, instalment payments, insurance, etc., since the competence and skills that are required go above and beyond cognitive learning alone. What is required above all is meditation of a conscious awareness of their own desires and wishes for the future, which are all too often associated with (the acquisition of) material good,

An important component of the activities related to (teaching) and preventing debt creation is to track and bring light the associations between possessing and desiring material goods. After all, goods and possessions are utilized to make the individual's life more comfortable and to gain recognition from society. Consumer goods satisfy wishes and desires, serve a certain social purpose, and last but not least, also function as rewards and affirmation. As such, strong emotions are associated with consumer goods, and this emotional charge is frequently overlooked in educational programmes for youth. Yet, it is precisely these hopes and desires for a comfortable and secure future that determine our actions.

Advertising has captured these associations and addresses itself especially to this emotionality when seeking to arouse an interest and desire for certain products. Recognizing this process and experiencing it in oneself is an important component in the future on debt prevention. Saint d'Éxupéry pinpointed this when he wrote:

“If you want to build a ship, call upon people not to draw up plans and build the ship, but teach them to desire the experience of the wide open seas.”

This appeal to freedom and self-determination has been answered in the flood of advertisement for consumer goods and manipulated to serve the purposes of the advertisers. The dream factory has always known the answer when young

people seek to conquer the world and gain recognition, and it is adept at connecting these desires with their products` image.

Debt creation is also related to possessing things and displaying them to others, either to be on a par with them or to distinguish oneself from them. In today`s consumer society conspicuous consumption and the associated social status-seeking are so predominant that debt creation is taken for granted. The ease of obtaining credit favours this situation.

If an educational programme on the subject of debt prevention is to succeed, it must not overlook these associated factors. In our search for a suitable method by which to offer students the means to develop an awareness of their attitudes towards consumption and to share and increase their knowledge in a group setting, we came across Robert Jungk`s concept of a future workshop. In numerous workshops we were guided by Jungk`s thought that “there is more knowledge in everyone that he is aware of; what is important is to bring this >treasure< to light.”

We wanted to depart from the method of >preaching< to students and have found a method in the future workshop concept that enables students to develop greater self-awareness and to involve them in the learning and acting process more meaningfully so that they may approach new areas of learning more independently.

We have expanded on the model of the future workshop through information blocks that have thus created a sort of learning workshop. The differentiated methods in the individual learning phases are designed to enable students to recognize now the importance of issues and problems that may only arise much later in their daily lives. In implementing methods that are presented as a game, they are motivated to deal with issues that, if taught in a traditional sense, would come off rather awkwardly.

The future workshop of debt prevention contains methodological game components and information building blocks structured into four work phases. In the **Orientation phase** participants` expectations of the workshop are noted, and their attitudes to the specific issue of debt prevention are compared with the current programme design.

In the **second phase**, the so-called **Awareness phase**, we approach the issues in order to gain new knowledge and, through group work games, to look at the subject of debt from all aspects. In the discussion of household expenses it is absolutely necessary to deal with the topic of advertisement. Again, students will work out results and experiences interactively. Our work has demonstrated

that this method contributes significantly to building the motivation that is vital in the later phases of the future workshop. The students' latent knowledge and attitudes towards advertisement are brought to the fore and applied in creative role-plays. Participants, in small working groups, have a choice of media through which they may execute their given task, such as making a video, creating a skit, compiling a photo collage, or producing a talk show. The given task may be to create a loan shark's TV commercial, to enact a sales excursion during which peddlers sell their wares, or to rouse interest with a talk show or photo collage with the aid of newspaper ads or radio spots. The individual working groups are given specific assignments and detailed instructions, although the actual work procedure is left to their own discretion. It has been shown that by investigating how a professional advertising agency actually works students gain valuable knowledge.

It is an important goal of consumer pedagogy to empower youth to assess advertisement critically so as to establish an independent viewpoint within society. In the foreground of these activities, it is necessary to work intensively on watching and analysing advertising on television and in the print media to see what conscious means are implemented that lead consumers to obtain goods that they might otherwise not necessarily purchase.

In the information components >Youth Marketing in Credit Institutions<, >Children and Advertisement<, >Debt<, and >Insurance<, important details are transmitted in brief that crop up again in the method elements significant to the games of >Creditpoly< and >Insurance poker<. The >Creditpoly< and >Insurance poker< games are based on the structure of the well-known conventional games in that one throws the dice, cards are drawn that tell you if fate will wrap you up in more debt or if fortune will bring sudden windfall. Students learn something about the causes of debt creation through these games. In >Insurance poker< they learn something about sensible and non-sensible insurance policies in a given case. Both games are, however, only simulations and cannot as such wholly recreate reality. In the >Creditpoly< game the individual groups must pay careful attention that the rules are obeyed, but it is nevertheless foreseeable that debt creation may cause frustration in some students. The emotional aspects of being indebted must be omitted from discussions that follow up on the games. More in-depth information building blocks are part and parcel of these games.

We are grateful of the German Caritas Organization in Freiburg for providing us with the video >Cash for Kids< as a case study. We highly recommend that the video be shown to the whole classroom in its entire 9-minute length. The film shows impressively how closely debt creation and friendship and love are connected. We know from the reality of debt counselling that this is indeed often

the case. In the follow-up discussion to the video, or as the case maybe, in the reading of the film transcript, it should be made clear to students what commitments they are taking on if they act as the guarantor of a loan.

The two game elements >Downward Spiral Scenario< and >Dream Life< come closure to the awareness phase and as a sort of pedagogical climax. For one, students are confronted with the fictitious scenario of a household that is (heavily) indebted. They are then encouraged to design a coping strategy for an imaginary person. At the end of the work in the >Downward Spiral Scenario< they are asked to present their own personal >Dream Life< in terms of how they envision their lives at 20, 25, 30,65 years of age, in terms of career and family. The paradoxes which emerge between the individual and fictitious ideal lives and the scenarios will be significant again for later activities in the future workshops.

In the Fantasy Phase the issue of future quality of life is investigated in various ways in order to uncover the associations between personal consumer behaviour and the notion of quality of life.

In the card game >What do you need to be happy?< we have come up with similar results in past workshops; that is that despite students' awareness that the future workshop is about the relationship of spending behaviour and debt creation (the desire to possess), the answer cards often contain the following responses: "My happiness is largely dependent on my having friends and my mother and father having more time and paying more attention to me." Other non-material things such as "staying healthy" and >"safe environment" were and are often mentioned. It is interesting to note that students have a definite sense that the potential to have and possess is not the only key to happiness in life. Why it is that the material is so often in the foreground is a question that must be investigated together with the students. Various key questions are meant to get to the bottom of the matter in the group discussions.

Students are encouraged to deal with their visions and hopes for the future by means of the guided fantasy Voyage on the >Dream Ship<. Students sit in a circle and listen to the account of a dream journey and allow images to take in their minds. At the end of the dream journey they are each asked to draw their dream on a sheet of paper, either in detail or with a few symbols, as they please. The pictures allow them to express and define their desires via a medium other than language. In pair discussions the students talk about their visions and then provide feedback to the whole group. Results are compiled.

From the contradictions resulting in the awareness phase and the fantasy phase we move to the **Implimentation phase** and try to look for ways to realize these

dreams in real life. It is part of the learning process to become aware of varying viewpoints through role plays, to practice reactance, to discuss controversial viewpoints and to take the first steps to putting what has been learned into practice. The role plays contain a general description of a situation and the roles for the various players. The following situations are enacted: a visit to a loan shark, buying a new suit that may be too expensive, what to do if someone shows up at the door and wants to sell a subscription. There is also a >Less is More< scenario where lifestyle and the associated expenses to maintain it are discussed. Another vital component is gathering on-site information such as at a bank or savings and loan institution where pertinent questions that have been worked out beforehand are asked.

It is important to keep in mind that the procedure to be followed in a future workshop ought to be flexible in what that materials and game elements be utilized by the teacher as a sort of toolbox from which he uses and applies his instruments to fit the knowledge level of the students involved. The methods have been tried and tested in various workshops and, as such, have proven useful for both classroom instruction and teacher training in the future. It would, of course, be fruitful to envision the future workshop taking place over the course of a few schedule project days since it becomes rather more difficult if there are only two or three-hour time blocks allotted for it. As the future workshop relies heavily on visualisation. E.g., poster work, a concentrated time block would be better enable students to pick up where they left off.

Social awareness and responsibility: An assessment and recommendations for teaching methodologies

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Background

Citizenship education is an important vehicle for learning about today's society. Today's consumer requires greater knowledge and a broader range of skills than ever before. People will be best equipped to participate effectively in the marketplace if they have received systematic preparation for their role as consumers by the time they leave the educational system. Different schools of thought have offered diverse perspectives and suggested distinct focus of analysis in the field of consumer citizenship education (Alba and Hutchinson, 1987; Block, 1994; Dawes, 1980; Lindblom, 1997; Park and Mittal, 1985). Although the authors define it using a common background they put the emphasis in their research on different components and aspects such as political literacy (Kerr, 1998), consumer literacy (Bannister and Monsma, 1982), social awareness (Gabriel and Lang, 1995). This paper believes that consumer citizenship education should both reflect the interdependence between the political, social and economic spheres, and balance this relationship in synergistic ways. As McGregor (2002) stated, it should enable students to gain an appreciation of the links between the values and principles of the market economy and the values and principles of a democracy, often seen to be at odds with each other.

