

Taking responsibility



CCN conference proceedings
Bratislava 2005

Dag Tangen and Victoria W. Thoresen (eds.)



Hedmark
University
College



Taking Responsibility

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Proceedings of the second international conference
of The Consumer Citizenship Network, Bratislava 2005

Dag Tangen and Victoria W. Thoresen (eds.)

“We must decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community as well as our local communities. We are at once citizens of different nations and of one world in which the local and global are linked. Everyone shares responsibility for the present and future wellbeing of the human family and the larger living world.”

The Earth Charter

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I. INTRODUCTION

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

The second international Consumer Citizenship Network conference

Defining criteria for responsible action in the marketplace was the central theme of the second international conference of the Consumer Citizenship Network which was held May 26-27, 2005 at the University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovakia. 147 participants from 35 countries attended. The participants examined how mature civic involvement can affect the development of a more just and caring global society. They also discussed and exchanged experiences about how “taking responsibility” can be taught in higher education particularly in relation to consumer citizenship education.

The conference dealt with:

- how taking responsibility contributes to dignity and self-worth,
- how the responsibilities of the individual, particularly in his/her role as a consumer, can be identified,
- how the responsibilities of the individual differ from those of business and governments,
- how the individual fulfils his/her responsibilities,
- how one learns to be responsible,
- how the spirit of selfless community service can be developed in children and youth,
- how being responsible can be enjoyable

50 papers were presented at the conference describing research and development work about topics such as: Peer pressure and self-image; Acquiring a knowledge of consumer rights; Risk perception and labelling; ICT as tools for citizenship; Agenda 21 and consumer citizenship; Corporate and consumer social responsibility; Health and illness alienation; Teaching responsibility. In addition to the 50 presentations made at the conference by members of the Consumer Citizenship Network, the following guests contributed to the conference:



*Dr. Gregory Norris
Harvard School of Public Health*



*Nobel Peace Laureate
Dr. Wangari Maathai*



*Jacob Bomann Larsen
Senior Advisor
Norwegian
Ministry of Consumer Affairs*

Dr. Wangari Maathai is the founder and former coordinator of the Green Belt Movement. Maathai wrote to the CCN that among her key objectives for this year are to inspire and empower organizations which work in the areas of environment, democracy and peace and to create a forum where innovative ideas are nurtured and supported. She sent her greetings to the CCN conference and encouraged the participants to work diligently for sustainable development.

*“There is a need to galvanize civil society and grassroots movements to catalyse change...On their part, civil society should embrace not only their rights but also their responsibilities...The extreme global inequities and prevailing consumption patterns continue at the expense of the environment and peaceful co-existence.
The choice is ours.”*

Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai

Dr. Gregory Norris of the Harvard School of Public Health is also president of Sylvatica, a life cycle assessment research consulting firm. Norris is Program manager for the United Nations Environmental Program global Life Cycle Initiative. Norris, founder and director of New Earth, a global foundation for grassroots sustainable development, spoke about the “participation revolution” enabling global dialogue between over-arching research and bottom-up, reflective practice. He emphasized the importance of holistic approaches to sustainable consumption.

Jacob Bomann Larsen is Senior Advisor at the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Family Affairs (the Ministry of Consumer Affairs). He dealt with the question of sustainable economics for the 21st century by reflecting on how we must plan to share the resources of the world. This means that if those who consume too little shall have enough, then those who consume too much must reduce their total resource consumption. Larsen explained that this is especially applicable to the western industrialized countries and that such a reduction should come about by economic design and not through economic collapse.



*Dr. Sue McGregor
Mount Saint Vincent University
Canada*



*Dr. Ezio Manzini,
Politechnical University, Italy*

Dr. Sue McGregor, professor in the Faculty of Education at Mount Saint Vincent University, Canada and coordinator of the Peace and Conflict Studies Program discussed participatory consumerism and the responsibilities of the individual consumer in relation to those of the government and of business. She dealt with issues of critical discourse analysis, reflective human action, leadership and transformative learning.

Dr Ezio Manzini, from the Milano Politechnical University, in Italy stated that: “The transition towards a sustainable society is a massive social learning process requiring vast experimentation, a vast capacity for listening and just as great a degree of flexibility to change when it becomes evident that a road embarked upon does not in fact lead in the desired direction...Creative communities—that act outside the dominant thought and behaviour pattern—organize themselves in such a way as to achieve what they want directly themselves. These communities provide examples of how we can do things differently.”

In addition to the above mentioned speakers, the Consumer Citizenship Network Conference was also addressed by *Carmen Varese*, from the National Agency for Consumer Protection in Argentina who discussed the responsibility of education in connection with consumer citizenship.

Plenum discussions

The question of how responsibility can be measured was discussed by participants at the conference. Some suggestions as to how responsibility can be measured were: by the absence of destructive conflict, by the degree of participation in public debate, by the extent of voluntary service offered and by the transparency, accountability, honesty, trustworthiness and humility exercised.

Panel debate

A panel consisting of the following individuals discussed with the conference participants concrete examples of “Taking Responsibility as a Consumer Citizen”: Ezio Manzini/Francois Jegou , Milano Politechnical University; Sandra Kamerbeek, Civiq, Utrecht, The Netherlands; Martin Coppack, Financial Services Authority, London, U.K.; Priya Bala, Consumers International, London; Jeppe Læssøe, Pedagogical University of Denmark; Gerd Michael Hellestern, University of Kassel, Germany.



Didactical exercises

Teaching responsibility can often become highly theoretical and abstract. In order to avoid this and bring the topic into direct contact with the students and their daily lives, the use of concrete exercises were considered a valuable didactical tool. The conference participants also experienced how this can be done. Personal "reportcards" were another tool suggested to assist individuals in keeping track of their own actions. By setting personal indicators related to such areas as food, safety, transport, entertainment, community service, and global solidarity, the individual can regularly assess his/her progress towards a more responsible, sustainable lifestyle.



Exhibition

The Sustainable Everyday Project exhibition provided the CCN conference with an extensive, interactive presentation of scenarios, projects and real cases of sustainable solutions for responsible lifestyles. The exhibition described (via texts, pictures and videos) scenarios of everyday life functions. Participants were able to provide feedback and comments.



Conference participants acknowledged the fact that identifying, assuming and sharing responsibility as consumer citizens is a complicated process involving diverse stakeholders. A common resolve was expressed to continue the task of spreading consumer citizenship education in education.

“The new social movements, especially ecological movements, have already worked out a concept 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 consider consumption as an active political, social and ecological practice.” Isin & Wood



Symposium

A symposium was held in connection with the conference entitled “*15 years of active Slovak consumerism market – referenced space for modern development through symbolic “apple consumerism” movement inside Europe and over the globe.*” The symposium was arranged by Pavel Hrasko & Jarmila Tkacikova.

Conference committee

The conference coordinators were Sona Galanova, University of Economics of Bratislava; Jarmila Thaeikova, University of Economics of Bratislava; Victoria W. Thoresen, CCN Project manager; Dag Tangen, CCN Core Unit; and Bjørg Quarcoo, CCN Core Unit, Hedmark University College. The CCN conference committee included Declan Doyle, Institute of Technology, Carlow, Ireland; Isabella Marras, UNEP; Dana Vokounova, University of Economics Bratislava, and Pavel Hrasko, University of Economics, Bratislava.

* * *

About the Consumer Citizenship Network

The Consumer Citizenship Network (CCN) is an interdisciplinary network of educators, researchers and representatives of non-governmental organisations who share an interest in how the individual’s role as a consumer can contribute constructively to sustainable development and mutual solidarity. The Consumer Citizenship Network began functioning 1. October 2003 and is based on a three-year project design with possibilities for eventual extension.

The participants develop interdisciplinary approaches to central issues dealing with the balance between material and non-material well-being and how one can translate ethical values into everyday practice through conscientious participation in the market. The Consumer Citizenship Network brings together expertise in the fields of citizenship-, environmental- and consumer education to develop good practice for teaching and accessing consumer citizenship education. The Network consists of 125 institutions in 29 countries. CCN provides channels for dialogue and cooperation in research and development work related to consumer citizenship education.

The Consumer Citizenship Network is an Erasmus 3. thematic network supported by the European Commission Socrates- Erasmus Programme and the Norwegian Ministry of Education and the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Family Affairs.

The first CCN international conference held in Paris March 2004 was hosted by UNESCO.

In recent years many individuals have had to deal with abrupt, dramatic and far reaching alterations in their daily lives. The causes of these are varied, ranging from natural catastrophes to terrorism and war. At the same time many people constantly face the consequences of systematic impacts on the physical and social environments resulting from governmental policies, corporate activities and individual lifestyle choices. Educational systems continue to struggle with the challenges of relating theoretical knowledge to the practical everyday experiences of their students in order to develop competences for functioning creatively and meaningfully in modern society. Progress towards sustainable development and achievement of the Millennium Goals is slow for the European Community as well as the global community.

The Consumer Citizenship Network recognizes the fact that there is a significant need for stimulating the individual's awareness of the central role they play in forming society and assisting them in finding constructive ways of doing so. The CCN has approached this task by first acknowledging that a consumer citizen is:

A consumer citizen is an individual who makes choices based on ethical, social, economic and ecological considerations. The consumer citizen actively contributes to the maintenance of just and sustainable development by caring and acting responsibly on family, national and global levels.

The Consumer Citizenship Network's activities have focused on issues of responsible consumption which include such highly debated topics such as food safety, genetic modification of organisms, single markets, fair trade, environmental protection, equitable distribution of resources, lifestyle diseases, etc. These are not merely local or national issues. Most often they tend to be regional or international. Citizens need training in how to define issues; gather, handle and apply relevant information; consult; plan courses of action; make choices; analyse and assess the consequences of their actions, and reflect upon the effect they have made locally, nationally and in a global context. The CCN network provides institutions of higher education, researchers and civil society organizations in European countries with opportunities to learn from each other's experience by encouraging reflection, discussion and research on the similarities and differences in national, regional and individual approaches to the challenges of responsible consumption.

Coordinating, improving and intensifying this work are the basis for The Consumer Citizenship Network. Teacher trainers, in particular, face the challenge of helping student teachers integrate scientific, theoretical knowledge on relevant topics into professional practice. Educators, as well as students, need to be motivated and empowered to actively participate in the growth of a just society.

Consumer Citizenship Education

As advocates of consumer citizenship and educators of students needing degrees qualifying them for modern society, the CCN network participants have worked to

develop consumer citizenship education as a relevant, interdisciplinary theme in universities and colleges. Consumer citizenship education deals with “empowering students to develop and evaluate alternative visions of a sustainable future” and motivating them to turn these visions into reality. CCN has as its main aspiration to contribute to the individual’s integrating of democratic ideals with personal aspirations thereby assisting in the evolution of a civilized international market.

The Consumer Citizenship Network. aims to stimulate research and discussion on consumer citizenship and the acquiring, handling and applying of knowledge in the context of learning to interact with the market. The network provides institutions with opportunities to share ideas and practices. It encourages reflection and discourse, practice and evaluation.

During its first year of existence the CCN realized the need for contributing to the formation of a more widely accepted set of concepts related to consumer citizenship. As a broad interdisciplinary theme, consumer citizenship tends to either be ignored or considered a “catch all” for “a little bit of everything”. The objectives of the CCN during its second year were to collaborate on identifying the generic and subject specific elements which consumer citizenship education consists of and to clarify how these are connected to sustainable consumption.

The Consumer Citizenship thematic network also attempts to contribute to the growth of consumer citizenship education as a relevant, interdisciplinary theme in universities and colleges. It does so by contributing to the creation of new information highways, by examining the need for renewed social, ethical and natural contracts in society and by making suggestions for reforms in education. This has been begun by publishing the 21th edition of the NICE mail journal, publishing the papers from the CCN First International conference, “Using, choosing or creating the future?”, preparing an index of resource people (experts) and by preparing a draft teaching/learning guideline on consumer citizenship education.

The second year of the CCN project focused on continuing the abovementioned initiatives and including activities supporting the launch of the UN Decade for education for sustainable development. Numerous approaches such as contributing to the translation and use of already existing materials on topics related to consumer citizenship such as the YouthXchange toolkit, booklet and website were objectives of this project year.

Direct beneficiaries of the project are 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 and consumer issues. The main outputs are: communication channels for dialogue and debate; curriculum surveys; annual conferences; reports; guidelines for learning materials; prototype teaching- and competency-assessment materials; a database of relevant literature; newsletters; web-site; and dissemination of the results to a wide audience.

“Alongside economic entrepreneurship that drives markets, social entrepreneurship now drives policy debates on issues that matter for people”

UNDP Human Development Report 2002

Thematic task groups

The following thematic groups functioned during the second year of the project.

1. Ethical challenges:

How can the consumer citizen deal with the ethical challenges of prosperity?

This group deals with subjects concerning e.g.: value-based education, character building, fair trade initiatives, sustainable lifestyle initiatives, transparency and accountability, and collective vision.

2. The information society:

How can the media and ICT be constructive tools for the consumer citizen?

This group deals with subjects concerning e.g.: commercial influences on youth and children, the acquiring and handling of information as a consumer citizen, how complex concepts can be made accessible and understandable for young people, e-commerce and e-marketing.

3. Rights and responsibilities:

What are the consumer citizen's rights and responsibilities as regards food, transport, housing, energy use and personal finances?

This group deals with subjects concerning e.g.: the impacts (social and ecological) of production and consumption and how the consumer citizen can prevent or change them. Other related topics are: industrial ecology, lifestyle modifications, financial literacy, and community initiatives.

4. Global solidarity:

What contributions can the European consumer citizen make towards the eradication of poverty in the world?

This group deals with subjects concerning e.g.: North/South issues, industrial poverty, resource management, economic systems, and civic action.

5. Involvement:

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

This group deals with subjects concerning e.g.: use of case-studies, active learning, scenarios for the future, and training of communication skills, conflict resolution skills and change management.

II. KEY NOTE SPEECHES

Comments from Wangari Maathai , Nobel Peace Laureate

Wangari Maathai is founder and former coordinator of the Green Belt Movement. She is a member of the Parliament in Kenya and Assistant Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. Maathai has been active in the National Council of Women of Kenya and launched a campaign formed out of the Jubilee 2000 Coalition which advocates for cancelling the back-logged, non-repayable debts of poor African countries. She has served on the U.N. Commission for Global Governance and the Commission for the Future. Wangari Maathai has written to the CCN that one of her key objectives for this year is to inspire and empower organizations which work in the areas of environment, democracy and peace and to create a forum where innovative ideas are nurtured and supported.

Wangari Maathai has stated: “Activities that devastate the environment and societies continue unabated. Today we are faced with a challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking, so that humanity stops threatening its life-support system. We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own – indeed, to embrace the whole creation in all its diversity, beauty and wonder. This will happen if we see the need to revive our sense of belonging to a larger family of life, with which we have shared our evolutionary process.

In the course of history, there comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness, to reach a higher moral ground. A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other.

That time is now.

There can be no peace without equitable development; and there can be no development without sustainable management of the environment in a democratic and peaceful space. This shift is an idea whose time has come.”

The Consumer Citizenship Network deals with precisely this shift in thinking. The CCN partners focus on how the individual can actively and conscientiously interact with the market and the environment—social and physical, in a manner which will contribute to equitable use of resources, safe products and lifestyles, and peaceful and sustainable development. By inviting Wangari Maathai to join us here at this conference in Bratislava, we recognized, as Maathai herself has said, that:

“There is a need to galvanize civil society and grassroots movements to catalyse change. Governments must recognize the role of these social movements in building a critical mass of responsible citizens, who help maintain checks and balances in society. *On their part, civil society should embrace not only their rights but also their responsibilities. Further, industry and global institutions must appreciate that ensuring economic justice, equity and ecological integrity are of greater value than*

profits at any cost. The extreme global inequities and prevailing consumption patterns continue at the expense of the environment and peaceful co-existence. The choice is ours."

This choice requires, as Maathai has reiterated: "values of volunteerism, love for environmental conservation, pro-action for self-betterment, accountability, transparency, and empowerment. It involves understanding the linkages between poor governance and development."

Wangari Maathai has furthermore written that:

"Many wars are fought over natural resources, which are becoming increasingly scarce across the earth. As the Earth's resources continue to be depleted through unsustainable use, poor management and exploitation, conflicts will flare more often, and will be more difficult to contain. Protecting global and local environments, therefore, is essential for achieving lasting peace. It is critical that people around the world take action to reverse environmental degradation and its negative impacts on our lives and those of other species. If we did a better job of managing our resources sustainably, conflicts over them would be reduced."

Managing resources sustainably depends to a great extent on education. Maathai confirms the fact that education is needed. She has herself been responsible for numerous educational initiatives. But she explains education for sustainability as being more than research and theoretical analysis. It is education which results in raising awareness and in instilling values and attitudes which are translatable into action--participatory action on the individual level, "actions which are a part of a larger mission to create a society that respects democracy, decency, adherence to the rule of law, human rights... By realizing that one can and must be part of the solutions, self confidence increases and inertia overcome... Entire communities also come to understand that while it is necessary to hold their governments accountable, it is equally important that in their own relationships with each other, they exemplify the leadership values they wish to see in their own leaders, namely justice, integrity and trust."

Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai sent the CCN conference on "Taking Responsibility" her warmest and most sincere greetings and reminds us that: "Those of us who understand, who feel strongly, must not tire. We must not give up. We must persist. I always say that the burden is on those who know. Those who don't know are at peace. It's those of us who know that get disturbed and are forced to take action."

Awareness, action and accountability

Victoria W. Thoresen

*Consumer Citizenship Network, Project Manager
Hedmark University College, Norway*

Responsibility is the pulse of human society. It is stimulated by vision, set in motion by awareness, realized through action and regulated by inner values, social norms, and/or legal criteria. There are no simple definitions of responsibility. Responsibility is based on complex processes of initiatives, reactions, interventions and revisions. When considering the question of what constitutes consumer citizenship, it is necessary to first reflect upon the existing explanations of responsibility, subsequently to analyze (briefly though it be) the present distribution of responsibility, and then to contemplate which modifications appear necessary in order to contribute, individually and collectively, to more sustainable human development.

In other words, let us look at why people feel they are being responsible, what characterizes being responsible and what alternatives can be found so that the consumer citizens can better assist the growth of a more just and caring world.

Explanations of responsibility

Few animals care for their young as long as humans. By doing so, humans increase their species' chances of survival. Sociobiological theories based on the biological determination of actions and emotions, (Edward Wilson 1971) connect processes such as caring, defending, sheltering, feeding and educating to natural motivation associated with functioning in a physical environment. Taking responsibility for kin or group members is identified as being an instinctive reaction to possible threats.

A related approach is that practical conditions demand reactions which are classified as "responsible" since they stem from a response to an event or situation connected to practical necessities. A Zen proverb says simply: "After ecstasy, the laundry." Another way of describing this approach is that there is the need for constant action to avoid degeneration. Existence is dependent on effort. Without food, we starve to death. Without mobilizing energy, we stagnate. Without involvement, community life dissolves.

Civilization has, however, evolved so that it has been essential to develop functional competences based on more than purely biological or physical awareness. Most social systems require individual members to contribute to the maintenance of the existence of the group to which they belong. The dialectic relationship of the individual to the group creates limits to acceptable behaviour and defines identities. Social interaction is considered a main source of encouragement. In other words, being responsible becomes a way of indicating commitment to the group and gaining mutually satisfying rewards (be they money, services, goods or intangibles like information, status, or

love). Theories supporting this are often referred to as social-exchange theories (Thibaut & Kelly 1959, Foa & Foa 1974)

In theories of social constructivism the individual is considered to be a product of how others experience him/her. The dialectics of interaction create personalities and form behaviour. One consequence of this approach is the individual's total rejection of responsibility: "I am only a product of how others see me and therefore my behaviour is entirely everyone else's fault." Responsibility becomes transferred to those who "construct" the individual's personality. Another consequence is the individualist conviction that "My fate depends only on myself. I can blame no one for failures and shortcomings." (Bruckner 1995) This leads to a guilt-laden attitude to responsibility in which the individual alone feels ultimately responsible for absolutely everything.

Despite these two extremes, many scientists agree that normative social influence combined with what some refer to as natural altruistic and empathic actions (when a person without apparent gain acts to reduce the distress of another person) form the basis for what is often called "prosocial" behaviour. (Batson & Olesen 1991) However research indicates that prosocial behaviour seems to dissipate when situations provide the opportunity for diffusion of responsibility. In cases where studies have been made of information interpretation and individual initiatives, a significant percent of those tested failed to respond to potential danger when in the presence of others. (Latane & Darley 1968)

This has led to theories on the cumulative processes of prosocial behaviour, in which individuals learn from experience how to react responsibly in given settings. Thus the "nature-nurture" dilemma applies as well to the challenge of acting responsibly. Learning prosocial behaviour occurs in part through trial and error and in part through conceptualizing desired outcomes of situations. Gaining insight into what constitutes positive responses involves defining what kind of life one wants to live personally and collectively. It can even require choosing between two or more seemingly positive values.

Political systems (be they representative democracies or totalitarian dictatorships) go to great lengths to define visions of desired futures. Political doctrines provide moral imperatives. They emphasize the necessity of the citizen's active participation in order for their system to function. Rules of conduct are often delineated in constitutions and charters. In democracies, who has responsibility for what is identified in general terms. Courts and laws exist to further determine who has the task of carrying out specific actions. Individual-, corporate- and governmental responsibility evolve from the priorities of a given period. Internationally, the existing human rights declaration has in many countries been accepted as a common denominator for acceptable priorities. Similarly, other international treaties and pacts reflecting public opinion and the will of the constituents have influenced the existing definitions of responsibility. At the moment the international community has challenged itself to achieve the Millennium goals and move towards sustainable development.

Religions have, throughout the ages, also provided humankind with visions of the “ideal society” and the “noble individual”. Responsibility has been characterized as a source of integrity and moral obligation. The golden rule, in whichever religious expression, emphasizes this. Responsibility has been the cornerstone of nobility and is considered to be based on love and faith. The morals of religions are long term commitments rather than short term personal involvements. Religious leaders have provided “hard core principles”, fixed standards, as opposed to sets of soft values which can be modified under varying circumstances. The morals which religions expound often function as a measuring stick or goal post against which individuals can evaluate their attitudes and actions.

The present paradigm of shared responsibility

What characterizes being responsible today? Answers to this differ according to which cultural group one belongs to. In today’s multicultural societies a consensus on what responsible behaviour is, reflects the diversity of the community’s cultural composition. There are also strong temporal criteria connected to defining who has responsibility for what. The pendulum swings from left to right and back again in the political realms around the world. Additionally, the last decade has had watershed events which have drastically altered the map of responsibility. One of these was the Tsjernoble disaster, another Sept.11, and still another, the recent tsunami in Southern Asia. The intensified interdependence of communities in modern society has added geographical dimensions to responsibility that have not previously been as dominant. Even the individual has begun to take Agenda 21 to heart and act and think glocally (thinking globally- acting locally)

Elinor Ostrom has categorized the criteria for reviewing responsibility in modern society:

“Boundary rules that specify who is allowed to use what resources and under what conditions
Position rules that specify the broad capabilities and responsibilities of users and officials
Scope rules that specify which outcomes are allowed, mandated or forbidden
Authority rules that specify the actions that participants in positions may, must or may not do
Aggregation rules that affect how individual actions are transformed into final outcomes
Information rules that affect the kind of information present or absent
Payoff rules that affect assigned costs and benefits to actions and outcomes”

Elinor Ostrom (2001)

The recent decades have testified to increased privatization of what previously has been considered public responsibility. Welfare, health, and retirement care are examples. Businesses, individuals and civil society organisations have been forced to

take over tasks once considered the responsibility of the state. This has gone hand in hand with the process of increased commercialization, supported by for example, USA's President G.W. Bush's own words: "Be responsible citizens—shop!" Social benefits, even charity, can be found at your local grocery store if you exercise corporate loyalty (as, for example, Ingles and Food Lion stores who advertise that "your" money goes to maintain soup kitchens, library services, etc). Mismatched information flows are also a part of the profile of the present paradigm of shared responsibility. Can one trust corporate social responsibility advertising claiming that the "bad-guys" have cleaned up their act and behaving as angels? Or does the truth lie with those who take on the responsibility of "black-listing" businesses and influencing consumer behaviour by what occasionally turns out to be rumour and assumptions? Lobbying by the market has become a significant part of the process of distributing responsibility. It has proven to be a means of convincing politicians and stakeholders of their responsibilities in relation to protecting and encouraging specific actors in the market. The tobacco industry is a relevant case in this connection. When reviewing the state of shared responsibility today, the reoccurrence of reprisals must also be mentioned. "Whistle-blowers pay a price". Exercising responsible behaviour can have drastic repercussions. Some examples are the Enron executive who informed on the corruption of her directors, Eva Joly, the lawyer who brings companies to court, and Veronica Guerian who challenged the druglords. Finally, in this very condensed overview of responsibility sharing today, guilt relief should be included. By placing the responsibility for the ills of the world on others' shoulders, the various actors can escape immobilizing frustration and the sense of futility.

Radical reorientation of responsibility-sharing and gradual remodelling of decision-making processes

The abovementioned "rules" for identifying responsibility can be interpreted as absolute; a locked matrix within which development is forced to exist or wither away. This not the case and history gives us succinct examples of governments, markets, civil society organisations and individuals who have conscientiously transgressed similar rules and initiated a radical reorientation of responsibility sharing.¹ Reorientation demands a rethinking of earlier perceptions. New concepts exist today such as the notions of life quality, human development, sustainability, Agenda 21, corporate social responsibility, bioethics, global security, consumer citizenship. There also exists what some researchers refer to as a timeframe acceleration (a legislative Dopler effect) in which there is a significant time lag between the public demand for

¹ "In classical Athen, according to Plutarch, the disparity of fortune between the rich and the poor had reached its height, so that the city seemed to be in a dangerous condition, and no other means for freeing it from disturbances seemed possible but despotic power. The poor began to talk of violent revolt. The rich prepared to defend themselves by force. However, good sense prevailed; a new leader was elected, who introduced policy reforms with currency devaluation that eased the burdens of the debtors, a progressive income tax, popular courts, and arrangements to sons of those who had died in wars for Athens to be brought up and educated at the government's expense. The rich protested that these measures were outright confiscations; the radicals complained that the land had not been redivided; but within a generation almost all agreed that the reforms had saved Athens from revolution" (Carl Tham and Dag Ehrenpreis; "The Role of the state and Market in addressing inequality and growth"; People: from impoverishment to empowerment; NYU Press, 1995) Other examples referred to: England in the 1750's, the famine codes of India in the late nineteenth century. The East Asian development success of the late twentieth century could also be included in this list.(VWT)

legislation and the enacting and enforcing of such legislation. The fact that institutions grow slowly, adjusting to situations rather than existing as perfect ideological models, is another argument for reorienting responsibility-sharing. Intensified social and ecological degradation has led to reversed ideas about the “naturalness” of consumption first and cleaning up the mess afterwards. The global society’s new interconnectedness has led to closer communication and sharing of personal experience which in turn has resulted in altered arenas of commitment. Diplomatic careers are seen to be as much, if not more, attractive than military ones. Social activism and volunteerism are in many communities the foundations of a new kind of nobility resulting in greater grassroot participation in development, opening the way to new approaches to policy making.

The government

On the level of governmental responsibility there are several areas in which reorientation and remodelling are important for consumer citizenship. The emergence of more reflexive governance which initiates explorative scenarios, foresight processes, and consequence analysis based on human development is only beginning to occur. (J.P.Voss 2005) There is also a pressing need for mutually reinforcing policies which take into consideration the social, economic as well as ecological affects simultaneously. By doing so, governments will of necessity develop more long term perspectives. The Marrakech 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production is an example of an initiative with this goal. Institutional adaptability and flexibility is another element of improved governmental responsibility. It involves the development of a new legal regime which supports such flexibility and addresses up-to-date challenges. A more flexible institutional structure would allow for greater responsibility to be delegated to the grassroot level which has in the recent years demanded to be involved in two-way dialogue on public concerns. Resisting the polarization of ideas, those closest to where changes are happening want to be included in the decision making process. This speaks for a more multilateral system empowering those on the bottom, allowing “functions (to) be carried out at the level closest to the people affected” (Strong, M.P. 1995). And finally, an aspect of reorientation which has already begun to be recognized is maintaining the democratic principle of majority rule while protecting the rights of minorities, in particular the marginalized and impoverished.

The Market

The calls for reorienting the accepted responsibilities of the market have been clearly heard in the international community. Environmental codes, ethical standards and indicators of social responsibility have been created and, in some instances been, accepted in varying degrees by corporations. Yet the goals of sustainable human development have not yet become closely coupled with the purely profit-oriented goals of economic prosperity. (For example: to what degree do the “golden parachutes” – the multimillion euro severance pay of the corporate CIO’s - guarantee responsible action?) This is also reflected in the short-term perspectives of many market activities from raw material exploitation to waste reduction. There is still the need for long-term perspectives such as those enunciated at the World Summit on

Social Development where the slogan was “put poor people first”. A vital step in this direction is to ensure greater market transparency and accountability. Life-cycle analysis and labelling are essential elements in this process. They contribute to improving the individual’s ability to use consumer spending power constructively. Remodelling decision-making processes requires that the market involve itself more deeply in partnerships with governments and civil society organizations. Whether as “watchdogs”, partners or development agents, cooperation between business, grassroots communities and consumers can serve to strengthen corporate commitments to social development. “Be sensible, act humanely” implores the Brandt Commission when addressing this kind of cooperation. (1981)

Civil society organisations

Civil society organisations consisting of “concerned citizens” have long been referred to as the Don Quixote’s of modern society. However, as Mats Karlsson (1995) states, “Ngo’s have revolutionary potential”. Indeed their efforts have transformed the role of the worker, given the vote to women, and modified many practices around the globe. Nonetheless they face the challenges of reorientation and remodelling as well. Some are one-issue, marginal groups which lack sufficient accountability. Others are emotionally lead reactionary groups rejecting scientific support. The great majority have committed themselves to channelling civic activism into constructive efforts for change. This has required a delicate balance between autonomy and cooperation with government and market. Especially in relation to consumer issues and consumer agencies the dilemma of independence has been a difficult one to deal with. One alternative in use some places is to secure more open and reciprocal channels of communication which would allow civil society organizations to contribute to envisioning goals, providing alternatives and information about consequence-analysis. A prerequisite for this is increased collaboration with research and education. Civil society organizations can press into the mainstream research on consumer issues related to sustainable human development. They can raise the profile of issues which might otherwise be ignored. Most importantly, civil society organizations can fill the role of being a supplement, not an alternative to political involvement or legislation.

Education

“Our biggest challenge in this new century is to take an idea that sounds abstract—sustainable development—and turn it into a reality for all the world’s people...This is essentially an educational enterprise.” (Kofi Annan UN press release 15/03/01) Sustainable production and consumption are integral aspects of sustainable development and thus education is faced with the task of helping to turn these ideas into reality. Consumer citizenship education attempts to contribute to this process. Research to support consumer citizenship education is necessary. By stimulating foresight and consequence analysis, testing alternative scenarios, and facilitating the flow of knowledge, research can improve the quality of consumer citizenship education. The main chores remain the teacher’s: to teach controversial issues, to galvanize social involvement and to encourage individualism and innovation. Conflicts are inherent in this kind of work and training how to handle opposition and frustration must be included.

The individual

The ways in which the government, the market and civil society organizations deal with their responsibilities, affect consumer citizenship. Yet it is the individual who is the central actor. A reorientation of the individual's responsibilities and a remodelling of the individual's role in decision making processes can allow for diversity of opinions and the mobilization of public involvement. Increased awareness must come first. This has been referred to as a "global civic spirit", "servitude", or a culture of caring. It stems from the acknowledgement that it is a civic duty to be a conscientious consumer and that the efforts made will make a positive difference. The next step is for individuals to be able to articulate their visions. Critical reflection forms the baseline for personal indicators of responsible lifestyle which each individual needs in order to make their personal lifestyles more environmentally and ethically sound. Just as the UN is greening its institutions and some governments are greening their behaviour, many individuals are challenging themselves to align their beliefs and words with their actions. To become driving forces of change individuals need to be encouraged to greater commitment and social involvement, creating a convergence of human energies of the formal and informal sectors.

Incentives

What incentives are there to reorient responsibility-sharing and remodel decision-making? Peace is doubtlessly a major incentive. This is not a lack of conflict, but the lack of violent aggression. Monetary benefits cannot be overlooked. Some price adjustments to encourage policy priorities as well as taxes reflecting policy choices are already in place. More are needed. Certain subsidies, however, have wider ranging negative effects than originally intended and require rethinking. Economic support to consumer related civil organisations which does not interfere with their autonomy is a similar encouragement to involvement in consumer citizenship related issues. Curriculum reform and intensified educational focus on consumer citizenship is yet another incentive.

Dangers

But there are dangers, problems to avoid in the process of encouraging awareness, action and accountability. Essential, innate, instinctive, experimental learning can easily be sacrificed for ready-made answers and solutions. The linear movement from chaotic, competition to structured responses with clearly defined interrelationships may offer more orderliness, more consistency, but can destroy differentiation and creativity. Establishing new categories of "orthodox," responsible behaviour can tend to result in temporary solutions becoming inflexible, dogmatic answers. "Humanity has advanced, when it has advanced, not because it has been sober, responsible, and cautious, but because it has been playful, rebellious, and immature." claims Tom Robbins. Though this may be a statement which contradicts the very concept of mature civic action and responsibility, there is unquestionably value in natural capriciousness and spontaneous reactions to the unexpected.

Benefits

To summarize briefly; the previously mentioned benefits for consumer citizenship of reoriented responsibility-sharing and remodelled decision-making can contribute to: better policy coherence on all levels; shorter distances to decision makers and earlier, more streamlined opportunities to influence; greater social and market resilience to unexpected events; and increased trustworthiness and individual integrity for all involved. This effort to build unity based upon frank and critical consultation and the practice of a wider range of responsible lifestyles is envisaged as a step on the path to global citizenship.

Heroes of responsibility don't fly through the air or fight with fancy swords. They don't flash across mediascreens aglitter with fame and riches. Nor are they Cinderellas turned princess overnight. They are common folk with determination and vision. They are discriminating, critical, active citizens who occasionally make some kind of sacrifice (pay a little more, walk a little farther, choose an unpopular alternative) but are not expected to become saints. They just contribute to making the world a little less dominated by greed and power and a little more filled with justice and caring. Taking responsibility means being aware, active and accountable.

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The Dynamics of Shared Responsibility: Strategies and Initiatives for Participatory Consumerism

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Introduction

The crux of this paper is that responsibility for the *conscience of the marketplace* is shared among consumers, governments and industries and that this sharing is a complex dynamic. In order for consumers to participate responsibly, with a moral conscience, in a consumer society, they have to know that they are being held accountable. They have to know what participatory consumerism would look like and what is expected of them when they are asked to be accountable in the marketplace. To facilitate citizens acquiring this mind set, this paper discusses the nature of participatory consumerism, followed by four suggestions for how educators and others can augment their work so it is grounded in a new taxonomy of consumer education types, leading to a concern for moral development (a principled conscience), transformative learning, and transdisciplinary inquiry.

Issues with Accountability

Accountability measures are needed wherever there are concentrations of power in society (Democracy Watch, 2002). In most developed countries, consumers spend more than two thirds of the GDP relative to business and government (70% in Canada and the US). This is phenomenal collective power, implying that accountability measures should be in place. The challenge to individuals seeing themselves with this sort of power is that, in an individualistic society, where self-interest is the norm, there is a general inability to make judgments beyond one's personal experience and accept collective responsibility in the face of the damaging effects of consumerism (BBC/h2g2, 2001).

It is not enough to promote the idea of corporate ecological responsibility, and to hold governments and nations accountable for the idea of global ecological responsibility (Evans, 2000). Consumers, themselves, also need to be held accountable for their actions and their impact on the environment, human rights, labour conditions, social injustices and inequalities. This paper is asking that consumers become self-enforcers at the same time that they depend on governments and industries for their respective responsible behaviour. To do this, they need our help, especially given the current cultural trend of denying direct human responsibility in all areas of life. People are conditioned to "give their power away" to external agencies, including governments, corporations, religions, teachers, doctors, lawyers and judges (Webb, 2001). We need to help them get this power back.

Nature of Participatory Consumerism

Gabriel and Lang (1995) recognize that the concept of consumerism means different things to different people in different contexts. But, they felt it was possible to identify at least five different approaches. They propose that (a) consumerism is the essence of

the good life and a vehicle for freedom, power and happiness. Consumers have the ability to choose and enjoy material objects and experiences (services). (b) Consumerism supplements work, religion and politics as the main mechanism by which social status and distinction are achieved. Displays of all of the goods accumulated gains prestige and envy - the ideology of conspicuous consumption. (c) Consumerism is also seen as the pursuit of ever higher standards of living, thereby justifying global development and capitalism via trade and internationalism of the marketplace. (d) Consumerism is a social movement seeking to protect the consumer against excesses of business and to promote the rights of consumers (concerns for value for money and quality of goods and services). Finally, (e) consumerism is coming to be seen as a political gambit to gain power. States (governments) are moving away from the paternalistic mode of service provider and protector of citizens to privatization of services that can be bought in the private market from corporations.