The use of the conceptual framework of the components of consumer citizenship education is based on previous work. Lindblom (1977) frames his analysis of the major politicoeconomic systems of the world into three classes of social control: persuasion, exchange, and authority. John P. Knapp (1991) has three elements in

his analysis: individual, business, society. Hastings and Elliott (1993) use 3Es – education, environment, and enforcement – in their micro level framework. Incorporating aforementioned elements with the results of the work of Michael L. Rothschild (1999) who suggests a tripartite classification of education, marketing, and law, we propose the 3S conceptual model of the components of consumer citizenship education (Fig. 1).

The interdependence between the elements in the 3S conceptual model is very important especially if the model will be implemented for students studying economics or related subjects. Their education should be dual-purposed, because they will work as managers⁶ but also will “act” as consumers. Social awareness and responsibility are both an outcome of and drivers for the continuous and successful process of consumer citizenship education.

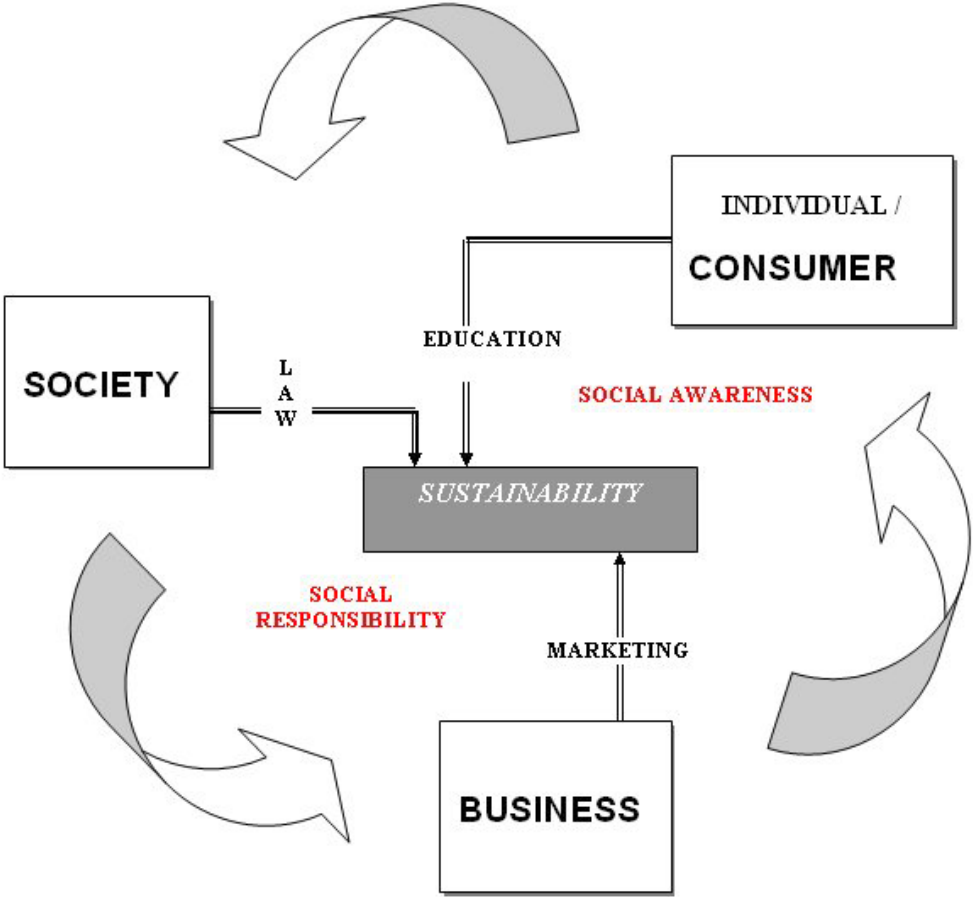


Figure 1. 3S Conceptual Model

⁶ *Manager* is used here as a generic term that includes, but is not limited to, various persons such as civil servants, nonprofit administrators, legislators, and/or private sector managers who attempt to direct the behaviour of individuals for the good of society.

Increasing complexity, rapid change, and global perspective are the characteristics of the world in which today's students will live their adult lives. Consumer education - the process of learning to manage personal resources and make decisions (Bannister et al. 1992) - is essential in this challenging environment. Knowledge of economics, personal finance, and consumer rights and responsibilities can help people function as more independent, productive, and informed citizens. However, surveys (Bonner 1993; Brobeck 1991) showing glaring deficiencies in the consumer competence of young people are cause for concern.

Consumer citizenship education should be multidisciplinary by design. Therefore, consumer citizenship concepts have to be incorporated throughout the whole university curriculum as a separate subject, or to be integrated into existing subject, or to be integrated into several existing subjects.

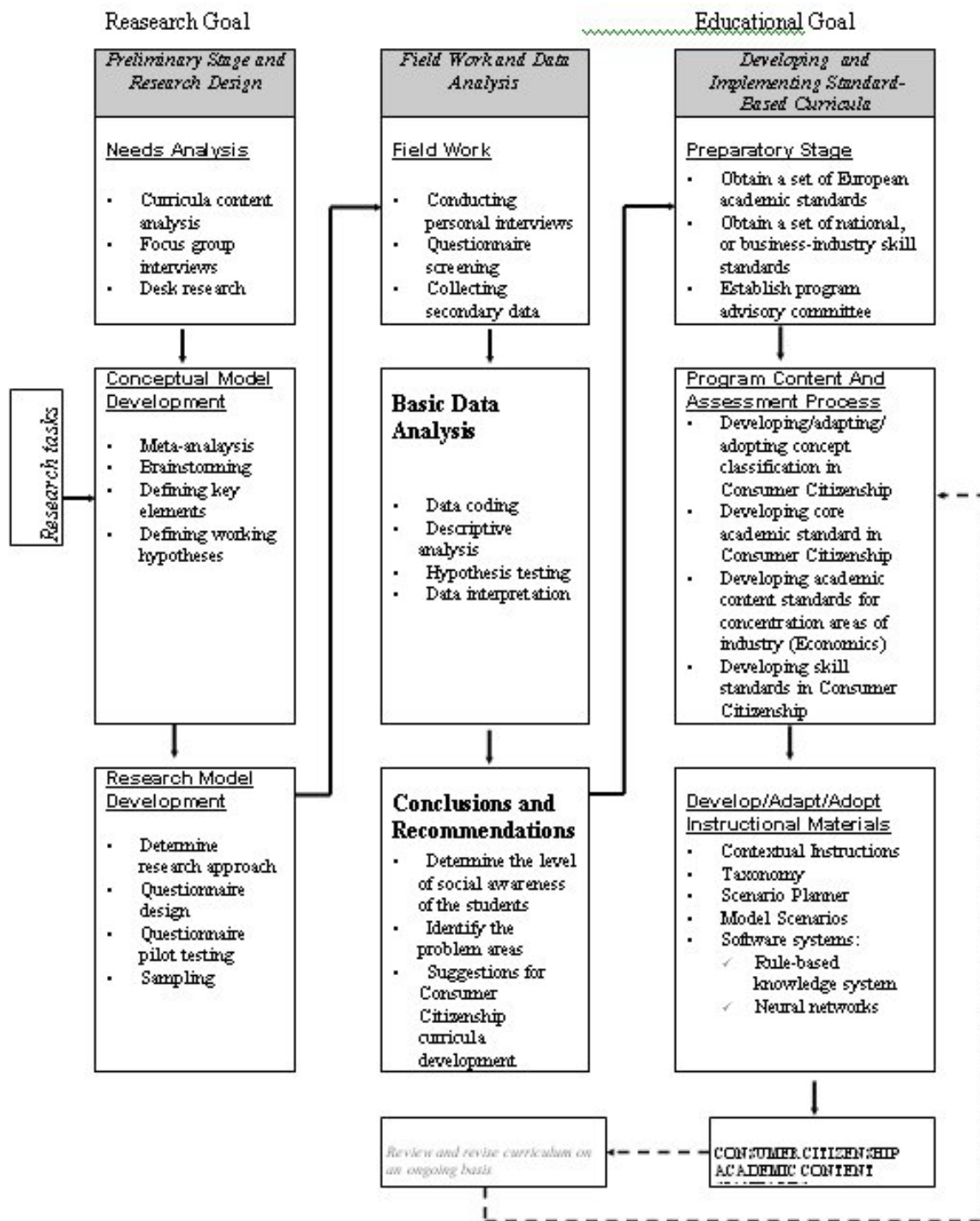
Methodology and Research Method

The objectives of the study were twofold: (1) to investigate and evaluate the status quo of social awareness and responsibility among students at Varna University of Economics in order to determine the drivers and inhibitors; and (2) to develop initial methodological framework or format for consumer citizenship education at university level, which can be used further as a practically applicable curricula as well as a tool to promote attitudes toward social responsibility and develop knowledge and skills in the field of consumer citizenship education.

The research follows the planned sequence of steps presented in Figure 2. The first stage is a preliminary one including needs analysis and both conceptual and research models development. During this phase a sequence of focus group interviews have been carried out in order to determine the research problem areas. We accomplished a curricula content analysis to determine the level of consumer citizenship issues contribution. Further we collected information about the number and type of consumer complaints for the year 2003 in Varna region⁷. Then a conceptual and research models have been developed with a questionnaires aimed at students as a target group. During the second stage the field work has be done to collect the necessary information.

⁷ This information has been submitted to us by the Committee on Trade and Consumer Protection.

Figure 2. Research Methodology



The questionnaire⁸ has two separate parts. The first part focuses on students' attitudes and behaviour toward the quality of educational service, students' relationship with the labour bureau and labour offices, and student organisations. The aim of this part of the questionnaire is to measure students' civic attitudes

⁸ The questionnaire is available from the authors under request.

and position. The second part contains questions about the students' behaviour as consumers.

The quota sample has been drawn from total 2 554 students studying in their 3rd and 4th year. The first screening criteria was year of study, the second one – faculty and the third one – gender. A total number of 122 students has been interviewed. The personal interviews has been conducted during the period late November – early December 2003.

All the data has been processed using SPSS software. Descriptive analysis and hypothesis testing has been done. The conclusions and recommendations made at the end of the second stage have been used as an input to the third stage of the research process. During the last phase we propose a framework for developing academic content and skill standards in consumer citizenship in order to implement them in our university curricula. The instructional materials will be a subject of our future work.

Results

The content analysis of the subjects taught in Bachelor Degree has been done in order to determine the level of contribution of the topics related to sustainable consumer behaviour and consumer citizenship. The results were rather discouraging. There are several subjects integrated in their syllabus such topics but more than half of them are elective. There are only two subjects – Sociology and Basics of Law – which are studied from all students at the university in their background level (1st year of study) (Table 1).

Table 1. Subjects Taught in Bachelor Degree with Issues on Consumer Citizenship

Subject	Semester	Type	Focus on Consumer Citizenship
Sociology	I	Obligatory	High
Ecology	II	Elective	Low
Basics of Law	I	Obligatory	Medium
Commercial Law	III	Obligatory	High
Economic Psychology	III	Elective	Medium
Social Psychology	IV	Elective	Medium
Economic Sociology	II	Obligatory	High
Quality Management	IV / VI / VII	Obligatory	High
Sustainable Development	V	Elective	High
Consumer Behaviour	V	Obligatory	High
Marketing Ethics	III	Elective	High
Europeistics	II	Elective	Low
Social Psychology in Tourism	IV	Obligatory	Medium
Client Services	VI	Elective	Medium

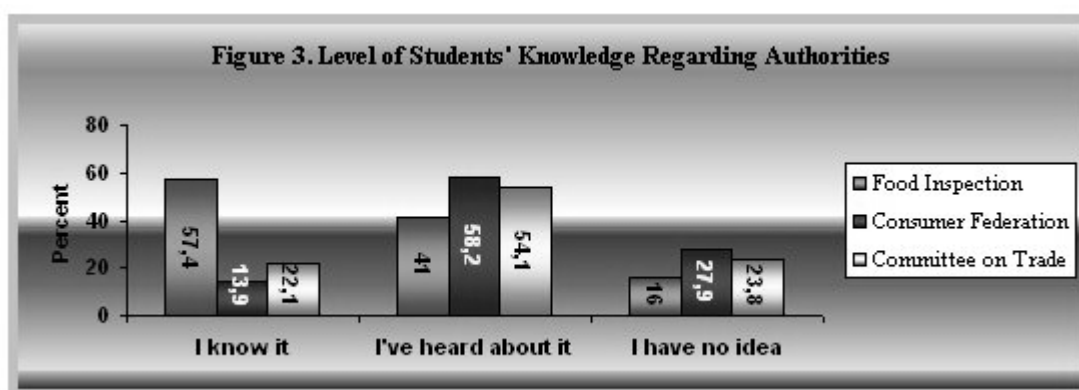
With the purpose of assessing the adult consumer knowledge we processed data gathered from the Committee on Trade and Consumer Protection Varna Office for the year 2003. Regarding Bulgarian Law on Consumer Protection there are two types of possible reactions: complaint (with receipt as evidence) and signal. Results are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Number and Types of Complaints and Signals Registered by the Committee on Trade and Consumer Protection Varna Regional Office, 2003

Type	Complaints		Signals	
	Number	%	Number	%
Defective product	117	55.19	10	3.83
Poor service	37	17.45	-	-
Refusal to honour the guarantee	26	12.26	8	3.07
Terms of contract/Cancellation of contract	14	6.60	1	0.38
Incorrect information / information missing	2	0.94	10	3.83
Refusal to give an invoice/receipt	1	0.47	79	30.27
Misleading advertising	3	1.42	6	2.30
Pricelist not presented	-	-	10	3.83
Selling products after expiration date	-	-	22	8.43
Incorrect/Incomplete price information	-	-	46	17.62
Other	-	-	29	11.11
Another field of competency (Tax Administration, Telecommunications, Labour Inspection, etc.)	12	5.66	39	17.94
Total:	212	100	261	100

Of particular concern is the fact that more than a half of the signals (52.11 %) are unjustified which is an evidence for a rather low level of consumer knowledge regarding their rights. As a whole 10.78 % of consumers didn't know the right authority for their complaint or signal.

The results are almost the same for our target group – students. Our students have surprisingly little consumer know-how. Many lack the basic knowledge and skills needed to make important decisions they will face as adults. Forty-three percent of the students have never been interested in Bulgarian Law on Consumer Protection. The percentage is even bigger for the Law on Protection of the Competition – 47.5 %. Students' average level of comprehension regarding the legislation affecting consumers is 46.8 % - good and 53.2% - poor. Similar are the results regarding the students' knowledge about authorities in the field of consumer protection (Fig. 3).



Regarding rental relationships our students prefer to react passively, mostly by oral discontent (Table 3). More than a half of the students perceive the result after such a response as rather satisfactory.

Table 3. Frequency of Problems in Rental Relationships

Type of response / reaction	Frequency, %			Result, %*		
	Never	Some-times	Always	Unsatisfactory	Rather satisfactory	Satisfactory
Oral discontent	12.5	57.5	30.0	3.1	59.4	25.0
Discussion or written complaint	51.3	46.2	2.6	3.4	55.2	31.0
Refusal to pay	82.1	17.9	-	3.7	48.1	29.6
Participation in organized boycott	69.2	17.9	12.8	3.8	30.8	12.3
Participation in disputes	61.5	33.3	5.1	3.7	44.4	44.4

* The sum is below 100 percent because there are missing answers.

Sixty-four percent of the students have never used the services of a labour bureau or office. It's an interesting fact, that of those who have used more than twice such services 76.9% have never used again the same labour bureau or office. The problems they faced most frequently in their relationships with the employer are as follows (the percent in parenthesis shows respondents who reported that they faced such a problem more than 3 times):

- Bad working conditions (21.9 %);
- Low wages (19.5 %);
- Lack of social and health assurance (27,5 %).

The picture of the problem frequency is the same. The students' reactions to the problems they faced are rather passive (Table 4).

Table 3. Frequency of Problems with the Employers

Type of response / reaction	Frequency, %			Result, %*		
	Never	Some-times	Always	Unsatisfactory	Rather satisfactory	Satisfactory
To discuss the problem with the employer	24.6	53.6	21.7	28.6	60.7	10.7
To insult the employer and quit the job	81.4	17.1	1.4	68.3	22.0	9.8
To make a complaint to the labour protection office	80.9	13.2	5.9	75.7	18.9	5.4
To make a consultation with a competent body	66.7	27.5	5.8	62.2	32.4	5.4

Unfortunately, as a whole, our students are not willing to consider engaging in some form of social activities in order to improve present conditions at the university, their surroundings even in their own lives. Their attitudes toward the possibility to change the world are pessimistic and hopeless.

Conclusions and Implications

Consumer and economic actions lie at the heart of modern life. Consumer citizenship education, like the general education curriculum, is a part of that foundation on which students may begin to build their personal lives, and on which we must begin to build a more responsive and humane world. Consumer citizenship education as an integration of critical thinking, decision-making skills and academic basics should be taught in a multidisciplinary, applied approach.

If we modify the model of information processing MOA (motivation, opportunity, and ability) (MacInnis, Moorman, and Jaworski, 1991) for our research purposes we can conclude that our students (our target) in its vast majority are either resistant to behave or unable to behave (Fig. 4).