In 2001, I developed another concept of consumerism, participatory consumerism. I drew on insights gained from the people-centered development, participatory citizenship and action research literature (McGregor, 2001). I shared this idea at the 2002 international conference on developing consumer citizenship in Hamar, Norway (McGregor, 2002). Today, I will provide a summary of the four key concepts shaping the idea of participatory consumerism followed by some ideas for how we can start to make this a reality.

Libratory Participation

People who are oppressed are exploited and taken advantage of due to their circumstances. They feel they cannot flee from, or change, what appears to be, irreversible conditions. In a consumer culture, not only are labourers oppressed. In the North, people are so indoctrinated into the logic of the market that they cannot 'see' anything wrong with what they are doing. Because they do not critically challenge the market ideology and the myth of consumerism, they actually contribute to their *own oppression* (slaves of the market) and the oppression of others who make the goods and services and the oppression of the ecosystem (McGregor, 2001, 2002). Liberation results from an interesting process. As consumers, with the help of educators, learn to see marketplace challenges interrelated to other problems and issues within a total complex, their social conscience can begin to emerge. There is more potential for them to engage in thought and actions that critique the status quo power distributions in society.

People who are liberated see themselves as limited but challenged rather than fated to oppression ("Libratory Pedagogy," 2005). Liberated people would be the essence of participatory consumerism. Liberation is life affirming and humanizing, the opposite of regular consumerism.

Transformational Participation

Transformational participation entails participation in such a way that sustainable results will continue when the initiative is completed. Transformational participatory consumerism would involve an evolution wherein people would see themselves as

world citizens first, and consumers second. Central to this transformation is dialogue. Participatory citizenship involves discussion among people about public issues shaped by listening, talking and acting such that the world changes for the better. Applied to consumerism, similar public discourse would involve the implications of current consumption behaviour on the lives of others, future generations and the integrity of the ecosystem.

Reflective Participation

Participatory consumerism would involve active reflection prior to, during and after purchase decisions. Reflective participation entails dealing with uncertainty while knowing that choices have to be made and action has to be taken (this action could be a decision not to purchase). Moral issues have to be dealt with. These refer to disagreements people may have about values that justify personal consumption actions. Reflection allows people to step back from the immediacy of a situation and examine their beliefs, attitudes and past behaviours in a dispassionate manner. This detached reflection flies in the face of the need for instant gratification and material accumulation, features of the prevailing consumer society. Nonetheless, participatory consumerism would involve the dynamic process of action-reflection revised action.

Critical and Skeptical Participation

Ongoing, active participation in consumption would help people to be ever curious, to take risks in their decision climate of uncertainty, to gain a better understanding of complicated realities comprising the global marketplace, and to gain enough power to work for improvement in their consuming role, and by association, the well-being of global citizens. Indeed, one can be a consumer while disagreeing and criticizing the marketplace in their role as citizen. Being skeptical means being cautious when drawing conclusions about the world and willing to change one's minds if new information appears (Alberta Skeptics, 2005). Also, as a caveat, being skeptical is not the same thing as being cynical. Skeptics do not assume that the world is bad, evil or corrupt. They do believe that there is power, and that there are hidden agendas in every message and every position that people take on issues. Skeptics will critically examine whether the knowledge and perceptions they encounter are actually true, whether they have good reasons for believing something. This would be truly participatory consumerism.

Strategies for Consumer Citizenship Educators

Perceiving citizens as “participating” consumers is a powerful way to extend the current dialogue around consumer citizenship. Participatory means a state of being related to a larger whole by taking part, sharing and contributing. An increased sensitivity to one's connectedness to others in the world's marketplace could be referred to as conscientization. This means that people gain a conscience through the process of learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, develop a critical awareness, so that they can take action against the oppressive elements of reality. This personal growth involves becoming more fully human, not just a more efficient consumer. The final section of this paper will tease out four strategies being

used in other educational settings and discuss why they are deemed relevant to consumer citizenship education.

Typology of Consumer Education Approaches

Exciting new work is being done around the relationship between the way consumer education is taught and the kind of consumer that is formed (Flowers, et al., 2001; Sandlin, 2004). They offer a typology of three types of consumer education and three resultant types of consumers. Type 1 consumer education teaches people about consumer information, protection and advocacy leading to consumer who see consuming as their key role in the economy. They equate success with materialism and money and think consuming is a good and natural thing. Type 2 consumer education teaches people about the importance of critiquing the role of consumption in their life but the intent is to form consumers who focus on changing their life style to accommodate for the environmental implications of their consuming decisions. Type 3 consumer education teaches people to be critical citizens in their consumer role. The consumers' main focus is to free themselves from the grasp of the market. But, their concern is not totally extended to the plight of others yet, because have not found their inner voice as a moral citizen.

I added a fourth type of consumer education to this typology, the empowerment approach for mutual interest. From this perspective, consumer educators would teach people using critical pedagogy, intending for them to learn how to unveil oppressive power relationships in the global market. Critical reflection helps people find their inner power, their inner voice and the potential to change the world for the better, by challenging the status quo from a social justice and moral imperative stance. They know that they have a responsibility to help other consumer-citizens to find their voice too, because, once found, the person will be transformed and will not consume the same way (McGregor, in press). They will have evolved towards having a moral conscience in the marketplace.

Moral Development

Indeed, educators who are striving to prepare participatory consumer citizens need to appreciate the different levels of moral development. They would ask themselves, "Why don't people, in their consumer role, have a well developed moral conscience?" Tucker (1994) sheds very interesting light on the concept of moral consciousness. He explains that "when we can see into the complexity of a situation, look with penetrating insight into all of the possibilities, understand the true impact of each possible action, then we are using moral consciousness" (p.1). He has just described a heightened awareness wherein people choose consciously rather than instinctively or habitually. Hand-in-hand with moral consciousness is a sense of connectedness, an awareness that everyone and everything is linked together and that one has to continuously rise above a sense of personal self. Moral consciousness refers to the power of choice. People can chose to reject responding automatically to a situation and elect to be acutely aware of the mix of right and wrong, of good and bad in everything, and of the many possible responses to a situation. Being conscious of the moral quality

of one's consumption choices is an important part of one's life that, and once gained, can never be lost.

The most popular theory of how people develop morally is Kohlberg's (1981) work. He proposes that people move, sequentially, through three stages (with two levels at each stage) on the path to a principled conscience. At Level one, people do things because they are told to and because they do not want the consequences or punishment if they do not obey. They try to stay out of trouble and their motivation to act is anticipation of pleasure or pain. In level two, the individual does something because it is in their best interest. People are concerned with fair exchanges and will give if they know they are getting something back in return. They know they risk punishment but they make concessions only as necessary to satisfy their own needs. They will do what is necessary and value people in terms of how much they can help get what they want. In Level three, a person's orientation shifts from pleasing self to pleasing and helping others. But, the *intent* is to gain the approval of others (not altruistic). "Everyone else is doing it" is the new motto. Individual vengeance is not allowed but collective retribution for a wrong against the group is alright. Punishment is allowed if someone has strayed from the group norms.

What is *morally right* is anything that conforms to what is expected by one's peers or society. Good and right behaviour is that which maintains good interpersonal relationships (remember these are usually teenagers) and good inner feelings such as love, empathy, trust and friendship. This stage of moral development is intensely focused on two-person relationships, like friends or family members.

When someone reaches Level four, their perception of what is morally right shifts from what peer's expect to a new respect for formal rules, laws and authority - what is necessary to keep order in society. One's concern is now for society as a whole. This concern is evidenced by obeying the laws, demanding punishment for those who do not, justice for those who are harmed. These conventions keep society running and functioning smoothly. Authority figures are seldom questioned because they ensure consistency and set precedents that provide order.

At Level five, instead of blindly adhering to rules and laws specific to an orderly society, at this stage, people begin to question "what *is* a good society" and strive to figure out what society *should* look like so that the welfare of everyone is met. At this stage, people assume that individuals are born with rights and society should not be able to infringe on those rights. In fact, society should protect these rights. Each person benefits from a *social contract* - society will agree (contract) to protect the welfare of its individual citizens. Also, each individual can exercise these rights unless, in doing so, the person infringes on others' same rights. Any punishment for infringement of these rights must protect future victims, provide deterrents, and rehabilitate offenders.

Finally, at Level six, people will have developed a principled conscience. They will have forged a respect for all human beings, justice for all, freedom for all, basic dignity for all, empathy for all. They will follow their conscience, their internalized

ideals, no matter what others may think. If they do not follow their conscience, live by their principles, they experience guilt and condemn themselves for not being true to their moral compass. Civil disobedience is alright because it is acceptable to disobey an unjust law. It is assumed that each and every person is due full consideration of their interests in every situation, and that those interests are just as important as anyone else's.

Of grave import to consumer citizenship educators is that 75% of the world will never develop a principled conscience or even the concept of a social contract. Instead, they will be stalled at Level four or lower (Kohlberg, 1981). They will obey the laws, demand punishment for those who do not, justice for those who are harmed and never question authority because questioning it would threaten social order. If stalled at a lower level, consumers would look out for their own self interest and use people to get what they want. They would not engage in altruistic behaviour nor would they move beyond group-think. More telling is that Stage one applies to those aged 1-9, Stage two relates to those aged 10-20 and the advanced Stage three pertains to those aged 20 and over. This suggests that the adult consumer is behaving at the moral age of a 10 to 20 year old, or younger. This possibility does not bode well for participatory consumerism. Being stalled at a moral age, that is narrowly focused on peer and group acceptance, and a predisposition to not challenge authority, suggests that consumer citizenship educators are faced with a real challenge. The young students they teach may never advance beyond Level four and the majority of adult consumers are stalled at this moral stage. Somehow, educators have to find a way to break this moral imperative barrier and advance people to the principled conscience stage. Three ideas for how we might do this are tendered below.

Transformative Learning

If a person's priorities or assumptions change, then the learning process becomes transformative. The person will now have the ability to critically reflect on their own and others' premises, things that are taken for granted without any proof. As a result of critically reflecting on underlying premises, one's specific beliefs about oneself or the world transform as does one's world view. A transformed learner is progressing toward being an autonomous, critically thinking individual who negotiates their own meaning instead of uncritically acting on those of others, or doing what has always been done. As a result, the learner is more self-aware, more conscious of conditions of society and more predisposed to continually search for new meanings, not just more facts and information (Barkmeier, 1999; Mezirow, 1991).

Transformation occurs when one has to deal with a disorienting dilemma; that is, an emotionally charged situation, a catalyst, that fails to fit one's expectations and makes one completely lose one's bearings and become lost. When someone experiences a transformative moment in their consumption life (like learning about the labour behind the label), the events have such a profound impact on them, and the *reflection* on the event is so meaningful, that the person's consuming behaviour changes entirely, and forever, as a result. The person now embraces a completely new way to interpret future

consuming experiences. The person is more reflective and critical of the world, more open to perspectives of others and are less defensive and more accepting of new ideas.

To facilitate transformative learning, leading to transformative consumption, consumer citizenship educators could learn the process of reflective inquiry, using scaffolding. This approach to teaching assumes that a student can be in one of three mental spaces when it comes to problem solving or skill performance: (a) able to do it independently, (b) unable to do it even with help, or (c) able to do it with help. It is when a student is in the latter head-space that scaffolding works. The underlying foundation of the scaffolding model is five different types of *reflective inquiry* that a learner can engage in on a regular basis with the help of the teacher: creative, caring, critical, collaborative and collegial (the 5Cs) (Henderson & Hawthorne, 2000).

Succinctly, and respectively, learning experiences would involve students working and learning collaboratively together to solve consumption related problems so gain different perspectives and an appreciation for how they come up with their interpretation of their consumption experiences. Educators would create caring learning environments where students can engage in critical, reflective dialogue and guided self-discovery. Educators would help students deeply question the status quo, looking for underlying power relationships and whose interest is really being served. They would focus on personal and social justice issues as they relate to consuming and producing. Educators would create a space where students are expected and encouraged to contemplate the ideal ethical and moral vision of consumption. When people contemplate, they acknowledge their humanity and connections to others and they slow down so they can meditate about their consuming practices. Finally, educators would pay close attention to helping students learn that, eventually, they have to embrace a moral position in the marketplace if they accept that a just marketplace would reflect tolerance, sensitivity, and ethical responsibility for one's actions. Educators would help students learn that they should strive for critically informed consumption if they want to convince others that they are accountable (Henderson & Hawthorne, 2000).

Transdisciplinary Inquiry

Given the lack of moral imperative in consumers, and the prevalence of Type 1 and 2 consumer education, consumer citizenship educators face a complex situation as they strive to ensure that participatory consumerism evolves. I would like to suggest an exciting new approach to practice and inquiry that would have educators working with people from all walks of life - not just other educators (McGregor, 2004). This is called transdisciplinary inquiry and involves multiple disciplines, other elements of society, and **the space between them**, with the possibility of new perspectives beyond those disciplines and actors (Nicolescu, 1997). When engaging in transdisciplinary inquiry (this means zigzagging or weaving back and forth), academics would work with academics *as well as* civil society organizations, actors, artists, musicians, dancers, government officials, youth, singers, poets, gardeners, journalists, businesses, story tellers, videographers and the like. Each of these minds have been prepared differently so they will *see* the world differently. The intent would be to weave

knowledge together from these *many ways of knowing* that exist along side academia and the scientific method. Using a metaphor, they all would work together in the form of a dance, counting on new perspectives that will generate new information, insights, concepts and growing relationships. They would assume that a new type of knowledge is emerging from the dance, with complex and complicated insights. They would rely on *each other* to interpret this new knowledge as they work together to deal with large global issues including: human aggression, harmonious distribution of resources, development of anthropocentric (human centered) world views, and the realization of human empowerment and potential through education. The ultimate intent is to understand the world, not just bits and pieces of the world.

As people approach the group of co-learners in the dance, the other *knowledge dancers*, they would be willing to suspend their views of reality at that moment (cross the veil of resistance) and be open to the new insights that will emerge from working together as they weave their collective knowledge to form new knowledge and concepts. Information will literally be *in-formation* as they work together and watch their consciousness merge into one for the moment. People would learn to see things in open unity, more complexly, rather than in black and white. Also, constantly adapting relationships lie at the heart of what makes solving these complex problems so special. Any information brought to the dance by someone will be modified as it is passed from one person to another within these changing relationships - it is *information*.

Transdisciplinarity is a new form of learning, inquiry and problem posing involving cooperation among *different parts of society*, including academia, in order to meet the complex challenges of society. Through mutual learning, the knowledge of all participants is enhanced and this new learning is used to collectively devise solutions to intricate societal problems that are interwoven (Regeer, 2002). Out of the dance and the dialogue, a new vision of reality is possible (Nègre, 1999). Conceiving our work as consumer citizenship educators through the lens of the transdisciplinary dance is a powerful way to move forward to accomplish participatory consumerism and more shared responsibility in the marketplace. This approach is true to the principle the dynamic nature of shared accountability in a consumer society.

Conclusion

The title of the talk is **The Dynamics of Shared Responsibility: Strategies and Initiatives for Participatory Consumerism**. To address this dynamic, I shared ideas about how to see consumerism as participatory, how to teach consumer education differently and how to work with others differently as we write new curricula and pose problems related to consumer citizenship and global consumption. These ideas offer another perspective when dealing with the complexity of holding people responsible and accountable for their actions in their consumer role. When combined with other great ideas tendered at this conference, we move closer to creating a conscience in the marketplace and creating principled consumer citizens.

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Creative communities and enabling platforms.

An introduction to a promising line of research and actions on sustainable consumption and production

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The aim of this paper is to introduce a line of research and action in the field of sustainable consumption and production that refers to the concept of “*creative communities*”: grass-roots organisations of citizens and other actors who have, or could have, the ability and will to re-orient themselves towards sustainable ways of living and producing. Moving from here, it introduces the potentiality of new governance tools and “open” organisational models to promote *horizontal links* between peers (in this case, between the creative communities) and vertical ones, between these grass-roots organisations and local, regional, national and European governments and authorities. These new governance tools are defined as *enabling platforms*. Finally the paper presents some ideas on new communication tools that can be conceived and developed as the “communicative dimension” of these large and articulated enabling platforms.

1. The background

Transition towards sustainability requires radical changes in the way we produce and consume and, more generally, in the way we live. In fact, we need to learn how to *live better* (the entire population of the planet) and, at the same time, *reduce our ecological footprint* and *improve the quality of our social fabric*. In this framework the link between the environmental and social dimensions of this problem clearly appears, showing that *radical social innovation* will be needed soon, in order to move from current unsustainable models to new sustainable ones.

Given the nature and the dimension of this change, we have to see transition towards sustainability (and, in particular, towards sustainable ways of living) as a *wide-reaching social learning process*: a social innovation process in which the most diversified forms of knowledge and organisational capabilities must be valorised in the most *open* and *flexible* way. Among these, a particular role will be played by the *distributed knowledge* and *organisational capabilities* that can be found in grass-roots organisations of innovative citizens.

This last consideration is particularly relevant because it links the topic that we are discussing here with two other very relevant ones: the role of *creativity* in present society and *open source* and *peer-to-peer* models as new forms of knowledge generation and system organisation.

Until now, these topics have been discussed and developed without explicit reference to the transition towards sustainability. But it is clear that a relation exists, especially if, as we are doing here, the role of distributed knowledge in the learning process towards sustainability is considered.

2. Creative communities: the seeds of “the new”

Observing society as a whole and in all its contradictoriness, we can see that alongside numerous worrying tendencies, signals are also emerging that indicate different and far more promising developments. Signals, still weak, but all the same stating clearly that another way of being and doing is possible. In practical terms, what we can see is a variety of *promising cases* of social innovation: bottom-up initiatives that appear to be positive steps towards the environmental and social sustainability.

For instance: groups of people who re-organise the way they live their home (as in the co-housing movement) and their neighbourhood (bringing it to life, creating the conditions for children to go to school on foot; fostering mobility on foot or by bike). Communities that set up new participatory social services for the elderly and for parents (such as the young and the elderly living together or micro-nurseries set up and managed by enterprising mothers) and that set up new food networks fostering producers of organic items, and the quality and typical characteristics of their products (as in the experience of Slow Food movement, solidarity purchasing and fair trade groups).

The list of examples could continue showing their variety, but also their common denominators.

In fact, considered as a whole, these promising cases tell us that, already today, it is possible to do things differently and consider one’s own work, one’s own time and one’s own system of social relationships in a different light. They show that there are people who are able to act outside the dominant thought and behaviour pattern and organise themselves, and cooperate with others, to achieve concrete, positive results.

We will refer to them with the expression *creative communities*: groups of innovative citizens organising themselves to solve a problem or to open a new possibility, and doing so as a positive step in the social learning process towards social and environmental sustainability.

On the other hand, however interesting these creative communities may be, their existence and their dynamism are as yet only *weak signals*: they say that something can be done, that promising cases may appear, but that they are still a minority phenomenon. Given this evidence, some fundamental questions arise: what possibility have these cases of multiplying and achieving the scale effectively required by the dimension of the problems at stake? What infrastructures may facilitate this process? What governance tools may help these positive examples to spread beyond the specific conditions of the context where they were born?

Faced with these questions our hypotheses are that:

- *Creative communities*, and the promising cases that they generate, small and weak as they seem, represent a fundamental source of knowledge and experiences in the transition towards sustainability: the seeds for new ideas on

well being and, beyond that, for new organisational models and for new ideas on business.

- To grow and spread, *creative communities* have to find *favourable contexts* and innovative forms of relationships between their *local level* and *higher ones*, i.e. with regional, national and European levels.
- In practical terms, the generation of a *favourable* context may be facilitated by an appropriate infrastructure (the *enabling platform*) and by multi-level systems of relationship (the *new governance tools for sustainability*)

Moving from these hypotheses, the general aim of the field of research and action that we are proposing here is articulated in three major objectives:

- To better understand creative communities and their explicit and implicit demands
- To outline an infrastructure to facilitate the diffusion and consolidation of creative communities
- To define new governance tools to promote multi-level interaction between creative communities, local, national and European actors

3. Creative communities: explicit and implicit demands

The research that we are outlining here starts from the recognition that *creative communities*, and the promising cases that they generate, are an important source of knowledge and experiences. And its first specific objective is to better understand them and their explicit and implicit demands.

To achieve this objective the research does not have to start from zero: as regards the initial steps (how to recognize the creative communities? How to describe the promising cases that they generate?) we can integrate the network and the results in progress of EMUDE-*Emerging User Demands*², an on-going SSA that focuses on promising European cases of social innovation oriented towards sustainability (some of the Consortium partners are involved in the EMUDE programme too). More precisely:

Our research may start from the EMUDE collection of promising cases (and from the insight that EMUDE is offering in them). Moving from here, it will extend this collection (adding relevant new cases as they appear) and, more importantly, it will answer a second set of questions: what are the implicit or explicit demands that

² EMUDE - Emerging user demands for sustainable solutions: social innovation as a driver for technological and system innovation 2004-2006 (NMP2-CT-2004-505345) EMUDE seeks to shed more light on cases where subjects and communities use existing resources in an original way to bring about system innovation. From here, it intends to pinpoint the demand for products, services and solutions that such cases and communities express and point to research lines that could lead to improved efficiency, accessibility and diffusion. Actions: a) identify cases of social innovation geared towards sustainability; b) evaluate, select and bring the most promising cases to light; c) clarify the demand for products, services and solutions they give rise to; d) visualise, communicate and disseminate these cases and their possible implications by mean of technological trends, scenarios and roadmaps.

creative communities are expressing? What enabling solutions³ can be conceived to consolidate them and to make the examples that they generate more accessible? What social and political environment facilitates their wider diffusion and consolidation? What governance tools can promote the realisation of this positive environment?

4. Local solutions and enabling platforms

The second research objective is to outline an infrastructure to facilitate the creative communities diffusion and consolidation.

Traditionally, the term *infrastructure* stands for a set of artefacts that enable a particular activity to exist. In our case, if the activities to be developed are bottom-up initiatives organised by groups of innovative citizens, the question is: what kind of artefacts do these creative people request?.

On the basis of recent observations, it can be stated that the contexts that facilitate creative attitudes present some common characteristics: they have to facilitate access to appropriate technologies, they have to promote the diffusion of knowledge, skills and abilities and they have to enhance social and political tolerance.

In view of the second objective of the research, this general description of the creative context will be articulated considering in particular its technical and organisational dimensions. I.e. the infrastructure for creative communities, to which we will refer here with the expression: *enabling platform*.

More precisely, what the research outlines is a set of material and immaterial elements (products, services, infrastructures, knowledge and rules) that, implemented in a given context, enhance its possibility of becoming a fertile ground for creative, bottom-up initiatives, that is: *to support* creative communities and *enable* a larger number of (potentially) *innovative citizens* to move in the same direction.

5. New governance tools and open models

The third objective of the research is to outline a set of governance tools to promote the multi-level interaction between creative communities and local, national and European actors

It has frequently been stated that, in contemporary society, many of the traditional governance tools are inadequate to face the complexity and the dimension of the problems we have to deal with. In particular, when we consider the transition towards sustainability, it clearly appears that a new generation of governance tools have to be developed. In particular new governance tools are needed that promote participation and new forms of citizen auto-organisation in the perspective of sustainability. New governance tools that have to promote horizontal links between peers, and, at the same

³ *Enabling solutions* are systems of products, services and organisational tools that enable individuals or communities to achieve a result using at best their skills and abilities.

time, to connect different *vertical* levels of public administration organisational structure.

In view of the third research objective, the issue of how to conceive new governance tools, will be developed considering the new forms of organisation that are emerging in contemporary society: the *open source* and *peer-to-peer* organisational models, to which we will refer with the general expression: *open models*. The research-specific working hypothesis in this case will be the possibility of using them, and/or the principles behind them, to shape new, flexible and adaptable forms of governance, i.e. a kind of *open governance* that will promote physical and virtual spaces where creative communities can share ideas, communicate, help each other and build together a new body of common knowledge.

6. An advanced communication system as knowledge network

The fourth objective of this research is to build a communication system conceived as a knowledge network.

A research that intends to understand the emerging phenomena of creative communities, on one side, and of open models, on the other, requires an innovative research structure: a structure conceived on the basis of similar principles. That is, an experiment in applying open models to the generation of a new body of knowledge and experiences.

In other words, open model principles have to inspire the research organisation and communication systems. Moving from here, the fourth research objective is to experiment a new form of organisation and communication, and to set up a structure to support bottom-up initiatives and to build a shared common knowledge in the learning process towards sustainability. This communication system will become the base for a wider social learning system, by facilitating and practicing both bottom-up learning and bottom-up governance.

To facilitate bottom-up social learning as a complement to traditional expert-driven learning, the research has to create a lasting “receptive structure” that enables the bottom-up contribution of knowledge from within and, later, outside the network of partners.

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III. CULTURAL AND ETHICAL DIMENSIONS

Beyond the dualism between citizenship and consumership – Is the family perspective a possible way?

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Introduction

Kofi Annan, the UN secretary general, puts forward one of the big challenges we face in the world today when he says:

Our biggest challenge in this new century is to take an idea that sounds abstract – sustainable development – and turn it into reality for all the world's people" (Kofi Annan cited in Nordic Council of Ministers 2003).

Sustainable development is a notion introduced by the Brundtland Commission in 1987. And, as Kofi Annan says, it is an abstract idea that education, as one of many actors, has to make its business to "turn into reality". That education has a role to play to meet this challenge was stated at the Johannesburg Summit in 2002, and of course, by the declaration of the UN decade of Education for sustainable development 2005-2014.

Concerning education, it can be interesting to look for what kind of subject position the struggle for a sustainable development needs. And what educative process is needed to meet the needs of such a subject position? One way to meet the challenge of education for sustainable development is by turning to the subject-position of the consumer-citizen.

What does "consumer-citizen" mean? This question can be approached by turning to the idea of two subject positions that the children and young people growing up today are presented to. First, the consumer a subject position suggested by global capitalism. There is no doubt that one of the challenges we face is globalisation, taking place in several different spheres. One of the most prominent is the economic sphere. Finance, production as well as consumption are today a part of one global network.

The ideal consumer for global capitalism is the dedicated follower of fashion, the subject who lets his [sic] wants be defined by the need of capitalist production for constant expansion. Global capitalism is not interested in individual

differences – other, that is, than for the creation of new niche markets or the invention of new trends and fashions... (Biesta, 2004)

Or, as discussed by Ockenden (1999) a consumer that sees fellow humans as economic and social antagonists, competitors for limited natural resources and power. For whom a protecting lifestyle and social position is vital and the struggle to do so fosters individualism and nationalism. The consumer sees those who are different from him/her self as threats. Diversity is not valued; instead it is ignored or exploited. Respect is not a prime concern, nor is the welfare of other individuals, families, communities and the environments outside one's own region or nation.

Second the citizen, a subject position related to nationality: Citizenship is a person's belonging to a state according to Lexicon 2000. Such a view of the citizen is close to what Albala-Bertrand (1997) talks of as the republican citizen. He suggests that the character of republican citizenship can be described by three principals: the sense of belonging to a political community and thus citizenship appears as the sharing of a common civic life; loyalty towards the homeland; and the predominance of civic duties over individual interests. The liberal ideas of citizenship, on the other hand, focus on the freedoms and rights of the individual. All individuals are regarded equal and are depositories of inalienable rights that cannot be revoked by any social institution. From this, Albala-Bertrand argues further, three major sets of rights derive: civil, political, and socio-economic (cf. UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

A combination of the two, consumer and citizen, as in the subject-position consumer-citizen could thus be when a readiness to consume (buy) is added to a sense of belonging to a political community and to a loyalty towards the homeland as in republic citizenship or the freedom and rights of the individual as in liberal citizenship. We ask if there is a line of individualising in this combination, a selfishness or limitation to nation that makes it difficult to handle common global concerns such as sustainable development. We want to take this reasoning a step further, saying that one plus one equals three, in other words we are trying to reach beyond the dualism of consumership and citizenship.

Ochender (1999), in her discussion of the two subject positions presented to the young of today does not put such a description of the citizen as the second subject position besides the consumer. Instead she talks about the member of the global village, sharing the resources of the planet in ways that is ecologically, socially and economically sustainable and sharing rights as well as responsibilities with other fellow humans. Multiple perspectives are embraced and cultural diversity is valued. The global villager recognises that poverty, hunger, democracy and environmental degradation are local as well as global issues, and that global sustainability begins with building healthy and strong local communities. What we are looking for is something in that direction.

Accepting as one task of education the responding to the questions and challenges that we are facing today (cf. Biesta, 2004), we can say that education has been successful, at least if you look at it from the perspective of global capitalism. As expressed by Clover (2000): one of the deepest and most pervasive educative processes at work over the past decades has been teaching and learning to consume (p. 73). What about education for citizenship? And what about an education that goes beyond a dualism of consumer and citizen and thus sees as a possible subject position the member of the global village as described above?

In this paper we want to discuss education that helps the students to handle the subject positions presented to them by global capitalism and sustainable development. Learning how to avoid being petrified or stunned by inner and outer conflicts or defective knowledge. We discuss a theory offering concepts and models that makes the actions of individuals and families visible as well as the mutual relationship between family members and between the families and its surroundings. We explore if it is possible to use this theoretical approach to go beyond the dualism between consumer and citizen. Further, we will discuss if and how this approach can be fruitful in an educational context, in this case in teacher education.

The disposition of this paper is as follows. First we make a short presentation of the Human ecology theory, as it has been developed by Home economists in the United States and further developed and adjusted to a Swedish context by us. Secondly, we give some examples of the “theory in praxis”. We present an example of how this specific theoretical approach has been used in a project that is an important part of the first course of study for teacher students in Home and consumer studies at Uppsala University. Finally we discuss if and how this specific theoretical approach can help us to create an education that answers at least some of the questions and challenges in terms of sustainable development we face in society today.

I. The human ecology theory

The human ecology theory presented here is adopted from Bubolz and Sontag (1993). We have withdrawn some things and added other, to make it work in a Swedish context in the 21st century.

We argue that it has three mayor features: (1) the emphasis on the interaction between the families and their environments, (2) the family perspective, and (3) the visibility of family activities makes this specific theoretical approach fruitful in a discussion of education for sustainable development.

(1) Interaction between the families and their environment

A key concept within the human ecology theory is interaction, the mutual interdependence between the individuals and family, the socio-cultural and human built environment and the physical-biological environment (Fig. 1).

It is important to note the pros and cons when using a model as this. A model always makes things simpler than they really are. In this case, for example, it can be difficult

to determine the borders of the different environments, and of the family itself. Families can be very different, they change over time and different families have different needs and wants. The human-built environment changes as new roads or houses are built, farmers close down their business and new communication needs for example pylons. The important pro, though, is that the model helps us to see and to analyse the mutual interdependence between family members and between the family and the different environments.

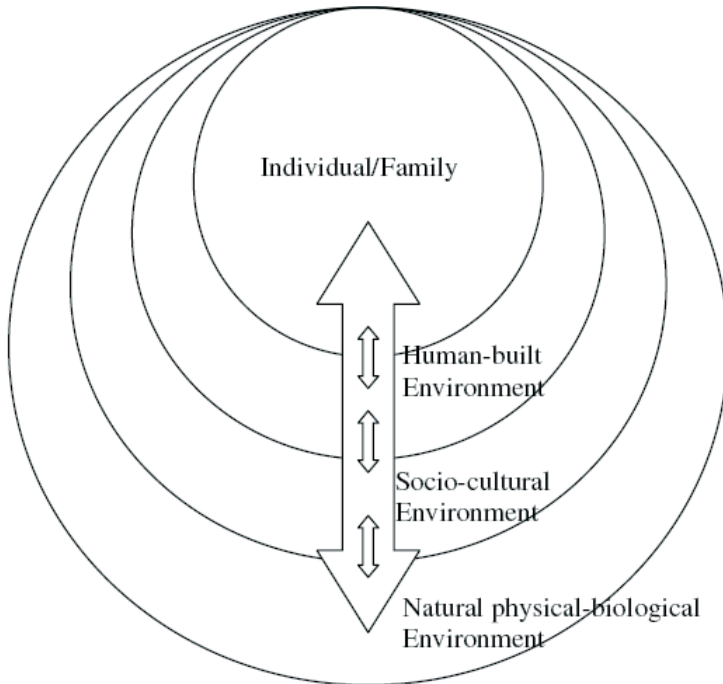


Figure 1. The interaction between individuals/families and their environments (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993; Turkki, 1995).

Environments

The totality of the physical, biological, social, economical, political, aesthetic, and structural surroundings for human beings is what the environment consists of. It is the context in which they live their lives, and for their behaviour and their development. Analytically it is fruitful to distinguish three interrelated environments:

- I. The natural physical-biological environment which includes atmosphere, climate, soil, water, minerals, plants and animals,
- II. The human built environment is the natural environment in different ways altered or transformed by man, e.g. roads and other means of

communication, cultivated land, urban settlements, material artefacts, and polluted air and water

- III. The socio-cultural environment includes both the presence of other people and abstract constructions such as language, laws, norms, and cultural values and patterns.

All three environments can be conceptualised in terms of proximity, i.e. near or distant, to the individual or family. The so-called globalisation makes the inclusion of both dimensions inevitable.

(2) The family perspective

In this theoretical approach the individual (family members) and the family and their interactions are focused – a family perspective.⁴ This perspective illuminates (1) the interactions within the family and (2) the interaction with the different environments. A focus on the individual is too limited. Most people live within some kind of a family, which functions as sort of gatekeepers to the outside world. Values and norms are formed within the family and, at least for parts of our lives, it provides daily care (Casimir and Dutilh, 2003), or as said by Struening (1996) using the notion of intimate relationships to show the great varieties of families in the global society today (cf. Hjälmeskog, 2000):

They are inclusive of all relationships in which individuals care for each other and take responsibility for or contribute in significant ways to each others' welfare (Struening 1996: 138).

From such a broad definition it is clear that both from an individual perspective and a historical perspective that what counts as a family changes over time and differs between cultures. An individual can live alone for parts of her/his life, as co-habitant or in a so called nuclear family for other parts etc.⁵

Turning the model in figure 1 create a model of the family perspective with the individuals/family on the top, which give them an overview over the environments. The first focus of interest we put on the interaction between family members, in the model shown by the arrows between the family members. The second focus is on how the individuals and family interact with the environments, and it is a mutual relationship. The family effects the environments and the environments affect the family (the arrow in Fig 1 and 2 indicate this interaction).

⁴ In Sweden "family" is a quite politically controversial concept. The words home and household is more useful as it is more "neutral". In this paper we use the English word "family", in the broad sense explained in the text.

⁵ In research separating different kinds of family forms can be essential. In the project for teacher students discussed in this paper the students create a fictive family, which makes different family forms and various family situations visible.

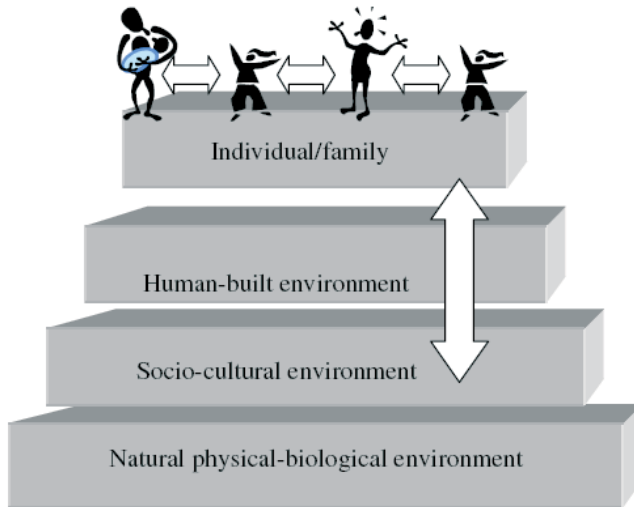


Figure 2. Family perspective

(3) The family activities

By what means and activities do the family members care for each other, take responsibility for/contribute to each other's welfare and in a way that harmonize with sustainable development. Below we forward concepts, offered by the Human ecology theory, which makes these internal "activities" visible. First the means: matter, energy, and information, then the processes included in the adaptation i.e. the infinite reactions and actions to meet the needs and wants of the family in a constantly changing world.

Resources

Matter, energy, and information are the concepts used to clarify the resources existing in different forms in the family and in the environments. The human beings and families need these resources to survive and grow. But the human beings/families also have a great responsibility to use the resources in a sustainable way. *Matter* is anything that has a mass and occupies physical space and the source is the nature. One example is oil, a limited nature resource that you can find in the home as plastic goods and in the human built environment in the streets as asphalt. *Energy* is a resource that is needed in different processes to transform materials. The food chain can serve as an example of the flow of energy through the whole process. The concept *energy* also includes physical, cognitive and socio emotional work of a human being. Just think of getting bread on the family's dinner table. *Information* is a set of communication through language, pictures etc. that help human beings to perceive and understand the meaning they carry as the SOS signal, the behavior of an animal or a conversation.

In the family we use and transform the resources: Material, energy and information, and create new through the interaction within the family and with the different environments. The result is production of goods, services and waste. This

transformation and use of resources are carried out in the family regardless of their particular structure, ethnic origin, life stage or socioeconomic status. The Human ecology theory helps us to regard the family decisions and activities as a part of a greater whole (figure 1 and 2).