Figure 4. Positioning of the Target Group According to MOA Matrix

MOTIVATION		YES		NO	
		YES	NO	YES	NO
ABILITY	YES	Prone to behave	Unable to behave	Resistant to behave	Resistant to behave
	NO	Unable to behave	Unable to behave	Resistant to behave	Resistant to behave

Adapted from: Rothschild, Michael L. (1999), Carrots, Sticks, and Promises: A Conceptual Framework for the Management of Public Health and Social Issue Behaviors. Journal of Marketing, Vol. 63 (October 1999), p. 31

Motivation is a goal-directed arousal (Park and Mittal, 1985). Self-interest is a strong component of motivation (Mansbridge, 1990). For many issues, there is no inherent motivation to comply because there is no perception of the potential accommodation of self-interest.

Proposition: Motivation to act socially-responsible can be increased through education by explaining self-interest or discussing the relationship between economic self-interest, from one side and social and environmental responsibility, from the other side.

Lack of opportunity includes situations in which the individual wants to act but is unable to do so because there is no environmental mechanism at hand. Such situation is quite usual in Bulgaria now because of the frequent (sometimes turbulent) changes especially in legislation. In some cases, as the research results show, the individual is not familiar with such mechanisms or he/she does not believe that they work properly. As Tyack (1997) notes when citizens lose the sense they can shape institutions, it is no wonder they participate less in civic affairs. This line of reasoning can be extended to consumption - if consumers lose the sense that they can shape the marketplace, they become apathetic and participate less critically in the market. Marks (1997) suggests that situations in which there is lack of opportunity can be overcome by use of law and marketing.

Proposition: Education can make the students aware of existing opportunities but it cannot create opportunity. Nevertheless, education can develop a background in the minds of prospect managers to use marketing in social responsible manner in their future business practice.

Ability refers to individual skill or proficiency at solving problems and may include breaking a well-formed habit or countering the arguments of peers (Bandura, 1997).

Proposition: The ability to behave can be developed through education.

Based on aforementioned results and propositions we plan to develop further:

- Concept classification in consumer citizenship for students in the field of economics;
- Academic content standards for concentration areas of industry;
- Pilot skill standards in consumer citizenship
- Instructional materials to support the pilot skill standards in consumer citizenship.

Concept classification in consumer citizenship will serve as a basis for developing a core academic standard in consumer citizenship. Academic content standards and pilot skill standards will be developed for the students in following specialties at Varna University of Economics: Economics of Trade, Marketing, and Science of Commodities. The instructional materials will include contextual instructions, taxonomy, scenario planner, model scenarios, rule-based knowledge system and neural networks as working examples for the needs of the students.

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The Conceptual mapping of Consumer Sciences in the United Kingdom in Higher Education in relation to Consumer Citizenship

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Issues of consumption both from provider and consumer perspectives and aspects of citizenship have become areas that Consumer Sciences courses in Higher education in the UK have needed to take note of. Some would argue that they have always been an intrinsic part of the field of study from the heritage of Home Economics.

As the subject field of consumer sciences has developed the question as to how course design has responded in relation to these issues has been in need of study. In order to track these changes in the UK, research is currently being undertaken to develop appropriate concept maps. For the purposes of this paper thought is given as to how consumption and consumerism has been reflected within changing course structures. This is considered through the mechanism of reviewing how key aspects of course content have changed over a twelve year period. This however does not give a full flavour as to how these topics are addressed within the content approach, which will be considered through future research.

Background

The higher education sector in England and Northern Ireland is diverse. The Higher Education Council funds education in over 140 institutions of Higher Education. These institutions vary greatly in size, subject provision, history and statement of purpose. Typically, at these full time studies at undergraduate level for BA/BSc courses is for 3 or 4 years, or for 5 to 8 years if part-time study is undertaken. Each has autonomy to determine its institutional mission and its specific aims and objectives at subject level. However in the last few years subject benchmarking has been developed for a wide range of subject areas.

There has also been much debate in the last ten or so years about what it means for subjects in the post modern world - characterised by complexity, uncertainty, social construction of knowledge, fragmentary, validation by usefulness rather than scientific rigor (Richards 2000; Baldwin 2002; McGregor 2003).

However the fluidity of approach forces examination and reflexivity - so it is less threatening than it appears and perhaps Consumer Sciences can therefore be proud to be a subject that is open to change and development- that it is a changing subject for a changing world. Arguably it is a subject area that is more open than others to change due to its subject content and the current changing social, technological and economic forces. Hence it can be useful to track the genealogy of the subject development given its key purchase on the present, and strong connections between theory and practice. Hence the need to clarify key concepts - what it is to “do” consumer sciences.

Definitions

Recently, subject benchmarking (QAA 2002) has been established for Consumer Sciences at bachelors level, and this has been focused on describing the nature and characteristics of the subject area and identifying the “typical substantive core”.

Hence Consumer Studies/Sciences as academic areas in the UK have been defined as: “Interdisciplinary subjects which seek to understand the relationships between the consumer and the economic, technical, social and environmental forces which influence the development and consumption of goods and services” (QAA,2002).

This definition was developed through a process of peer consensus by the Standing Conference for Consumer Studies, the collective of Higher Education institutions teaching in the area, now subsumed into the UK professional body the Institute of Consumer Sciences (SCCS 1998).

This complements the broader definition by the Institute of Consumer Sciences as : 'Consumer Sciences is the interdisciplinary study of individuals, households and communities as consumers of goods and services.' (Institute of Consumer Sciences, 2001,).

In comparison citizenship can be perceived as having civil, political and social dimensions. It is characterised by rights and responsibilities in both private and public spheres, but also includes the approach of consumer citizenship- power through choice in the consumer market. Citizenship in Britain could be perceived as having evolved over time, with the development of its civil element in the eighteenth century, its political element in the nineteenth century and social citizenship in the twentieth century with the acknowledgement that there is both passive and active citizenship.

It is important to be aware that from August 2002 in the United Kingdom Citizenship has been taught in secondary schools as a statutory responsibility.

This means that issues such as legal and human rights and responsibilities, services, funding and contribution via central and local government, voter responsibility, work of non-government organisations, conflict resolution, media in society and the global community, are taught earlier at key stage 3. Additionally cultural histories and social identities, basic economics, influencing social change, rights and responsibilities of consumers, employers and employees, global interdependence and sustainability are covered by the end of the second key stage 4.

Rationale

The aim of the current research has therefore been to analyse the subject field construction at Higher Education for degree courses in the UK in the last four years using prospectus, handbook and official data in terms of stated subject study areas. In addition semi-structured interviews with members of staff involved with the construction and delivery of these courses is currently being undertaken and analysed to produce comparative concept maps. It is also expected to relate the research as to how consumer citizenship and also consumer education and personal, social and health education are seen as significant (or complementary) areas. The question needs to be asked if these areas are perceived as being an intrinsic part of the interpretation and concept map for consumer sciences or whether the approach is more fragmented.

Initial analysis of the subject field indicated that in the last four years there has been a period of relative stability in terms of course content and emphasis, but with an increasing focus on the consumer particularly as an individual, not necessarily in the context of a family.

Historical Development

Historically specialist colleges for teachers of domestic subjects existed in the UK from 1873 (Dyhouse 1981) and it was made a compulsory elementary school subject from 1878 as a primary response to the wretched living conditions, poverty and neglect. Although the orientation was practical, financial management and nutrition were key areas. In the academic area degrees developed at Bristol and London Universities in 1912 and 1926 with a social and household science orientation. There were predominantly teaching orientated diploma courses and these two degrees until the 1950's when technical training developed. There was then a significant development of degree courses in the late 1970's. The move from teacher training certificates, BEd degrees and technical qualifications to BSc and BA level courses, plus the change from Home Economics to Food and Textiles as elements of Technology in the National Curriculum in schools in England and Wales contributed to the move away from Home Economics as a degree title.

This movement started in 1982 at the then South Bank Polytechnic, by a change to BSc Food Textiles and Consumer Studies followed shortly after by Newcastle Polytechnic in 1984 to BSc(Hons) Applied Consumer Sciences. The move away from Home Economics as a degree title increased in the late 1980's and continued during the 1990's (Eden 1989; Evans 1992; Strugnell 1994; Bailey 1996). As Harvey stated that although there has been a change of content usually reflected in the change of title away from Home Economics in most degree courses which started in the early 1980's, nevertheless "the holistic views, practical interdisciplinary approaches and ideas of integration that Home Economics used to represent" (Harvey 1997) are still valid conceptually.

It was recognised in 1992 in the CNAA report that the subject field identity needed to be clarified. Since the report in 1992 the revalidation of the established degree programmes has enabled course review and development to occur. The course developers in each institution have been able to emphasise different strengths within the subject field and be able to more freely define what the Consumer Studies/Consumer Sciences degree field should encompass. But one of the problems has been that since the demise of the CNAA as the Council for Academic Awards that gave an overview of the status of and development in the field, there has been no published national review. Elements of this have been achieved through the QAA visits to individual institutions and through the development of subject benchmarking but there is still a lack of fully comprehensive information available.

Research Methodology

One of the major areas of rationalisation has been in the number of institutions from 17 in 1992, to 16 in 1997 then to 9 by 2003 offering courses with Consumer in the degree title. This number did not include teacher training courses. However, due to diversification and development and revalidation of new courses of courses within the remaining institutions, there has been a relative increase in the number of degree courses with Consumer or Home Economics in their title from 22 in 1997 to 33 in 1999. Those institutions that had stopped directly named courses had moved into areas such as food marketing and trading standards with some links to previous consumer studies related courses but with no overt consumer ethos.

The development of the new areas indicated above makes it even more necessary to be clear about what courses can be considered to fall within the Consumer field. This issue lead to a research paper on the developing identity of degree courses in the Consumer Studies field in the UK. (Bailey, Flynn et al. 1999)

The sample for the study was drawn from all Higher Education courses that have had a significant amount of Home Economics or Consumer Studies in the course content. These were identified using descriptions contained within the relevant Higher Education prospectuses, 1999/2000 and 2003 UCAS Guide to degree courses and the MODUS (The Journal of the National Association of Teachers of Home Economics and Technology) annual review of courses 1999/2000 and 2003/4.

This paper therefore considers statements of course approach and philosophy that were made in 1992, 1999 and 2003 and the extent to which the subject field has moved in eleven years. Since many changes have occurred in the last eleven years it therefore raises the question as to whether there has been a weakening or a strengthening of subject field identity and hence the development of this study of change. The original CNAA data was used as a baseline from 1992 to give the degree course titles, and the subject field definition terminology as collected from documentation for the review.

The 1999 data was collated using a comparable range of printed sources (prospectuses, courses guides, and web site links. The 2003 data has been collated using a comparable range of sources (prospectuses, courses guides, web site links plus ongoing interview information).

Thus the current research based on content analysis of the key course philosophy statements related to core and designated unit themes gives a mapping of the subject field of Consumer Sciences using five categories defined as approach, area, aspect, context and activity in 1992, 1999 and 2003. A comparison with the subject benchmarking statements has also been undertaken. The results of these findings suggest that there are indications of an increasing subject field identity. This also gives a framework for a consideration of how consumer citizenship areas could be linked with consumer sciences and consumer education

Results for approach - 1992,1999 and 2003

In terms of *approach*, there has been a development in terms in use in 1992, 1999 and 2003. The only one that has been consistent for all three is 'interface'. Developing terms have been 'exploration' 'interdisciplinary' and 'multidisciplinary' in 1999 and 2003. It is interesting that these last two phrases are now mentioned explicitly in course content descriptions, since a key feature of the subject field is that it is interdisciplinary and requires the contribution of both the natural and social sciences. The CNAA report in 1992 acknowledged this by suggesting that courses are 'multidisciplinary in the foundation year, but then become interdisciplinary, with an emphasis throughout on integration'. This

then is not a change, more an explicit articulation of approach. However key areas emerging in 2003 are 'identity', 'holistic' and 'interprofessional'.

Results for area- 1992,1999 and 2003

The next categorisation explored was *area*. 'Food', 'textiles', 'shelter', 'resources', 'goods and products' and 'services' are key terms used in 1992, 1999 and 2003. The last two are emphasised in the subject benchmarking statements. The satisfaction of 'needs' is still a key area and as a general term received more emphasis than on particular commodities as it seemed important to employ a more broad phraseology when describing the areas associated with the subject field. Hence the satisfaction of consumer needs can be seen to have a much wider perspective than purely domestically orientated services. What is noteworthy is that key areas of development by 2003 have been 'contemporary consumer issues', 'quality of life', 'social and public policy', 'promoting health' and 'welfare rights'. This has potential importance for a synergy with consumer education and consumer citizenship.

Results for aspect 1992, 1999 and 2003

In relation to *aspect*, key words maintained through from 1992, 1999 and 2003 are 'business', 'technological' 'behavioural/psychological', 'social'. New descriptors of the subject field in 1999 following through into 2003 are 'applications', 'lifestyle', 'marketing' and 'scientific'. The terminology of 'aesthetic' and 'physical' used as descriptors in 1992 were no longer used. However, terms that were there in 1992 and had seemingly disappeared in 1999 re-emerged in 2003. These were 'applied economic' and 'political'. New terms in 2003 are 'cultural', 'legal' and 'health'. These have a clear relevance to consumer education and consumer citizenship as aspects of consumer science. Interestingly subject benchmarking statements emphasise 'applied economic', 'social', 'technological', 'scientific' and 'legal' as key aspects of study in the Consumer Sciences area.

Results for context in 1992, 1999 and 2003

In terms of *context*, the key focus of operation as 'industry', 'producers' and 'retail' is still current through from 1992, 1999 to 2003. The most common newly used *context* term is 'consumer', including policy, affairs, protection and education in 1999 and 2003. There is also an emphasis on 'providers' in local, national and international contexts as a broader generic term in 1999 and 2003, with the introduction of 'environment' and 'welfare' including health and social services, as terms. The subject field terms associated with the more personal and domestic orientation of Home Economics - 'home', but also 'individual' in use in 1992 were abandoned, arguably replaced in 1999 by 'people' and 'society'

and now in 2003 by 'community'. Interestingly subject benchmarking statements emphasise the 'individual', 'environment' and 'society'.

If the original focus of Home Economics was on the locus of the household as the frame for the consumer- the move away from a more family focused approach to the potential individualism of the consumer approach, or the consumer as a larger entity that is not necessarily family focused, is a significant shift of emphasis.

Results for activity 1992, 1999 and 2003

In terms of *activity* many similar approaches are being utilised in 1992, 1999 and 2003 - 'development', 'research', 'consumer advice and education', 'design and creativity' and 'creative and practical applications' with an increasing emphasis on higher level approaches but a maintenance of the applied approach that has always characterised the area. Terms such as 'analysis' and 'behavioural change' developed in 1999 and 2003 with the appearance of 'policy' in 2003. In the 1980's the subject field was being criticised for being insufficiently involved in policy, so this has eventually been addressed. However terms of 'conceptualisation', 'principles', 'judgement' and 'evaluation' previously used in 1999 are not in use in 2003.

The review therefore suggests that as a subject field, consumer studies has undergone clarification and development from 1992, which strengthens the subject identity as a whole in the UK.

Conclusions and future developments

Consumer Sciences therefore shows a major content and ethos change over 12 years from 1980's Home Economics to Consumer Sciences with some loss of courses to more specialised retail, marketing or nutrition degree areas. However there has been a clarification, strengthening and modernisation of approach, area, aspect, context and activity with a rather closer focus on contemporary consumer issues. There has been a development of course specialisation's and a rather more distinctive focus yet there is still a strong commitment to a common subject goal. Subject benchmarks have recently clarified the field and are particularly useful as a frame of reference to promote discussion and debate and orientation for future development.

There is also the potential for a critical science approach - that is based around a systems of action, moral value reasoning, critical thinking, reflective practice, a contextual and dialogue based approach, with a mapping of concepts, plus a willingness to be change orientated, learner centred and collaborative (Baldwin 2002; McGregor 2003). This approach has been well developed in relation to

Family and Consumer Sciences in the USA, Australia and Canada but has potential for evaluation for consideration in the UK.

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Consumer Citizenship Education in Finland -- Comparisons between comprehensive school curricula in 1994 and 2004

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Introduction

This paper deals with issues concerning consumer citizenship education in the basic school system in Finland. The objective of basic education is to support pupils' growth towards humanity and ethically responsible membership of society, and to provide them with the knowledge and skills necessary in life. The instruction shall promote equality in society and the pupils' abilities to participate in education and to otherwise develop themselves during their lives (Basic Education Act 628/1998). Basic education is general education provided free of charge for entire age groups. The comprehensive School lasts nine years and is intended for children between 7 and 16 (Ministry of Education 1999). More information about the Finnish education system can be found on the Internet (<http://www.eurydice.org/Eurybase/Application/eurybase.htm>).

This paper includes some discussion about the presence of consumer citizenship issues in the official documents concerning basic education, mainly for grades 7-9. This is the level that is structured according to separate subjects mainly taught by subject teachers with special qualification to teach a certain subject. The national curriculum includes at least the following compulsory subjects: mother tongue and literature (Finnish or Swedish), the other national language (Swedish or Finnish), foreign languages, environmental studies, religion or ethics, history, social studies, mathematics, chemistry, biology, geography, physical education, music, visual arts, craft and home economics. The National Board of Education decides on the objectives/aims and core contents of instruction by confirming the core curriculum. The present one was introduced in 1994 (National Board of Education 1994). The latest one was just approved in January of this year and the schools will have time to prepare their local or school level curricula before the school year starts in August 2005, or at the latest before August 2006.