Adaptation and involved processes

In order to survive and grow it is necessary for all living systems as the family, society and the nature to adapt and change. Creative adaptation is vital for a sustainable development. Learning is an important step in this process. In this creative process of adaptation the family must find information, choose among many alternatives and make their decisions. These actions help the family to reach desired outcomes. For example if something happens a member in the family (a child begin school, someone gets ill or change place of work) or external factors (the electricity taxes changes, the bus line stops) the family often have to change their habits and routines or a member in the family gets new tasks or another position in the family or they choose to expand in some way. Adaptation changes the state, structure and situation of the family and/or the environments. The adaptation is carried out through the processes that are involved in perception, use of technology, organization, communication, management and decision making, sustenance activities and human development

Perception is an important factor to recognize and get information from the family members and the environments. People respond differently to different stimuli with their taste, smell, hearing, perception of touch, sight and it depends on cultural and personal meanings. *Technology* is an application of knowledge for solving a practical problem that means to use different tools, instruments both within and outside the home. *Organization* of the family activities need a certain structure and organizing such as sharing the work and does a timetable. *Communication* transfers and creates information and meaning between individuals in the family or between the family and the environments. This process is one of the most important interactions and it leads to reciprocal influence when knowledge is passed on, arranged and created. *Decision-making* is the central and complex control process in the families that direct actions for attaining individual and family goals. The decisions are different as technical, economical, moral, juridical and political and many of them are taken under risky and unsure circumstances and it involves recognition, identification, evaluation, and comparison of alternatives and choice of alternative. *Management* is a comprehensive process that involves attainment, creation, coordination and use of resources to meet goals and realize values. Decision-making is involved in all management processes such as to set goals, plan, implement and evaluate. Management can be means to optimize human development and sustain environmental resources. *Sustenance activities* are needed to provide the basic needs for survival of the family. These encompass to provide economic livelihood, nurturance activities, consumption and household work and care of the family members. The activities need material, energy and information and are repetitive, regular, enduring and are the major part of every day life and they are carried out through the other processes. *Human development* is dynamic and usually leads to a greater level of sophistication. All mentioned processes

and activities have influence on the learning and development of the individuals, to perceive, conceptualize, and act.

II. The human ecology theory approach in teacher education

Here we present a teaching project that illustrates our attempt to go beyond the consumer -citizen by using human ecology theory and thereby direct the student's study on the processes within the family and the interactions with the environments. The project is part of the first course for the teacher students in Home and Consumer Studies.⁶ The reason why we begin with this approach is that Home and consumer studies in the Swedish compulsory school emphasize sustainable development. This is expressed in the syllabus as one of the goals to aim for is “develop the pupils understanding and a permanent interest in how activities in the household interact with health, economics and the environment, both locally and globally” (www.skolverket.se).

The teacher students in the beginning of the course get both an oral and a written introduction of the theory. Then they gain knowledge about ethics of natural environments, the cycle of the nature (including a guided tour at the sewage treatment works). They also study research about Swedish family life as for example job sharing in the family. Parallel to this the students start their project that aims to study processes within a family in order to develop the ability to make choices, carry out practical activities in the household and reflect on the consequences of these choices for the family and the environments in order to find creative solutions to adapt in a family situation. Another aim is about becoming a teacher, teaching this kind of issues in school, i.e. didactics.

The students are grouped into teams (4-6 persons) and they practice the method cooperative learning⁷. Each team examine activities in the family by focusing on one materiel resource a family use, such as water, milk, ecological food etc. First the team creates a fictitious family (certain living conditions and members). They study “their family” during a limited period of time and by asking questions with help of the concepts and models offered by the human ecology theory. Every team do two field studies concerning their own project for example the team studying milk visit a farm and a dairy, and some of them do interviews. The team study the interactions between the family, the society and the nature, also conflicts of interests within the family, the family and the society or within the society and discuss different family actions. Examination consists of an oral presentation and a written report. During the oral presentation the students in practical action (role play, testing, exhibition etc.) show different choices their fictive family can make. The presentations also include ideas how to accomplish teaching in a compulsory school context.

⁶ Home, Society and Nature, 7,5 ECTS- credits is the first course in Home and consumer studies at Uppsala university.

⁷ Cooperative Learning is a method focusing on the relationships in groups of students, which require positive interdependence, individual accountability, interpersonal skills, face-to-face promotive interaction, and processing. (www.co-operation.org).

Which conflicts do the students create within “the families”?

The family perspective in the theory makes the relations between the family members visible. When the students create their fictive family they also create conflicts of interests. Examples:

- The daughter has gained deeper knowledge about garbage reclamation through a field study to the big local refuse tip and wishes that all the family acted in amore environmentally friendly manner by sorting out the garbage and buying more consciously. The mother agrees but not the father...
- Another daughter had learned in school about the importance of saving our natural environment and demanded that her family to buy only ecological or environmentally friendly products
- A third daughter demands to drink only bottled water...
- The children have different opinions on food, one is vegetarian and the other wants food rich of proteins

What processes do the students use to learn about family life/actions?

That learning is an essential part of the adaptation process became very clear in the students reports. To detect, select and compare information about these daily resources we use without reflecting often made them excited. To gain knowledge of ecological products by visiting a farm, a diary, shops etc. made the students understand the complex relations between these environments and the family. Focusing on one very important foodstuff in Swedish food culture, milk, made the students reflect on the importance of many actions and decisions in the family everyday life. ‘Should the milk package be burned or be recycled’? The students uncovered conflict of interests and contradictions in the society. Should the family buy cheaper foreign milk or think more locally or ecologically? Should the family buy milk in the small local shop or go by car to the big supermarket?

The students also reported on how learning by testing was an important and enriching part of the project: The “water group”, for example, reported that in a blind test the students find that tapped local water is as good as the bottled water and that very few could taste any difference. Further their shower and bath test and, testing to wash up the dishes by hand or by machine was reported to give new experience and knowledge about the use of resources. The students discover that testing products and habitual behaviour is a very good method for clearing misunderstandings for example in a family context. The students considered it problematic to change habits and routines for all members in a family. To make them communicate and make a decision that all in the family could agree on was a common attempt: ‘OK, we try for a month to buy only ecological milk..., and then we make a new decision’. Other students argue that gaining knowledge about the consequences of buying conventional or ecological products made them willing to change their own habits and buy some ecological food stuff as milk, flour, potatoes, coffee and bananas even it was more expensive. To afford this they buy less junk food instead.

Communication is also reported as really important in the project. One example is the interviews they do with people, salespersons, experts, farmers etc. It makes the

students understand that the project is about “real life”. This kind of communication makes them more interested and energetic to learn. Videos from example the Fair trade organisation, Agenda 21 also have a great impact on the students understanding of the relations between the family, society and natural environment.

Students’ reports on the impact of environmental changes on the families

In the students reports they discuss that the global market, food industry and the supermarkets have made it easy for the families to find lots of milk products, bottled water and vegetables from nearly all over the world wherever the family lives in Sweden. The amount of offered goods has increased. New European big super markets have settled in Sweden, selling low-price products, for example milk from Germany is offered, but not local or ecological products. The students have realized that it is important in the global market economy to have knowledge about a sustainable society otherwise people just become egoistic and buy the cheapest alternative. They also say that the government should decrease taxes on ecological foodstuff. They also have ideas on new local television programmes that deals with sustainability in a manner that people understand that their choices have effects on the nature or the people involved in the production. The students seem to need/want positive feed back on their moral actions.

Students’ evaluation of the project

The students give the project a very high score in the evaluation. Many of them say that they before the project were interested and felt they knew a lot about sustainability. But this project has really opened their eyes of both the needs and the difficulties of changing habits. In the project they make unexpected experiences and discoveries and this learning they say have influenced them more than a teacher telling them what is right or wrong. A great number say that they have changed routines at home. But they also have a hard time on realizing and accepting that their own actions and habits have negative consequences for the natural environment and for people that is producing coffee, tea etc. Two students write in their reports:

When I read about the theory I begin to realize that everyone’s choices have an effect the nature, choices that often are unconscious. “The world should be seen as a unit where all phenomena are interrelated”; I understand now for the very first time what it means. A few weeks ago I would, as an obstinate little child, have said that I am independent and don’t rely on anybody or anything, I can’t say so any longer because I now think in an entirely new way (female student 1).

We can’t afford to play with out nature forever; we have to become more cautious before it is too late. We must not be so lazy so we only rely on new techniques that take care of everything. Because the basic problem is our habits and routines and these we can change. We must become more “eco- centric” (female student 2).

III. Discussion

The quote from Kofi Annan in the introduction urged us as educators to turn the abstract idea of sustainable development into reality for all the people in the world. We can start with our own students, and we believe that it is possible to make an abstract concept real for the students by using a Human ecology approach.

Using the Human ecology theory as an approach in teaching (and research) is fruitful for two reasons. First, because it offers ways to make visible the family and their everyday activities, habits and routines. It is in this context important to remember the inclusive definition of “family”; otherwise the view will be too narrow. Second, because the family perspective lets us see the internal relations in the family, and the mutual interrelations between the family and the different environments from a family perspective.

The family perspective

A pedagogical problem is that education has become too abstract i.e. students are unable to use their own experiences as support for what they do in school. Taking the everyday life as a point of departure or as focus in projects, like in our example from a teacher education course, is a way to make education less abstract, i.e. more meaningful, comprehensible and something that touches your senses as well as your feelings. Such an education is capable of really making a difference. As the teacher students said in their evaluation of the project: it made them understand that what they do make a difference. They started to see themselves and their own actions in a new light and they said that they actually did changes in their own families. Further, the students saw themselves as individuals and as family members and they realised that it can be really tuff to make changes in a family and that a lot of negotiation and that experiments like periodical preliminary changes can be one way to get the family involved, interested and to tear down barriers for new ways of doing things.

The household perspective is important when we want to understand the family actions, as Helena Åberg (2000) discuss in her doctoral thesis on waste management. In one of her studies she interviewed families about their interest and willingness to act in accordance with a new waste management strategy that was introduced in the area. In most cases it was the woman/mother in the families that accepted to be interviewed and she showed a very positive reaction to new waste management routines and agreed on its necessity. After three years she was interviewed again. This time it became clear that the families had not changed their routines according to the new strategy. Why? The results from the first interview pointed towards that direction. Åberg finds out that in many families it was only the woman that was positive, and she was not able to influence the other family members. Åberg’s conclusion is that the whole family should be interviewed and the power relations, communication, decision making etc. between family members need to be part of such a study if the purpose is to learn about the interest and willingness of the family to change.

The teacher student-project gave the opportunity for the students to explore conflicts within the family, i.e. conflicts between family members or between wants and needs

or between different needs of the family. But also conflicts within one single human being: Conflicts between irreconcilable needs or between wants and needs within a single individual. What about our desire to attend this conference and travel here fast by air, and the want to be careful with the use of fuel contributing to the CO₂- outlet? This type of inner conflicts has been really hard for student to accept and handle. An example: “I really like bananas and I buy those available in the local store even though I know that these conventionally grown are bad for those working at the banana plantations in the Philippines”.

The family and the environments

The project also gave the students opportunity to study at least two other kinds of connected conflicts. First, conflicts between certain lines of development such as global capitalism versus sustainable development. Even though human beings create this conflict, it is regarded by many as circumstances and objectively given, which by many of us are seen as meaningless, alarming and in conflict with human dignity, and, more or less beyond our control. Secondly, there are conflicts between different interest groups. Some want cheap and easy made food, while others want local grown food and a minimising of ecologically harmful packages.

All these types of conflicts must be included in environment education, argues Schnack (1996). The reason for this is that environmental problems are constructed of conflicting human interests in relation to nature. This is how complex reality is. The students involved in the project discuss that their insights about being a part of something bigger inspired them not only to political actions such as buying green-labelled foods themselves but also to be proactive by talking to the local shop keeper about the selection of vegetables or other food stuffs. They took this action based on knowledge that is incomplete. It must be incomplete as different experts offer different answers to relevant questions and because of the conflicts of interest between for example local farmers and international supermarkets. A will and power to act in responsible ways seems to develop by understanding the family perspective and by experiencing that everyday actions have consequences not only to one self but also to others and to society and the natural environment.

Education

The complexity of a global society has impact on the situation of education in society. For one, schools have no control over the flow of information, not over how much, over what kind or from whom. This means, Säljö (2003) argues, that the main focus of schools have to be re-oriented towards helping people to operate in such a world and to discern what is relevant and reliable information/knowledge. He continues: “This is a different, and to some extent much more complex, task than teaching some basic skills of reading and writing and testing whether pupils can regurgitate the information presented by the teacher or the textbook” (Säljö 2003: 317).

We argue that traditional approaches to instruction, such as readings, lectures etc. often produce inert knowledge, i.e. knowledge you learn that you forget to apply when solving a problem and thus remains “inert”. It is knowledge acquired outside of a

problem-solving context. The project we have discussed in this paper is an example of such a problem-solving context. It also becomes clear, the important task of education to actually give opportunity to find out what it is one need to learn. Biesta (2003) talks about the risk when one engages in organised forms of learning, that learning may have impact on you, that learning may change you. In this kind of risky enterprise the educational professionals have a crucial role to play because a major part of their expertise and professionalism lies in facilitating this kind of situations for students to take part in and where they learn what they have expected, but also things that they have not thought of as possible or wanted knowledge.

If we look at environmental and health education we often see that educational task as a question of behavioural modification and change of attitudes. We argue that there are two central aspects needed to counterpart such education, i.e. critical thinking and action competence. As Schnack (1996) puts it: A democracy depends on critical thinkers, on people being willing and competent to act without being sure. Action competence is not only a skill or an ideal of living; it is a capability, which is based on critical thinking and incomplete knowledge.

Beyond consumer-citizenship

Growing up today is being presented to the two subject positions, which both can be seen as “images” of a world citizen (Ochenden, 1999). The consumer, and, as we see it, the citizen. It has been argued that one way to help the students to define their own roles as members of the global communities is by encouraging students to be aware of these opposing concepts of world citizenship – and the different attitudes each brings to current issues (Ockenden, 1999).

We argue that in the education project presented in this paper Human ecology theory helped the students not only to be aware of different subject positions offered to them, it helped them to integrate them. The position as consumer is no longer opposed to the one of the citizen, instead they are interwoven, due to the focus on near (intimate) relationships and the actions in everyday life. Through the family perspective, one focus of interest in Human ecology theory, a sense of connectedness seems to have been created, a sense of being important. That one’s own choice of coffee, bananas etc. have consequences in the near by and far away human beings and natural environment. It also made the students to be aware of conflicts within the family and finding ways to solve them. The question “what do you want?” is no longer sufficient. Finding solutions to certain global issues starts at home by the kitchen table. This is where the first battle is fought.

The students also became aware of the importance of knowledge. This is in line with the results of a study of who buys green-labelled food (Solér, 1999) showing that those who regularly buy green-labelled food are those who have knowledge of the mutual relationship between them, choice they make and the natural environment.

Inspired by Ekholm (2005) in his speech about learning for sustainable development at a seminar that officially started the Decade for education for sustainable development in Sweden, we say:

To learn is to change the whole human being. We are actions, we are relations. We are in our togetherness with other people and with our societies and with our nature, and that is what we learn.

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Cultural understanding of responsibility

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I. Introduction

It appears that the contemporary world will soon become overwhelmed with a drift toward globalism, due to advanced technologies breaking through all borders and limits existing so far. Such a threat, however, is only seemingly real, since the closer nations converge, the better they perceive differences invisible at first glance existing among them. The dissimilarities emerge on the ground of comparative studies, and their understanding is conditioned by the comprehension of philosophical-religious veneers as well as the social context. Many different classifications of cultures exist, as there are several variables influencing the existence of those pigeonholes⁸. One of the most insightful classifications was presented by G. Hofstede whose explanation of differences occurring among people was based on the notion of their being differently “programmed” in the process of socialization within a particular culture of a nation.

II. Classification of cultures according to g. hofstede

Geert Hofstede, the Dutch scientist investigating cultures of societies, in 1970s of the twentieth century an adept of discerning cultural variables⁹. He described culture as collective programming of the mind differentiating certain parts of the global society from other ones. His classification was based on the interpretation of 117, 000 answers to questions to a questionnaire distributed among IBM employees from 66 countries around the world. Basic dimensions allowing for identification of cultural differences are centered around four aspects of the problem: First one, labeled as **power distance**, pertains to the relations between persons with higher or lower social status. Questions from the research concerned various attitudes of subordinates in a particular country – whether they expect specific instructions from their superiors and accept them unconditionally or, on the contrary, they express their doubts about the orders of their superiors and willingly and eagerly initiate discussion on the subject matter with them. The value acknowledging sbd’s superiority is usually placed between those two opposites marking the distance of power in organizations. Table 1 presents the results of Hofstede’s research in relation to **power distance**.

⁸ One of the most fervently disputed classifications in literature devoted to the topic was presented by Richard Gesteland, who divided cultures into partner- and transaction-friendly; ceremonial and non-ceremonial ones; monochronic and polichronic; expressive and submissive. (Gesteland, R.R., *Różnice kulturowe a zachowania w biznesie*, PWN Warszawa 2000). Another, equally prolific classification was proposed by Edward Hall dividing cultures into high- and low-context ones. (Hall, E.T., *Poza kulturą*, PWN Warszawa 2001).

⁹ Hofstede, G., *Kultury i organizacje*, PWE Warszawa 2000.

Table 1

Power Distance			
<i>High Power-Distance</i>			
Malaysia	104	South Korea	60
Guatemala	95	Iran	58
Panama	95	Taiwan	58
Philippines	94	Spain	57
Mexico	81	Pakistan	55
Venezuela	81	Japan	54
Arab countries	80	Italy	50
Ecuador	78	Argentina	49
Indonesia	78	South Africa	49
India	77	Jamaica	45
West Africa	77	USA	40
Yugoslavia	76	Canada	39
Singapore	74	Netherlands	38
Brazil	69	Australia	36
France	68	Costa Rica	35
Hong Kong	68	Germany (West)	35
Colombia	67	Great Britain	35
Salvador	66	Switzerland	34
Turkey	66	Finland	33
Belgium	65	Norway	31
East Africa	64	Sweden	31
Peru	64	Ireland	28
Thailand	64	New Zealand	22
Chile	63	Denmark	18
Portugal	63	Israel	13
Uruguay	61	Austria	11
Greece	60	<i>Low Power-Distance</i>	

From: Hickson, D.J. and Pugh, D.S.: *Management Worldwide. The Impact of Societal Culture Organizations Around the Globe*. Penguin Books 1995, p. 22.

The second, bipolar dimension of interpersonal relations is called **individualism** or **collectivism**. Individualism is being realised in orientation towards achieving success by an individual, in stressing one's independence, self-reliance, in appreciation of the freedom of choice; resorting to one's privileges rather than to responsibilities. Collectivism, on the other hand, is characterized by strong sense of duty to other members of the group. An individual perceives him/herself as element of a bigger entity; he/she feels the need to conform to the norms set by the group and nurture the maintenance of harmonious relationships within the group. In collective cultures, then, a strong sense of duty is regarded as major value. Table 2 places countries where the research was conducted, according to the level of individualist/collective attitudes. The position of a particular country was set on the basis of the following questions: Do you value your job for the challenges it sets on you; for high level of independence in decision making process; for substantial time left for personal life; or, do you prefer opportunities for upgrading your professional skills and satisfactory working conditions?

Table 2

Individualism versus Collectivism

<i>Individualistic</i>			
USA	91	Turkey	37
Australia	90	Uruguay	36
Great Britain	89	Greece	35
Canada	80	Philippines	32
Netherlands	80	Mexico	30
New Zealand	79	East Africa	27
Italy	76	Portugal	27
Belgium	75	Yugoslavia	27
Denmark	74	Malaysia	26
Sweden	71	Hong Kong	25
France	71	Chile	23
Ireland	70	Singapore	20
Norway	69	Thailand	20
Switzerland	68	West Africa	20
Germany (West)	67	Salvador	19
South Africa	65	South Korea	18
Finland	63	Taiwan	17
Austria	55	Peru	16
Israel	54	Costa Rica	15
Spain	51	Indonesia	14
India	48	Pakistan	14
Japan	46	Colombia	13
Argentina	46	Venezuela	12
Iran	41	Panama	11
Jamaica	39	Ecuador	8
Brasil	38	Guatemala	6
Arab countries	38		
		<i>Collectivistic</i>	

From: Hickson, D.J. and Pugh, D.S.: *Management Worldwide. The Impact of Societal Culture Organizations Around the Globe*. Penguin Books 1995, p. 30.

Another criterion, according to which cultures are different from one another is the cultural trait, named by Hofstede as either **masculinity** or **femininity**. In cultures dominated by males, chances of promotion, variety of challenges, opportunities of sky-high salaries, individually set goals and achievements become major momentum of human activity; while in societies representing feminine cultures, good rapport among fellow workers, cooperation within the group, certainty of employment play much more significant part. Table 3 illustrates the division of values predominant in either feminine or masculine models of culture in countries where Hofstede's research was conducted.

Table 3

Masculinity versus Femininity

<i>Masculinity</i>			
Japan	95	Singapore	48
Austria	79	Israel	47
Venezuela	73	Indonesia	46
Italy	70	West Africa	46
Switzerland	70	Turkey	45
Mexico	69	Taiwan	45
Ireland	68	Panama	44
Jamaica	68	France	43
Great Britain	66	Iran	43
Germany (West)	66	Spain	42
Philippines	64	Peru	42
Colombia	64	East Africa	41
Ecuador	63	Salvador	40
South Africa	63	South Korea	39
USA	62	Uruguay	38
Australia	61	Guatemala	37
New Zealand	58	Thailand	34
Greece	57	Portugal	31
Hong Kong	57	Chile	28
Argentina	56	Finland	26
India	56	Costa Rica	21
Belgium	54	Yugoslavia	21
Arab countries	53	Denmark	16
Canada	52	Netherlands	14
Malaysia	50	Norway	8
Pakistan	50	Sweden	5
Brazil	49		
		<i>Femininity</i>	

From: Hickson, D.J. and Pugh, D.S.: *Management Worldwide. The Impact of Societal Culture Organizations Around the Globe*. Penguin Books 1995, p. 33

The last dimension is labeled **uncertainty avoidance** (openness or resistance toward changes, or the fear for your future life). Answers to three questions from the questionnaire:

What is your attitude toward breaching the barriers existing in the company?

How long are you going to continue your work in the company?

How often do you feel nervous or tense while being in the workplace?

allowed for creating a list of countries according to the level of avoiding uncertainty by their citizens. Table 4 presents the results of research concerning uncertainty avoidance tolerance level in particular cultures.

Table 4

Uncertainty Avoidance

<i>Uncertainty Avoiding</i>			
Greece	112	Ecuador	67
Portugal	104	Germany (West)	65
Guatemala	101	Thailand	64
Uruguay	100	Iran	59
Belgium	94	Finland	59
Salvador	94	Switzerland	58
Japan	92	West Africa	54
Yugoslavia	88	Netherlands	53
Peru	87	East Africa	52
Argentina	86	Australia	51
Chile	86	Norway	50
Costa Rica	86	South Africa	49
France	86	New Zealand	49
Panama	86	Canada	48
Spain	86	Indonesia	48
South Korea	85	USA	46
Turkey	85	Philippines	44
Mexico	82	India	40
Israel	81	Indoneysia	36
Colombia	80	Great Britain	35
Venezuela	76	Ireland	35
Brazil	76	Hong Kong	29
Italy	75	Sweden	29
Pakistan	70	Denmark	23
Austria	70	Jamaica	13
Taiwan	69	Singapore	8
Arab countries	68		

Uncertainty Tolerating

From: Hickson, D.J. and Pugh, D.S.: *Management Worldwide. The Impact of Societal Culture Organizations Around the Globe*. Penguin Books 1995, p. 35

Within each of the four dimensions of cultures (as described by Hofstede) one may focus on crucial moral values typical of each culture. However, not each and every moral value bears comparable significance. The manifold notion of responsibility ranks among those ethical principles exemplified most clearly in **individualistic** and **collectivist** cultures. Pondering on the variety of approaches towards responsibility in those cultures would become much easier with the selection of a person representative for a particular dimension of a culture. In literature concerning the subject, the United States is the country most often mentioned as a perfect example of a society dominated by individualism, while Japan is frequently quoted as an ideal of collectivist society.

III. Economic, philosophical and social definition of responsibility in individualistic cultures

Several works of Aristotle contain his understanding of the theory of management presented through creating a model of an average household comparable

with modern enterprises. It was the result of his understanding of natural course of events. He divided subordination into three categories:

1. lord/servant
2. father/children
3. husband/wife.

The fundamental role of lord/father/husband was representing the entire system to the outside world. An individual in such a system was a mere representative. The function was labeled by Aristotle as politics. Sources of individualism in Mediterranean cultures can be traced back, then, to ancient times. American individualism, however, derives itself from Puritan ethics. It is expressed through the notion that any individual predestined by God to become a saint possesses direct and personal contact with God Almighty, has an opportunity of making a deal or alliance with God, and is participating on the behalf of God in creating His Church on the American soil. The divine management bequeathed personal responsibility onto the hands of His representatives on earth. In New England churches, there can still be found benches designed in such a way that the person sitting is separated from others by a curtain. In Puritan societies God is faced on individual basis, while Catholics represent uniform community¹⁰. Likewise, it was an individual benefit, not a social one that had initiated neo-classical economic doctrine. Its authorship is ascribed to Adam Smith whose work: *An Inquiry Into the Wealth of Nations* was hallowed as the most influential economic work ever done. The following extract from the work provided the definition of individualism from an economic perspective:

“ [An individual] pursues solely his/her own personal benefit and in this particular as well as in other cases an invisible hand guides him/her toward the achievement of a goal the individual in question had never even assumed to attain. It is by no means a loss for the society that the aim had been unintended. In the course of pursuing one’s own personal benefit an individual frequently contributes to the benefit of the entire society much more than while trying to achieve exclusively his/her personal goal. I have never seen a person doing much good in the name of public welfare, while conducting buying-and-selling activity. It is not a common stance among merchants, and only few words are necessary to discourage them from abandoning such attitude once and for all.¹¹”

Achieving success during one’s lifespan is held in high esteem among Protestants. One’s high self-esteem and conviction that you are a true professional in what you are doing are perceived as essential and expected values. It constitutes the drive for the development of the entire economy – from small companies to huge corporations. According to Protestant doctrine, the man is doomed to rely on his/her own skills. American managers consider an individual as a prerequisite in the constructing of any commercial enterprise, and as the source of its potential success. They hold the conviction that man has to fend for himself instead of submitting

¹⁰ Hampden-Turner, Ch., Trompenaars, A., *Siedem kultur kapitalizmu*. Dom Wydawniczy ABC i Oficyna Ekonomiczna. Kraków 2000. p. 52.

¹¹ Smith, A.: *An Inquiry Into the Wealth of Nations.*, after: Hampden-Turner, Ch., Trompenaars, A., *Siedem kultur kapitalizmu*. Dom Wydawniczy ABC i Oficyna Ekonomiczna. Kraków 2000, op. cit. p. 58.

himself to the influence of other people or subdue to external course of events. American culture encourages individuals to do their best. The majority of Nobel Prize laureates come from the United States. The bulk of new patents, the most of newly created work places, rapidly emerging new companies are also the achievements America can boast off. Outstanding individuals here are granted best access to investment capital. Moreover, the entire society is organized in such a way as to promote individuals. Individual consumption of goods absorbs 66.3% of Gross National Product. Such individualistic attitude also has its dark sides, including the instability employees in the US face now and then. They frequently shift from one place of work to another in the pursuit of their private goals. The result of such attitudes on the part of employees is the average bankruptcy rate among American companies (63 thousands companies fall every year, including many of huge market tycoons). The characteristic feature of societies with individualistic culture dominant is, in contemporary times, slackening of the bonds between institutions and individuals, revealed in unlimited opportunities of re-negotiating any contract. Professional life becomes only loosely connected with institutions. The evidence for gaining increasingly greater personal sovereignty can be found in data obtained within the last ten years, corroborating the statement that an average span of employment in such countries as Great Britain or the United States lasts for about six years. The change of psychological rapport between employers and employees can be clearly seen here. Such systems guarantee opportunities of employment, rather than employment as such. In reality, it means that one has to take care of him/herself, while employers are supposed to help if they are capable of doing so. Sigmund Bauman, author of *Alone Again: Ethics After Certainty*, is anxious about the fact that we either belong to ourselves more and more, or we are entirely occupied with ourselves. The author is trying to get through to the reader with message that in the place of work we are primarily responsible for ourselves and for our future life, then to our fellow workers, finally and to a limited extent we are responsible to the company.

With no links with someone or something, no sense of responsibility can be created, and if responsibility is absent, there is no need for morality. Subsequently, anything that is legal becomes acceptable. According to Charles Handy, theorist on modern organizations, such *status quo* also has its positive aspects, since man has become responsible for his life again, being free to do whatever he wishes.

IV. Economic, philosophical and social definition of responsibility in collectivist cultures

In congruence with the philosophy of Tao, people from the Far East represent a very specific mode of understanding the entirety of relations between buyer and seller. Market is perceived as a single entity, marketing orientation becomes a notion embracing all functions of coordination between the demand and supply within the frames of an integral system in a perpetually changing environment. The core of the Eastern marketing orientation lies in the ability of perceiving customers' demands. Buyers and sellers create a unity, not being capable of realizing their goals separately. Customer-oriented approach is firmly rooted in Eastern tradition of trade and in ethos of Eastern merchants. It is also distinguishable in the structures of contemporary business in Japan.

Confucian tradition perceives man as part of the Cosmos and is hardly inclined to treating man as an individual entity (the latter was inflicted on Western philosophies by Christianity formulating theory of the person). Philosophical consciousness in Japan, to much bigger extent than its European or American counterparts, leans towards giving up any claims from an individual. The development of personality in collectivistic mentality is based on understanding by an individual of his/her position in the cosmic order and, subsequently, comprehension of freedom as necessity of his/her occupying such and no other place. In Western cultures human life is an incessant competition with others, a ceaseless confrontation with the surrounding environment. In Eastern cultures, the elements of cooperation are more distinguishable, since the prevailing philosophy is maintaining the harmony of Cosmos with man constituting its integral part. In Europe, ever since the era dominated by teachings of Plato, the system of norms and values has been determined according to the hierarchy: from material to spiritual values. Eastern philosophical tradition never creates a particular system of values. Instead, it accepts it as an imperative.

Yoshino brings out the fact that efficiency of management system in Japan is the result of the Confucian system of values underlying it¹². Salient features of such systems are:

1. collectivism – the development of an individual; his/her perception and activity are realized within the group. The group constitutes a frame, a reference point for an individual;
2. home – any social or interpersonal relations are based on the notion of in-house family connections, reliance on inmates, on the hierarchy of responsibility within a family;
3. loyalty & conscientiousness – collective coexistence requires loyalty and responsibility from its members. Higher ranking ones are morally liable to hold responsibility for their subordinates.

Breaching the established code of moral conduct puts the violator in disgrace. Ostracism on the part of the group is perceived as ultimate punishment, whilst subordination to the code is rewarded with the group's care and protection for its member.

The feature of societies representing collectivist cultures is their nurturing of families consisting of several generations, in which every member perceives him/herself as inseparable ingredient of the whole. Incessant and continuing contacts with other members of the group create the drive to achieve harmony in surrounding social milieu. Harmony is regarded as basic moral virtue, and much of the group's behavior remains subordinated to retaining it. In collectivist families, the children's attitudes and opinions are shaped by following patterns set by others. Opinions expressed by an individual is virtually non-existent. Children incompatible with their peers in the group are frequently regarded as indocile. As it often happens in such families, every member contributes his/her share to pay for the child's education, expecting that later on the child will support them in return. Achieving a top-rank position in society puts the burden of responsibility on the winners for supporting those who occupy lower positions in the social hierarchy.

Collectivist culture is characterized by collective responsibility. For violation of

¹² Yoshino, M.: *Managerial System. Tradition and Innovation*. MIT Press, 1968.

commonly accepted rules, the entire group whose member breached a norm is held responsible. It is, then, indisputable working model of collective responsibility. The character of interpersonal relations is morally justified by natural law.

In countries classified among those representing individualistic cultures, the prerequisite of a marriage is romantic infatuation. Simultaneously, the majority of people enter matrimonial bonds with a partner capable of contributing to the welfare of the entire family, rather than focus on the perspective of their gain as an individual.

V. Conclusion

Each of the cultures mentioned above can boast of the possession of some precious values: respect for the rights of individual on one hand; focus on wellbeing of the group on the other. Such contradictory attitudes are determinants of moral values characteristic of particular types of cultures. There is no unanimous answer to the question, whether a synthesis of such attitudes within the frame of today's global economy exists. One may merely speculate that some form of their coexistence will become indispensable. The best of all available solutions in the era of global economy would be the fusion of the individualist attitude, with man being entirely responsible for himself, and the collectivist approach in which responsibility is spread amongst entire social groups. It would benefit the entire human society.

VI. Summary

In the article the author presents the influence of cultures on the reception of moral values taking as an example the category of responsibility. Part one contains the conception of culture division based on their dimensions. The dimensions, make it possible to identify culture differences take into account the following factors: power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, and uncertainty avoidance. In part two the author attempts to explain the notion of responsibility in its economical, philosophical and social dimensions with respect to two types of cultures: individualistic and collectivistic. The final part is devoted to speculations on a possible combination of the two approaches.

Possibilities for the Formation of Responsibility in the Process of Ethical Education in Latvia

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Introduction

Present-day Latvia, having just become a full-fledged member of the European Union and joined its single labour market, is characterized by contradictory ethical values and needs. This specific situation, which has developed under the influence of the global tendencies of postmodern culture and consumer society, manifests itself as dehumanization and lack of moral and social criteria.

The formation of a universal and educated civil society requires answers to the question: how can the pedagogic process focused on the ethical framework of humanity preserve universal human values and provide the development of a personality? On the background of the global tendencies of our time, ethical education becomes particularly important as a possibility for the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of a personality. One of its strategic tasks is the formation of responsibility as an ethical value and its consolidation in a purposeful and organized process of life activity based on the principles of the development of an individual and the values important for him/her, including responsibility for oneself and other people, work, cultural values, nature, society, and the state.

The “White Paper” of the European Union emphasizes the following as one of the most important tasks of education, “The ethical factor of responsibility has to become one of the basic components of the curricula of basic education (White Paper, 1998, 21).

Upbringing is different nowadays. It is the interplay of many factors, in which the diversity of ethical education reflects transformations taking place in the dynamic society.

The topicality of the issue raises one pedagogic problem: how can education respond to the current European and global tendencies in the development of responsibility? The purpose of the present article is to analyze possibilities for the formation of responsibility in the process of ethical education in Latvia.

1 Transformations in the Ethical Value Orientation in Latvia

At present, the Latvian society is experiencing the most serious crisis of moral values since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the regaining of independence. The formation of the civil society reveals the immoral nature of the political environment where low moral standards dominate political process. The society is worried about the triumph of market values and attracted by them at the same time. Alienation appears in the relations between the society and the authorities, and the effect of competition is felt in people’s relationships. The society still encounters distortions of the universal human values, which leads to the rejection of the values of the civil society and the active involvement of citizens.

Thus, there is certain skepticism regarding moral norms, principles, and criteria. The role of the ethical heritage and traditions is undervalued. Knowledge about ethical problem solutions is surprisingly scanty and selective.

It should be admitted that regarding value orientation the situation is contradictory and uneven due to the fact that “Latvia is still at the crossroads of the political, economic, and humanitarian life. This situation has lasted too long. The Latvian social life is characterized by insecurity and lack of clarity both regarding the society and the fate of an individual. This situation manifests itself as disillusionment with the current transformations and disappearing of a person as a value from the system of values” (Freiberger, 2001, 66).

Alienation has gained the features of a social dimension. In the period of transformations, many people have been obliged to change their individual lifestyle due to the dramatic changes in their social lifestyle. “By force or voluntarily, consciously or unconsciously they have been obliged to become part of the global monetary lifestyle determined by the market economy. Consequently, the interference of different lifestyles can be observed” (Money. Lifestyle. Identity. 2000, 9).

At the very beginning of the formation of the consumer society in Latvia, which took place in the style of liberal anarchy, the axiom of individual inequality was enhanced by vivid, sharp, and sudden economic and social inequality resembling some fairy-tale descriptions. In this transition society, the laws of value harmony have not taken effect yet. As we all know, “The law of harmony requires the prevention of radical discord in the ethical and eudaimonical life of the society” (Simmel, 1992, 42). That is why, the demand to focus on the treatment of ethical issues in the process of education becomes more pronounced.

The need for ethical education is determined to a great extent by the development of consumer education. In this respect the project “Guidelines for Consumer Education in the Baltic States” which was carried out in Latvia should be mentioned. This project touched upon some ethical parameters of consumer education. It was pointed out that the progress of Latvia depends on how successfully children will be educated including the development of their critical thinking, conscientiousness, and responsibility. The view that “a responsible citizen of the 21st century is characterized by insight and ability to function both in the role of a producer and a consumer as well as understanding of the effect these two roles have on the world in general” (Guidelines, 2004, 6). The necessity and importance of ethical education is also included in the definition of consumer education. “Consumer education comprises not only the problems of individual consumers, but also sustainable consumption, social justice, human rights, ethical values, and elimination of poverty” (Guidelines, 2004, 8).