The aim of this paper is to make comparisons between the present curriculum (accepted in 1994) and the new curriculum (accepted in 2004) in the light of consumer and citizenship issues. My approach is mainly from the viewpoint of home economics, but I will try to form an overall picture of the topic in the

context of the curriculum as a whole. Besides home economics, I will deal with the general framework of the curriculum, including intercurricular issues or thematic wholes, as well as a selection of subjects such as history and social studies, religion and ethics, and health studies. Health studies, which was included in physical education earlier, is a new compulsory subject in the 2004 curriculum. Some conceptual analysis will be made to find the concepts used and the emphasis made, and to reveal the contexts in which consumer citizenship is introduced. After introducing the overall picture, some proposals for new frameworks in understanding consumer citizenship education will be discussed. I hope this analysis may also reveal some requirements to prepare supporting material to make consumer citizenship issues more visible and understandable, and to help teachers produce local curricula at the school level. This will be the task of many teachers during this and next year.

The concept of Consumer Citizenship

This concept is not used in the documents discussed in this paper. The concept consumer and the concept citizenship are discussed separately and mainly in completely different contexts. Consumer issues are mainly discussed in connection with home economics and social studies, while citizenship issues occur mainly in those chapters concerning the general justifications for the curriculum and in connection with social studies and ethics.

In this paper I use the definition that was introduced in the documents of the Consumer Citizenship Network (Thoresen 2003): “Consumer citizenship is when the individual, in his/her role as a consumer, actively participates in developing and improving society by considering ethical issues, diversity of perspectives, global processes and future conditions. It involves taking responsibility on a global scale when securing one’s own personal needs and well-being.” In the Finnish context it is advantageous to combine these two concepts into one concept consisting of two dimensions. This will be discussed more in the chapter ‘Concepts and Frameworks’ and I will propose adding one more dimension, which may reveal and emphasise the human aspects that should be given more attention in this discussion, especially in terms of basic education and teacher education. To raise global and ethical questions or to increase future awareness there is a need to look for the essence of a human being. The abbreviation for consumer citizenship education in this article is CCE.

PART I National Curriculum for the Comprehensive School in Finland

Curriculum 1994

In this chapter I give a general view of the trends and changes in Curriculum 1994 as compared to the earlier ones, and introduce the curriculum of home economics in more detail. This chapter is partly based on my earlier research and other international publications (Turkki 1996a; Turkki & Sulonen 1998). I describe this curriculum in detail because the latest one (2004) is extensively based on the foundations laid ten years earlier.

Changes in curriculum thinking and educational knowledge

Curriculum 1994 replaced those of 1970 and 1985, and introduced many changes. During the development process it was emphasised that the work must be based on a totally new way of thinking about curriculum, as well as about learning and teaching at school. There was a strong emphasis on value thinking, as schools and teachers were asked to clarify their values and use them in the development process. The curriculum was based on a broader view of knowledge and action than the former curricula. The role of the teacher was understood to be more that of an adviser and a planner of learning environments than that of an outside expert who knows everything. Teaching methods put more emphasis on pupils' experiences and self-formation through learning in projects and teams, as well as in activities outside the school.

Most of the changes listed above supported the renewal of the home economics curriculum, too. New curriculum thinking such as the emphasis on value thinking and new approaches to knowledge and action, and a broader view of learning environments and teacher roles offer many advantages for developing subjects such as home economics. All teachers were asked to approach their work innovatively and they were supported with additional material on the theoretical and conceptual understanding of home economics. The biggest change, however, was that teachers were no longer ruled by a detailed national curriculum, and they did not have books or other study materials approved by any national authorities. Instead of that they were given much more flexibility in organizing lessons and timetables. This allowed more freedom and responsibility for the individual teacher.

Some new crosscurricular themes in the national curriculum of 1994, combined with home economics, could create valuable comprehensive experiences for pupils. The most important crosscurricular themes were:

consumer education:

The aim of consumer education is to improve the student's ability to function as a knowledgeable and prudent consumer, and to encourage the student to a critical look at the factors guiding his consumer decisions, and at how his choices affect his own life and his environment.

family education:

The aim of family education is to support the growth of a child and a youth towards adulthood and to establish grounds for a successful family life. The aim is also to present the transition in family structures and everyday life.

international education:

The aim of international education is to increase the student's knowledge and understanding of different cultures, to guarantee human dignity and human rights for all, to establish peace, and a just distribution of the world's resources, and to further sustainable development.

environmental education:

The aim of environmental education is to protect biodiversity and to further sustainable development.

media education and information technology (IT) skills:

Media can be defined as informative, aesthetic, and ethical interaction through communicative messages. The aim of teaching IT skills is to guide students to attain knowledge, to investigate and organise issues and to produce new information.

Health education:

The aim of health education in school is to support the student's healthy growth and development and also his health-promoting behaviour.

In addition to these crosscurricular themes the curriculum includes the definitions for *entrepreneurship education* and *traffic education*.

Changes in society

Curriculum 1994 was preceded by a critical discussion about the changes in society. Our educational systems must help us prepare for the future, since the future society will be quite different from the society of today. The changes in society and the challenges of information technology were greatly emphasised. More attention was given to global, environmental and multicultural issues. Today the global view is the reality, and life is becoming more complex. At the same time it is becoming more and more difficult to predict future trends, which increases the insecurity felt by people and their political and economic decision-makers.

Home economics deals with family and consumer topics, and a family life that is quite different from some decades ago. There are changes in family size and structure, in the roles of different family members, as well as in household activities. Children are no longer educated in household work by their parents or grandparents, and they have a much more independent position in the family than earlier. In Finland there is a great deal of discussion about the so called "new disability", meaning that people have difficulties in coping with their everyday life. Many families have economic, social or health problems, and at the same time the social security systems maintained by the state or community are dismantled or weakened. This situation creates many new possibilities for home economics and consumer citizenship education, and also requires new approaches in teaching and consulting.

Changes in teacher education

A rapidly changing society puts great pressures on teacher education. In Finland the response was to transfer nearly all teacher education to universities before 1980. Home Economics teacher education has been at the Master's level since 1979. The study program is conducted within the Faculties of Behavioural Sciences or Education at two Finnish Universities. This means that all students gain abundant research experience during their five to six-year programme. Studies have progressed towards more scientific- and research-based knowledge, with more responsibilities for students themselves and more broadly-based courses. The widely accepted aim in the new teacher education is "teacher as researcher". This means that every teacher should have the ability to develop his work. This kind of teacher education, together with the idea of lifelong learning, should guarantee the best possible teachers, who can meet the challenges of today's school and society.

Home Economics in the framework of Curriculum 1994

According Curriculum 1994 the purpose of teaching home economics at comprehensive school is preparation for everyday living. While studying home economics, the pupil becomes familiar with many important issues concerning people's well-being that have to do with him/herself, home and family and their connections with society and the environment. The aim is for the pupil to want to be responsible for his/her own health and resources, for his/her relations with other people and for the environment. In studying home economics, the activities of searching, evaluating and applying information create the prerequisites for functioning in a changing environment. The pondering of choices pertaining to managing everyday situations gives pupils practice in analysing problems, in studying possible solutions, as well as in critical thinking (National Board of Education 1994).

As a multi- and interdisciplinary subject, home economics offers meaningful examples for illustrating central phenomena of many other subjects such as chemistry, physics, biology, languages, history and social studies. This increases the integrative image of the subject. Cooperation with teachers of other subjects separately or within crosscurricular themes, and with the meal, health or cleaning services of the school also support the attainment of the goals of home economics. The learning environment can naturally be expanded outside the school to many fields in the community, including shops, social and consumer services.

The central goal of home economics in the National Curriculum of 1994 is the development of skills for everyday life, so that pupils can:

- recognise their own needs and values and their responsibility for their decisions and everyday activities,
- learn to acknowledge their own resources and to use them in planning their activities and managing everyday life,
- understand the value of positive human relations, good manners and equality from the point of view of the well-being of the individual, family and society,
- learn to master the basic skills of food management, housing, cleaning and textile care, and attain healthy and safe work habits,
- understand the purpose of nutritional recommendations and are able to choose food and food preparation methods which promote health and well-being,
- be aware of issues that have to do with consumerism and know how to act as prudent and responsible consumers,
- know the role of the family and the household in society and understand their interaction with different systems and domains of society,
- learn to evaluate options and practices of everyday life in a way that promotes sustainable development and harmony with different environments,
- respect the national heritage and culture, and be aware of global and international aspects of household activities and human relations (National Board of Education 1994).

In addition to the above goals, the National Curriculum determines four content areas for Home Economics. They are 1) nutrition and food culture, 2) prudent consumer, 3) home and the environment, and 4) living together. These content areas are understood to be very closely connected. The national document includes only these four titles and teachers are free to plan the detailed contents of their courses following the aims and goals above.

Curriculum 1994 was planned to reflect the complexity of household situations and everyday life, the complexity of the knowledge we are dealing with, and the importance of the work being done at home or in the near environment. We must realise how important family life and household activities are for human development and economic, social and cultural well-being in society and the whole world. We have also tried to promote the idea that people themselves have their lives in their own hands. Home economics can offer many opportunities to strengthen people's own skills and the abilities to use their resources in a more efficient and responsible way, and thus provide some aspects of empowerment. Home economics can be expressed as an empowerment of families to function interdependently, and an empowerment of individuals to perform family functions wherever they may occur.

A look at the history of home economics reveals that the teaching of home economics has been ruled by a strong technical tradition and commitment to substance. The analyses of processes, problems and situations related to everyday activity and different kinds of households have received less attention. This was the basis for restructuring the national curriculum in the early 90s. Much attention was paid to integrating the separate elements of the subject by renewing some main concepts, as well as the approach to teaching and learning. The new approach has moved home economics from technical to more practical and critical subject, and our thinking from the private to the public, from national to international and from local to global. An idea of a school as an open learning environment is emphasised, and decisions are increasingly made at local and school levels. These sizeable changes in the curriculum made it necessary to prepare supporting material (Aho 1994). Development of the curriculum was also supported an increase in research activities (Turkki 1990; Gröhn & Palojoki 1992; Turkki 1996b).

Over the last ten years we have collected a wealth of material on the experiences of the schools using Curriculum 1994. Many graduate students have selected these themes as topics for their Master's or Doctoral theses. We have seen the publication of plenty of other research consisting of theoretical and conceptual frameworks that have been developed further (see Haverinen 1996, Palojoki 1998; Turkki 1999; Myllykangas 2002; Sulonen 2004). This knowledge base is confirmation that the directions taken in the early 90s have been in right one, and that there is not such a great need to make any major changes in preparing for the next curriculum.

Curriculum 2004

The National Board of Education started developing the new curriculum in 2001, and it was approved in January 2004. The document is very detailed and consists of nearly 200 pages (National Board of Education 2004). Some major

changes are mainly structural. The role of the national curriculum is different in that the latest curriculum was given a more normative status than the previous one, and this had many effects on the way the content is presented. The new situation is of some concern to teachers who wonder whether they can continue to use their own creativity as they have done in recent years. Also, the new guidelines for evaluation cause some confusion in the field. The following is a description of the main changes in these structural aspects in which I introduce some elements of the curriculum that may have effects on the position of consumer citizenship issues. The English translation used is not official because the translation process is still going on.

Changes in the normative nature of the curriculum

The normative nature of the curriculum can be seen in all parts of the document. The structure of the text is regulated quite strictly and all subjects have to follow certain guidelines. The aims and contents of each subject are described separately, and the descriptions must function as a basis for the evaluation of pupil's performance after certain grades. Some guidelines for evaluation have been added.

Changes in curriculum thinking and the knowledge base

The compulsory subjects are nearly the same as in the 1994 curriculum. There is a minor change in health education, which will be taught as an independent subject during grades 7 to 9. Earlier it was taught as part of physical education. There is also more emphasis on increasing cooperation between the school and homes, and on supporting pupils who have learning difficulties.

The crosscurricular themes of the previous curriculum have been replaced by completely new kinds of thematic wholes. This might be one of the major changes in the whole process. The decision on these themes was a difficult process, and many proposals were introduced. The approved curriculum consists of seven themes, which are: 1) Human development; 2) Cultural identity and globalisation; 3) Communication and media literacy; 4) Active citizenship and entrepreneurship; 5) Responsibility for the environment, well-being and a sustainable future; 6) Safety and traffic, and 7) Interface between man and technology. All these themes are introduced in the curriculum in a similar form as each subject consisting a general definition, aims and main contents. Thematic wholes have been given a normative status and their importance is highly stressed. Schools are obliged to make sure that each of these themes is integrated into different subjects and the implementation of this process is documented in the school curriculum.

I believe that the presence of these thematic wholes is an efficient challenge to the promotion of consumer citizenship education if there is enough

determination to integrate the contents described with different subjects, to enhance cooperation between teachers and to meet the challenges faced by schools on a local level. All the themes listed above include several items that are central to CCE: ethical issues, human rights, solidarity, justice, sustainable development, future generations, life skills, multicultural issues, cultural identity and heritage, and global and international understanding. There is also a concerted effort to support new kinds of learning environments, including critical thinking, cooperative learning and using new technology. Future thinking and a broad understanding of sustainable development are emphasised more than in any previous curricula. There is also a clear emphasis on increasing the awareness of one's own responsibilities in creating the future.

Home economics in the new curriculum

The description of home economics in the new curriculum was steered by the same guidelines as the other subjects. This has given us added concerns because of the danger that the basic idea and the special qualities of home economics may be lost or difficult to discover if one cannot see how the aims and contents form an entity. In this situation it is more the greatest importance to produce additional supporting material and new textbooks that better illustrate the basic ideas. It is also important for the teachers in the field to know that their hard work over the last ten years will result in continuity and that the new curriculum does not ignore the development that has taken place.

The introduction of the general aim of home economics slightly different from the earlier one, but the main aims and contents are the same, as is the basic theoretical and conceptual framework, although the text was shortened. During the whole planning process it was emphasised that home economics has to cover all aspects of everyday life that young people have to deal with and increase their preparedness to take more responsibility for themselves. The holistic and integrative nature of the subject, the central role of practical activities, and working together and in small groups were all considered important. There is a clear message to increase the cooperation between different subjects and to integrate the thematic wholes to support home economics lessons. The content of home economics is expressed in four titles: The Family and living together; Nutrition and the food culture; The Consumer and a changing society; The Home and environment. Together they form an entity that makes up the basic essence of the subject. Three to five subtitles are listed under each title. These themes, together with the aims, guarantee that home economics brings its own body of knowledge to the school community.

PART II Discussion on Conceptual Frameworks supporting CCE

Some conceptual frameworks

When trying to promote any change in our school system, we have to pay attention to the basic phenomena in schools – those of knowing, learning, teaching, studying and educating. In this connection I choose the concepts of knowledge and learning that have a central position in the knowledge society. After discussing knowledge and learning, I clarify my understanding of the concepts of consumer and citizen. Finally, I try to create a blueprint of a holistic future education that well satisfies the requirements of consumer citizenship education. This part of my paper largely reflects the ideas I presented during the consumer conference in Helsinki two years ago (Turkki 2002).

Education - Knowledge and Learning

Knowledge and learning are key components in education, as they are in striving for change. What is learning and what kind of learning should we support in promoting positive change? Most of us may have heard about the UNESCO declaration *Education for All in the Year 2000*. The report refers to four essential dimensions of learning which can be seen as key elements comprising civic skills. “They are (1) learning to know, (2) learning to do, (3) learning to live together, and (4) learning to be.” These all are essential and they should be in a state of balance within the learning processes. Social skills will become increasingly highlighted in the future as will metacognitive skills, such as learning to learn and to reflect on one’s own actions. Quality of being is based on one’s ability to develop oneself as a holistic personality and as a responsible individual, with lifelong learning constituting part of one’s human existence, without continuous compulsion or threats (Suurla et al. 2002).

In the discussion about consumer or citizenship issues we may add a fifth dimension proposed by Professor Jussi Koski: learning to choose. Learning to choose is connected to the other dimensions but it emphasises those personal skills and competencies that are essential in decision making: comparing and choosing. The more complex the world becomes, the more essential it is to have the ability to choose. Choosing is in some sense a kind of competition that arises inside a person, who is thus pitted against the outside world with all its competing inputs. Choosing is based on recognising and acting on a clear sense of values, which can be developed through education. In other words, we need to continually judge our actions against our value commitments. A mastery of values is the individual’s ability to prioritise matters based on personal life experiences, understanding of the world, and a capacity to learn. This is something we should invest more energy in developing.

The demands made on the future consumer or citizen are huge – but so too is human potential. The profile of knowledge professionals or future consumers can be described as follows. They are independent, lifelong learners, goal-orientated, evaluators, multitalented, international, technology experts, and skilful communicators. They are cooperative, active, creative, and innovative. They are social, free, responsible, and humble, and have a clear sense of ethics. In addition, all are unique individuals. But the question remains as to how to develop consumers such as these through education (Suurla et al. 2002).

Human beings and/or Consumers and/or Citizens

I do not speak so much about a consumer per se, but human beings and human actions in everyday life, and I consider the issue in relation to different environments. By environment I mean both the natural environment and the social and cultural environments as they are understood through a human ecological perspective (Turkki 1999a). The concept of a consumer is used widely but it is seldom clarified in detail. However, the meaning of consumer differs in different cultures, as well as in different academic disciplines. In marketing, the term consumer means something else than in sociology or in the household and family sciences. There is reason to be careful when referring to various sources in this context.