Thus, consumer education is focused on “the formation of responsibility, which develops individual’s abilities to organize his/her own life as well as the common life of the global society” (Guidelines, 2004, 9).

2 Understanding of the Concept of Responsibility and Possibilities for the Development of Ethical Responsibility in the Educational Process

In the modern society, each individual has to be responsible for his/her actions, the quality and precision of work. Readiness to undertake responsibility implies a high

level of the ethical maturity of a personality.

The ethical upbringing of a personality is based on the ideas of humanism. Latvia has to educate a generation whose ideals and values are connected with the democratic society, the highest value of which is a humane personality characterized by the unity of freedom, independence, and responsibility. Individual freedom starts when there is a choice. The term freedom comprises human abilities and possibilities to think and choose the best option for one's action and behaviour corresponding to one's needs. There exists inner and outer freedom. A person possessing inner freedom is autonomous, which is manifested in his/her independence and responsibility irrespective of the surrounding environment and conditions. A free individual sets the goals of his/her life independently, chooses the means, and undertakes responsibility for the decisions taken" (Spona, 2004, 53).

"The core of the concept of responsibility consists of the cause-effect relationship between person's action and the consequences that the society applies for the particular action. Responsibility has two main dimensions which are mutually connected. On the one hand, it is an inner standard for judging person's behaviour as good or bad. On the other hand, responsibility implies negative consequences for the action which is considered to be bad. Thus, the concept of responsibility has its repressive dimension. Usually, attention is paid to responsibility only when the repressive dimension is applied. However, in the everyday life of an individual, the preventive dimension of responsibility predominates" (Levits, 2005).

In the pedagogic aspect, responsibility as an ethical category implies honest discharge of one's duties. "The Dictionary of Pedagogic Terms" defines it as "an attitude characterized by conscientiousness, and conscious necessity to be responsible for one's action and its consequences, to undertake and fulfil the duties set by the society" (The Dictionary of Pedagogic Terms, 2000, 18).

From the psychological point of view, "responsibility results from the integration of several functions of a personality. These functions are the following: the subjective perception of the world, evaluation of one's life resources, emotionally interested attitude to one's duties, and will" (Karpova, 1994, 114).

In order to develop the ethical responsibility of an individual, a specific pedagogic activity is needed including ethical education.

At present, there is a growing interest in ethical education and value orientation in Latvian schools. Until the year 2005, ethics was taught in form 7 as a compulsory subject, and it was included in the curricula of secondary schools as an elective subject. At the same time, schools had a right to offer the course of Christian ethics as an optional subject. However, there is an opinion that the amount of time devoted to ethics and other subjects dealing with value education has to be increased teaching them as compulsory subjects from the 1st to the 12th form.

It should be noted, however, that the interest in ethics mentioned above contradicts with the indifference of the majority concerning various manifestations of moral crisis in our life.

On 14 October 200, the Cabinet of Ministers passed a resolution on changes in the standard of basic education, which provides the teaching of ethics/ Christian teaching as a compulsory subject starting from the 1st form in September 2004. It gives parents a choice which subject – ethics or Christian teaching – their child will study.

According to this resolution, the draft standard of the course “Ethics” was developed for the forms 1 – 3 (Ethics. The Standard of Basic Education for the Forms 1-3, 2004).

According to I. Augskalne, the necessity for teaching ethics as a compulsory school subject is based on the following considerations. “First, it is necessary to get acquainted with the autonomous sphere of morality, which is independent from and not subordinated to the functional spheres. A separate subject makes it possible to show its links with other spheres of life and to draw students’ attention to its specific independent nature, and its role both in the society and the life of an individual.

Second, ethics provides a uniform consolidated terminology for the general concepts related with morality taught in various subjects. Besides, it gives an opportunity to reflect on the issues of morality.

Next, modern schools have to undertake responsibility for the functions traditionally performed by the family and other social institutions. Unfortunately, in many cases modern parents do not devote sufficient time and effort to ensure that their children acquire certain virtues and moral norms, and find their spiritual ideal as well” (Augskalne, 2004, 21).

The main objective of ethical education is to stimulate active cooperation and act as a stabilizing factor in the changing world. Consequently, ethics has to form the ethical ‘core’ of education and integrate other subjects. While morality comprises and unites various social processes, the ethics comprises and unites various school subjects. Thus, every subject has to contain a value dimension, and it can be achieved by means of interdisciplinary links and close cooperation among teachers, not by mechanical integration of various school subjects. Therefore, ethics has to assume the role of a practical integrator of value education in schools. There exist several approaches concerning the content and methodology of the course of ethics.

As regards the formation of responsibility, the approach of value experience seems to be the most productive one. It is based on the idea that it is important to experience, feel, and rationally analyze ethical problems comparing various outcomes that result from their different solutions. It is very important to give one’s personal evaluation to these solutions, thus forming an active position, which manifests itself as a particular moral choice and individual’s behaviour corresponding to it. This approach emphasizes that the purpose of practical ethics is not only learning to understand oneself and the others, but also acquiring the desire to implement the personal ethical ideals in real life.

That is why it is very important “to maintain student’s interest in the process of research, interpretation, comparison, and evaluation because the establishing of knowledge does not guarantee yet that the process of value education has been triggered. Student’s participation in the process of learning is needed; moreover, it has to take place at the deepest level involving all the consciousness, opening one’s soul, awakening one’s conscience. At the same time, this approach requires particular sensitivity from a teacher. That is why teacher’s personality is the top priority” (Augskalne, 2004, 25).

In the process of the formation of responsibility as an ethical value, teacher’s responsibility is very important as well. The way how teachers deal with their own problems reveals their values and serves as an example of a possible behaviour to their students.

The draft of “Teacher’s Ethical Code” has set some requirements concerning responsibility. In the Latvian educational system, its guidelines are supplemented by ethical codes existing in various schools. The basic principles set in the code are professionalism, responsibility, fairness, respect, sensitivity, and self-respect.

The document mentioned above emphasizes that besides the development of student’s personality it is necessary for teachers:

- to be aware of their responsibility for children, the society, and the humanity;
- to be loyal to their school and the state, using constructive criticism at the same time;
- to bring out students’ potential abilities and develop their personalities possessing acute conscience and sense of life;
- to develop the cultural environment by finding practical application to students’ abilities of perfecting their environment and themselves;
- to take a strict position against evil, injustice, dishonesty, and immorality and to demonstrate it in one’s work and lifestyle.

Responsible teachers do not use their privileges to impose some political or sectarian views (Teacher’s Ethical Code, *Teacher*, No 1, 1997, 17 – 18).

The process of learning also plays an important part in the formation of responsibility in ethical education. The purpose of the dialogue between a teacher and a student is to develop creative attitudes when looking for ways how to understand social processes and helping a student to discover the significance of ethical choices and values in his/her life.

It should be pointed out that “a teacher, students, and the content of studies form a triangle where all three components and a dialogue among them are very important” (Murnieks, 2001, 22).

The dialogue implies not only interaction between a student and a teacher but also the content of studies. The dialogue approach requires taking into account antinomies, contradictory views, values, and tendencies which can not be ignored as an integral part of culture. “The essence of the dialogue approach is to try to demonstrate the viewpoint of the confronting positions in a correct way as if from inside and then to encourage students to make a decisive choice but not to remain halfway in the search for truth. As a result, students will form their own views, but they will not be “automatic and stereotypical, but conscious”(Augskalne, 2004, 24).

Ethics can not be a moralizing school subject, but a process of search, during which a student becomes aware of the hierarchy of values, makes judgements about the sense of life, the motivation of an ethical action, and conscience.

The development of the integrated content of studies for the course of ethics is based of the principles of wholeness and continuity. Consequently, all the themes of the course make a uniform whole and comprise “ personality and its deepest layers – motives, conscience, self-control (the thematic cycle Me and Me), moral-psychological regularities and moral norms in interpersonal communication (the thematic cycle Me and the Others), and the role of morality in the society (the thematic cycle Me and the Society) (Augskalne, 2004,25).

This also involves encouraging students’ interest in ethical values and acquisition of knowledge related to the ethical heritage, as well as facilitating the

ethical perfection of a personality and readiness to act in everyday situations according to ethical values. The development of responsibility is paid particular attention to in all the thematic blocks. For example, the thematic blocks “Ethical Values” and “Ethical Heritage” emphasize the role of self-determination and spiritual growth in the development of an individual choice and responsibility. First, students learn to understand the relationship between their actions and the resulting consequences. Then, they characterize a responsible/irresponsible action, and, finally, they can substantiate their choice and undertake responsibility.

Regarding the studies of ethics in elementary school, the following should be admitted: “As a person can not be considered to be a sum of moral-psychological competencies, the process of studies in ethics can not be reduced to the acquisition of successive and linear knowledge, skills, and attitudes. There is no place for algebra in the humanitarian and social subjects. The spiritual growth of a personality and a versatile process of studies require a focus on the integrity of a personality and the deepest “mechanism” of its development – moral choices, which are connected with the development of virtue and character”.

Ethics has broad educational possibilities as a school subject. The content of the subject has to be focused on the spiritual growth of a student. Thus, ethics as a subject of value education becomes life teaching in the development of responsibility.

Conclusions

- 1 In view of Latvia’s accession to the European Union and involvement in its social processes, there is a growing need to focus on the formation and consolidation of responsibility as an ethical value. The development of responsibility is also a topical issue due to the fact that the Latvian society is experiencing the most severe crisis of moral values since the collapse of the Soviet regime and regaining of independence.
- 2 The strategic objective of ethical education is a focus on the integrity of a personality and its deepest “mechanism” – a moral choice.
- 3 Responsibility as the ethical value orientation of a personality is developed successfully if the process of ethical education stimulates students’ interest in ethical values and acquisition of knowledge related to the ethical heritage, which facilitates their spiritual growth and readiness to act in everyday situations according to ethical values.

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Dilemmas and opportunities in making the “right choice”

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1. Introduction

In recent years, we have seen an increasing interest in a renewed consumer’s role. The interest towards more responsible forms of consumption is testified by the increasing number of publications that should guide conscious consumers in the jungle of modern consumption societies. Not all this information, however, seems to produce the expected results. We may use recycled paper for our printers, and buy teak furniture for our gardens. We may boycott Nike shoes, and buy the cheapest T-shirts from Bangladesh. As consumers, we seem to live with and through a bunch of contradictions between our attitudes and values and our everyday consumption practises. The problem seems to be, not just how much information do we have, but rather how this information is used, how it becomes part of a *repertoire* of individual lifestyles and identities.

In this paper, I will present some examples of how concerned consumption choices are made, trying to cope with different dilemmas designing a personal agenda of priorities.

Aims of “saving” or “changing” the world can be regarded as two important dimensions for understanding how individuals interpret their responsibilities as consumers and the impact of their choices.

2. The centrality of goods

Western societies have in the last decades faced a dramatic turn. The classical structure based on factory production is progressively decreasing and fading away. It is enough to look at the landscape of our cities in order to recognise this change. Looking around us, we do not see many factories anymore. The ones of us that are old enough to have grown up in the ’70s, indeed, may still remember the relevance that they had in our everyday experience.

It was just not their physical presence, but all the social and political life that generated inside and outside them.

Social conflicts were situated along the cleavage that characterised this type of organisation of the production: from mobilisation for better working conditions to demonstration against the impact that factories had in terms of pollution and deterioration of the environmental resources.

A feeling of closeness to relevant conflicts characterised social mobilisation in industrial societies. The targets of protest were identifiable and reachable, the structure of power understandable by the most¹³.

¹³ Conflicts in industrial societies are analysed, for instances, by Alain Tourain, Sidney Tarrow, Alessandro Pizzorno.

During the eighties, a restructuring phase has involved –to a various degree- many western countries. The number of industrial workers had decreased. Many factories shut down and relocated in other parts of the world where it is possible to carry on production with lower wages and lower restrictions. International corporations have increased their magnitude and power. However, they are also less identifiable and reachable.

The landscape of our cities has changed. Where there once were factories, we would now most likely find shopping malls. They are now the dominating presence of our everyday world.

An important effect of this shift from a traditional industrial society to a society dominated by corporation concerns also the forms of mobilisation¹⁴ the relationship that we have with the products of our consumption.

In traditional industrial societies, the link between the product and who owned the factory where it was produced was rather immediate (i.e. FIAT cars and Agnelli family). Often, we also knew the people that worked in those factories: they were our relatives, neighbours and friends. In a productive world dominated by corporations, ownerships and responsibilities became blurred (who owns Coca Cola?). The link between products and who has materially produced them has also bleached.

Products now stand by themselves, with an own life, apparently disembodied by what happened before they found their place in the shelves of the shops.

Products not only took over the material space of our society but also its symbolic and cultural space¹⁵.

Much more than in the past, we tend now to identify ourselves, and others, through the products we buy and through our consumption patterns. Our identity, as consumers, has replaced the role of other weakened identities (i.e. identity through working places or political affiliations).

This centrality of goods has also generated a new arena for ethical concerns and political participation¹⁶. Products now represent the tangible link between the unreachable producer and us.

In the past it was possible to demonstrate against questionable practices organising rallies in front of factories near us. Now it is through products that it is possible to express our protest.

The NIKE boycott campaign is an example of this¹⁷. As reaching “Mr NIKE” is impossible, it is through boycotting the products of this corporation that we can give

¹⁴ On the transformation of social mobilisations you may consider Ulrich Beck, *The reinvention of politics: towards a theory of Reflexive Modernisation*, in Ulrich Beck, Antony Giddens and Scott Larsch, *Reflexive Modernisation*, Polity Press, 1994.

¹⁵ There are many studies on this, among them, I would suggest Daniel Miller, *Consumption as the vanguard of history*, in D. Miller, *Aknowledging Consumption*, Routledge, 1995.

¹⁶ See for example, Michele Micheletti, *Political virtue and Shopping. Individuals, consumerism and collective action*, Palgrave Macmillan, 1995. In Italian, you may see Paul Ginsborg, *Il tempo di cambiare. Politica e potere della vita quotidiana*, Einaudi (2004).

¹⁷ The Nike campaign is well described by Jonah Peretti, *The NIKE Sweatshop Email*, in Micheletti, Follesdal and Stolle, *Politics, products, and markets*, Transaction Publishers, 2004

voice to our concerns against the use of child labour for mass production.

Responsibilities that in the past were primarily linked to our role as citizens have now become responsibilities that we take as consumers.

This represents a significant shift, to which an increasing number of people are turning to. A number of studies have in fact indicated that, in the last years, there has been an increase of forms of boycotts in many Western countries. Parallel to it, there has also been a n increase of choices of goods that are produced accordingly to ethical values (“buycotts”)¹⁸.

Initiatives pointing to a renewed consumer role have spread in most western countries, promoted by a multitude of social and institutional actors.

3. The responsible consumer guidelines

Naomi Klein’s NO LOGO¹⁹ has been a tremendous literary success. It found its place in the bookshelves of many households and has become a kind of manifesto for critical consumers trying to contrast the power of corporations in our everyday world.

More in general, the information on how to be a responsible consumer had a dramatic increase in recent years. It is enough to take a short tour on internet in order to see the multitude of web sites that contain pop ups all around. A Google search for “ethical consumer” gave 2.900.000 hits! Although it was impossible for me to go through all them, a rough overview indicates that many of these pages contain information that should guide consumers to make appropriate choices, purchasing right products and avoiding controversial ones.

www.responsible shopper.org, is a continuously updated website, listing the current boycott campaigns and the brands that, instead, are making valuable efforts. Through this site, it is stated “*you will discover the good, the bad and the ugly behind the products you buy everyday. From clothing to shoes to toothpaste*”. Another valuable source of information is the Ethical consumer magazine, which “*will tell you everything you need to know, from the social and environmental impacts of a product to the ethical records of the company that make them*”.

Quite outstanding is the fact that a publishing house well know for their alternative travels’ guides has printed “*the essential handbook for responsible consumers*”²⁰. In its 374 pages, going from food and drink to finance, household and transport, the guide will “help you to navigate” into the world of ethical shopping.

The amount of information we can have access to is enormous, almost overwhelming. To be a responsible consumer could easily become a full time job!

How do we cope with all this information?

¹⁸ See for example: “Political Consumerism: its motivations, power and conditions in the Nordic Countries and elsewhere (TemaNord: 2005:517).

¹⁹ Naomi Klein, NOLOGO, Flamingo 2000.

²⁰ Duncan Clark, The Rough Guide to Ethical Shopping. The issues, the products, the companies, Rough Guides, 2004.

4. Taking responsibilities as consumers in everyday life: dilemmas and strategies

Looking around us, and searching in our historical memory, we may find examples of people that tend to live a life that is as close as possible to their values, and where consumption had a prominent role for achieving this. Religious affiliation offers numerous examples of this: from the Franciscans confraternities, to the Amish communities (just to quote a few). We may as well find other types of experiences, not related to religious beliefs, as in the case of the hippies communities flourished at the end of the '60s.

As we easily may see, these examples often imply a pull out from mainstream society. These communities distanced themselves –often also in geographical terms- in order to be able to live up to their values.

Although these may be regarded as isolated experiences, it is important not to underestimate the impact that they can produce. These experiences can in fact provide symbols and discourses that can influence the society and be of inspiration for others²¹.

More likely, however, most people would not embrace a life where ethical concerns and prescriptions would guide them all through their everyday life. We live in this world, and like it or not, we come to compromise with it. As a message in an Italian critical radio network states, explaining why they are using Microsoft programs, “if we were in a perfect world..... But we are not in a perfect world...”

The purpose of reaching as many people as possible (me included, who listens to this radio in Norway through my computer) and of promoting a critical culture, wins towards the aim of boycotting Bill Gates.

The tendency of giving priorities does not concern individuals only. As we observe, in our society, there is a plurality of organisations supporting different kind of ethical issues. In some cases, this plurality of concerns may coincide with each other.

Environmental organisations may, i.e. suggest to rely on local products in order to avoid a long and polluting transport. Organisations involved in projects in developing countries may, instead, suggest increasing consumption of products coming from southern regions of the world. When buying green beans I may find myself in the position of having to choose between the ones that have a low environmental impact over others that may provide a Kenyan family with a decent life.

Attempts to cope with these dilemmas, and eventually find acceptable compromises, often seems to be the common case for many concerned consumers.

During a research project²², we met a woman that was very concerned about her consumption practices. She built an ecologic house and bought herself an electric car. When shopping for food, her main point was to choose organic products. This was, according to her words, her contribution to a better world. Where it came from was not

²¹ See, for example, David Vogel, *Tracing the American Roots of the Political Consumerism Movement*, in Micheletti, Follesdal and Stolle, *Politics, products, and markets*, Transaction Publishers, 2004, and also Alberto Melecci, *Challenging codes: collective action in the information age*. Cambridge University Press, 1996.

²² I refer here to some focus groups interviews I carried on together with colleague Hanne Torjusen, I thank her for allowing me to refer to these interviews. This interviews are part of a project on consumers concerns about animal welfare.

particularly relevant and she would not find it problematic to buy organic apples from Australia.

Another person, many years ago made the choice of becoming a vegetarian. He is an activist for animal rights. His wife only partially shares his concerns. She is very fond of fish, but does not like to cook it. This man, who loves animals and his wife as well, prepares a fish dinner for her once a week.

A student, coping with a tight budget, said that she was putting the extra money she could afford in buying fair trade coffee; otherwise, she was always choosing the cheapest alternative. Her main concerns were related to human rights and through buying fair trade coffee, she was expressing her discontent towards an unjust world.

Setting up a list of priorities emerges as a strategy for dealing with these dilemmas.

This list of priorities, tend to depend by different factors, where information itself plays a rather marginal role: relations with significant others, resources and constraints of our everyday life more often have a prominent role²³.

Particularly relevant is the meaning we associate with our consumption choices: why we make those choices and what we want to achieve by doing so.

5. To save the world or to change it? Some considerations on ethical and political consumption

Analysing the literature on consumer involvement, we may observe that there is often an overlapping between an ethical and a political dimension²⁴.

Although ethical and political aims may indeed be associated in consumption practices, from an analytical point of view it may be useful to keep these two dimensions distinct.

Ethical consumption may refer more properly to intimate choices that individuals make, when trying to follow their personal values. Political consumption, instead, is more related to the visibility that these choices have, to their impact in terms of creating changes.

In terms of choices, ethical consumption may involve a widespread range of products and practices. Having an ethical attitude towards consumption patterns may imply, for example, to use environmental friendly soaps, to throw away glass bottles in special containers, or buy local food in order to avoid long and polluting transports. On the contrary, political consumption seems to lead to more “targeted” choices, as the case of the NIKE campaign against child labour exemplifies.

While ethical consumption may involve single individuals, in political consumption the collective dimension is emphasised, leading to a stronger need of information and coordination of efforts.

²³ On this, you may consider also Bente Halkier, *Miljø, til daglig bruk?. Forbrukeres erfaringer med miljøhensyn i hverdagen*. Forlaget Sociologi, 1999.

²⁴ There is a quite interesting debate on this. See, for example Mads Sørensen, *Den politiske Forbruger*, Hans Reitzels Forlag, 2004.

While ethical consumption may be carried on in silence, political consumption needs to communicate to an audience.

Ethical and political consumption seem to imply also a different way of interpreting consumers' responsibilities.

The main domain of ethical consumption is consumption itself. Taking responsibility implies taking responsibility as consumers. In consuming less, in consuming better we may give our contribution to a better world. When I use recycled paper I give my contribution to the preservation of the forests. When I buy fair trade coffee, I may help a community in Columbia.

For political consumption, consumption is more of a mean. When I buy fair trade coffee, I may call the attention to the injustice of the world economy. When I avoid buying teak furniture from Burma, I may express my protest towards tyranny. Political consumers, by taking an active role in the market, point out to the presence of problems of our society, calling a plurality of actors to take responsibilities in order to share the burden of solving these problems.

Responsibility as a result of socialisation

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Introduction

A classic in the history of psychology Abraham Maslow in the introduction to the *Theory of Motivation* speaks about wholeness and integrity of the universe, wholeness and integrity of any community and wholeness and integrity of any person. To bear the burden of responsibility for this, not only preserving this, but also investing, working for it is a challenge for a man. We, human beings, are closely interconnected by virtue of the wholeness and integrity of the world we live in.

“Social creatures such as ourselves rely on each other for much of their “maintenance and enhancement.” One thing we need, especially early in our lives, is positive regard, meaning attention, affection, etc. At first, it's a matter of physical survival; later in life, it's a sign that we have support around us”, says George Boeree.

Having been born, human beings are growing and developing under the influence of other people. They adapt to perform definite duties in society, take responsibilities, answer the demands of society to which they belong. The process by which the individuals learn and perform behavior expected of them by society is defined by the term socialization. The primary steps of it are achieved in the family, and if the family for one reason or another fails to perform its functions and there is an obvious lack of responsibility in taking care of the children in the family then we speak of dysfunctional families. The consequences of this negative phenomenon can be drastic for the society: it is the loss of integrity in its infrastructure.

As it is noted in the review *Street Children/Children in the Street* prepared by the Joint Programme of the King Baudouin Foundation and the Soros Foundations in Partnership with the World Bank “, experts share the general belief that a third of Latvian families can be regarded as dysfunctional”(1999), and there is a great doubt whether these families are capable of providing harmonious development of their children and the number of neglected children in Latvia is not becoming less.

About “20 organizations participate in the Non-Governmental Organizations network *Street Children/Children in the Streets*” in Latvia, whose “investments and efforts ... are essential and which have already become powerful and independent in their activities” (*Street Children/Children in the Streets*, A Joint Programme of the King Baudouin Foundation and the Soros Foundations in Partnership with the World Bank, 1999), providing various forms of support for street children.

Many of the Non-governmental organizations were created around 1996 – 1997 and they have gained a lot of experience in working with street children since that time. One of the NGOs engaged in social work with adolescents is the Riga Christian St. Nicholas Children Shelter, which works as a Day Centre involving teenagers in the

process of gaining social experience, acquiring the norms of community life, building a system of their values, practicing in self-control, learning responsible behaviour.

A Problem of Street Children in Riga.

During the period of transition to a free market economy the families and the children were exposed to various types of risks (low wages, unemployment, high public utility payments etc.), but did not receive sufficient support to overcome them. As a result, in the middle of 1990s, begging and vagrant children appeared in the streets of Riga and other towns of our country. At the same time, children, who did not attend school also became a problem.

The reason for this phenomenon was not only in impoverishment of many of Latvia's families with children, but also in complete elimination of the links between family, school, society and governmental institutions, which had been functioning rather effectively during the previous decades, but had not been replaced with anything new in the first years of independence.

According to information provided by the Riga Municipal Crisis centre for Street Children "Mars Avenue" (2002) the typical reasons for why children end up on the street are:

- the parents are drug addicts or alcoholics, conditions at home are unsanitary;
- the children have been abandoned, left without care;
- the children have been abused;
- the children have conflicts with their parents;
- the children have run away from childcare institutions.

Failure to attend school or dropping out of school can be both cause and effect in the process of a child's becoming a street child.

Nowadays statistical reports and studies carried out in Latvia lead to a conclusion that the number of street children is not declining and that their problems are becoming increasingly serious, deeply-rooted and chronic. Allowed to continue at its present rate of growth, the street children phenomenon would have a deleterious impact on the general welfare of society in the country in the nearest future. The consequences will become apparent not only in the negative effects of the street environment on the civic development of children and their ability to function in society as responsible citizens, but also in growing crime and threats to public safety. Sociologists predict that society will suffer from a rise in crime, drug addiction, prostitution, theft, beggary and hooliganism.

A prolonged life on the street leaves a deep impact on children and reduces their ability to function within a society as a civic-minded part of population and to appreciate the importance of being responsible. On the contrary, they become part of a specific subculture with a crippled system of values that is ruled by street laws, street culture, street ethics and street values that have little in common with the norms of a civic society.

Most of the risk group children come from dysfunctional families and it is not their fault to be born in such families where they do not get enough parental care and support and when "the street is often a better and even safer place for these children than their home" (Lukashinska, 2002). These youngsters are part of our society and society should possess an optimism to believe in possibilities rather than obstacles in

rehabilitation and socialisation of the children on the street.

Socialisation.

Socialisation is a process of achievement of personhood, gradual adoption of social demands, perception of socially significant characteristics of consciousness and conduct, which regulate the interrelations between a person and society. Socialisation begins at birth and continues throughout life, we may say, it can never be accomplished and can never be complete (Toshchenko, Moscow 2004).

According to Krysko, "A person develops and progresses under the influence of other people, adapts to completing in the society definite duties and commitments, bears responsibility for his behaviour, actions and deeds" (Krysko, Moscow 2004). From the start of his life a person is involved in social interaction. In the process of inter-relations with other people he gains certain social experience, which, being personalized becomes an indispensable part of his personality.

The main agents of socialisation are the child's parents, it is in the family where children learn many of the basic characteristics of being human in terms of our particular society. Warm, loving interactions with parents who respect their children, make children feel secure and confident, assuring their social success. Lack of good and positive socialisation or "negative socialisation", which is the case in dysfunctional families, exposes children to obviously corrupting influences (Dossier: Home, 1992).

According to Maslow "indication of the child's need for safety is his preference for some kind of undisrupted routine or rhythm. He seems to want a predictable, orderly world. For instance, injustice, unfairness, or inconsistency in the parents seems to make a child feel anxious and unsafe. This attitude may be not so much because of the injustice *per se* or any particular pains involved, but rather because this treatment threatens to make the world look unreliable, or unsafe, or unpredictable. Young children seem to thrive better under a system which has at least a skeletal outline of rigidity, in which there is a schedule of a kind, some sort of routine, something that can be counted upon, not only for the present but also far into the future. Perhaps one could express this more accurately by saying that the child needs an organized world rather than an unorganized or unstructured one".

Alongside with this an individual always needs recognition, he or she cannot tolerate constant dispraise, blame, neglect.

A want to be respected is another fundamental need of an individual, and it is especially important for children and teenagers. Being in a state of an acute moral discomfort, an adolescent cannot help looking for a way out. His self esteem seeks to find an adequate support in the social expansion.

Teaching Life Skills and Responsibility Training in the Children Centre.

The non-governmental organisation Riga Christian St. Nickolas Children Shelter works as a day centre. It is now in its 9th year of operation and works with street children in one of the close to the centre of the city districts with a nearby park, where groups of children are concentrated spending their time daylong till late at night.

The work of the Children Centre is based primarily on yearly projects that are financed by international foundations, on donations of some firms and organizations

from Riga and from abroad. The Shelter often finds it difficult to guarantee the sustainability of its services, which is particularly important in working with street children. If financing ends, the project must be discontinued.

Being a Day Centre with the staff of four full-time social workers and several part-time workers and volunteers, the Centre is attended by approximately 25 teenagers (the number of them can be floating) and is open for children from 4 pm till 9.30 pm. The shelter owns an apartment consisting of two rooms with a small kitchen in an old building, not spacious enough to receive all the children who would like to apply to the Centre for help. It also owns a spacious country house which needs considerable investments for reconstruction.

The target group of the Children Centre are children and teenagers from social risk families, as well as their parents, step-parents and custodians. Coming from dysfunctional families these children and teenagers constitute risk group children.

In the Christian Street Children Shelter the children and teenagers have an opportunity to have meals, to wash their clothes, to get immediate moral support, to consult the social worker and the psychologist, to get advice for solving his or her problem, to know more about their rights, to receive information about organizations and institutions where they can apply to for help before their problems become incapable of solution.

The children and teenagers can come to the centre every day after school. In the centre they meet the atmosphere of friendliness and love. The staff of the Day Centre show genuine warmth, respect and caring towards every child or teenager, create a peaceful and trustful environment for them. The new-comers practice obeying the rules of good, responsible behavior, which is not so easy at the start. The children take part in fulfilling the duties in the Centre, for example, to be a leader (a boss) that day and distribute the tasks among the children in the centre such as cooking meals, cleaning the rooms, taking out garbage. The leader is responsible for the discipline, order, for fair completing the task by other children, performs the role of a mediator in case of a conflict between the children and teenagers.

All the activities held in the Centre and every element of work with the children and teenagers are aiming at positive socialisation, development of civic life skills and responsibility training. The teenagers are taught to be responsible for their actions and to be open to receive criticism and punishment when it is necessary.

The strategies used in the work with the children are:

- provide group and personal counseling, creating the atmosphere of trust and openness;
- regular interaction, sharing and discussion, giving the children the right for their point of view, not judging them;
- create informal, friendly and warm environment for cultivating friendship, reconciliation, personal conflict resolution and overall compassion for fellow children;
- gradual discouragement for incorrect behaviour such as fighting, use of bad words, smoking, drinking, stealing;
- organize creative activities such as art and craft, music, gardening etc.;
- teach life skills;
- organize outings, visits, excursions, exhibitions;

- observe all cultural events, parties;
- involve the children into enjoyable occupations, creating the experience of spending time in a healthy way rather than dysfunctional behaviour.

The atmosphere of trust in the Centre allows the children to become more open with the social workers, share with them their domestic problems and home atmosphere, relationships with their parents, disclose their bad behaviour without fear of getting stern reprimands. Instead, group discussions in a quiet way and manner make it a common, co-operative discussion, where there is no place for one-sided moralizing. While discussing some child's problems, other similar cases are being told, compared and talked over. Not only adults but also teenagers give considerations to possible consequences of behaviour and actions of their fellow peers, which seem to be sometimes more convincing for the adolescents. In the course of discussions the children often come to a conclusion that the reason of their problems is lack of responsibility. The teenagers realize the significance of responsibility in solving their problems, but also recognize that in their situations they do not always have an opportunity to be responsible.

Responsibility training is an important part of educational work with the children in the Centre. In order to be able to attend the Centre the children have to obey the rules and keep to the schedule adopted in the centre. First of all, they must be punctual, learn to plan their time and come to the centre according to the schedule and follow the rules. Other requirements include participation in doing chores, activities, respectful conduct, honesty.

Older children take part in kitchen duties, doing it together with adults or without, - it's cooking and laying the table for approximately 12 up to 20 children a day, serving during the meals and washing-up after the dinner. Special efforts are made to do everything thoroughly, with the due attention to hygiene. Very often adults dine together with the children, showing proper manners and commenting on them, using magic words "please" and "thank you".

As many things at the Centre are done together with adults, they show the children that they take satisfaction in acting properly and in accomplishing difficult tasks.

The topics very often discussed with the teenagers are their duties, honesty, respect, compassion, discipline, self-control and courage – all of them are the components of a good citizen and, unfortunately, stumbling blocks in their behaviour at school, at home, on the street.

The teenagers are also taught to organize their leisure time, to fill it with useful and exciting activities (as an alternative to vagabondage, drugs and alcohol), they take part in indoor and outdoor games, craftwork, arts.

They can study English for free in the centre, the accent is made on survival English - they learn how to identify themselves abroad, how to protect themselves against possible trafficking or being involved in sexual industry.

As the Centre has a computer class with the internet, the teenagers can get computer knowledge there, which is quite necessary for them in terms of future occupation and better opportunities in job hunting.

Conclusion.

In Latvia the period of transition to a free market economy has resulted in impoverishment of many families and appearance of neglected children in the streets, whose future is put in jeopardy.

Non-governmental organisations, working with risk group children, encourage teenagers towards a new direction in their lives, lending them a helping hand and engaging them in constructive socialisation process.

The social workers of the Riga Christian St. Nickolas Street Children Shelter are making a considerable contribution in the cause of rehabilitation and socialisation of children from dysfunctional families by fostering character training and encouraging them to make responsible choices.

Doing chores, running errands, completing different tasks is a useful way for children to learn persistence and to understand, that if they live up to their responsibilities they enable others to trust them and to rely on them.

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Responsibility as a Precondition for the Development of the Self-determination of Lyceum Students

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In the present-day socio-economic situation in Latvia, the issue of individual's responsibility becomes increasingly important in education and upbringing. In the conditions of the market economy, there is a need for the development of a personality capable of undertaking responsibility for the social and economic processes taking place in the society.

The purpose of this article is to identify the interconnection between freedom and responsibility in the development of a personality and to determine the effect of responsibility on the formation of the self-determination of lyceum students.

The Essence and Characteristics of Responsibility as a Personality Feature

Responsibility develops as an integrated feature of a personality including motivation (will, interests, values, and goals), the individual qualities of a personality, and ways of self-actualization. The development of responsibility takes place on the basis of understanding and correlation of the ideas "I want – I can – There is – We demand". Individual variations are determined by value orientation.

Responsibility is formed according to the demands that are made for an individual. If an individual perceives these demands as important for him/herself and socially valuable, they become the inner basis of a person's behavioral motivation. An individual feels free because he/she has made his/her own choice.

Interconnection between Freedom and Responsibility

Being the expression of personal freedom, responsibility implies a skill to implement the set goals in practice, to predict the consequences of one's action based on knowledge and life experience, as well as to undertake responsibility for the results of one's own actions.

The next stage in the development of a personality implies making demands for oneself. Due to highly developed reflection, individuals acquire an ability to look for the causes of their actions in themselves, not in the other people or external circumstances.

When individuals are able to analyze their own behavior and determine the level of their personal responsibility, they feel personal freedom. Freedom implies responsibility both during the stage of a free choice and during the evaluation of the results of one's action, i. e. there exists preliminary and subsequent responsibility. While choosing the strategy of his/her actions, a person is not free. He/she is responsible not only to the other people, but also, and more importantly, to his/her own choice and its implementation. The role of the preliminary responsibility is very significant in all areas of human activity.

Conscience serves as a criterion of harmony between freedom and responsibility. It indicates where the goal corresponds to the reality and the result corresponds to the goal. “I could have”, the conscience reproaches, “I have to”, the calling conscience appeals (Kagan, 1996). Consequently, a spiritually motivated action is the manifestation of will, the direction of which is determined by responsibility, but the basis is formed by conscience. Only the harmony of these two principles ensures the spiritual wholeness of a person. Conscience as a moral experience of a conflict between one’s desires and what is possible in reality is one of the main preconditions for individual’s self-development. Calls and twinges of conscience are constantly broadening the range of human possibilities, developing in each of us an ability to find a way to perfection, to believe in it, and return to it after errors and falls that we have not managed to avoid, and to always be aware of the prospects where this perfection is awaiting us.

The freedom of a responsible choice is complemented by the freedom of a spiritually motivated action, which in its aggregate constitutes the basis of individual self-determination. This basis includes the unity of an individually motivated action and responsibility for its consequences to other people and oneself.

The Approach of Culture-centered Education and the Development of Responsibility

The approach of education based on cultural values seems to be most appropriate for the development of individual responsibility. The basic philosophical principles of this approach are the following:

- strengthening of the humanitarian principles of education;
- increasing of the role of upbringing in the educational process;
- understanding the development of a personality as a process and the result of his/her social and cultural context;
- the referencing of educational space.

The methodology of the culture –centered educational paradigm is based on the following:

- the approach of culturally-historical development of an individual by L. Vigotsky;
- the anthropological theories by Vernadsky and Ilyin;
- the humanistic theories of the development of a personality by Maslova and Rodgers.

The humanistic nature of the present approach is based on the fact that it does not set strict parameters (demands) for individual’s perfection, i.e. it does not indicate specific qualities which the individual has to develop. These qualities will be a natural result of the spiritual self-determination of an individual corresponding to the selected ideal, whom the individual is trying to correspond to in the process of self-actualization. Spiritual self-determination and understanding of one’s true calling causes the desire of self-perfection. In this case, responsibility will function as the regulator of the process. The ideas discussed above served as a basis for conducting the experiment described below.

The Strategy of Experimental Education for the Development of Responsibility of Senior Lyceum Students

The experiment was conducted in the Psychology and Pedagogy Department of Pushkin Lyceum. The subject of the study was the development of responsibility and self-determination of senior students in the process of studies.

The analysis of the theoretical basis and the school practice made it possible to determine the following conditions for the development of responsibility in the process of studies:

- a purposeful pedagogic organization of the process of studies based on independent activities providing the freedom of self-expression and self-actualization;
- the organization of teaching focused on the development of individuality and the unique potential of each student;
- the organization of pedagogical practice aimed at developing the feeling of responsibility for junior students.

The strategy of the experimental teaching aimed at the development of responsibility implied the increase of students' freedom as a precondition for the development of responsibility.

There have been determined two approaches (used in particular cases) and two stages for increasing students' freedom in the lyceum.

Freedom as a Possibility to Have a Choice

In this case each individual was given freedom in choosing the means, setting objectives, and determining the conditions of his/her activity. A possibility to have a choice opened the way for creative self-expression.

Still, if a choice can only be made from what is offered to a student, it can turn into a compulsory choice and result in the lack of freedom, which slows down the opening of students' creative potential and the development of responsibility.

Freedom as Creativity and Self-creation

At this stage, freedom does not imply selecting the best option from those offered from outside as it was in the case of the freedom of choice, but the determination of individual activity, setting its goals, and choosing the means and conditions for one's own development. As a result of this creative work, activity is perceived as being free, and specific qualities of each individual clearly manifest themselves.

Independent activity where students are guided by their own needs is a truly free activity. It is this free activity that generates responsibility for the results of one's actions and offers broad possibilities for the development of individuality.

The experimental organization of the process of studies resulted in the defining of objective and subjective conditions facilitating the broadening of students' freedom, which serves as a basis for the development of responsibility.

Objective conditions:

- the broadening and deepening of creative, moral, and professional principles of the process of teaching;
- the broadening of the social ties;
- the development of humane interpersonal relationships;
- the determination of an individual model for the professional development of each student.

- Subjective conditions:
- the development of the ethical potential of each student;
- the development of cognitive and professional interests and aptitudes;
- the development of a positive self-concept.

A purposeful organization of the process of studies taking into account the conditions specified above facilitated the development of free and creative educational process with a certain professional direction, which stimulated students' perception of themselves as unique individuals responsible for their self-realization and self-development of their individual abilities.

There were provided different study programmes in Pushkin Lyceum which were provided by several departments, e.g. the Departments of Philology, Law, Economics, Arts, Psychology and Pedagogy. The experiment was conducted in the Department of Psychology and Pedagogy. Students selected their educational specialization and chose a particular study programme, which ensured their preparation for the future profession. It should be noted that the students' choice was based on their own interests, needs, and inclinations. Therefore, this was the situation of creative freedom and self-awareness, where freedom implied creating new possibilities for one's own development, not choosing one of the options offered from outside. There was created the educational environment which was most effective for the development of responsibility.

This process could be observed most vividly during the period of psychological and pedagogical practice, which was intended for three years of studies. In form 10, the practice took place in the Studio of Children's Creative Activities. The purpose of the practice was to study the characteristics of the age-group and individual qualities of six-year-olds, to get acquainted with the teaching methodology, and, above all, to understand the correctness of students' own professional choice. Twice a week the lyceum students attended classes in the children's studio, observed children's behaviour, and got to know the work of various teachers. A compulsory element of these activities was writing of a journal recording the observations and analyzing the work of teachers and activities of children. Students also had to offer their own vision of the class they had observed.

After that, the observations were discussed in the workshops. Besides, each student had to conduct a practical class with a group. A hands-on experience in the role of a teacher made students look at themselves and their own future from a different angle. Some students decided that work with children was not what they wanted to do. At the end of the academic year, three girls decided to move to another department. When asked to explain the reasons of their choice, they said, "We understood it is not meant for us. We found communicating with children unpleasant. One thing is studying human psychology; another thing is communicating with children." On the other hand, other students demonstrated creativity in working with children: they invented games, proverbs, crossword-puzzles, etc. Later, they used their experience in working with children in the classes of pedagogy as a confirmation or rejection of pedagogic ideas. "We can see new self-awareness and understanding of our place in the society."

A conscious feeling of responsibility not only for themselves but also for small children turned them into adults and helped them understand the essence of a teacher's profession, its significant role in the transformation of the society and themselves, and

the necessity of changing their relations with the teachers. Thus, there took place the formation of professional self-determination.

Conclusions

Organization of the culture-centered educational environment based on the interaction of the principles of freedom and responsibility, as well as the freedom of choice in professional education determines “the area of the closest development” of lyceum students, and the development of responsibility as a precondition for their professional self-determination, as well as the development of a personality as a self-creator.

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IV. INFORMATION SOCIETY

Using the mass media - how advertising sings

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Introduction

Nowadays the mass media is the new oracle for young people. This media talks to us in a loud voice. But they are singing us “how wonderful life is” through songs that bring “happiness” and “life” as a famous “black liquid” inside a “red” tin. How to be able to “hear” advertisement music to find out the message inside, is a project born to teach teachers, young people, and consumers in general how they –those who want to sell us something- whisper these songs in our ears. The history of radio, television and cinema with their music to sell. Our mind is able to remember a song in few seconds, and they know it. But we can learn too how to take responsibility in the time we spend watching TV. Music is wonderful and sometimes is powerful too.

1. Listening to the past

Close your eyes just for a while, and try to remember how you learnt the multiplication table when you were at school. Do you remember? Maybe at this moment you are listening, from the past, the reminisce of a melody repeated once and again in your heads as a neverending music full of numbers: *two times two is four, two times three is six, ...*

Music, in our memory, works as a hallmark that perpetuates its sounds through the ages and makes us remember old melodies that we used to listen when we were children. Beautiful, isn't it? Beautiful if thanks to this "musical memory" we manage to capture images from the past. Beautiful if we can remember the songs we sang when children or the signature tune that we used to like so much.

Close again your eyes, now try to imagine yourselves at the desert, in a heat sun and with nothing to drink. You walk on the sand and you suddenly feel that you can't continue, your mouth is completely dry...a sound arrives to your ears: always coca-cola!



What colour are you visualizing? What would you most like now? Which drink are you imagining? Is this memory so beautiful? Is it really a memory...?

Professor Sergè Salaün, from the Sorbona university, says in his book on the song: *“Why won’t we switch on the TV or the radio? How can we turn a deaf ear to those tunes spread everywhere, at street, at big stores, at every circumstances of public or private life? Who pretends not to have recordings in their memories, affinity for a kind of song, an style or a genre?”*. Music, as a universal, unique and symbolic language, has the capacity to last on us, as well as making learning easier. Our teachers knew about this when they used to make us “sing” the multiplication table, and also do publicists that repeating and repeating messages make us “learn” about their products. Nevertheless, it is true that is a quite useless lesson for us. Our emotional memory, in conclusion, amalgamates sounds, and also has its room for publicity.

2. Research sources. Archaeology of the mass media

Some years ago I met a compilation album of advertising songs, those which used to be broadcasted on radio –and also on those breaks among one reel and another of a cinema screening- in the thirties in Spain. An incredible emotional involvement drove me to dedicate some time to investigate and recover about two hundred songs from different periods, to study, as a matter of a final work at my musicology studies, which were those musics used at that “past time”, and its relation with the announced products.

Step by step I found further information: the strong feeling I felt with that first contact with ancient advertising. Why did those “old” musics affect me so much?

What began being a mere musical study became a sociological research. The aim of the project was not analyzing the relationship between composer and his work or performers with music, but analyzing the connection between musical advertisements and its final aim, this is the product’s consumer. Radio had democratized information, and reading or writing began to be no so useful to have information. Neither to read an advertisement. Messages started to be indiscriminately broadcasted for all publics, despite the fact that there were always an objective public.

With this new approach I could discover very funny things, some of them really interesting, and some other more dramatic. As an example, the close relation between the rythmn used in some advertisements and its clearly politic linking at the moment they were broadcasted. Imagine Spain during its fourties, few months after having suffered a Civil War that wasted more than one million lifes. Imagine a chocolate advertisement that shows “those times when fats looked down their nose at thins, who had never tried such a good chocolate”, also try to figure out the melody that talks about a pawnshop called “Happy”...all that with march rythmns (in times of war), or with the spanish “pasodoble”, one of the most expressive dances at that moment.

*Es que aquellos tiempos que alegres pasaron,
el simbolo e imagen del gordo de ayer,
que mira orgulloso al flaco inocente,
que un buen chocolate nunca lo probó.
(Chocolates Matías López, años 40)*



Those times that passed happily ,
the symbol and image of yesterday's fat
who looks down his nose at the innocent thin,
who (the thin) never tried a good chocolate
(Chocolates Matías López, 40's)

*En la vida muchas veces
tenemos necesidad
de lucir alguna joya
en cualquier solemnidad.
Otras veces, ya lo creo,
también puede suceder
que por salir de un apuro
las tenemos que vender
(Joyería Alegre, años 40)*

Many times in life
we need
to wear any jewel
at any event.
Other times, as far as i think,
we may have the need
to sell them
in order to solve
a difficult position.
(Alegre Jewellery, 40's)

3. Towards today's publicity

Some time later, researching sources were wider, and we focused our efforts on other media realities. After the almost-archaeological work "looking for the lost material" at the radio files, we started to look for TV songs, as this media soon overshadowed the Radio regarding publicity. With TV there was also a logical evolution as it had happened at the Radio, but now there were also images and singers that showed themselves also in advertisements.

Media History would continue showing funny lyrics and "catchy" songs, and meanwhile, society seemed to be evolving, but it was actually technology which did evolve, instead of the society.

Comparing the new advertisements and songs with the old ones, we noticed that they were basically the same, but with a different "package". In 1930 we could listen to the recorded voices of two impressionists of Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy selling a coat or talking about a "delicious coffe, very famous because the mayor of Madrid or an outstanding boxer use to take it..."

*Hoy lo toma Don Pedro Rico
y por eso es tan hermoso
y lo toma Paulino Uzcudum*

*porque así sale victorioso.
Compre Vd café son vacilación
en Montera es, en el 32.
(Café La Estrella, años 30)*

Today Don Pedro Rico takes it
and that's why it's so lovely
also Paulino Uzcudum takes it
as that's why he claims victory.
Don't hesitate to buy coffee
at Montera Street, 32
(Coffee La Estrella, 30's)

*-Sé de un saastre
que vive en Madrid
-¡Ay, Ardil, te marchas
-¿Y que harás allí?*

I know about a Taylor
who lives in Madrid
-Hey, Ardil, you leave!
-What will you do there?

*-Me voy a casar
con una morena
y a hacerme un gabán
en Casa Carmena
(Sastrería Carmena, años 30)*

-I'm marrying
a dark haired woman
and i'm making an overcoat
at Casa Carmena
(Carmena Tailor's shop, 30's)



In the late twentieth century, it was Michael Jackson or the Spice Girls who promoted a drink with the rhythm of their songs. Or was it the other way round? Who promotes who? We discovered how the advertising campaigns started to sell not only certain products, but also certain music. At the beginning the deal was to do huge payments to celebrities to obtain their music, image, and involvement at certain advertisements. Coca-cola, as an example, gave singers as Ray Charles, Connie Francis, Aretha Franklin, Tom Jones or Petula Clark a contract at the most crucial moment of their careers, to perform the

promotional jingle of the product: “Be really refresh...”. Pepsi, on the other hand -“on the other drink”- still spends a part of its benefits on celebrities such as Ricky Martin, Shakira o Kylie Minogue.



Later on, the tendency was composing “covers” that used to substitute the well-known music for other musics really similar to the original one, but legally new made, so that the copyright laws on each country were carried out.

It was very common to use past music; forgotten themes and singers by public used to mean cheaper copyrights. Huge telephone companies recovered the hits of “Motown”, as it would happen also at many cinema films.

Another option was the use of new musical groups, completely unknown, to make them famous repeating constantly their music at advertisements. This strategy made those groups become famous at a very competitive price, and their promoters could take advantage of this new situation.

Technology progress constantly, and so do manners in a century unstoppable. Music became a trade property, and enjoying the art of “muses” was no more exclusive for our ears. Inventions such as the gramophone, tape, compact disc, mp3, bluetooth, mobile phones...have opened new selling sources. Latelly what seems to be important is the music device more than music itself.

Internet, for instance, has revolutionized and lead through a crisis musical industry. The matter is no more selling a product by songs, neither selling a device for music. Now the assumpt is the way music should be sold. Copyrights cry “the death of music” due to the massive unloadings of audio files in internet. However, the number of devices that reproduce this kind of internet files (wav, mp3, mp4...) grows day by day. We can even find that cars and mobile phones include standard equipment with devices that reproduce files directly unloaded from internet. Chance? Surely not.

4. Publicity and mass media

Maybe you wonder about the reason of this speech focused on the past, present, and, maybe future of publicity in a forum dedicated to consumers citizenship.

The concept of “education” shouldn’t forget the fair balance between the legacy of the past and the convenience of taking into account what is happening at present. It becomes necessary to offer society tools to understand those messages that citizens find everyday. This way students are taught to talk, read and write in order to understand a world where language is essential. Likewise we must teach to read advertisement messages –in this case how to listen to music- as the way of being free when deciding as consumers. Making them see –and/or listen to- that despite the beauty of advertisements, the aim is always the same: selling a product.

Working on publicity and its relationship with music has some other attractions.

The idea a community have on the advertisements that “affect” them, is alive as a matter of the repetitions that sales campaign impose. Therefore, it’s easy to speak about publicity and attract people attention with the music it uses, believe me.

And considering that the topic is quite attractive, a new educational source comes up, in this occasion directly related to the title of the CCN thematic group I belong to, “Involvement”. Involvement of teachers, parents, tutors, and associations willing to work on this topic is simple, as we are talking about music and publicity, and both of them are strongly involved in ourselves.

If we manage to take responsibility understanding the media messages, we will gain the freedom to choose the proper way. Watching TV, listening to the radio or going to the cinema are normal activities that millions of people do every day. The music that we listen to at the elevator, the ring bell of a mobile telephone, waiting at the dentist...the omnipresence of sound makes us reconsider a new way of listening, so that we shouldn’t blindly believe everything our senses manifest when we listen to these musics.

5. Practice Implementation. All public workshops.

How could we work on this subject?

I’ve had the chance to work on music and publicity from different points of view, from the very theoretic, writing texts at specialized magazines, to the most practical, offering conferences to all kind of listeners –pensioners, schoolchildren, blind persons, teachers...-, who have been involved somehow in workshops on this subject. The best results appear when participation and game are the way to analyze directly or indirectly this topic.

Looking backwards, everyone has its own memories based on experience; regarding artistic memories, musical ones are easily rememberable if they are accompanied by words. I remember when my grandmother, who was about 80 years old, used to sing the commercial songs that I was trying to recopilate. Songs that she hasn’t heard for ages. But they were there, at her memories. Historical revision of the use of music at publicity is the best way to start to understand nowadays’ society. Those primitive advertisements

had the same purposes as actual ones have, and in some occasions the same mechanisms, but with a surprising sincerity and innocence.

Listening carefully to primitive advertisements can also be helpful to analyze that same society. As we pointed out at the beginning of the text, the analysis of spanish music advertisements in the post-war years (1936-39) shows the new political reality of the country trough adverts such as clothing ones. We can also notice this social reflection in the fifties, when a tropical rythmn from the film *Anna* (1951) was generalized.

A revolution for a society, the spanish one, that looked at that rythmn and the dance of its actress (Silvana Magnazo) as a sexual reference evoked by many advertisements, specially by its music.

It is also very interesting to analyze, regarding music at advertisements, the way a topic can be treated. The role of women at the spanish post-war, the increase of hygiene product advertisements at this same time, children's toys...are examples that show, specially through their songs, the conditions of that society.



An example of the love story among shaving devices and men in the fourties and fifties at Spain, is captured in the text below:

*Una dulce ilusión
de amor sincero
sentí con embeleso,
soñé mil caricias.
y sentí resbalar
un largo beso*

A sweet illusion
of sincere love
is what i felt,
I dreamt one thousand caress
and I felt sliding
a large kiss

*Has sido siempre para mí sincera
no me has mentido ni una sola vez
y al acercarte a mis mejillas
acaricias mi rostro como amante mujer*

You've always been sincere
you've never lied me
and when you are near my cheeks
you caress my face as a lover

*La encontré por fin,
como la soñé,
muy delicada y juncal,
de bello perfil
y sentí en mi piel
su inefable suavidad*

I finally found it,
as i had dreamt it,
delicate and slender,
with a beautiful silhouette
I felt on my skin
its ineffable softness

If we manage to understand and laugh at this primitive publicity, maybe we are also capable to understand and laugh at today's publicity. That which is specially created for us. A way of analyzing, from the past to the present, that it works when we understand that the product is the same. How could those men buy shaving devices with such a sickly-sweet love songs? How can nowadays' men buy a shampoo just because at the advertisement it's said to be the best way to pick up a woman? It is exactly as ridiculous and real as it used to be.

6. Theoretical and practical workshops: the image added value

There is a way to understand the real value of music at the media-society we live in. A way to understand the added value of music when this is accompanied by images, and in the end, publicity makes us have our own "Original Soundtrack" of our life. If possible linked to the products for sale.



The practice consists on watching a film scene whose soundtrack has been changed. For instance, if we took the famous Alfred Hitchcock Psycho's shower scene, where Janet Leigh is murdered while strident chords written by Bernard Hermann sound, and instead of this music we listened to a romantic melody, or a viennese waltz, or maybe a modern rythm. Every time we see the same scene our perception changes. We know exactly what is happening, and the content of the film, but music makes us understand it in a different way. We have tried this experience on several occasions, and at the end of every single one we asked some questions. One of them about "the reason why the woman was murdered". And the coincidences, depending on the music that had sounded on every moment, were really astonishing. Going through the line that separates the "spectators" from the "spectacle-creators" is the best solution to understand their messages.

7. Conclusion

Being responsible is not a matter of fighting against the society in which we live, but of being capable to interpret the messages we receive in order to be informed and free consumers to choose according to our interests.

The music-advertising pairing could be said to be "dangerous", as it works in the field of emotion and "memory". Its indiscriminated and constant use in our society makes teaching to analyze necessary.

Learning to be “conscious citizens” implies knowing how language is used around us, finding the freedom to choose and understand that consumerism is the necessity of selecting. To do so, it is absolutely necessary to understand the offer itself, not by its music.

Looking to the past is essential to understand the present and to build up another future, our future, that one that we are seeking. In contrast to the utopia of a new world, we can find the education reality that leads us to understand our own world, and also gives us the chance to learn to change it. If this change can be carried out through songs...it will be nicer, don't you think?

The Internet and the public sphere. Promises and prospects for the consumer citizen.

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In the last few decades the world has witnessed great transformations in the information and communication technologies. The convergence of previously segregated fields of computing, telecommunications and broadcasting and the introduction of more sophisticated, innovative technological systems have become a common feature of the information society. The computer communication technologies centred on the Internet and their capacity for instantaneous global communication, have provided new frontiers, not only for communication but also for production and consumption. What are the implications of the new information and communication technologies on the everyday lives of citizens, on business, corporations, governments, civil society and the democratic process?

The main purpose of this paper is to explore the prospects and opportunities for participation presented by the Internet. Does the Internet constitute a public sphere? Can it be used as a constructive tool for citizen participation? The paper will explore the Internet's great promise to promote public discourse and a free flow of information. It argues that the Internet has a potential for empowering smaller communities, individuals and minority groups, enabling them to widely disseminate their information, ideas and messages to a global audience as well as access an endless catalogue of information and entertainment from around the world. It also argues that the Internet is generating new contexts for consumer citizens, whether as frameworks primarily for consumption, production or for citizen action. The citizen is not only a consumer but also a producer. The conclusion reflects on new challenges concerning the impact of the Internet on the spaces for public discourse and participation.

Rethinking the public sphere concept

To examine the question of the Internet as a public sphere we have to revisit Habermas' theory of the public sphere. Habermas has defined the public sphere as the sphere between civil society and the state, in which public discussion on matters of general interests is guaranteed. He defines the public sphere as follows;

By 'public sphere' we mean first of all a domain of our social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed. Access to the public sphere is open to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere is constituted in every conversation in which private persons come together to form a public. When the public is large, this kind of communication requires certain means of dissemination and influence; today newspapers and periodicals, radio and television are the media of the public sphere. We speak of a political public sphere when the public discussions concern objects connected with the practice of the state (Habermas, 1991; 398).

Implicit in Habermas' theory is a model which envisages a "discursive public space".

Central in this model is the idea of conversation and dialogue. As the space between civil society and the state in which citizens can debate issues of common concern, a well-functioning public sphere depends both on access to pertinent information about the actions of governmental institutions and opportunities for citizens to engage in rational-critical deliberation that result in the formation of public opinion and the shaping of governmental conduct (Haas, 2004:178). Habermas laments that the intertwining of the state and society in the late nineteenth century and the twentieth centuries meant the end of the liberal public sphere. The rise of the institutional media and global trends towards oligarchies in the 20th century created a system that monopolised the public sphere. As Stichweh has noted “the mass media tends to consider itself as being identical with the public sphere and public opinion” (Stichweh, 2003:28).

While the public sphere described by Habermas is typical of an epoch, in that it took place within specific historic, economic and cultural context, the idea of the public sphere continues to captivate researchers from different disciplines. In political science, the idea of the public sphere remains central, though highly contentious, to the reconceptualisation of democratic theory. From the media perspectives the concept serves as the conceptual foundation for many efforts to suggest the structural and discursive contours of a more democratic media system (Garnham, 1992, Keane, 1991, Scannell, 1989). Dahlgren conceived of the public sphere as a series of societal dialogues dealing with issues of common concern and politics in overarching sense (Dahlgren, 1995). One could say that a functioning public sphere is the fulfilment of the communicational requirements of a viable democracy

In an era where the classical public sphere is no longer feasible the question often asked is whether the public sphere can be reconstituted under radically different socio-economic, political and cultural conditions, and how it can be reconstituted. Also asked is how the reconstituted public sphere could cater for the shortcomings sighted in Habermas public sphere, such as its exclusiveness.

Some scholars have however questioned the applicability of the concept of public sphere to mass-mediated societies (Thompson, 1995). This pessimism is dismissed by Habermas himself who has argued that the idea of the public must be divorced from the ideal of “physically present, participating, and jointly deciding members of a collectivity” (Habermas, 1992: 451). He further argues that a genuinely democratic public sphere comes into being when the interactions are focused on issues of common concern to citizens, equally accessible to all those potentially affected by those issues, based on rational-critical deliberation” (Habermas, 1984). These ideals can be applied to assess the Internet’s potential as an arena for mediated rational-critical deliberations.

In today’s information society, the Internet has been cited as having a potential to serve as an arena for public sphere(s). The rise of the Internet has created possibilities for opening a new public sphere, though, not based on Habermas’ idealized and exclusionary public sphere. The typology of the computer mediated public sphere is undoubtedly different from that envisaged by Habermas in his classical work.

Connecting dispersed citizens

Consumer citizenship has been defined as, “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, and locale scale when securing one's own personal needs and well-being" (Thoresen, 2002:22). As today's marketplace becomes globalised and more complex, so is the requirement for new skills, attitudes, knowledge and understanding amongst consumers. There is an increasing challenge to promote consumer competence, stimulate active citizen participation and enhance consumer decision making processes. There is also a need for interconnectedness and a sense of common purpose amongst consumer citizens in tackling the global marketplace.

The Internet offers immense opportunities for consumer citizen networking and coordination at local, national or global scale. Manuel Castells uses the term 'network society' to capture the new kind of society – one based on computers and information technologies, and characterised by new networks of relating (Castells, 1996). The technological structure of the Internet allows for a decentralised network of networks where different communications mediums such as the television, radio, print media and telephony have converged to create a computer-mediated public sphere. As Stichweh has noted, "the public sphere of the Internet is a distributed system that functions without any need for synchronization (Stichweh, 2003:28). It is not a single entity, but rather a conglomeration of smaller public spheres organized around specific issues and interests. This structure has implications on power configurations in that in principle anyone can be connected to the network and send messages to many others among geographically dispersed groups and individuals. Hence the Internet presents genuine opportunities for consumer networking and action. It facilitates the recruitment of new members and activists, who can be reached instantaneously via various canals of information distribution supported by the Internet. The structure of the Internet networking overcomes the geographical barriers and reduces the costs of information exchange, in terms of time and money.

The Internet allows for conversation to take place in various forms, be it oral or written. Conversation is an important activity of the Internet and from its beginning the Internet was conceived as a medium of communication. It facilitates communication, permits dialogue and provides mechanisms for immediate feedback. The computer technologies and software enable citizens to participate directly in call-in talk shows, reply to incessant public opinion polling, and offer constant feedback to government officials with a speed and frequency heretofore possible only in tiny ancient Greek city states (Grossman, 1995:23). These technological abilities for communication have led to the conclusion that the Internet may fairly be regarded as a never-ending worldwide conversation. One question that has to be asked however is whether these conversations strengthen or weaken the public sphere, enhance public opinion formation processes and stands up to the criteria set by Habermas in his conception of ideal speech situation, namely that all relevant voices are heard, the best arguments are brought to bare, and that the agreement or disagreement is based on reason, not force. Equal access to the public sphere is the best guarantee for the quality of conversation. How accessible and inclusive is the Internet public sphere?

Accessibility and Inclusiveness

The modern concept of the public sphere is based on an understanding of 'the public'

which presupposes the accessibility of a public space to all (Luhmann, 2000: 284 quoted in Stichweh, 2003). One of the main features of the public sphere is universal access. Universal access has different dimensions including availability, affordability and accessibility. A number of factors present significant impediments to access to the Internet, and these include infrastructural and technological limitations, capital and literacy. As a result there is a general digital divide between segments of the population and across geographical zones. The digital divide exists not only between countries but also within countries in the form of differences in access between urban and rural dwellers. These differences lead into two-tier societies of 'have' and 'have-nots'.

The implications of unequal access are highlighted in the World Telecommunications Development Report, Universal Access 1998, and UNDPs Human Development Report 1999 which states that "Internet poses severe problems of access and exclusion" of those who are poor, illiterate, rural and non-English speakers. In the EU there are geographic discrepancies between Western and Eastern Europe. Positive steps have however been taken to bridge the gap by incorporating universal service into public policy. The EU Directives on universal access encourages members to harmonize regulatory frameworks which secure the delivery of universal service (Centre for Democracy & Technology, 13 April 2005). Progressive public policies adopted by the new members of the EU would undoubtedly go a long way in bridging the information gap. Rapid technological developments are also providing alternatives to fixed telephone network dial-up-access, likely to span geographical barriers. While there are still a number of obstacles limiting access to the Internet, these do not in any way diminish the Internet's potential as a public sphere.

Theoretically speaking, the Internet is disengaged from the aspects of race, gender, ethnicity and age. It provides a sphere that is not as exclusive as the one described by Habermas. Habermas's public sphere did not grant equal access to women (Calhoun, 1992; 35-36). In the Internet public sphere all groups have access. Using network interactive media such as electronic mail, MSN Messenger, chat and electronic mail, bulletin board systems, Multi-user Dungeons, newsgroups, and conferencing systems like Usenet, citizens have formed virtual communities, be they communities united by ideology, politics, social issues, entertainment. In this way the Internet sustains and support individual and group interactions and conversations. The promises are that the Internet will create social places of assembly conducive for political participation, and social contact.

Consumer Participation

Participation and deliberation are central to the public sphere concept and also underlie the concept of consumer citizen. A great deal of conceptual work has been done on the concept of participation and there have been shifts in the participation discourse over years. One perspective on participation is when citizens are called upon to make contributions to interventions that are intended to benefit them so as to increase the effectiveness of these interventions (Cornwall, 2000). Participation is pivotal to increasing citizens' influence over the institutions, industries and policies that have a bearing on their lives. Which spaces exist today for citizen participation? How can citizens themselves take initiatives to create spaces for participation? Internet petitions

and 'web polls' are a good example of instrumental participation, whereby participants seek to change decisions taken by dominant institutions. The Internet has the ability to speedily distribute petitions and protests. Thus it has that potential of serving as an arena for participation and deliberation at the local, national and global scale.

The contemporary reality is that the consumer issues transcend local and national boundaries. It is increasingly difficult for citizens within national boundaries alone to deal with problems of global nature. Living within a specifically defined geographical space no longer defines consumer citizenship, instead it is increasingly being defined through technologies that connect the local and national to other points, thus creating a wider global network community. As the connection gets wider and wider face-to-face communications cease to have the same kind of role. Some researchers even argue that "the age of the public sphere as a face-to-face talk is clearly over" (Poster, 1995; 6). The broadening of the citizen action into the global sphere also envisages usage of a global communication system. Various techniques are required for mediating distance and space and the structure of the Internet presents these opportunities for mediation and capacity to coordinate action. Through international network of the consumer citizens via the Internet, several opportunities can be observed. The Internet offers opportunities for increasing the number, diversity, intensity, direction and quality of ties/links of organisations and groups concerned with consumer issues. The Internet offers new directions of participation within the context of the Internet public sphere. There is however a prerequisite to participation and that is access to information by consumers.

Consumer Information

What should participation consist of and on what scale(s) should it act? How does the Internet affect the dynamics of participation and deliberation? The need for consumer citizens to be well informed and educated about complex issues and the workings of political and economic systems has become more important than ever. One of the most revered rights of consumers is the right to be informed. The Internet provides a pragmatic base for the dissemination of information to large audiences across the entire world. Issues of common concern to consumers are distributed widely across the entire world. Communities in the peripheries who have little means of generating information can easily access knowledge databases. Public access to a wide range of information is essential for citizen participation and access to information is a prerequisite for deliberative capacities and citizen action. What should be emphasized here is the productive and distributional potential of the Internet.

While it has been acknowledged that the Internet carries a wealth of information, there are also concerns that this public sphere is also filled with information of questionable value. The biggest challenge facing the citizens is how to find credible and accurate information amongst millions of web sites. Citing the problematic of finding authentic sources some critics have been quick to point out that availability of information in the Internet does not necessarily translate into enhanced knowledge and therefore participation. Habermas for example, has noted this by saying; "Whereas the growth of systems and networks multiplies possible contacts and exchanges of information, it does not lead per se to the expansion of an intersubjectively shared world and to the discursive interweaving of conceptions of relevance, themes, and

contributions from which political public spheres arise” (Habermas, 1998). Bohman also argues along the same line that the “mere availability of information and communication.... is not the same as the creation of contexts for mutual responsiveness and accountability required for the self-conscious identification of a public that crosses boundaries of social and cultural space (Bohman, 1996). There are of course other barriers that undermine the Internet public sphere such as illiteracy, language, software design.

Whilst there are enormous amounts of “garbage information” entering the Internet public sphere as noted by Schiller (1976) in Hunter (1998), there is also ample quality information. The challenge is to locate it. Renowned search engines such as Yahoo and Google have come up with innovative categorisation of information found in the Internet. The guides provided make it much easier for consumers. The networking of Consumer NGOs into one stop portals has to some extent improved the categorisation of information in the databases. There has been increased delivery of specialised information in the Internet, for example from reputable United Nations organs, international non-governmental organisation, specialised groups like university academics. The challenge is therefore to empower citizens to have a critical ability when accessing information from the Internet, the power to recognize authentic sources. There is therefore no doubt that the Internet enhances opportunities for access to information and the deliberative capacities of the citizens. There is however still challenges for realising this potential and how to make the content relevant to citizens’ awareness of and participation in consumer related issues.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the possibilities presented by the Internet in facilitating the revitalising of the public sphere envisaged in Habermas’ theory of the public sphere. It has attempted to identify those factors enabling or inhibiting the advancement of computer-mediated public sphere. It sought to highlight those characteristics of the Internet which can be used as constructive tools for consumer citizenship. Critics of the Internet public sphere often argue that it is not as coherent and as meaningful as real life public sphere and that increased connectivity does not necessarily translate to global solidarity of consumer citizen. There are still problems of access, availability, quality of online discourse, commercialisation of the cyberspace, and corporate control of the Internet infrastructure. In spite of these shortcomings, it can be argued that the characteristics of the Internet technology give hope for the revitalising the public sphere. In short the Internet enhances the distribution of information that keeps consumers worldwide aware of what is going on and helps in the realisation of consumer rights, facilitates participation, directly or indirectly. It provides spaces where citizens can deliberate on common concerns.

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V. Consumer rights and responsibilities

Individual Responsibility on the Adequacy of Retirement Income

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1. Introduction

Ageing is challenging social security systems functioning in many industrial countries. To overcome potential financial sustainability problems, many economists and policymakers subscribe reforms that rely both on the capitalization²⁶ and on individuals.

The European Union is debating these issues (European Commission (2003)). At the same time, in many countries, some reforms are taking place which include the raising of the legal age of retirement, the amendment of the formulae used in calculating pensions, which leads to a benefit decrease, and the creation of reserve funds. The role of the private pension funds is also enhanced.

This paper analyses individuals' capacity to provide adequate retirement income, given the growing responsibility that they are supposed to take. The education and the regulation issues are considered. Additionally, it describes the main features of Portuguese social security system, including the creation of a trust fund and of conditions to the development of the complementary schemes.

Section 2 reviews the life cycle model as well as the contributions from behavioral finance and psychology to understand saving behavior. Section 3 addresses the importance of education and regulation, given the growing importance of occupational and personal private pensions. Section 4 presents Portuguese social security system taking into account recent reforms and pension funds industry. Section 5 concludes.

2. Life cycle Model and the Psychology of Saving

Life cycle theory, due to Modigliani, has had a wide influence on economists' thinking about the timing of retirement as well as the determination of saving. Modigliani's basic hypothesis was that far-sighted workers will rationally plan their consumption over a full lifetime. Accordingly, they take account of the likely path of their labor earnings as they age and then prudently accumulate savings in anticipation of their retirement (Modigliani, 1986). In this manner, it will be possible to maximize the worker's lifetime well-being, subject to the constraint that lifetime consumption

²⁵ Financial support for this research was provided by FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia.

²⁶ Or funded systems.

cannot exceed the worker's lifetime wealth²⁷. Rational and far-sighted workers will plan to avoid situations in which all of their lifetime wealth has been consumed long before they expect to die.

In simple versions of the life cycle consumption model, an individual is well informed about the path of his future earnings, his age at death, and the interest rate he is able to earn on his savings. If the worker has stable preferences throughout his life, his planning problem is formidable but tractable (Burtless, 2004).

The life cycle model emphasizes the sharp drop or complete cessation of labor earnings at retirement, meaning that individuals must find another way to pay for their consumption, namely personal savings. Hence, individuals who do not expect to retire until shortly before they die do not need to save much for retirement. Thus, retirement and saving decisions are interrelated.

Some evidence supports the theory (Burtless, 2004). However, some critics have been made because it is not very successful in accounting for important aspects of personal saving. Many individuals reach old age with very little savings. Even considering the effects of uncertainty, when people decide when to retire or how much to save for retirement, their choices may be poorly informed, short sighted, and less than rational. The crucial problem is that unlike other economic choices, which may be repeated many times throughout the life period, the decision of when to retire is made only once. The opportunity to improve on the decision making through experience, as is the case when consumers learn how to budget and shop for groceries, clothing, or apartments, for example, is inexistent.

The existence of social security systems as well as mandatory occupational pension schemes means that the optimal amount of savings depends on individual circumstances, although it affects the lifetime trade-off between consumption and retirement in a complex way. The impact of social security systems on retirement depends on the contributions individuals must make and on the benefit formula. Additionally, the effect of occupational pension plans on retirement depends on the plan type: defined-benefit or defined-contribution. Individuals who can expect pensions that replace a large percentage of their net earnings have much less need for savings than workers who do not anticipate pensions.

Social security reforms that rely on individuals to make their own decisions about retirement must take in to account that too many individuals base their retirement and saving choices on herd behavior, faulty logic, or defective information. Moreover, a majority often shows astonishing ignorance of the most basic provisions determining future retirement incomes (Burtless, 2004).

3. The Role of Education and Regulation

In order to make retirement systems more effective in providing sustainable and adequate protection for their ever growing elderly populations, greater attention should be putted on education and regulation issues. Otherwise the effects of a planning error would be catastrophic for the well-being of the aged.

The replacement of state pensions with individual investment accounts implies that workers might have to decide on four important questions:

²⁷ Lifetime wealth consists of the worker's initial assets and the present discounted value of anticipated labor earnings and other kinds of income.

- the age when they will retire;
- how much savings to place in their accounts;
- how to allocate their savings across different investment options; and
- how fast to make withdrawals from their accounts.

The reforms that rely on individuals responsibility to make their own decisions about retirement saving and investment seem acceptable if individuals make these choices rationally and competently. Big mistakes do not have the opportunity to be corrected.

The decision to save, the investment decision and the decumulation decision are far more complex than what is supposed by the life cycle theory. Although consistent with fundamental economic proposition that individuals can and do try to maximize their self-interest, often those decisions have less-than perfect outcomes. Hence, this new perspective regarding how “real” people make economic decisions must be considered in the design and in the management of retirement systems (Mitchell and Utkus, 2003).