Therefore, I call for a deeper discussion on the concept of the consumer, at the very least and its relation to the human being and citizen. This is a relevant question in many countries where there is discussion on how people can participate in decision making in general, or on how to incorporate these issues into various educational systems (see McGregor 1999; International Conference on Developing Consumer Citizenship 2002). In the EU several projects have been dealing separately either consumer education or citizenship/civic education (i.e. CiCe –project/Children’s Identity and Citizenship in Europe 2002). Both are interested in similar topics, but with a slightly different emphasis. In all cases, the discussion deals with human action in various societal settings, and mainly with our everyday activities. Do we need to separate -- and why -- education for humans from education for consumers or citizens? How do they differ? Or are consumer issues and citizenship issues so relevant and central in our present societies that they should be the focus of attention in all education. I believe this network is also trying to clarify these terms.

In my work I am mainly dealing with these issues in connection with home economics teacher education. The core contents in our university degree programme for home economics teacher education are nutrition education and food culture, consumer education, family education, and environmental education. The general aim is to reflect human action in everyday life as a whole. In the context of teacher education I have noticed that it is useful to

separate the concepts of human being, consumer and citizen, but also to see them as being linked. This emphasises the different roles or dimensions of each person, but at the same time it brings human processes, such as human growth, ethical awareness and responsibility, more into the centre of focus. Consequently this allows more space for real change. It also helps us to consider the issues in relation to various sectors of society and the world. I prefer to promote an education for the whole person, which makes it possible to reshape our thinking about and attitudes toward the actual world in which we live. A human being -- the consumer included -- is a person with a body, a mind and emotions which all need to be nourished if he/she is to fully develop his/her skills and capabilities.

Holistic Future Education

In many connections during recent years I have called for a holistic understanding of the human being, and an integrative and holistic worldview (see Turkki 1999; Turkki 2002). I have also stressed the variety of human potentials and people's ability to learn new things. Why do we not carry out these ideas? The main reason for this lack of follow-through is the fact that we have not established enough learning environments that support this kind of learning, and our society's thinking does not correspond with the kind of worldview that would make it possible on a larger scale. Our worldview -- in a larger sense -- still follows the *technological principles* that have their origin in the Industrial Revolution. Based on the analytical perspective of Newton and Descartes, this perspective reduces things to their smallest component parts in order to understand them. Its strategies are fragmenting, linear and sequential. Its empirical logic discounts intuition and value-based perceptions and forces us into an "either/or" problem-solving and decision-making mode. This reductionist worldview is explicitly taught in our schools and it forms the conceptual framework for most social decisions. A great deal of research also follows this reductive line of reasoning

A systemic ecological worldview is -- I hope -- emerging. Crucial to much of science today, this systems view is a fundamental premise upon which the cutting edge of every major discipline is based. This new worldview is global, holistic, and integrative. Its primary mode of thinking is whole-brain thought, incorporating both inductive and deductive strategies, while integrating both rational and intuitive modes of knowing. Although it acknowledges that, for certain purposes, the concept of objectivity is useful, in our complex world the best decisions are more often "both/and" rather than "either/or" choices. This emerging worldview acknowledges the importance of science and technology, but holds that these must be understood and applied within the context of a global, ecological perspective (Clark 1991).

This approach is especially appropriate for the areas of everyday issues, such as consumer and family education, citizenship education, health education and environmental education – subject areas that will all be discussed during this conference. Moreover, this approach could well be established as the heart of basic education as a whole.

Between the traditional reductionist worldview and the emerging systemic ecological worldview, there is a basic difference in an understanding of the relation between human action and the natural environment. The technological worldview can be described as *humanity over nature* and the ecological worldview as *humanity through nature*. Our aim in all our actions should thus strive toward long-term balance and harmony.

Table 1 gives a summary of my ideas on the requirements of education. Future education can be described as democratic, experimental or functional, humanistic and holistic. It gives learners a sense of their responsibility to one another, to the whole society and to our planet. It incorporates meaningful activity into the learning experience and relates academics to the real world. With regard to humanistic ideals it heightens self-esteem and allows the whole personality of the learner to develop in an affective way. The holistic perspective provides for an integration of subject matter, giving the learner a sense of humanity’s relationship to the whole, and incorporating the knowledge of how everything on earth and the universe is interdependent and interrelated.

Table 1. A New Framework for Education (Gang 1991)

Principle	Goal Summary
Democratic	To give learners a sense of their responsibility to one another and to the planet.
Experimental	To incorporate meaningful activity into the learning experience and to relate academics to the real world.
Humanistic	To heighten self-esteem and to allow the whole personality of the learner to develop in an affective way.
Holistic	To provide for an integration of subject matter and to give the learner a sense of humanity’s relationship to the whole, incorporating the knowledge of how everything on earth and within the universe is interdependent and interrelated.

In my mind, I see the very close relationship between family and consumer education (or home economics as it is also called), future education, environmental education and consumer citizenship education. They all can be based on an empowerment orientation that describes the world as a network of interrelated living systems, and participation as the means by which persons become part of something larger than themselves (Vaines 1993). Consumers and markets are not understood as opponents but as partners having different kinds of qualities and specialities. Consumers and citizens are different qualities in every human being, and that need to be supported by various systems. These requirements can be achieved by bringing education and learning to the centre of all activities in society. It is not only the schools and basic education that must be paid attention to, but all activities up to the political and global decision making bodies. To invest in human capital is the surest guarantee for the well-being of society. Such an investment is also useful in making 'the future' more real, more accessible and more a part of daily life.

PART III Conclusions and future challenges to promote CCE

At the school level, it is important that all teachers and staff members assume some responsibility for consumer and citizenship issues and that these skills be practiced in all subjects and at all levels. This was the main intention in placing more emphasis on the new thematic wholes introduced by National Board of Education in our latest curriculum. We must realize that it is not enough to pay attention to the contents of CCE. We must concentrate on our understanding of learning and teaching in a broad sense. In Finland there are no special teacher education activities that focus on CCE, but it will be included in the general education of class teachers, and some subject teachers (including home economics, social science, ethics). Because there are many competing thematic wholes in our new curriculum, some may not be getting enough attention. In my opinion it is very important to discuss which subjects and teachers should take the main responsibility for each thematic whole. Consumer and citizenship issues are integrated to several themes and they could be the ones that home economics teachers would be mainly responsible for. I see home economics as a promising and variable subject for reaching the aims of consumer citizenship education during grades 7 to 9. The present number of compulsory hours allotted to home economics are restricting, but there is a hope that students will be further willing to select this subject as an optional one, too. Home economics has been one of the most popular optional subjects in upper comprehensive school. However, a negative signal by the Finnish Government may hinder promotion of CCE. The new time allocation for basic education will, as a whole, reduce the optional/elective hours from 22 to 13 (Finnish Government 2001). This puts pressure on the planning of activities for compulsory hours.

On the basis of these issues, I list some preliminary proposals for *What should be done ?* in Finland to support CCN during the following years. There are many processes going on in our education system, which may clearly affect of these issues. Part of this work can be linked to the activities of this network, and I hope we can encourage more active partners to work on these important aims.

From National Framework Curriculum to School Curricula

- Teachers must be allowed enough time, additional resources and support to produce the school curriculum according to the new national rules.
- The new normative structure of the national curriculum should be discussed, and it is important to assess its consequences; there is a risk that many teachers see the new national guidelines as turning back the clock.
- Evaluation will be emphasised.
- Co-operation should be encouraged between teachers in planning and integrating the thematic wholes with several subjects. The real reduction in optional hours should be noted. Schools should nominate responsible teachers to be in charge of each thematic whole.
- Schools should be seen as open learning centres, encouraging activities with parents and other local partners. Genuine participation could be one common aim.

Teacher Education

- CCE should be adopted as a new entity. Teacher education could be re-evaluated from this point of view. In any case, it needs to be included.
- The on-going process regarding new university degrees allows some new activities to support CCE. It could be a specialisation in some teacher education programmes (like home economics and social studies) or CCN could be a special theme around which to plan a separate Master's degree.

Field Activities and Research

- Teachers can be encouraged to use their own resources and to establish local projects.
- Increased research in this field is needed in order to develop the concepts and to add theoretical knowledge. It is also important to pay attention to research methods in this connection. Action research and other participatory research methods should be adopted as the main methods, but there is a need to support theoretical, conceptual and philosophical research as well.
- The coordination of ongoing research should be organised, and networking between researchers encouraged. There might be room for a coordinating body or centre.

Towards Cooperation and Common Responsibility

- The basic vocabulary used in CCE must be clarified and discussed carefully at all stages, because many issues included will have cultural interpretations that may prevent co-operation.
- International networking and projects, along with local ones, should have an important role in CCE. The two should not be considered opponents but supportive of each other.

Finally, to reflect on the title of this conference, I would like to make a proposal to change one small but important word. It was announced as “*Using, choosing OR creating the future*”. Why not express it as Using, choosing and creating the future. We cannot give up choosing and using, but we have to critically reflect on *How* to do it? It is time for us to make the shift from ..either/or -thinking to ...both/and –thinking, as many future researchers proposed long ago (Bell 1996; Slaughter 1996). This is the way we can build a balanced society and a balanced world.

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