Understanding why people save and what they invest in are questions of great importance in this context. If the lifecycle analysis is true, households should have some demonstrated skill at estimating their needs for retirement. This requires accurate estimates of uncertain future processes including lifetime earnings, asset returns, tax rates, family and health status, and longevity. In fact, survey and empirical research suggest that individuals are not particularly good at the retirement savings problem. Only few people feel they are able to plan effectively for retirement (Lusardi 2003, and EBRI, 2003). On the other hand, DeVaney and Chiremba (2005) found that obtaining more education, being more willing to accept risk, and enhancing past savings behavior were among the factors that were most influential in having a larger amount saved for retirement, when comparing the retirement savings of the baby boomers and other cohorts in U. S.. The findings of the later supported the lifecycle hypothesis that household savings tends to increase with age and the theory of planned behavior (Wärneryd, 1999): retirement savings behavior was shown to be influenced by attitude, subjective norms, perceived control, and past experience.

Behavioral economists rely on a psychological explanation called “lack of willpower” or “bounded self-control” to explain the lack of retirement preparation. That is, individuals try to save for retirement, but too often prove to be limited in their capacity or desire to execute intentions (Thaler and Shefrin, 1981), as it happens in other behavior modification programs such as exercising, dieting, or quitting smoking. The recognition of this problem gives support to the use of commitment devices or mechanisms that help foster desirable changes in behavior. Concretely, pension plans should be formulated such that contributions are automatically deducted from workers’ pay before the money can be spent. Withdrawal restrictions on individual retirement accounts and other retirement plans also appear to be commitment devices, imposing a psychological and financial hurdle on accessing money, helping to counteract lapses in personal willpower.

Often, individuals also deviate from standard economic theory because they are easily influenced by decision framing, which means that responses to a question vary based on how it is asked. Additionally, when confronted with difficult decisions, individuals tend to adopt heuristics that simplify the complex problems they face, for

example accepting the available default option. Inertia and procrastination also have an important impact on decision making (Mitchell and Utkus, 2003).

The investment decision has been widely explored by the modern portfolio theory (Francis, 1986). The question is: do investors in general and plan participants in particular understand and act on the predictions of mean-variance theory? Much research clearly is against mean-variance behavior among investors. Weak preferences for the portfolio elected were found (Benartzi and Thaler, 2002). Framing effects and inertia are also detected (Mitchell and Utkus, 2003).

Finally, the last phase of financial decision making for retirement, the decumulation decision, confronts many sources of risk. The most important of these are longevity risk, inflation risk, health risks (leading to unexpected expenses and costs), and capital risks, contributing to experiencing consumption shortfalls during retirement.

Retirement plan design in the future should incorporate these results. Retirement savings decisions are complex, meaning that individuals need help. Plan sponsors, benefit plan consultants, consumers associations, and policymakers should give that help. In 2000, the Commission has presented a directive on institutions for occupational retirement provision with the aim to create a prudential frame work in order to ensure a high level of protection for the rights of future pensioners, as well as to ensure that institutions enjoy sufficient freedom to develop an effective investment policy, which has received the political agreement of the Council in 2002.

The OECD has especially focused its work efforts on the regulatory and policy issues arising from the growing importance of private pensions. Its mission is to assist countries in the development of an adequate regulatory and supervisory framework that protects the rights of members and beneficiaries and ensures the financial security of pension plans and pension funds. In fact, delivering pension promises is an objective shared by all private retirement systems, but the ways of doing this are complex. The OECD has approved a set of fifteen basic principles and two specific guidelines, considering regulation, governance and the protection of rights of members and beneficiaries (OECD, 2003).

4. Provision of Retirement Income in Portugal

The prospect of rapidly aging populations is likely to lead to insolvency of state pension schemes unless contributions are raised and benefits cut.

The proportion of the young in Portugal is declining dramatically, -44.64% in the period 1960-2001 (EC, 2002). Additionally, the proportion of Portuguese aged 60 or over increased by roughly 76.5% between 1960 and 2001 and it is estimated that this age-group will constitute 45% of the country's population by 2020.

This evidence has driven to a course of action that enhances workers responsibility to save for their retirement.

4.1 Social Security

In accordance with the terms of Portuguese Law Nr. 32/2002, 20th December, which regulates the social security system, the system comprises three other systems:

- The public social security system;

- The welfare provisions system; and
- The complementary system.

The public social security system comprises three sub-components: the benefits system²⁸; the solidarity system and the family protection system. The welfare provisions system is developed by public institutions, namely autarchies, and by private institutions without profit purposes. Finally, the complementary system comprises legal regimes, contractual regimes and optional schemes.

The objective of the benefits system is to provide compensation for the loss or reduction of occupational earnings. Those legally entitled to benefits under this sub-system are either employees or self-employed, constituting the general regime. In addition, the unemployed as well as non-working individuals have the option of subscribing to the sub-system, constituting the special regimes. The benefits system is based on the legal obligation to make contributions and covers the social insurance regimes applicable to employees and the self-employed.

The complementary system is regulated specifically, although it must obey to some criteria.

The financing of the system must obey the principles of diversification of the sources of income and of selective taxation criteria. More specifically, the financing of pecuniary benefits, which replace occupational earnings, is a twofold process, namely through the contributions of employees; and through the contributions of employers. Furthermore, the Law stipulates that there must be transference into the Social Security Trust Fund (FEFSS), created in 1989, of an amount between two and four percent of the contributions of employees, up to the point at which the total expenditure on pensions for a minimum period of two years is ensured. In addition, any annual surplus in the benefits system, as well as profits on asset sales and the gains from financial investments, flow into the reserve fund, to be managed under principles of capitalization. In fact, the public social security system must consider the pay-as-you-go technique as well as the funded one to its financing. The simulation of the fund's assets was made by Silva et al. (2004) concluding that the fund's assets reach their peak in 2012 and that the fund will be mobilized for the first time in 2011 and will run out in 2026.

4.2 Occupational and Personal Private Pension Schemes

Pension funds have been in existence in Portugal for about twenty years now. There are diverse factors which have determined the evolution of pension funds in Portugal: the prognosis of the difficulties which the public social security system will experience in fulfilling the expectations for which it was created (Silva et al., 2004); and the somewhat alarming phenomenon of ever-decreasing levels of saving.

The establishment in 1989 of the retirement savings plans (PPR) and the retirement savings funds (FPR) was an additional measure intended to attenuate the preoccupations mentioned earlier. The savings plans involving shares (PPA) were launched in 1995 as a means to achieving the development of the stock market. There was a clear intention to stimulate individual, long-term saving, thereby reinforcing the

²⁸ Or insurance-based system, which offers earnings-related pensions aiming to provide a standard of living similar to that obtained during working life, financed by earning-based contributions.

third pillar of guaranteed retirement income.

The revision of the regulation law in 1999 clarifies and modifies formal aspects and introduces alterations, not only with a view to the reinforcement of the protection of contributors, participants, beneficiaries and also of member-companies, but additionally to the qualitative perfecting of the functioning of the pension funds.

A detailed characterisation of pension funds market can be found in Garcia (2004).

Closed pension funds are prominent among the various types of pension funds. These, as well as open funds, are occupational. In an open fund there is no requirement for any connection whatsoever among the different parties adhering to the fund, adhesion to the latter depending solely on the acceptance into it being granted by the fund's managing institution. PPR and PPA type are personal funds.

Contributions to closed funds have decrease on average. In contrast, the amount of contributions to PPR and PPA funds grew on average.

The majority of members/sponsors are found to belong to the financial sector and to sponsor a pension plan that represents the first pillar of social security.

The dominance of defined-benefit plans (DBP) is still in evidence, despite their declining trend. Only about half of them are complementary to social security. The funds' third-pillar role has been reinforced, with the correspondingly increase of PPR and PPA funds. In Portugal, there is no available data on the rates of return by pension fund under management²⁹. Only aggregated data is available.

5. Conclusion

Underlying the global movement of the social security reforms, spurring individual choice, is an implicit assumption about behavior, namely that the individual-citizen to whom the responsibility of choice has been handed is a well-informed economic agent who acts rationally to maximize his self interest.

However, in the real world, peoples' decisions are subject to several restrictions:

- bounded rationality, in the sense that certain types of decisions and problems may be simply too complex for individuals to master on their own;
- bounded self-control, in the sense that individuals have the right intentions or beliefs, but they lack the willpower to carry out the appropriate changes in behavior; and
- bounded self-interest or bounded selfishness, in the sense that many individuals do seek to maximize their personal welfare, yet they prove far more cooperative and altruistic than economic theory predicts they will.

The recognition of these constraints are very important for the design, the management and the regulation of retirement systems. Plan sponsors and policymakers are getting more and more aware of these issues taking actions toward consumer education and regulation.

The development of pension plans, either occupational or personal, in Portugal and in other countries, justifies a deep look at the problem of individuals' capacity to protect themselves adequately in the absence of proper financial education and consumer regulation. Further research is needed on this issue.

²⁹ Except for PPR/Es and PPAs.

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Consumer Citizens' Rights and Responsibilities in Financial Services in Hungary

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Introduction

In Hungary from World War II there is a permanent need for new flats and houses. During the 2nd World War a high proportion of the flats and houses were destroyed. In the so called socialist era, there were huge building programs for blocks of flats. These flats were built in bigger cities by state subsidy and most of them were in the possession of the Hungarian state. Flats were distributed and sold by the state or municipalities (soviets). Rental fees were very low, they did not even cover the maintenance costs. There was also possibility for building or buying houses, mainly in the countryside and without subsidy. The impeachment of waste was on the shoulders of the state and municipalities, but they, in permanent lack of financial resources, could only concentrate on building as much new flats as possible.

As a part of the transition period after 1990, the state sold the flats at reduced prices for the tenants so as to get rid of the burdens. At the same time there is a considerable demand for good quality new flats. As far as the quantity of the flats and houses are concerned, it seems to fulfill the needs, but the inner structure is different from the real demand. The Hungarian state has almost entirely withdrawn from building, new flats are built on market basis. Because of the restricted purchasing power, a modern credit system has to bridge over the gap between the demand and purchasing power.

In developed countries it is much easier to obtain a flat, because because of the low required own contribution, the long term financing and the suitable amount of credit. In contrary to this, in Hungary the minimum own contribution required by banks, is minimum 50%, which seems to be the most important retaining factor of the expansion of credits for flats. That is why government offers state subsidy at different conditions for buying or building flats or houses. In previous years these conditions has almost continuously been altered according to the concepts of different governments. In the past six years the maximum of accessible subsidised credits was reduced from 30 million HUF (appr. 120.000 EUR) to its half. The existing system makes difference between used and new buildings. While 6 years ago the maximum amount was at the disposal of the people, both for used and new flats. According to the existing rules, the reduced maximum (15 million HUF) amount can be drawn only for new flats. Those who want to buy a flat at a price less than 12 million HUF, may get a subsidised loan up to 5 million HUF. Above 5 million HUF one has to apply for loan with market interest rate. In Hungary the prices of newly built flats are over 300.000 HUF, while the net average monthly wages are not more than 85.000 HUF (appr. 340 EUR). At the above mentioned prices very good quality used flats are available. Unfortunately the existing system does not support the buying and renovating of used flats and houses. This short introduction seems to be necessary for foreigners to be able to get a comprehensive picture on the Hungarian situation.

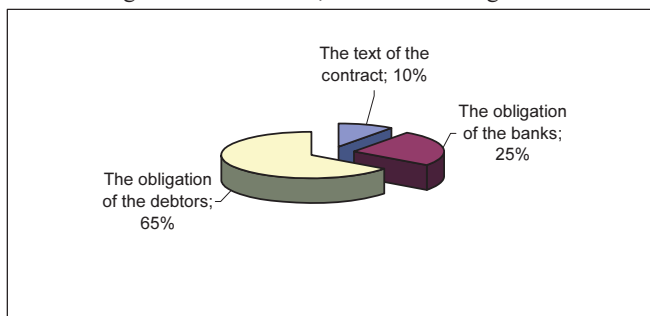
The system is complicated, the interests are different. By the help of our research we would like to examine the relationship between the two actors, the client, the consumer who applies for credit and the bank, who offers the credit. They exist in a kind of asymmetric interdependence, because there is a mutual dependence between the two parties, but in this relation banks have advantageous positions.

Our research

Our research focused on the substance of the contract made between the two parties. In Hungary the financial services sector consists of banks, specialized credit institutions, mutual savings banks and credit unions. The total number of the banks and different kind of credit institutions is approximately 50. They all have the right to give loans for flats, but approx. two thirds of them do it in practice. In our research we overlooked the available general credit contracts used by Hungarian financial sector as standards. We were curious if there are possible individual alterations from the general conditions. We examined the proportion of obligations for the contracting parties beyond the mere facts concerning the credit.

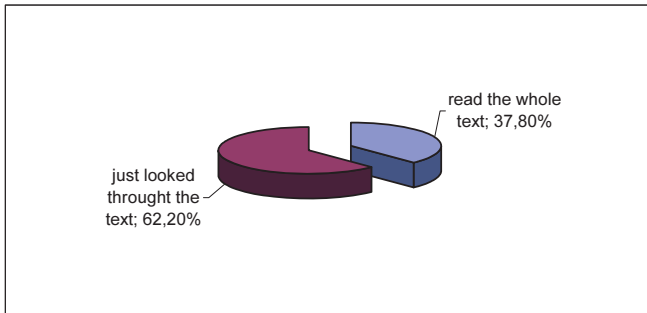
Outcomes of our research

The general conditions of the contracts are worked out by systematic, long and prudent lawyer's work so as to minimize the banks' own risks. The documents are long, with complicated legal phraseology, not easy to understand for every day people. It is necessary to read them carefully from the beginning to the end, because all parts contain essential elements. As far as the division of different elements are concerned, approx. 10% of the texts of contracts cover the nomination of contracting parties, 20-30% the obligations of the banks, 60-70% the obligations of the debtors.



we asked the clients of six institutions. Out of them four are banks, two belong to credit unions. Out of 167 trials, we got 124 answers in the framework of personal interviews. We do not know, how many of them really got a loan. Although our questions were very simple and did not touch any personal element of their own contracts, we were surprised to see the distrustful behaviour of the potential debtors. Of course they did not know in advance, what kind of questions did we want to put them.

37,8% of the potential debtors read the whole text of the contract, the others just looked it through. They said „ it is no use complaining, we can not influence the general rules.” 6,14% had comments on the text, but they were also convinced that the bank will not take their opinion into consideration.



The obligations of the banks

Basically from the banks' side it is the only obligation to set the loan at the debtors disposal. In 98% of the cases the bank performs by remitting the sum of the loan to the debtors accounts. If cash is required, it has an extra fee.

The obligations of the debtors

The obligations of the debtors begin with submitting the claim for a loan. Banks require full supply of information including personal data. It is also a basic condition in banks' practice, that the debtor has to show the invoice of telephone. Previously cable telephone was required. Potential debtors without cable telephone had to order this type of service. This type of practice was totally against the law. Today mobile phone is accepted, but prepaid ones are not accepted. Banks refer to international business experiences, according to which the best indicator for willingness of payment is the payment of telephone bills. Who goes out of money, starts with not paying the telephone bill.

Obligations during the credit process

During the crediting process some costs and fees occur. E.g. fee of the judgement of credit, estimation of the value of the flats, notary fees. The credit contract itself has to be signed by Public Notary. Out these costs for the estimation of value the potential debtor has to pay in every case, before granting the credit. Public Notary fees also occur before getting the loan, but at least in this phase the credit is sure. Judgement costs and other fees are deducted from the sum of the credit.

Obligations after getting the loan

The obligations of the clients become even more serious after getting the loan. A very complex system of financial security defends the bank, which is a burden on the client's shoulders.

The usual general elements of the security system are as follows:

Prompt incasso
Mortgage
Guarantee of the expert of value estimation
Insurance for the

Out of them prompt incasso is very rarely used for citizens.

Mortgage is used in every case, it is registered on

The guarantee of the expert of value estimation means that he has to buy the flat from the bank in case the debtor does not pay, at the value he estimated. But is a possible solution just at the final stage of collection process.

The insurance for the coverage of the credit means that a special insurance contract is made with a specialized insurance company for the sum of the loan and the costs have to be covered by the client.

Most of the bank, 86% of the ones we asked, lets prepayment by instalments. In these cases clients have to pay for the alteration of the contract. It is mostly 2% of the contract value, and it has a minimum amount.

For the question „Which is the most painful burden for you ?” 79% of the potential debtors said, that banks mislead them before and at making the contract by calculating in their interest rates only basic costs(mainly interest) and afterwards new types of costs „come up from the cellar”.

As a reaction for the continous complaints, Hungarian Financial Supervisory Authority, which is responsible for the protection of the consumer citizen's rights from government side, ordered the compulsory use of „Total Credit Fee Ratio”, which contains all costs and fees. It happens many times that very low interests rates are advertised, while the Total Credit Fee Ratio is by 5-50% higher. The difference comes basicly from the so called”Credit Handling Fee”.

The other main problem about which 84% of the clients complained the lack of information given by the banks' employees. Clients have to stubborn enough to put again and again awkward questions. After a time it is inconvenient but important to know all the details. Bank executives like to emphasize the „sunny” side of the contract, just shortly mentioning the cos telements as if they were natural for anybody. They do not like to speak about Total Credit Fee Ratio.

Summary

All in all the position of the Hungarian Consumer Citizens become better ont he financial markets in the past 15 years. Consumer Citizens become more self consious, and they can vote by their feet, because the number of banks increased Competition seems to be fierce, but clients and also experts suspect that there has to be a close cooperation between different banks. Clients, consumer protection organizations, schools, universities etc. have a lot to do for reaching an acceptable balance between rights and obligations. Not only in case of financial institutions.

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Consumer Complaint Forms and Complaint Categorization: A Way to Achieve Consumer Commitment

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1. Introduction

In recent years consumers' complaint intentions and behaviors are getting more attention in quality management literature (Garvin, 1988; Goetsch and Davis, 1997; Yi, 1990). According to De Meester and Mahieu (1999) quality management is a prospective view for the purpose of avoiding or preventing dissatisfaction or complaints. Complaint management is a retrospective view upon a customer's individual experience that is not in accordance with his or her conception of a "good" company. However, the way a company reacts to complaints is a measure of its concern for the quality of its products and services (Hackman, 2002) as well as of its desire to retain its customers. According to Buttle (1996), Jackson (1985) and McKenna (1991) customers can be a valuable resource in identifying problems and offering potential solutions to them. Currently the managers' attitudes toward complaints can be divided into two contradictory types. At the negative side complaints seem to be threatening and as such they have to be avoided. Complaint procedures are seen as a "security function", as a way of repairing the damage suffered and as a form of legal protection. The second vision deals with the managing of complaints as a tool towards quality improvement within the company. We acknowledge the second vision as expressed by Klaasen (1997): "Complaint management refers to the structured reaction of a company to complaints...; complaint management contributes to the prevention of complaints". Effective complaint management benefits a company by (1) identifying areas that need changing and/or improvement; (2) giving the company a second chance to serve and satisfy dissatisfied customers; (3) providing an opportunity to strengthen company reputation and credibility; and (4) helping to reduce a company's workload.

Nowadays consumers are more sophisticated and better informed than their predecessors (Powell, 1995). Better education and a higher level of information availability coupled with extensive media exposure help today's consumers to reach their current level of knowledge and sophistication. Additionally, complaining gives dissatisfied consumers the chance to vent their unhappiness and to act as a responsible citizen.

2. Consumer Complaint Process

Research suggests (TBCS, 1998) that relatively few dissatisfied clients bother to complain. As a result, every complaint received may provide a window into a much larger pool of dissatisfaction. By dealing with the causes of complaints, the company can further reduce both the number of complaints and dissatisfaction with its product or service. Dissatisfied clients often speak poorly of a company. The reputation and credibility of the company may suffer as well. On the other hand, customers whose problems are resolved quickly tend to be more loyal to and supportive of the company

than those who do not experience any problems.

The process of complaining behavior starts as soon as consumer starts evaluating product or service. If he/she feels unsatisfied, either he/she will take some action (behavioral response) or will not do anything (non-behavioral response). Consumers either use formal or informal channels to file complaints. Consumer complaint behavior like all consumer behavior can be divided into two classes, private and public (Day and Landon, 1977). Public actions include complaining to some third party (e.g. Better Business Bureau), taking legal action, or complaining to a seller or manufacturer, while private actions include negative word-of-mouth such as telling friends and relatives, or switching products. Several researchers have attempted to sketch profiles of dissatisfied consumers in order to form sub-classes (Richins, 1987). Both researchers and practitioners examine the process of complaining behavior as consumers' evaluation of a product or service (Richins and Verhage, 1985; McClure and Kiecker, 1993). According to the literature (Miller and Sarat, 1980-81) dissatisfied but non-complaining customers may resign themselves, spread rumours, call in intermediaries or a third party, react with aggression, or rouse popular feeling.

Presented paper is an attempt to develop a taxonomic hierarchy of classes and subclasses of consumer complaint problems and requests in order to create an agreed vocabulary between the managers and consumers which will ease the consumer complaint process. Based on aforementioned research results we can conclude that a common taxonomy of consumer complaint problems and requests does not exist. Many customers, in fact a majority, leave because of being neglect and/or because the complaining process is too complicated and/or they do not expect any positive resolution. Even more, some of the customers perceive the complaining process as a waste of time and efforts. CCform³⁰ platform is a management tool for individual complaints made by a complainant (customer, consumer, client, retailer, etc.) directed online towards a particular company. The CCform's primary goals are to increase consumer trust and confidence, to ease the complaint process and to improve service quality. CCform benefits customer by providing them with an effective means of solving their complaints online. It is exceptionally helpful for consumers who have no standards for handling complaints before they become disputes, and have particular difficulty with crossborder complaints in their own language. CCform benefits businesses too, because consumer complaints and claims are presented to them in a packaged format thus allowing them to manage customer relations more efficiently.

3. Method

We followed a three-steps simplified benchmarking process, including (1) identification of Web sites against which to benchmark and metrics development; (2) complaint categorization; and (3) implementation. The target Web sites with consumer complaint forms were identified using search engines. The first 45 web sites from the generated lists and some of their hyperlinks have been analysed. The selected web sites with consumer complaint forms included in this research were divided by the author into three groups regarding their content and provider/way of complaint

³⁰ CCform stands for "Consumer Complaint form" used during IST-2001-34908 project development and impementation process.

handling³¹. Group A includes web sites with regulation guidelines and rules covering the consumer complaint process. Group B is composed of different initiatives for online consumer complaint process. Web sites containing consumer complaint forms as a documents which have to be 1/ filled and sent by e-mail or 2/ filled, printed and sent by mail have been grouped together in a Group C.

The metrics used in this study includes absolute measures which are divided into two categories, namely functional/structural issues; and content and style. All sites were visited and reviewed between January 25, 2003 and February 25, 2003. They were analysed independently by two experts and by the author on the basis of content analysis.

A modified version of Ishikawa diagram (Ishikawa, 1985) has been used as a tool for identifying the hierarchy of the causes for consumer complaints. For the purposes of conceptualisation we divided the purchase decision-making process in three phases as follows. The pre-purchase phase basically includes product/service search and discovery in the information space in order to acquire product and service information. The purchase phase consists of: (1) comparison shopping and product selection based on various attributes; (2) supplier evaluation and selection; (3) placement of order. The core of after-purchase phase is (1) product/service receipt and (2) process and/or output evaluation.

4. Results

4.1. Content analysis of consumer complaint forms

Content analysis has been done in order to evaluate the structure and content of the consumer complaint forms and to determine the similarities and differences between them. The results are summarised in Table 1³².

Parameter	Description
Size	From 1 to 4 pages; Mo = 2 pages <i>Consumer complaint forms for health services are an exception with a length of 5 pages and more</i>
Type of the file	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ html, pdf, txt, doc; or a combination ▪ A possibility for online complaint process is provided
Level of structuring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fully structured (all questions are multiple-choice) ▪ Semi-structured (part of the questions are multiple-choice; the others are open) ▪ Unstructured (all questions are open) <p>The proposed length of the answers for the open questions vary, e.g. up to 500 characters (about 62 words); up to 2030 (about 254 words).</p>
Number of sections	From 1 to 5 sections; only sections; sections and subsections.

Table 1.
The structure of the consumer complaint forms: summary

Table 1. The structure of the consumer complaint forms: summary

The online complaint process takes plenty of time to finish (up to 30 minutes) because it requires too much information to be filled in by the complainant and needs

³¹ Due to the limited length of the paper, the table with a detailed description of the groups can be obtained by the author.

³² The summary of the content of the analysed consumer complaint forms is available from the author by request due to the limited length of the paper.

problem or complaint description to be written in free text³³.

The most significant part of the consumer complaint form is the section “complaint information”. The content analysis revealed that there is no common approach to complaint problem categorization among the forms analysed. Furthermore, the problems are sometimes classified as business types, sometimes as channel types and sometimes as specific product or service problem types, and in several forms these types are mixed haphazardly. All the analysed consumer complaint forms require free description of the problem which takes a lot of time and efforts from the complainant. Moreover, in such a case the analysis is getting more complicated. Based on the results presented above we can conclude that there is no standardised structure of the analysed consumer complaint forms while most of them require a lot of time and effort to be completed.

4.2. Complaint categorization: Ishikawa diagram

The root cause for a complaint is supposed to be that some definable problem/dissatisfier exists. In order to avoid free writing, to facilitate problem description, and to prevent existing gaps figured out above a systematic hierarchical problem categorization is needed. Thus the primary categorization problem is to develop a structure which can intuitively represent all possible complaint problems, and which can be successfully extended at need by any recipient organisation.

The process of complaint categorization started with the results of the content analysis presented above. A hierarchy of problem types and a list of request types have been developed by a group of five experts with expertise in different fields such as marketing, legislation, consumer research. Doing this, the experts deliberately tried to avoid classifications by business or channel. These hierarchies have been considered generally applicable to most businesses. At the end of this stage it has been concluded that the top level of classifications should be small in number covering all cases, and the subsequent levels should be extensible both in number of entries and addition of levels of detail.

During the next stage the first version of Ishikawa diagram was built. The diagram was divided into three separate zones which represent the three phases in the purchase decision-making process namely pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase. Then the categories proposed in the previous stage were interchanged in correspondence with the aforementioned criterion. The main possible causes of the effect (consumer complaint) are drawn as bones off of the backbone. Usually the Ishikawa diagram has three to six main categories that encompass all possible influences. In the proposed diagram the categories are ten. The first fishbone was not complete, so all the possibilities for the root cause for the consumer complaints are not exhaustive (e.g. “Product quality problem” – phase Three, sub-category 1).

The proposed Ishikawa diagram is presented in Figure 1.

The Ishikawa diagram has been further modified by the experts. A category for causes which may not necessarily be associated with a particular purchase has been added. Finally, four zones, ten categories, and twenty-eight sub-categories of complaint problems have been identified and utilized. They are listed in Table II.

³³ The author tested by herself some of the online complaint initiatives for research purposes.

Requests were classified in four categories (privacy requests, information correction requests, payment requests and action requests) and thirteen sub-categories³⁴.

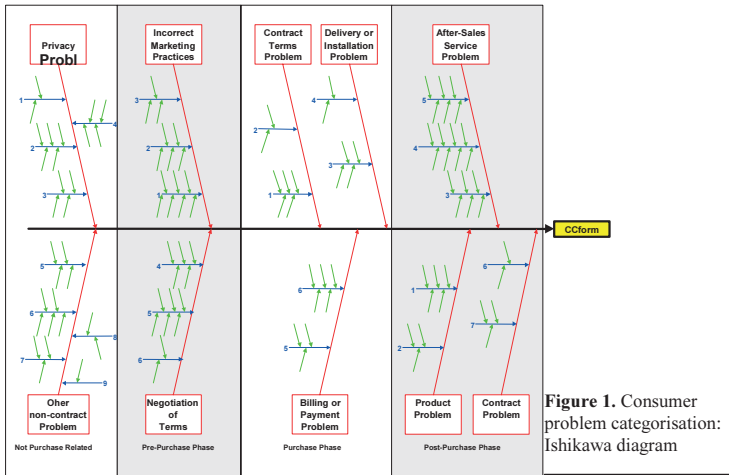


Table II. Proposed problem categories³⁵

Category	Sub-category	Descriptors	
PHASE ONE: PRE-PURCHASE			
Incorrect marketing practices	1 Advertising	1.1 Advertiser not identified 1.2 Misleading Advertising 1.3 Offensive 1.4 Unproven health claim	1.5 False statement 1.6 Misleading advertising 1.7 Unauthorised comparative advertising
	2 Sales promotion	2.1 Illegal lottery 2.2 Unfair contest 2.3 Prize not received	2.4 Unfair packaging 2.5 Hidden charges
	3 Personal selling	3.1 Street selling problem 3.2 Home selling problem	3.3 Poor advice
Negotiation of terms	4 Offer problem	4.1 Price unacceptable 4.2 Specification not adequate	4.3 Time limit (too short) 4.4 Unfair contract terms 4.5 Unacceptable terms
	5 Information problem	5.1 Legal information missing 5.2 Information not comprehensible 5.3 Information not easily available	5.4 Inadequate specification 5.5 Inadequate contact details 5.6 Inadequate charge details
	6 Refusal problem	6.1 Refusal to sell	6.2 Refusal to provide service

³⁴ Some of descriptors and sub-descriptors were changed in correspondence with the suggestions of the CCForm Legal Team. The Ishikawa diagram for consumer requests and the table with descriptors and sub-descriptors are available from the authors under request

³⁵ The sub-descriptors are available from the authors under request because of the limited length of the paper as well as the categories and their descriptors for the Phase Four: No Purchase Related.

PHASE TWO: PURCHASE			
Purchase or Contract terms problem	1 General terms	1.1 Terms modified 1.2 Contract rescinded 1.3 Jurisdiction inappropriate	1.4 Rights infringed 1.5 Unfair Contract Terms
	2 Price unfair	2.1 Not best offer 2.2 Competitor cheaper	2.3 No discount (usual one not offered)
Delivery and installation problem	3 Delivery problem	3.1 Product not delivered 3.2 Product delivery delayed 3.3 Product not in conformity to order	3.4 Product not ordered 3.5 Incorrect quantity 3.6 Gift defective or not received with product
	4 Installation problem	4.1 Installation delayed 4.2 Installation improper	
Billing or payment problem	5 Payment problem	5.1 Payment refused 5.2 Receipt not confirmed	5.3 Payment details not provided
	6 Unexpected charge	6.1 Incorrect amount 6.2 Incorrect date 6.3 Incorrect interest charge 6.4 Price increase	6.5 Delivery charge/problem 6.6 Supplementary (charge problem) 6.7 Unjustified payment demand
PHASE THREE: POST-PURCHASE			
Product problem	1 Product quality problem	1.1 Product is defective 1.2 Product performance below expectations 1.3 Product unsafe	1.4 Product fails standards compliance 1.5 Product unfit for purpose
	2 Documentation problem	2.1 Instructions missing 2.2 Instructions inadequate	2.3 Documentation in wrong language
After-sale service problem	3 Guarantee problem	3.1 Guarantee refused 3.2 Repair refused 3.3 Replacement refused	3.4 Refund refused 3.5 Compensation refused 3.6 Compensation inadequate
	4 Repair problem	4.1 Repair inadequate 4.2 Repair delayed 4.3 Repaired item not returned 4.4 Spare part not available	4.5 Defective item not accepted for repair 4.6 Charge exceeds estimate 4.7 Unauthorised repair 4.8 Misrepresented needs
	5 Service problem	5.1 Service not provided 5.2 Service partially provided 5.3 Service inadequately performed	5.4 Service provision delayed 5.5 Service cancelled by provider 5.6 Service not ordered
Contract problem	6 Execution problem	6.1 Switching or churning 6.2 Breach of contract	
	7 Termination problem	7.1 Cancellation or withdrawal refused 7.2 Deposit withheld (not refunded) 7.3 Advance withheld (not refunded)	

The proposed categorization has been used as a background for development of a both complainant and recipient user guides as well as for a supplementary glossary. An ontology that captures the core knowledge of the consumer complaint domain has been constructed as well (Jarrar, Verlinden and Meersman, 2003). There is a web site (<http://ccform.interbyte.be/>) which host the demo version of the CCform platform with a link form FEDMA web site. This complaint form is the standard one and is intended to be personalised for each company, incl. categories of problems, solutions, etc. CCform provides automatic translation into the language of the complainant/business (11 EU official languages³⁶). This capacity of the complaint to be translated is an added-value especially for small firms working in a trans-border area, because they will not have to support the cost of translation to understand a

³⁶ English, French, German, Italian, Dutch, Spanish, Danish, Swedish, Portuguese, Greek and Finnish

complaint which is addressed to them.

5. Conclusion

We propose that structures and hierarchies shown provide a good base for improving consumer complaints management. Proposed categories encompass all the problems commonly identified on the generic online complaint forms studied. There are about 90 categories actually identified at level 3 and some have additional subcategories already described. As a result presented Ishikawa diagram is complex and detailed but it could serve as a basis for further precise analysis from consumer point of view. The proposed categories and subcategories can serve as ontological commitments for the managers and consumers in different industries and markets. As such they can be used as a base for shared vocabulary development. We further propose that Ishikawa diagrams provide a good method for visualising the extensions during design and can be a useful aid to extension developers.

Acknowledgments.

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The Construction of Consumer Citizenship and its values

The Case of Food

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How is consumer citizenship constructed in the food market? Citizenships in modern western societies are constructed around rights and information a complicated process. Even more important is the culturally defined need to be an actor and as such support values and interests through action. Some values are of classical political nature and some are more rooted in daily life. Food market actions are potentially relevant for many different values and interests. Consumer behaviour are traditionally important for daily life with small direct political implications, but the political and value-expressive side is becoming more important in modern western societies.

This paper deals with this process generally, in particular the conditions for evolving consumer citizenship. My argument is that consumers have unique possibilities for introducing a long series of values into the food market and more empirically that these values and interest actually seem reasonable responsible. The special role of organisations is discussed and the Slow Food movement will be discussed as example. The reliance upon regulatory agencies and information is also discussed. Norway is the empirical case area and the conclusion here is that paternalistic practices form the regulatory system is hampering responsible citizenship involvement.

1. The food industry as decadence and commodification

Critique of industrial capitalism as a destroyer of the uniqueness and qualities of products is classical and from the start linked to food as example. Karl Marx argued that mass production for profit will start a process of **commodification**, meaning that products (and services) become more and more anonymous, losing connection to country, region, workers and all other qualities than the pure technical. This would eventually lead to the feeling of alienation, first of the relationship to products, then to the process of work and finally would people and society become alienated from itself. This is no great threat to producers, their interests in production is anyway restricted to the one aspect of profit-seeking, but society and individuals will suffer from this commodification process.

In 1906 Upton Sinclair wrote his famous novel “The Jungle”, attacking industrialized meat production in USA. His strong critique of capitalist industrialisation and its consequences is seen as important impulses for both the consumer movement and the workers movement. Food is frequently used as an example in critique of capitalism, in the 1970’s it was argued that in spite of formal wealth in western countries, eating patterns and the food presented on the market lead to bad health, cultural decline and many problems for both man and nature. McDonalds became a symbol of such dangers. In the recent years this critique has again been put forward and again McDonalds is a symbol (Ritzer 2000,2002, Alfina et.

al 1998). In a parallel to Sinclair's social critique; the meat industry is again a point of departure (Schlosser 2001). The "Slow food movement" (which we will return to later) is also critical to the general development and commodification in industrial societies, again with food as the topic and McDonald as main example enemy.

In Norway as in other countries the standardization/commodification has developed from production to also the distribution systems. The big grocery chains enhances commodification by preferring industrial standard food that is easy to produce, will keep for a long time and is easy to handle. Standard foods with high content of low-quality fat, white sugar, salt and additives fit well. And even better is food with anonymous origin that can easily be exchanged between producers. Fresh, local or seasonal foods fit badly in this system, as well as food with specific authentic origin. Authorities point to exactly bad kinds of fat, sugar and salt as main health hazards. Fresh fish, fruit and vegetables are the kind of food they declare as too scarce in the diet. (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs 2004).

The logic of commodification has also reached culture and politics. A common critique is that industrial standard production in mass media and the culture sector threaten quality, culture, social responsibility and political action (Horkheimer & Adorno 1947).

But is the critique relevant and correct? Yes and no. It is relevant in the sense these kinds of dynamics can be observed as a pressure in the markets, but wrong in the sense that these factors are the most prevalent. The simple notion of brand names and their symbolic authentic values indicate limits to the process of commodification (Jensen 2004b) and even the alienation process is debateable (Jensen 2004a). The consumers are actually characterized by other logics; like a longing for authentic qualities, healthy food and deeper cultural involvement, (Jensen 2004a), as well as emphasizing several other values than only technical qualities and price. But of course this is within limits of budget, information and convenience. This healthy and value-oriented aspect of consumers is a good reason for allocating citizenship to consumers and will be further discussed.

2. A new invisible empire of strenght and penetration ?

From the 1980's there has been a wave of changes in international food markets. The dynamics may look like the ones in the 1920's when food industry had hard struggles over marked shares and access to (other) national markets. In Norway, a government had to resign over a dispute regarding access to the margarine market. The turmoil in the 1920's and the 1930's ended in a system relying on national states and protected markets. In the recent round of changes the pattern is different; less national state influence and less traditional regulation are leaving more influence to markets and internationalised regulation bodies, within a cultural framework emphasizing globalisation, competition and profit as ends.

The new system is not ruled from an identifiable centre, continuously forming. In one tradition it is called an "Empire" (Hardt & Negri 2000), a global power structure with far reaching powers into human life, without simple bureaucratic and visible centres. This is more or less parallel to one interpretation of Foucault's concept of "governmentality" (Miller & Rose 1990, Bushell, Gordon & Miller 1991, Neumann 2003.) The basic idea is that the actors develop strong ideas on how they "must"

behave, regardless of a formal individual freedom and that this is especially visible in the markets (Miller & Rose 1990). Even politicians will have a basic feeling of being forced by external factors and not in charge (Beck 1997). This hypothesis of invisible manipulation is probably too strong, but has interesting evidence. In my opinion, this picture is not complete without noticing new openings and possibilities, which are creating an unpredictable system. The role of the consumer citizens may be a major force in this context.

The system and its the regulatory forces, are changing. More market, less state. More producers and consumers, less formal rules and politicians. “Deregulation” actually became “re-regulation”, creating more regulation of new kinds, especially to ensure that markets are working in an acceptable way. Generally in the OECD area regulation expands and is more standardised(OECD 2003).

3. The consumer privilege of values

The consumers don't share the producers' perspective on goods or services as only a mean for economic gain. In principle they can apply any value or interests when using their purchasing power. The mix of values may, and will, even vary between persons and situations. Variance and indeterminism creates possibilities for changes and create a platform for active citizenship and mobilisation. It also makes in necessary to actually study the value profile and actions of consumers. The producers side's single preoccupation with profit can more or less be taken for granted,

It is not unusual to assume that the consumers are easily manipulated and that they are bound to paths laid down by their social background, to the degree that that they loose the quality of an actor (Blindheim et al 2004). In my opinion this is wrong and empirical data will point against such a hypothesis (Jensen 2004a)

Another popular hypothesis points to the consumers as simple hedonistic and ego-oriented actors, with small possibilities for applying values outside their own narrow perspective. This is a popular myth, but data points firmly against it. (Miller 1998, Jensen 2004). Youth and women are the most criticised, but especially these groups seem to have a lot of bad consciousness regarding the environment and to some degree tries to act accordingly, to take one example. Shopping behaviour seem to be fairly altruistic in nature, guided by values linked to responsible actions regarding family, children or husband, to mention some of the most usual values involved (Miller 1998).

What are the more specific values linked to food? As a general tendency in the western countries, we see anti-commodification. When economy allows it, pressure for more authentic goods is clear. Food from a special area, with known origin, linked to a known and special process or made by an identifiable restaurant/cook will be preferred if it is practical. Wine can be sold more expensive if it is from a special area and a special year. Such processes are stronger when they link to the prevailing tendency of individualization.

There are also some more specific values that seem to be important for consumers with special relevance to food:

-Health and Safety. Both surveys of attitudes and market tendencies are clear on this point. If the information and the practical possibility for choice are there, food that is least dangerous to health will be bought. Nutrition in Norway has become much

better and life expectancy develops accordingly. Less milk fats, more vegetables and fish, and darker bread. The more newly found health problems of sugar has already started to have impact. Topics relating to health and food are also very popular in media and a new magazine “Food and Health” have become very popular in Norway.

-Known and unknown risks. European consumers are worried. They are worried on behalf of the environment, the animal species, and generally, the future. These attitudes are also linked to the unknown, to dangers from doing advanced industrial things to the food. Genetic manipulation, radiation and additives are items they dislike in their food. Ecologically grown food is popular for these reasons. Here the Norwegian situation is characterized by low availability, little marketing and high prices, so far the consumers have had small practical possibilities to buy ecologically grown food.

-Culture, identity and fashion. New foods are popular and not only because they are healthier. Magazines, books and TV have contributions on new food and new ways of making food. This is obviously a part of the process of authenticity and individualization, or “decommodification”.

In addition there is a long list of more traditional political items that may be linked to food. This is maybe the most important area for the construction of food citizenship. Solidarity with a country or region or boycott of countries with disgusting behaviour (like the French nuclear tests or South African Apartheid), fair treatment of producers and workers (the Fair Trade movement), environmental concerns or statements on animal welfare. This can be more or less organized and more or less conscious. And the list of possible action topics has no limits. A fresh example from Norway is a case of ethics. The biggest supplier of milk products (the old monopoly) was in spring 2005 caught by media in an attempt to give a food chain a large sum of money to keep competition out of the stores. The way the responsible leaders behaved triggered a spontaneous action that caused cheese sale from the supplier to drop almost 40%. This had nothing to do with price or quality; it was a strong political message on ethics. Regulation authorities investigated and concluded that this kind of “bribery” was possibly not illegal, indirectly pointing to consumers and media as guardians of the relevant values.

The values that consumer may apply on the food market, seems to be relative sensible and responsible. Given the weak organization and problematic possibilities for choice, it may seem promising. Based on interviews (Jensen 2004a) it seems that it is quite usual to have thoughts and ambitions of applying political values to shopping behaviour, but availability and lack of reliable information are given as reasons for not following up in practice.

4. Emerging citizenship of food

“Citizens are not born, they are made” (Barbara Cruikshank, 1999)

If democracy is to be able to influence one’s own life and society, then creation of active citizenship roles are at the core of democracy.

The establishment of **formal rights** are crucial for citizenship. To have a right is more than a practical tool. The sheer existence of a right is a powerful symbol telling the owner that she is an actor who reflects on the possibility of using the right.

The introducing and implementation of the classical consumer rights is therefore more than an arrangement of tools for the consumer citizen. It is an important link in the social and psychological process that creates this citizen.. **Information** has the same double role, both as instrument and symbol. In addition the flow of information will establish opportunities for action the same way lack of information creates helplessness. A main role for regulatory bodies agencies should be to supply continuous and reliable information.

But the consumer must want or feel obligation to act and such cultural variables are complicated and may change slowly. The existence of organisations, as well as introduction of rights and information, is important to support such processes as they are symbols sustaining the idea of social values, the idea of action, the idea of being a citizen.

5. History of food citizenship

Norwegian politics has a long relevant history. Most national states tried to influence nutrition and food patterns rather early, making obedient behaviour a part of the national citizenship. Even in this form it creates a simple, if passive, kind of food citizenship. The idea of independence and reflection among is evident in early conflicts. Around 1865 there was a conflict referred to as the “porridge struggle”, where the knowledge of traditional housewives was defended by some political actors against “modern” experts who wanted to reform their practices. In 1931 there was an even more interesting struggle related to paternalism and citizenship in food. Poor people were given (very low quality) food from the state. There were violent demonstrations and long debates among politicians and nutritional experts concerning both the low quality and (more important) the choice between distributing food or money. Those in favour of distributing money also suggested better information, food supply and quality assurance. The last line of arguments won the battle, thus establishing some kind of food citizenship, even among the poor. This struggle initiated a firm and active state policy of nutrition, combining information and education with subsidies to agricultural producers. (Jensen 1994, Jensen & Kjærnes 1997). Housewives and schools were main targets for information. But it was still a paternalistic system; the role of the consumer was to be informed, active and obedient. After some decades the link between nutritional policies and agriculture was strengthened and became problematic. Nutritional authorities more or less defended the high use of unhealthy milk fats and manipulated consumers, even holding back information. This problem was due to the system of negotiating and strong producers and weak consumers in this process. It is only a small exaggeration to say that in periods, consumers were more sensible than the authorities that should guide them. In the 1990’s the situation improved regarding information on milk fats, but a new struggle 2002 confirmed the paternalistic tradition and this time revealed consumer distrust to the system. Again the old formal system defended classical Norwegian goods, but new actors as well as many consumers tended to make more varied and probably more healthy choices. Regulatory public bodies do not recognise that consumers may have alternative information, distrust or higher ambitions than being obedient. This regulatory culture is in conflict with the development of a citizenship role where consumers apply values and take action on a basis of broad information.

The situation now is more positive, with consumer behaviour trends and values which implies better nutrition and application of values like global responsibility to food.

6. Problems of classical regulation

The examples above indicate problems in the role of public agencies supporting active consumers. The danger of “capture” is well known, it is a tendency for regulatory agencies to establish too close contact and understanding of the producer side which should be regulated. This will happen from time to time in food regulation and there are many examples. It is rather common that regulative bodies neglect to inform consumers and even hold back to protect producers. This is gradually getting better, but as we shall see, it is still a relevant problem.

On a series of modern hazards of food, Norwegian regulation agencies seem to be silent, thus making it impossible for consumers to be responsible citizens regarding. Examples may be GMO, acrylamide (WHO 2002) and dioxin in fat fish. My impression is that authorities actually are knowledgeable and worried and even may take some kind of action, but mostly backstage confronting producers. There are few attempts to inform, warn and mobilize the consumers.

According to the Norwegian ministry of health (2004) one of the most significant dangers to health in Norwegian today food is “trans fats”. They are found in industrial produced foods and are 5-10 times as dangerous as milk fats for heart and circulatory system, (Dagens Næringsliv 2004). In Denmark trans fats are banned and in USA products containing these fats must have declaration on the label. Norwegian consumers lack the specific information needed to avoid such products, although some newspapers has tried to provide information.. Again there seems to be meetings and negotiations behind the scenes and the use of trans fats will probably be reduced. If the information were available and reliable, the situation may be solved fast, because of the rather simple change to other ingredients. Our concern is not only the health of consumer, but their chances of becoming active citizens.

The impression is that authorities do not recognise the power of consumer citizenship, and are contained in a culture emphasising negotiations with producers. In our context we may call this a problem of paternalism

7. Organization of consumer citizenship

Organised action is always powerful, but so far there are only a few organizations linked to food consumer citizenship. However, several organisations work with declaration systems that will make consumers aware and informed, like Fair Trade or environmental labelling, Some of these are semi-state, like the Consumers Council and their magazine. It is worth mentioning that ethical variables are increasingly taken into classical consumer tests alongside the traditional ones on quality, price etc. Some are distribution chains (Max Havelaar) and some are only providing information. Information are widely available in handbooks and on internet, presented in such a way that it is possible to check a list of political variables linked for example a brand of clothing, a chocolate bar or mineral water.

The Slow food movement

“ *A firm defence of quiet material pleasure is the only way to oppose the universal folly of fast life*” (Slow Food Manifesto p1, 1989)

The “Slow food” organization is paradoxical and important from a consumer and political perspective. It started in 1986 with a demonstration against McDonalds’ establishing an outlet by the famous “Spanish Stairs” in Rome. Formal establishment as organization came with a manifesto in 1989. They discuss culture, tradition, values, lifestyle and environment as threatened by fast food and other commodified foods. It may look like a gourmet network for traditional food. The core practical activity is tasting, recipe discussion, eating, making and approving standards for food and information activities. But from the start they made strong political relevant claims on how fast food and industrial food should be avoided, pointing to McDonald as symbol. They also argued that locally produced traditional food will be sustainable; containing less chemicals, that it don’t need much transport or imports to be produced. It uses a lot of work and few other resources. At the same time it is fashionable and good food. The Slow Food movement is a success. The organization have around 100 000 members and have fought interesting and even victorious battles with the EU-bureaucracy, allowing traditional food to be approved by special and more liberal safety regulations. They argue that products with long traditions are tested by time and do not need the same rules as of the international industry. And they remind us that the Mad Cow Disease was created by big industry in a way that is impossible in local traditional production. Their impact can be seen in all the producers and communities that try to be approved by the organization. The Norwegian minister of agriculture often mention the organization and their values in a positive way. The combination of pleasure and values like environment and sustainability are fascinating. The significant political impact of a network that is mainly a kind of life-style and gourmet network remind us that the new political systems evolving adapt to new collective organization compared to classical interest organization, political parties and trade unions. With our concepts we can say that Slow Food symbolises anti-commodification, sustainable environment and new forms of consumer citizenship.

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Consumer protection directions in the republic of Bulgaria

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1. Introduction.

The democratic principle introduced in public relations determines for the development of the consumer protection activity in Bulgaria as well. The interests of the Bulgarian society are protected by priorities formulated in the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria and are treated on the grounds of the free development of the individual, his rights to be informed and the property rights. Article 19 (2) says that: “The Law creates and guarantees to all citizens ... equal legal conditions ... and protects the consumer”[1]. These priorities are guaranteed also by the “Law on consumer protection and trading rules”[2], saying that the objective is to protect the basic consumer rights in the following directions:“ 1. right to protection against the risks of acquisition of products and services, which could threaten human life, health or property; 2. right to protect consumers’ economic interests in acquisition of products and services; 3. access to court and special out-of-court procedures for consumer protection; 4. right to associate in order to protect consumers’ interests; 5. right to information”.

The objective of the consumer protection is:

- protection of consumers’ health, life and property, in case of acquisition of dangerous products and services;
- protection of consumers’ economic interests, through a wide choice of good-quality products and services, under the conditions of a good-quality and efficient competition;
- protection of human rights, by the means of unbiased information and access to training in the field of products, services and environment and in harmonization of the “manufacturers-traders-consumers” relationship.

2. The objective, of this paper is to cover and indicate the directions of priority in the work on consumer protection at a regional level, taking into consideration the democratic trends in the development of the state.

3. Origin and development of the idea of protection of consumers’ rights and interests.

The contemporary view over the requirements of the quality of life and in particular - the quality of the products and the services brings forward the figure of the consumer as the only substantial, leading and demanding one. In the name of the consumer subordinates the entire economic, administrative and state policy, which corresponds to the spirit of the International Charter on Human Rights [3].

The fact that during the entire economic period of the history of mankind no attention was paid to the product as an object is remarkable, for that could harm him

both physically and could cause financial and economic damages. Along that entire transition in the course of development, no institution of national or international significance, having the objective to protect citizens—consumers from dangerous products, has been established. The Roman maxim saying “Let the buyer protect himself” was in force. It is nowadays replaced by the contemporary principle “Let the manufacturer and the trader protect themselves”. Serious progress in the way of thinking and the approach of action was made in the 70's /1972, in Paris/, when a decision was made that “the improvement of conditions of life presumes the relevant protection of health and safety of the consumers and protection of their economic interests”. That highly humanistic initiative was followed by a series of legal actions in the following decades, resulting in the adoption of two amendments of the Roman Treaty /1986/, which played a significant role in EEC to undertake measures for consumer protection. Measures were undertaken, in compliance with the Decree, article 100 A, saying that: “further setting up and functioning of the external market of the Community is under regularization”; and in addition “the motions referring to the consumer protection will be approached to as from a high level of protection”.

The quality of the products is one of the priorities among the issues developed in the European legislation.

The responsibility for flaws in products and the consumer protection from dangerous products is a well-known issue of the quality, tackled by the EC Consumer Rights Council, but now it is examined from another point of view and has a new meaning.

The European legislation puts the stress on consumers' health, life and property, and they are brought forward as basic priorities of the society. In the name of these priorities industry and trade should keep on working.

The consumer is a central figure in the legislation and in his name a policy of development of scientific and technical activity is pursued. In the scientific formulations and technical developments of products for the market the influence of each element, included in the manufacturing cycle must be considered, as well as the responsibility of the individual participants in the chain to the consumer, through their company's registration.

The scientific integration has a unifying center and that is the Consumer law. The main requirement was stipulated by the EC Council, dealing with the consumer protection legislation, i.e. manufacturers and traders bear a responsibility in case of offering defective products and poor-quality services.

The mere existence of the EC Council developing the directions in the field of consumer rights (European Community Consumer Law Directive), assists the development of state laws on consumer protection. Each consumer has the right to protection from the offered on the market defective products. Thus the consumer takes the position of a potential factor for control over manufacturers and traders.

The recommendations, stipulated in the Council Directive have two accents: “The manufacturer will be responsible for the damage, caused by flaws in his product” (clause I).

“For the same reason, the responsibility must be transferred also to the importers of products in the EC and to persons, who present themselves as manufacturers by indicating their

name, trade mark or another distinguishing mark, or who supply products from manufacturers, who cannot be identified” (№1, 210/29).

There are conditions for the EC member-states for efficient functioning at the community's home market, i.e. by a secondary legislation. It pursues two objectives: organization of a united market by abolishing the boundaries through equalizing the conditions and the requirements for performing economic activity and protection of human health and life, the interests of the consumers, intellectual property, competition, environment, etc., by means of equalizing the requirements in a legislative way and approximation of the national standards with the European and world normative documents.

The fundamental documents of the secondary legislation are developed in a way, which does not infringe upon the national interests of the Community member-states, does not infringe upon the rights of the consumer and does not threaten the environment. A New Approach is adopted, ensuring liberalization in the recommendations in order to achieve the necessary scale and scope of their influence.

The New Approach determines the role of the harmonized European standards as fundamental documents, and in compliance with them is taken the EC Council Decision to adopt procedures for conformity estimation. In conformity with that decision were established the rules to set and use the CE mark. The CE mark means that each product indicated in the New Approach Directives corresponds to the requirements for safety and innocuousness for human health and life. That symbol is not a sign replacing the mark for product's quality, but it is put next to it. Products, without a CE mark have to comply with the requirements for labeling and certification, indicated in the relevant Directives.

4. Institutional structure

The activity on protection of the rights and the interests of the consumers in this country is guided by the Bulgarian Consumers Federation. It is an independent, nongovernmental organization, set up as a public formation on democratic principles and voluntary participation, equal in rights membership without interference and discrimination by political or ethnical particularities. The Federation is registered as a nonprofit society and develops its activity on the grounds of independence from the state and political management, though in co-operation with state bodies, public and economic organizations, with the only objective to protect consumers' interests. The approach and the means to achieve co-operation are: competency, scientific character, efficiency, transparency, publicity and truthfulness.

The idea of consumer interests protection originated during the second half of 20th century and resulted in setting up of the International Organization of Consumers Unions (IOCU) in 1960. It united the consumer unions of over 80 states worldwide. In September 1994 IOCU renamed in Consumer International during the 14th World Congress in Montpellier, France.

The idea of consumer protection was raised in Europe at an institutional level in 1973 when the EC Assembly was held. At that time a charter was adopted with requirements to the EC member-states to solve in a legislative way the issues of

consumer protection, by means of adopting a special Consumer Law. These formulations have been developed later on in the proceedings of the UNO 39th General Assembly in 1985.

The Bulgarian Consumers Federation /BCF/ was founded on 10 May 1990. In 1991 it was admitted membership in the IOCU.

EC bodies developed the White Book to approximate the national legislations in compliance with the EC requirements. The chapter “Consumer Protection Policies” was included in Part 23. According to it each country has to provide for the compliance of the laws, related to the protection of the rights and the interests of its citizens with the European technical and legal legislation.

BCF is a co-founder of the Balkan Consumer Center, in October 1995, together with Greece, Albania, Romania, Yugoslavia. Later on Cyprus and Turkey joined in. In March 1996 that center was institutionally recognized by the EC Commission as well.

BCF unites 23 Regional Consumer Unions /RCU/ with centers in the district towns, 96 clubs and three unions facing the problems of the consumers of electrical energy, water and the Mothers’ Union in Protection of Child Feeding.

RCU performs consumer protection at a regional level. We co-operate with the local District Administration Departments of the Trade and Consumer Protection Commission at the Council of Ministers and the local sub-divisions of the Hygiene and Epidemiology Institute, the State Vet and Sanitary Control and the Regional Center of Metrology.

5.Directions and realization of the consumer protection activity, performed by RCU-Varna.

The protection of consumer interests at a regional level is multiform and many-sided. It includes protection of collective and individual consumer interests and each problem requires the abiding by the principle of democracy.

First direction: services.

The problems of collective character are directed to services rendered by enterprises for electricity distribution, central heating supply, water supply and sewage. RCU participates in the discussion of the General Conditions for rendering services to natural and juridical persons by the electricity distribution enterprise, which has passed the privatization process, by submitting its notes and recommendations to the management. Monopolistic is the behavior of the Central Heating Supply Company, which does not provide for a calm public environment for the citizens in the process of calculating the consumed amount of their service. There are litigations submitted by Bulgarian citizens to the Court in Strasbourg and a collective litigation by BCF for wrong reading the consumed amount of service in the field of central heating. A court verdict is expected. The process of privatization has not started yet in the enterprise for water supply and sewerage. Every day RCU– Varna receive litigations for damages in the network. The price of service is going up as well.

Second direction: Supervision of the market.

Market supervision by consumers is performed in co-operation with the state municipal control bodies. The nature of supervision is providing for the safety of the

consumers from buying products being a potential threat for their life and health. RCU works on gathering information by the consumers for low-standard products and assists for the protection of their economic interests.

Third direction: provision of market information.

The performed market research aims at forming a new consumer behavior towards manufacturers and traders, who have proved their loyalty. It is applied for informing the society of the estimations, preferences and the opinions of the consumers with reference to the products and services offered at the market, by participation in media broadcasts and publications.

Fourth direction: Training.

Training programs at various levels on the problems and possibilities for consumer protection are under development, like – training levels for children and students and courses of lectures for mass consumers.

Fifth direction: International projects.

RCU – Varna takes part in international projects on assigned tasks. This kind of activity assists to enhance the scope of issues and to acquire new informational and practical possibilities.

6. Conclusion.

Consumer protection in the Republic of Bulgaria is a new civil society initiative. It appeared against the background of the stabilizing market economy in the country and needs clearly formulated legal regulations.

In our opinion, one of the directions is **consumer supervision**, which can be efficient if the activities of the separate control bodies and institutions are coordinated, and the information is collected and disseminated by a **United Information Center**.

The direction deals with consumer protection **by optimizing the quality of life through enhancing the economic rights**, on the grounds of labor occupancy rate, conscious and purposeful management of the regional and national economic activities on preserving the human potential, the material resources and protection of the environment.

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VI. Teaching rights and responsibilities

Cross-disciplinary consumer citizenship education

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Background

This paper examines a cross-disciplinary, problem-oriented workshop dealing with consumer issues. The workshop forms part of the four-year Danish teacher training course offered by the Copenhagen Day and Evening College of Teacher Training.

The workshop covers issues related to civic, environmental and consumer education, along with pedagogical issues, with the aim of developing a holistic, integrated approach to consumer citizenship education.

The workshop concept is based on the “IVAC” (Investigation, Visions, Actions & Changes) model (Jensen, B.B. 1997). As our point of departure, we take a practical and common everyday experience for both students and pupils: the living conditions, lifestyle choices and consumer behaviour connected to a lunchtime meal.

The overall aim of the workshop is to develop transferable knowledge, attitudes and skills among the students. The students are supposed to apply these competences in their practical teaching of consumer citizenship education in Danish comprehensive schools. Comprehensive schools are state schools combining primary and lower secondary education.

In Denmark, teacher training includes 24 weeks of teaching practice. The workshop forms an integral part of this practice. Before the teaching practice, the students are given a preparatory course offering them hands-on learning experience, guidance, pedagogical reflection and access to relevant teaching materials. During their teaching practice, the students have an opportunity to experience how the materials and methods function. In addition, they are offered a visit by their college supervisor. Upon completion of the teaching practice, a plenary evaluation takes place at the teacher training college. This is intended to bring the lessons learned during the practicum into the classroom in order to share the experiences.

Action-oriented or behaviour-oriented education

Today's world is a complicated and constantly changing one (Gabrielsen 1991). The wide range of food products provides many and new opportunities for choice. There are many strategies by which to choose food products, e.g. on the basis of price,

advertising, taste, customs, health, environment or principles of solidarity. In this context then, what should the overall goal of consumer education be? Should the goal be only to increase knowledge and, if so, what kind of knowledge is relevant? Should the goal be to change the lifestyle of the pupils in a more responsible direction? Many studies suggest that knowledge *per se* does not necessarily lead to a change in lifestyle (Jensen 1997). If the goal is to make the pupils lead a more responsible lifestyle, can this be achieved by an unconscious behavioural change or is there a need to develop their capacity for conscious action in a complicated and constantly changing world? It is claimed that without the ability to act through qualified choices based on personal attitude, pupils will not be able to precipitate the formation of a responsible lifestyle and society (Gabrielsen 1991). It is true that health education from a behavioural and moralistic approach (i.e. telling people how to live a healthier life), has proved unsuccessful in bringing about the desired change in lifestyle (Svedbom 2000, Jensen 1997).

If the overall goal is to empower pupils to act as responsible consumers, then CCN education should be action-oriented rather than behaviour-oriented. The concept of action in CCN education therefore needs to be discussed.

The concept of action in CCN education

In order to define action in CCN education, we drew our inspiration from Jensen's (1997) "action concept model" and Gabrielsen's (1991) concept of action. According to Gabrielsen, an action differs from a behavioural change in several ways. A behavioural change is based on external factors e.g. pressure, temptation, persuasion or propaganda, and is unconscious. In contrast, an action is based on conscious reflection and attitude. In addition, an action has a motive and a goal defined by the individual in question. This definition has many similarities with Jensen's (1997) "action concept model" as used within the democratic paradigm of health education. According to Jensen, an action has two key characteristics. Firstly, it should be purposefully directed at solving a problem and, secondly, it should be decided by the person carrying out the action.

If we modify Gabrielsen's (1991) action definition and Jensen's model (1997) to form a CCN education action concept, this must be based around the pupils' own reflections on their habits and consumption patterns, and their motive for changing the situation to achieve their stated goal.

During our workshop, we transferred this concept to CCN education in relation to an alternative school meal and lunch policy that considers the environment and the pupil's health from a perspective of responsibility and solidarity. The concept was presented and discussed with students based on Figure 1, which is a modification of Jensen's (1997) model. The horizontal dimension depicts the boundary between behaviour and action and, thus, the question of whether the pupils themselves have decided to do something. The vertical dimension illustrates the difference between activity and action and, thus, focuses on whether what "is done" is targeted at solving the actual problem or not. According to this definition, only the shaded area in Figure

1 presents the concept of action needed in order to create an action-oriented CCN education.

	Unconscious activity	Conscious activity
Activity solely as a counterweight to academic tuition	For example, the teacher decides the theme (e.g. healthy and responsible farming) and the activity (e.g. testing for lead and nitrate in food products).	For example, pupils choose to work with a subject (e.g. organic farming). Some pupils visit an organic farm, some investigate the ecological footprint etc. None of the projects are directed at solving a problem.
Activity as a reason and targeted at solving a problem	For example, the school management decides that older pupils should sell Max Harvelaar labelled fruit and organic low-fat milk from the school shop as an alternative to snacks bought from the local bakery.	The pupils decide a problem to investigate. For example, they develop and present an alternative school policy for food and meals which allows for consideration of the environment and of the pupil's health from a perspective of responsibility and solidarity. The alternative is presented and discussed with all partners involved and sub-actions to achieve this goal are decided upon.

Figure 1. Narrative description of the concept of action in CCN education. Action in CCN education should be a conscious action decided by those carrying out the action and the action should be purposeful and motivated and at the same time directed at solving a specific problem. Only the shaded area in the figure fulfils both these criteria.

Responsible action

Sustainable development depends upon taking responsibility at all levels of society. This workshop deals mainly with an individual's responsibility in his/her role as a consumer of foodstuffs. In order to develop the ability of the pupils to act as responsible consumers in terms of the environment, health and solidarity, we believe the training should include three elements:

- Knowledge
- Attitude and willingness
- Experience

A triangular model can be used to illustrate the interactions between these three prerequisites for developing responsibility in terms of acting as a responsible consumer (see Figure 2).

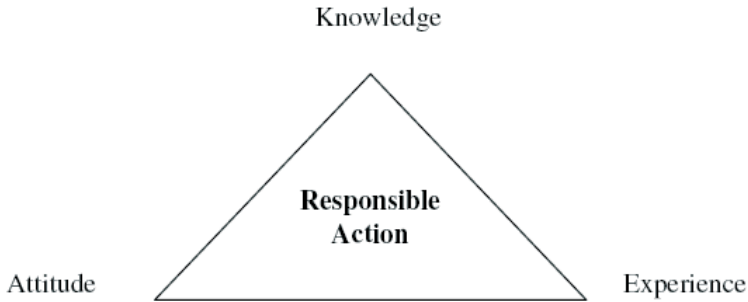
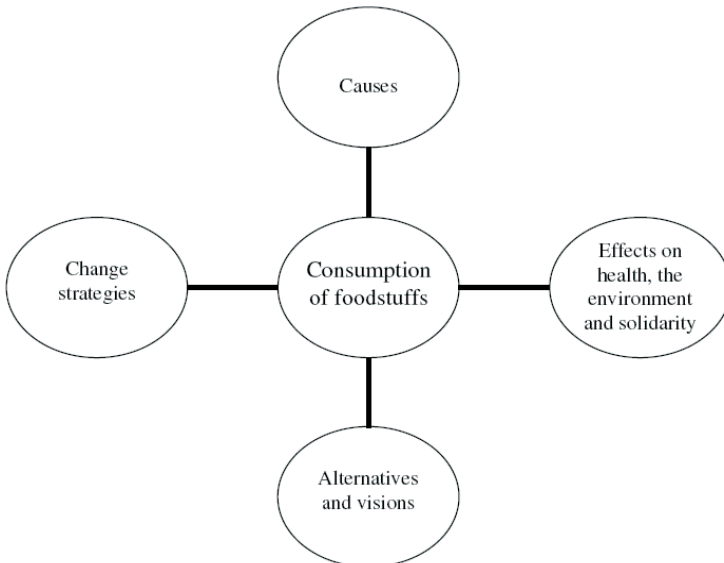


Figure 2. A triangular model illustrating the interactions between the three prerequisites for developing responsibility.

The four dimensions of action-oriented knowledge

If our CCN education is to empower pupils to develop and evaluate alternative visions of an environmentally sustainable and responsible consumption pattern and simultaneously provide sufficient motivation for the pupils to turn visions into reality then we must consider what kind of knowledge is relevant for inclusion in the workshop.

For this purpose, we used Jensen’s model (2000). According to Jensen, four dimensions of knowledge are required for action-oriented education around health and the environment: knowledge on (i) effect, (ii) root causes, (iii) strategies for potential change and (iv) alternatives and visions:



If this model is applied to our workshop, the relevant knowledge to consider would be:

- Effects of consumer choices and behaviour
- Causal analysis of consumer choices and behaviour
- Strategies for acting on consumer choices and behaviour
- Alternatives and visions for consumer choices and behaviour

Each of these kinds of knowledge is described below.

1. Effects of consumer choices and behaviour

The pupils should be presented with knowledge on the impacts of consumer choice and behaviour on the environment, health and solidarity. They should also gain a knowledge of the main factors, both external and personal, that determine consumer choice and behaviour.

During the workshop, we deal with consumer choices and behaviour in relation to foodstuffs. Examples include the origin, quality and production of food, food safety, meals, dietary habits, recommendations and evaluation. In order to illustrate how consumer choices and behaviour impact on the environment and health, a typical packed lunch is analysed and discussed through practical and experimental work. The main focus of the discussions is on the environmental impacts of farming, food pollution, lifestyle and health problems. In addition, ethical questions and considerations related to food production and distribution are discussed (e.g. global mutual solidarity taking into consideration health and environmental issues, plus animal welfare). The knowledge contributed to this part of the workshop comes mainly from the natural sciences. If we are to raise the pupils' concern and attention to a problem and create a willingness to act and change the situation, this kind of knowledge is important. However, such knowledge is insufficient to explain the causes of a problem and thus identify the potential factors to change.

2. Causal analysis of consumer choices and behaviour

Consumer choices and behaviour are not only determined by lifestyle but also closely interconnected with living conditions. In order to clarify and analyse the cause behind the effect, an interdisciplinary approach is needed. During our workshop, social, cultural, economic, technological and historical aspects are used in order to analyse pupils' lunch choices and behaviour. According to Holm's (2001) analysis, four key factors influence our food choice habits. These are 1.) the production of society 2.) the organization of day-to-day life 3.) food and subjectivity and 4.) the culture and consciousness of day-to-day life. In order to systematize the reasons for pupils' lunch choices and their behaviour, we use the same four factors.

3. Strategies for acting on consumer choices and behaviour

In this part of the workshop, we work systematically to explore possibilities for action and barriers relating to lifestyle and living conditions. This includes the potential for collective and/or individual action in school, at home and in society. Issues considered include establishing a meal and lunch policy at the school, parent participation, one's role as a political consumer, civil society participation, how to improve nutrition, and

the sensory and aesthetic quality of a lunch.

Barriers discussed are: economics, time, habits, insufficiently informative food labelling, limited supply and accessibility of foods produced with respect for the environment and mutual solidarity, and restricted areas for eating the lunch at school. Relevant knowledge is mainly of a social or socio-psychological nature but natural science aspects are also considered i.e. technological solutions.

4. Alternatives and visions for consumer choices and behaviour

This element of knowledge deals with the second prerequisite for developing responsibility in terms of acting as a reflective consumer – *attitude*. Based on the strategies for action possibilities, pupils must now develop their own visions in relation to their life, school, family, local and global society – now and in the future. In order to work within the ability of the pupils to develop their own opinion on personal values in consumer behaviour, directed choices are discussed including ethical considerations of equity and environmental sustainability.

In order to promote attitudes in relation to their own concept of “a good life”, personal questions and consideration of quality of life are included in the workshop. For this purpose, the WHO’s positive and broad definition of health is used, visualized in Bjarne Bruun Jensen’s model, see Figure 3 (Hansen, 1994). This model also illustrates how social and economic inequalities, as well as unequal access to natural resources and a clean environment, create different conditions within which people can improve their health. According to this definition, only the shaded area in Figure 3 represents the concept of health needed to get pupils to create their own attitude towards a “good life” and to recognize that lifestyle is influenced by external factors.

	Negative (absence of illness)	Positive (well-being and absence of illness)
Narrow (lifestyle)	1	2
Broad (lifestyle and living conditions)	3	4

Figure 3. Four different concepts of health. The horizontal dimension depicts the boundary between negative and positive concepts of health i.e. whether health is purely an absence of physical illness or whether it includes both good physical health and a subjective concept of quality of life.

The vertical dimension illustrates the difference between the narrow and broad concepts of health i.e.

whether health is only determined by lifestyle or affected by both lifestyle and living conditions.

In order to turn pupils’ visions and alternatives into action, the third prerequisite for developing responsibility – *experience* - is incorporated into the workshop concept. The pupils gain experience in communication through discussing and formulating

arguments for consumer attitudes and choice. At the same time, the pupils gain experience through concrete action.

We use collective as well as individual strategies for change. For reasons of clarity, it may be necessary to divide the proposed actions into smaller sub-actions, with each moving in the right direction. For example, in our workshop the vision focuses on how to devise an alternative lunch in order to create more responsible food consumption that takes the environment, health and solidarity into consideration.

A cross-disciplinary approach

If all four dimensions of action-oriented knowledge are to be included in consumer education then interrelated knowledge from several disciplines is needed. During the workshop, knowledge of a natural scientific, societal, social, socio-psychological and historical nature is used. In addition, a more philosophical approach has been shown to be relevant when dealing with pupils' development of alternatives and visions. For this purpose, we use central concepts taken from existential philosophy such as concepts of anxiety, freedom, responsibility and meaningfulness (Hiim & Hippe 1997). For example, how do we prepare a responsible lunch? A safe meal, a meal which does not affect other people's freedom of action and a meal that considers the needs of future generations.

A planning tool – the IVAC model

In order to uncover the four elements of action-oriented knowledge, a number of questions have been raised during the workshop. For this purpose, the "IVAC" model (Jensen, 1997) is used for inspiration and as a planning tool (Figure 4). This model lists a number of key components that should be dealt with in order to enhance the pupils' ability to take action through education on health and environmental issues. The IVAC model highlights three key issues:

1. **Investigation of a theme.** The first element deals with reaching a common perception of the theme and getting the students/pupils actively involved in choosing a problem to investigate and coming up with an answer as to why this problem is important to them.
2. **Development of visions.** According to Jensen (1997), the second element deals with developing ideas, dreams and perceptions about one's future life and society. In our workshop, this means getting the students to develop an alternative lunch, taking responsibility, lifestyle and living conditions into consideration.
3. **Action & change.** The third element deals with the different potential actions in relation to their potential effect. In addition, it deals with the potential constraints to taking action. In our case, this means working systematically to explore action opportunities and constraints for both lifestyle and living conditions so as to enable preparation of a lunch that integrates environmental and health considerations from a perspective of responsibility.

<p>Investigation of a theme</p> <p><i>Is your lunch choice important now and in the future for the health of you and other people?</i></p> <p><i>Is your lunch choice important for the environment, locally and/or globally?</i></p> <p><i>How does your lunch choice affect the environment and your health, now and in the future?</i></p> <p><i>How do you rank your lunch choice from a perspective of responsibility and solidarity?</i></p> <p><i>What factors affect your lunch choice?</i></p> <p><i>Do lifestyle or/and living conditions have an influence on your lunch choice?</i></p> <p><i>What was lunch like in the past and why has it changed?</i></p>
<p>Development of visions</p> <p><i>What is lunch like in other cultures and countries?</i></p> <p><i>What alternatives could you imagine to your lunch?</i></p> <p><i>Do you prefer an alternative lunch choice that considers the environment and your health from a perspective of responsibility and solidarity?</i></p> <p><i>Why do you prefer this alternative lunch?</i></p>
<p>Action & Change</p> <p><i>What changes will bring you closer to the alternative lunch (the vision)?</i></p> <p><i>Do these changes include modifications to your lifestyle and/or living conditions?</i></p> <p><i>What action possibilities dealing with lifestyle and living conditions exist to achieve these changes?</i></p> <p><i>What barriers exist between the change and the possibilities for action?</i></p> <p><i>How can you overcome these barriers?</i></p> <p><i>Can the actions be divided into sub-actions?</i></p> <p><i>Should you take action alone or together with other people?</i></p> <p><i>What actions will you carry out?</i></p> <p><i>How can we evaluate these actions?</i></p>

Figure 4. During one workshop conducted in 2004, the students considered a number of questions that were incorporated into a modified version of the IVAC model.

Conclusion

If the overall goal is to empower pupils to act as responsible consumers in a complicated and constantly changing society then CCN education should be action-oriented rather than behaviour-oriented. The action should be a conscious action decided by those carrying out the action and the action should be purposeful and motivated and, at the same time, directed at solving a specific problem.

Knowledge, attitudes and experience are three prerequisites for developing responsibility in terms of acting as a responsible consumer. Four dimensions of knowledge are required: knowledge on (i) effect, (ii) root causes, (iii) potential strategies for change and (iv) alternatives and visions. In order to deal with all four dimensions, a cross-disciplinary approach is needed that includes philosophical considerations.

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Consumer Education in Italy and in Europe: themes, tools and trends for the future years Results of an exploratory study

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Introduction: consumer education in Italy

Learning how to take responsibility is a process that starts early in an individuals' childhood and involves us in our role as citizens as well as consumers. Consumer Education (CE) in school, therefore, is definitely a powerful tool to promote awareness and social involvement in young as well as adult consumer citizens. However, the development of consumer education within the Italian society is quite recent. Started around the '80s, encouraged by the European Community, it slowly spread in schools mainly thanks to the initiative of a private cooperative society of consumers, producers and retailers (called COOP)³⁷. However, contrary to what happened in Northern-European Countries, Italian public institutions paid little attention to the issue, therefore consumer education was not integrated in national curricula but it was left (till nowadays) to the teachers' personal initiative. The delayed encounter of the educational system and the issue of "consumption" may be due to a number of reasons. One might be that, until the middle of the '90s, consumers' protection had not been an important topic for Italian public opinion, therefore institutions and mass media gave little consideration to it. Furthermore, the concept of consumption, explains Guerra (1998), has always had a bad reputation among Italian pedagogues, influenced by the catholic and the Marxist tradition: "consumption" generally evoked superficiality, dissipation and frivolous behavior (Fabris 1995). As with the expression "a consuming society" the reaction of the educational world was that of refusing consumption *in toto* (at least in theory, but not in practice) and classifying it as one of the structural evils of our society. The possibility to educate to consume was taken into consideration only by few, motivated and innovative teachers. In the last 10 years, luckily, more and more professionals have become carefully tuned to non-traditional aspects of youngster's lives, such as environmental, sexual, civil and also CE, and the number of projects about these topics significantly increased (Rinaldi 2000).

³⁷ COOP is the name of the above-mentioned consumers' cooperative society. Founded in 1967 as "Associazione Italiana delle Cooperative di Consumo", in 2002 it comprehended 235 firms (small and big co-operatives of producers and retailers dealing with mass-market products – mainly food and grocery), 35.100 employees and 3.375.000 members. At the moment, it is the biggest Italian consumers' organization.

Looking at past projects in CE in Italy, one of the first proposals was the campaign "DAYS OF THE YOUNG CONSUMERS"³⁸: a number of public meetings (free of charge) started in the '80s, aimed at consumer education of young students from all around Italy. Since then, many campaigns have been organized by COOP and, among the most important, there are: "Tutti nello stesso piatto" ("*All in the same plate*", about differences in food and cultural habits, tolerance and intercultural education), "Una moda mondiale" ("*A world fashion*", addressed to teen-agers, exploring the fashion industry), "Scherzare con il fuoco" ("*Play with fire*", for fire-incidents prevention), "Non rompiamogli le scatole" (addressed to children, aimed at raising awareness towards the problem of massive number of advertisements) and more recently "Totem&Tribù" ("*Totem&tribes*", about teenagers identity, fashion and group-relationships) and "Un bambino su 4 nel mondo lavora...noi siamo gli altri 3" ("*One child out of 4 in the world works...we are the remaining 3*", about child-labor and exploitation)³⁹.

One of the main characteristics of these initiatives was an inter-active, creative, practical approach to education. According to the pedagogical method adopted by COOP in Italy, a meeting of consumer education can not be defined as a "lesson" but rather - using a translation from the Italian language - as "*animation*" (*animazione*). An "*animation*" is usually organized as following:

a) schools or teachers are contacted and receive - or teachers require it - a list of different *animations* on various CE issues (for example: balanced-diet, OGM food, money-management, consumer rights, fair trade, fashion and identity...);

b) the teacher, together with the school council and after listening to parents' opinions, considering the specific class's needs and interests, select a proposal of *animation*;

c) consumer educators encounter teachers and prepare meetings with the class⁴⁰. There are usually minimum 2 meetings: one is more "theoretical" and informative and one more is "practical" – sometimes held in supermarkets, laboratories or parks;

d) consumer educators meet the pupils and carry out the *animation*, focusing not just on contents but especially on stimulating students do adopt a critical, reflective approach on consumer issues, encouraging all of them to participate actively with their own experience. Therefore, *animations* have just a "track" of what consumer educators will do, but large space is given to students' and teacher's initiative to explore new pattern of knowledge;

³⁸ The declared purposes of the campaign were: 1) Make young people, parents and teachers think about problems related to consumption. 2) Raise awareness on the important economic role that young-consumer had on the market. 3) Underline the need for information and training for consumers, especially young ones. 4) Show that training and education could be done in an attractive, practical, creative way and introduced smoothly in everyday life (Agozzino, Celada, 1986).

³⁹ For an overview of some of these campaigns, see Baruzzi and Di Vittorio (1998), www.e-coop.it and www.coop-pandora.it

⁴⁰ While the teachers' role, during the animation, is relatively marginal, the real "guide" of the meeting is the so-called "animatore". This word has various meanings in the Italian language but, in this context, it indicates an educator who teaches CE in meetings directed mainly to young people. Therefore we decide to translate it as "consumer educator".

e) sometimes, educators and teachers meet to discuss outcomes and feedbacks and plan future meetings. All animations are free of charge.

As said before, consumer education is left to the private initiative of teachers but ANCC-COOP⁴¹ has always encouraged, financially as well as with political lobbying, promoting conferences and educational campaigns, the spread of consumer education at a national level. Recently, however, project-leaders and educators has felt the need to understand what is going on in the other European nations and compare different experiences, practices, outcomes. Therefore, in 2004 ANCC-COOP promoted a short exploratory study in order to draw a broader picture of CE in the European Union and its future trends.

2. Method

The study was carried out between December 2004 and January 2005, involving consumer educators and opinion leaders on CE from all over the European Union. Prior to the research on CE in Europe, we interviewed 5 Italian teachers and 2 consumer educators⁴² in order to capture, firstly, what they appreciated the most in CE projects (themes, materials and practices) and, secondarily, their difficulties or critics. Then, we outlined the main research project which consisted of two parts: the first was a *documental analysis* (carried out on the most important magazines, journals, books and website dedicated on CE in the European Union, published in the last 2 years) whose results were used for preparing a short questionnaire sent via e-mail to all participants of NICE-Mail (*News and Information on Consumer education*)⁴³. The second part involved various opinion leaders on CE from different European countries who were interviewed by phone or by person about their expectations on the future of CE related to certain aspects. Experts interviewed were, in alphabetical order, *Grada Hellman* (ex-editor of NICE mail, Holland), *Marianne Öberg* (Swedish Consumer Agency, Sweden), *Nieves Alvarez Martin* (Escuela Europea de Consumidores, Spain), *Ole Erik Yrvin* (Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, Norway); *Steffens Heiko* (Professor at Technische Universität Berlin, Germany), *Valeria Malvicini* (national coordinator of consumer educators, ANCC-COOP, Italy) and *Victoria W. Thoresen* (CCN project manager, Norway). The main areas of the interview were: themes and teaching materials in CE used in the last 3 years, trends for the future, consumer educators' practices and difficulties, national policies on CE⁴⁴.

⁴¹ "ANCC" indicates "Associazione Nazionale delle Cooperative Consumatori" and it is a representative organ which promotes institutional and political interests of the Italian COOPs.

⁴² More precisely, they were 5 teachers (1 from primary school, 2 from low-secondary-school, 2 from high-secondary school, ranging in age from 40 to 60 years) and 2 consumers-educators (33 and 32 years old). They were all female except for one male-teacher. All teachers had been teaching for more than 10 years and they had been involved in one or more CE programs in the last 12 months. Both consumer educators had 5 years experience in the field.

⁴³ See : <http://www.norden.org/nicemail/>, participants LIST.

⁴⁴ Questions for the semi-structured interviews were: 1) Considering your past activities on CE in schools in the last three years , which are the themes that you have developed the most? ; 2) Considering your past activities on CE in schools in the last three years , which are the teaching materials that you have developed the most?; 3) Projecting to the next years, which are the themes that you plan to develop the most?; 4) Projecting to the next years, which are the teaching materials or tools that you plan to use the most?; 5) How much is CE important in your national curricula?; 6) Who teaches CE in your schools?; 7) What are the difficulties that those who teach

Being a preliminary study, ideas and consideration here explained must be considered as provisional. Further research will be carried out in order to deepen what was found at this stage: suggestions, comments or critics are welcomed.

3. Results

3.1 Themes of the past years

The documental analysis (carried out on the most important magazines, journals, books and website dedicated on CE in the European Union, published in the last 2 years) revealed that the 3 most frequent topics were: consumer rights and legislation, followed by projects related to food quality, nutrition and balanced diet, and by commercial pressure as well. Due to the teenagers' growing purchase power, in fact, advertising is becoming a more and more critical issue, as Örberg pointed out, as well as the issue of "health and beauty". Since few years ago for example, most experts state, the problem of obese and over-weight children was very limited, but it is now dramatically growing. Recently, also the concept of sustainable future has been strongly promoted, therefore many projects have been dedicated to sustainable consumption, sustainable development (alternative energies, environmental issues...) and intercultural education too. Another hot issue has been that of "money-management": as pointed out by Steffens, European youngsters are asked to make important financial decisions early in their life, and there is a growing request of financial education (for example, research on the introduction of the euro revealed that youngsters express the desire to be better informed about economic issues - Rinaldi, Burgoyne, Routh 2000). Due to the macro-economic crisis, continues Malvicini, there has also been an increasing need to teach efficient management of family's economic finance which involves adults as well as children.

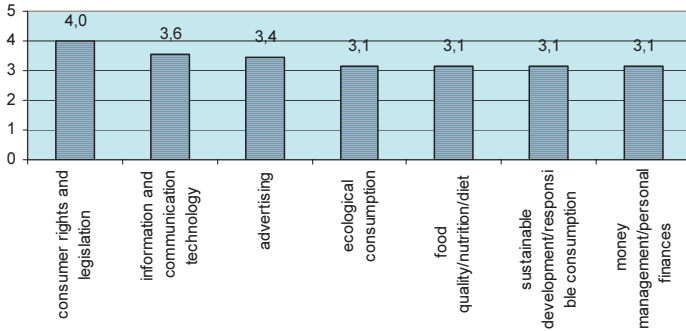
There are, of course, some age-related differences: CE projects on IT technology (internet, e-commerce, computer), on the relationship between consumption and identity (branding, advertising, fashion...) and on health&beauty topics, for example, have been targeted mainly to teen-agers, while younger children participated more often to projects on food, nutrition, product-safety.

The list of topics individuated in the documental analysis was used to prepare a questionnaire which was sent to all participants of NICE-Mail. Unfortunately, the response rate was not optimal (30%, i.e. 15 people), and we are preparing a new questionnaire to be sent in the next months to a broader mailing list. However, as one can see from figure 1, the preliminary results were much in line with what was revealed by the documental analysis. Considering the past activities on CE in school curricula/projects, the most developed theme has been consumer rights and legislation, followed by information and communication technology (internet, e-commerce...), as well as advertising. Similar relevance has been given to ecological consumption,

CE find in their everyday work?; 8) What is the relationship between consumer educators with retailers, supermarkets and the big company of supermarket/retailers?

food/nutrition/diet, sustainable development/responsible consumption as well as the always-present money management.

Fig.1 – Considering your past activities on consumer education in schools in the last three years, to which extend have you developed the following themes in your curricula/projects? (1=not at all, 5=a lot)



The preliminary study that we carried out among Italian teachers and consumer educators⁴⁵ (see Rinaldi 2004), revealed that, regarding reasons to participate to CE programs, most teachers indicate a desire to propose to their students “involving topics” (like fashion, advertising, group-relationship, environmental issues...) close to problems that young people experience in everyday life (“*I wanted to make something different...which might involve them...more than traditional subjects*”- Teacher n.4). Furthermore, although carried out in the school environment, consumer education lessons/animations offer very concrete tasks, experiential-learning experiences that are perceived as non-ordinary activities: CE’s practical approach easily raises students’ curiosity and attention (TEMANORD 2000). In Italy, for example, *Totem&Tribes*⁴⁶ was the *animation* most appreciated by upper-secondary schoolteachers because “*Through Totem&Tribes we saw their tastes, habits, fears, hopes and emotional experiences. And we understood that through these experiences we could bring to class interesting contents for them...Afterwards – as I am their Italian Literature teacher - I chose books, films and articles which dealt with these topics... I mean their needs and fears about the future, about adulthood and gender identity. To talk during the ordinary lesson about the themes that emerged during the animation, makes it more interesting (...)* Furthermore, by letting them talk about these issues, we gained their trust: we were there to let them talk about things they could use to grow”

⁴⁵ For further information see: Rinaldi E., (2004), *Reflective mechanisms for learning in consumer education*, paper presented at the workshop of the International Reflective Practice Research Group, “Reflective Practices: Mechanisms for Learning”, Hogeskolens Sk, Bergen, Norway, 15- 18 April 2004, soon published.

⁴⁶ As explained before, *Totem&Tribes* is a CE *animation* about teenagers identity, fashion and group-relationships., feeling “in” and “out” of the group, fears and dreams about the future, self-identity process.

(Teacher n.1). As these last words suggest, by proposing non-ordinary activities that encourage students to express their creativity and ideas, teachers try to reinforce a significant, mutual-trust relationship with students.

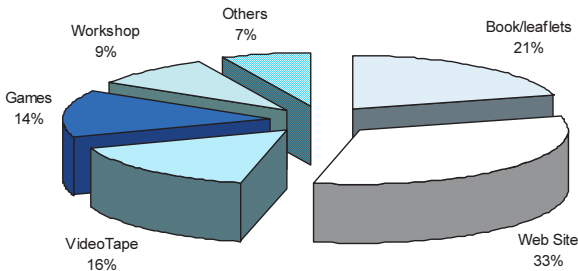
3.2 Teaching materials

Concerning teaching materials, we found a situation rather heterogeneous all over Europe. The most used teaching materials were books/ leaflets, then web-site, as well as videotapes or games. There are relevant age-related and national differences. While role-playing games and multi-media products (dvd, cd-rom, video-tape making...) is directed more to teenagers, young children prefer games, practical and perceptual workshops and group-games. As one can see in fig.2, books/leaflets and videotape are still much used, but young people also strongly appreciate games and practical workshops in the kitchen, in the park and, in some cases like in Italy, in the supermarket as well. On the contrary, in other Nations - as explained by participants - schools do not easily allow children to go to supermarkets in order to avoid any form of "indirect marketing" for any retailer or supermarket company. The teachers' fear of being instrumentalized has been overcome, in Italy, with transparent practices of consumer education which does not promote any brand and ANCC-COOP has gained teachers' trust and confidence: the results is that, in the last two years, the demand of CE animations has significantly increased, especially the more practical ones (workshops, laboratories and multi-media products making).

Generally speaking materials are available for free in most of the countries, whereas some regions can offer more materials than others, due to more governmental financial aid (as in Spain and in Germany). They can be ordered via e-mail or phoning to public institutions, as well as to National Consumer Agencies. Internet use is pretty high in Nordic European countries compared to the Mediterranean ones. In Sweden, for example, explains Marianne Örborg, the use of the Internet is strongly encouraged by the government and schools: it has to be stressed, however, that they try to promote a *truly interactive* use of the web (downloadable software to create one's own advertising, interactive web-sites where pupils can communicate, express their opinions and views) using the internet not only as a channel to collect information. Behind some of the web-sites on CE, in fact, there are various pedagogical methods used to structure web-pages (pictures, language, organization...). In Italy, on the contrary, web-sites are predominantly used to gather or share information. All opinion leaders underlined that internet has to be taken as a complementary tool to be used in the class, and not as "the tool" to do CE: it has to be reminded, in fact, that not all families have got a computer at home, and some schools still have a very limited number of computers available. Moreover, Örborg states, teachers are the real persons who in the end translate contents and information into interesting work with the class⁴⁷.

⁴⁷ Among the more interesting web-sites see, for example, www.globalis.no; www.galaktori.fi; www.kuluttajavirasto.fi; www.nordicplate.org; and the lively web magazine for young consumers www.yomag.net

Fig.2 – Documental analysis: materials used in projects on Consumer Education in the last 2 years (N total=43 projects)



3.3 Who teaches consumer education? Didactic practices and difficulties

Teacher training on CE in Europe is extremely different: in some nations (especially in Northern Europe) teachers receive formal training on CE when attending university, and public institutions (Ministry as well as National Consumer Agencies) organize regularly specific courses on CE for teachers (for example in Norway). The situation is very different in Italy, Germany and Spain where the initiative is relatively free, depending upon each Regional Government, school or local consumer association. On one side, this allows a more flexible approach, but, on the other side, it seemed to us that teachers are left “alone” without a professional preparation on the topic. Therefore, in some cases, teachers ask for external experts to come and make a “lesson” in the class on CE: they could be experts in law, in nutrition, in marketing as well as banking or cultural mediation. In Italy, the formula proposed by ANCC-COOP is pretty appreciated⁴⁸. Most opinion leaders interviewed, nonetheless, criticize the limited time available for CE in school. Even though it has become a compulsory subject in some countries (for example in Sweden and, at a multidisciplinary level, in Spain), there is not a specific subject but rather a multidisciplinary theme running through other subjects, sometimes isolated from other teachers’ programs. In certain cases, it is just about 10 hours in one year and it is most on cooking, nutrition and “home and economics”. Paradoxically, more time is dedicated to CE in primary school, even if, as Steffens highlights, teen-agers are those who need more information and tools to face the market and its commercial pressures.

On the whole, teachers and opinion leaders acknowledge consumption as being an important area in defining young people’ identity and ordinary life, therefore they find

⁴⁸ In order to evacuate teachers’ opinions, ideas, suggestions and critics, ANCC-COOP has organized a “National Conferences on Consumer Education”, 29-30 April 2005, inviting teachers and consumer educators from all over Italy. However, at the present time (writing the paper), the conference has not taken place yet and we are not able to give you the outcomes.

CE programs as an enriching stimulus both for children and themselves. Italian teachers, for example, strongly appreciate the presence and support of an external professional (the consumer educator) who is able to “animate” and involve students emotionally through creative techniques: *“He makes difficult topics more accessible...so that I can talk about it later on in the classroom with texts and articles. These topics are not really explained in text-books, so I need to use updated photocopies, leaflets...and having the educators’ track to follow is very useful”* (Teacher n.3). Experiencing new roles and letting someone else be the guide, allows teachers to see students from another point of view: *“sometimes, during my lesson of geography some pupils do not talk much, but during the animation they talk and make interesting and clever comments...therefore, I see them in another perspective and I try to insert in my program some moments in order to give space also to those pupils”* (Teacher n.3). When dealing with certain hot-issues (like those treated in CE dealing with self-identity, fashion, feeling “in” and “out” of the group) teachers experience also emotional difficulties, since they do not feel trained and prepared to face some critical emotional dynamics (Goleman 1999). As one teacher told us, when he saw that the project “Totem&Tribes” was truly becoming *real* in the class “I felt intimidated and frightened in facing the mechanism that we had activated... I did not know how to handle it...some students wanted to talk, others did not want to at all.” (Teacher n.1), but the animation was structured in ten 2-hours meetings, so teachers and consumer educators had the time to reflect, intervene and re-elaborate with students what was raised during the animation.

3.4 Themes for the future

Most opinion leaders indicate, as themes for the future, the issues of consumer citizenship (promoting socially responsible attitudes in different domains, like consumption, environment protection, global development, together with active participation to democracy), sustainable future (promoted by the UNESCO Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2015), as well as more “classical” topics like consumer rights&obligations, advertising/commercial pressure, life quality (food/nutrition/diet, environmentalism), as well as product/food safety. More importance will also be given to the new forms of beauty/health-issue (plastic surgery, tattoo, amphetamine...) especially in projects targeted on teen-agers. As mentioned before, money-management will remain an important issue: economic socialization, in fact, starts early in the life cycle of an individual living in western society and children become familiar with money and supermarkets much earlier than with the school environment (Webley, Lea, Burgoyne, Young 2001). The relationship with money, often considered as a taboo (Belk, Wallendorf 1990; Rinaldi, Giromini, 2002) has to be developed in a more open and rational way in the class setting as well as in the family in order to promote efficient management as well as prevent problems like debt and wrong economic decisions (Gnielczyk 2004). Recent education considerations would like a broader involvement of teenagers in the economic organization of the family as they are “active members” and protagonists of the family life, not only part of it (Leiser, Ganing 1996).

In addition, among the future themes in CE there are “mobile phones”, a growing

source of conflict within the family according to opinion leaders and families as well (see Rinaldi, Webley, Mora 2003). In the last decade, in fact, the amount spent on mobile phone usage has significantly increased in European families. Consequently, costs of mobile phones (and land-to-mobile phone expenses) have become a hot-issue, especially in families with teenagers, who are heavy-users of mobile phones. With regards to the emotional ties to mobile phones, young people attach more and more importance to it as if it was real «*extension of self*» (see Belk, 1988) absolutely necessary to communicate. Feelings for mobile phones are very different and sometimes ambivalent, ranging from a detached, cold and functional relationship to one of extreme dependence, where the appliance is anthropomorphized and defined as a “faithful friend” (for a collection on papers on mobile phones see Katz, Aakhus 2002; Brown, Green, Harper 2001). Teenagers need to be helped to adopt a more critical and aware attitude towards these types of new technologies and the strong marketing pressures that promote them.

Results of the quantitative research through questionnaires revealed that the top 6 themes for the next 4 years were: consumer rights and legislation, ecological consumption/environmental consciousness, information technology (indicated by 65% of participants), money management, ethics and consumption/fair trade, and food quality/nutrition/diet (50% participants)

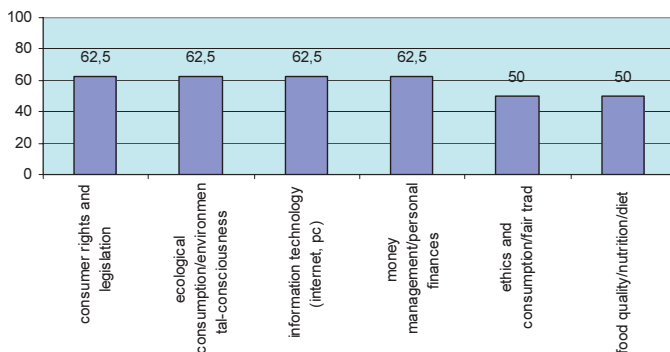


Fig.3 – Projecting in the next 4 years, which are the themes that you plan to develop the most? (% of positive answer)

4. Discussion

Basing the discussion of our results on the model outlined by Professor Heiko Steffens (see also Hellman-Tuiter 1999), we would like to propose a new schema which summarizes the evolution of consumer education in Europe. As in figure 4, it can be seen that after the era of Naïve Consumption (the 60^s, focus on private household and information, paradigm “value for money”), the Consumerism (the 70^s, paradigm “rights and power to consumers”, focus on market-structures and

organization), and the era of Social Consumption and Green (the 80's, focus on society and environment as well as communication, paradigm "quality of life"), the new millennium will enlarge CE to include the perspective of consumer citizenship, promoting an active participation in developing and improving society by considering ethical issues, diversity of perspectives, global processes and future conditions. Consumer citizenship will involve, as explained by Thoresen, taking responsibility in a global, national, regional as well as local scale when securing one's own personal needs and well-being (see Thoresen 2003 and NICE-mail n.21). Anyway, "classic" topics (like consumer rights & obligations, food quality/nutrition, advertising and commercial pressure/persuasions) will still receive a lot of attention but consumer educators are slowly trying to promote, among young people, a deeper awareness of their role as active citizens and not only consumers. However, there are still some limits and critical areas that need to be underlined here. For example, as Ole Erik Yrvin has underlined, the world of consumption and its problems change more and more rapidly: new technologies, new ways of producing (and related problems like mad cow disease, OMG food...) and new ways of marketing (see e-commerce fraud) are created every day and it is difficult to keep CE projects up-to-date on the market. As noticed also by Buzzi et al. (2002) at a European level there is a standard package of goods (electronic devices... such as mobile phones, CD-players, play-stations. and cloths, travels, music, scooters) that teenagers need to use to support their identity building project and to feel integrated, but it is a fast moving world: teenagers adopt a wide range of strategies to combine the "ingredients" at their disposal according to their taste, differentiating themselves and creating new models of consumption that should be monitored and, some times, guided. In this complex and dynamic scenario, the individual is asked more and more to decide and be responsible of his/her own actions, therefore there is a strong need for clear and impartial information in order to overcome a spread feeling of disorientation. Teachers, on their side, receive (and not in every country!) a weak training on CE and often consider CE as a secondary subject, compared to other disciplines such as literature and math, and are not much encouraged to integrate it in the national curricula. In some nations, like in Norway, the Ministry of Education sends out a national newsletter for schoolteachers which has 2-3 pages dedicated to CE but, unfortunately, we have not found similar practices in other nations.

Fig.4 – The evolution of consumer education in Europe. Personal re-elaboration of Professor Steffens' schema



At a governmental level, the situation is even now pretty fragmented: governments and schools, in the past, have often given limited and discontinuous support to CE, in particular in South-European nations (see also Paty, Lassarre 2002; Hengst 2002). Some opinion leaders have expressed the desire for a central institution which could coordinate and organize CE at a national level, respecting differences, freedom of choices and local characteristics. It is symptomatic, in fact, that in each Nation observed there are different public institutions in charge of CE (in some nations it is the Ministry of Education, or the Ministry of Children and Family, in others the Ministry of Economics; in Italy, for example, there is no ministry at all which deals specifically with CE's policies). In general, experts describe the relationship between CE's agencies and government as positive, but still weak. The European Union nevertheless is giving a strong support to CE and most interviewees are optimistic about its future growth. Looking at the co-operation between consumer associations and CE's agencies, opinion leaders highlight good relationships (sometimes, CE's agencies are just "inside" consumer associations) in lobbying for CE policies and creating CE projects and informative campaigns. However, most of them do not think "pedagogically": this means that consumer associations' policies are more oriented to give consumers "information and tools to defend" rather than to educate consumers to be responsible, critical and aware of their own behaviors. The dialogue with private companies, furthermore, is still very limited. While other agencies (like Antitrust agencies, Ministries of Economics...) do cooperate with companies, there is a sort of diffidence which must not penalize those companies which could really help educating consumers to adopt more sustainable and ethical pattern of consumption. In a certain way, having a well-informed consumer who appreciates good quality and sustainable products/services is an important advantage for companies too: CE's agencies could look for more occasions to cooperate with private companies, without becoming marketing channels for business.

At this point of our research, we can not give any "final solution" to solve the problems that CE is facing, but the opportunity of sharing information (through internet, congress, open dialogues, students and teachers' exchange), is certainly one to be taken. This would help promoting a more reflective approach to teaching and learning, and improve the quality of education (Chambers, Clarke, Colombo, Askland 2003). A need of dialogue with colleagues and tutors was expressed from various voices (teachers and consumer educators), and we believe that these conversations must be guided and examined so as to provide a real enrichment (Gozzi 2003). Most teachers who are truly involved in CE, in fact, are not only oriented to productivity and results, but they are also attentive to the quality of the process in which they are involved and the quality of relations created with students and colleagues. Underlining the limit of the present study (the restricted number of participants, the research techniques adopted, the fact that some materials/data still needs to be elaborated), nevertheless we believe that our results could be considered as interesting deepening of some aspects of consumer education, and taken as a starting point for future considerations and projects in consumer education.

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Formal and informal consumer education responsible choices in an irresponsible world

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Introduction

Consumption is part of our living condition and our lifestyles. It has a huge impact on the life of households, families and individuals. Consumption can be seen both as a way to construct meaning for individuals but also as a fundamental need for people, as consumption has to meet essential and basic needs for foods, shelter and cloths. Globally seen there do not exist same possibilities for consumption for all human beings, as inequality concerning consumption is one of the main key problems of the world today. Another problem is how consumption influences our lives in both positive and negative direction. We live, as Beck puts it in a risk society, which means we have to take risks or to reflect on how to deal with risks, as these are related to consumption and especially to food consumption although our society also have a lot of experts to take care of the problems.

To be a consumer you need to have competencies to deal with problems in your everyday life, problems raising a wide range of dilemmas. These dilemmas are of many kinds personal, economic, practical, theoretical, emotional, esthetical 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 as earlier described by Benn. (Benn, 2002, 2004) Consumerism is not new.⁴⁹(Campbell 19....) What is novel about it is the amount and number of consumer goods that are on offer in the late modern society and the rate at which they are changed, exchanged and thrown away and how fast new consumer items are developed. Another change is the power and potential children and young people have in relation to consumption, both directly as consumers themselves and indirectly by influencing parents' choices and consumption. This has been documented in a large Danish research study and in two European surveys.(Hansen et al, 2002, Fauth, 1999 Maggi et al, Unesco, 2002) It can be seen that these young people possess great potential for consuming. Jens Carsten Nielsen argues in the Danish survey that at the age of 11–12 years young people have finally moved into the adult world and their spending patterns resemble those of adults. With regard to consumption and the use of media, childhood only exists up till the age of 7 years (Nielsen, 2002) But children's ways of consuming do not quite resemble parents, as they do not have the responsibilities of running the household and taking care of the needs of the whole family (Benn, 2004, Hansen et al, 2002 & Storm-Mathiesen, 2004).

Historical changes have also diminished the need for children and young people to be active members of the household. In certain social groups this has always been the case, but for the majority of households in earlier times, children were positive

⁴⁹ Colin Campbell has documented this in *The Romantic Ethic and Spirit of Modern Consumerism* ()

contributors to production. Now they have become positive contributors to consumption, but the power and potential for consumption they have, has, as the Danish sociologist Henrik Dahl expressed it at a consumer conference, aroused the whole 'industry of concern'. (Dahl 2001) 'The industry of concern' is the established consumer information society, the Consumer Board and Council, and the education sector, all claiming a need for action and further consumer education, whereas Dahl sees no reason for concern. He finds children prudent and capable, and, '*we as parents and educators have always been concerned*'. You may as involved in consumer education be provoked by Dahl's description, but one may also turn it round and become eager to understand and to research the phenomena involved in the informal consumer education of children and young people, in order to develop and change formal consumer education.(Benn, 2002, 2004) This has been the overall aim of a research study entitled 'Consumer Education in school, home and society'.

Consumer experiences and conceptions – main results

The methods used were mind maps and interviews in the age groups: 12–13, 15–16 and 18–19 years old. In Grade 6, aged 12–13 the pupils are small-scale consumers, as they are not allowed to work to any great extent and are thus financially dependant on parents and family. Youths in the age group 15–16 may have paid work, and are in the beginning of independence, whereas those in age group 18–19 are independent in many respects.⁵⁰

Concerning the methods, it is obvious that mind maps and interviews reveal only part of consumption that can be verbalized, described and made explicit, whereas the tacit knowledge, or as Elliott calls it, the unconscious level, is difficult to catch through this methodology.(Elliott 1997) There are different aspects to what cannot be verbalized, the tacit may be tacit because there is no language available to speak of these sorts of items or it may be tacit because you are unconscious of it. Another part of the non-written (or spoken) consumer perspective may be revealed in the interview if the interviewer picks up on something the respondent says; nevertheless, some part of consumption and consumer behaviour and acting will be tacit at all times.

The results show that mind maps are a way of gaining knowledge of pupils' experiences, conceptions and concepts concerning consumption or some part of this. On the other hand, they also show that they have to be followed up, reinforced and explored through interviews and perhaps also a small questionnaire concerning the pupils' life situation now and their ideas about a future household and family. In-depth interviews with two students of both genders have been carried out in each class afterwards.

In general, the pupils of all age groups express expectations that:

- Further increase in consumption will be possible on a small or large scale and if not, it will be because they will have a bigger household (children).
- Resource and environmental problems can be managed through technological development, aid and solutions.

⁵⁰ In Denmark all students over 18 receive a study grant, regardless of their financial state and living conditions

Furthermore to be a consumer today to them means: Happiness, consciousness, freedom and pressure. But consumption comprises all sort of commodities and goods from food and drinks to cloths and mobile phones. These different consumer goods do not have the same meaning and necessity for young person. It turned out that food and drink was mostly decided on and purchased by parents albeit influenced by their children. The pupils in all age groups consumed fast foods, soft drinks and sweets bought by themselves. The boys generally did not bother about the sort and amount they consumed, whereas the girls gave more consideration to the issue.

Aspects of being a consumer today	
positive aspects	critical aspects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being ‘a happy consumer’ • pleasure • ‘buying when bored’ • consumption larger than needs • ‘ruled by majority’ • ‘no ends of choices’ • ‘we are spoilt’ • identity created by society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • power and consciousness • pressure towards political consumption • criticism towards purchasing • environmental consciousness • quality is important

Table 1: ‘To be a consumer today’ from the mind maps of the upper secondary school, n=20

Mind maps of consumption in the future forward the following key aspects as seen in Table 2.

The future mind maps dealing with food and drink revealed a growing financial, economical and ecological awareness: ‘it (food) will be more important in the future’ and ‘food must be pure and taste good.’ At the same time, some pupils suggested that more readymade foods and convenience foods would take over. Concerning clothes and equipment, some young people realized the possibility of a decrease in spending caused by responsibility for a whole family. A striking point was their confidence that technology would take care of future problems concerning consumption, and the possibility of consuming without restrictions if the finances were available.

Aspects of being a consumer in future	
positive aspects	critical aspects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • same premises for being a consumer as today • technology will have a great impact • intensification of marketing • easier consumption made possible by technology • consumption demands a large labour effort and big earnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing number of political consumers • consideration, consciousness and power • independent choice (have own households + families in the future) • conscious of consumption (because of own children) • recycling (only 1 person) • ecology

Table 2: ‘To be a consumer in future’, from the mind maps of the upper secondary school, n=20

Dilemmas and dialectics concerning consumption - discussion

Some dialectics show up on the mind maps as well as in the interviews. Richard Elliott describes the dialectics in his article: Existential Consumption and Irrational Desire. They may also be called polar tensions in the consumption areas, but it is not a question of one pole or the other, it can be both and may also be seen as a continuum (Elliott, 1997).

The dialectics are:

- 1 the material vs. the symbolic;
- 2 the social vs. the self;
- 3 desire vs. satisfaction;
- 4 rationality vs. irrationality; and
- 5 creativity vs. constraint (adaptation).

A sixth dialectic may be added:

- 6 pleasure/hedonism vs. asceticism/frustration.

Statements from the interviews and mind maps illustrate the dialectics as mentioned above.

1. The material vs. the symbolic

‘I can change myself as easy as I change my clothes’,

Taylor and Saarinen say.¹² One boy aged 15 in grade 9, was fully aware of that possibility, how to choose and shape an identity. ‘I am a skater . . . as you see, so I just go for that sort of stuff’. The boy wears skater cloths and sees himself as such, but when asked if he skates, he says no, although he justifies the clothing: ‘it is very comfortable . . .’ Both material and non-material arguments are brought forward. Today we are independent individuals with the possibility to choose what we want to be. We are, as Ziehe and Stubenrauch observe, liberated

from old cultural norms and values, which puts a pressure on the individual to choose who to be: the choice may not be the same on Monday as on Sunday, or in school and in leisure time.(Ziehe and Stubenrauch 1982)

2. The social vs. the self

‘I only need the basic essentials in my flat’, one male interviewee, aged 19 said in the interview and his mind map indicated that his future consumption dealt only with the need for the most elementary goods. He expressed a social and global concern, at the same time,

as he was aware that ‘goods are both to think with and to speak with’, as expressed by Fiske.(Fiske,1989) He demonstrates this in the interview, stating that: ‘A living place must have a proper address and some luxury designer furniture!’ Through clothes, foods, place of residence and surroundings people express who they are, and to which part of society they belong. But the inequality in the world and in his own world was ingrained in this boy’s

mind. The social self needs only the most necessary basic goods and foods, but the ego, or egocentric self needs more. It might also be expressed as the dilemma and dialectic between being eco-centred and egocentric, which are the terms used by the Canadian home economist

Eleanore Vaines in her work on philosophical orientations within home economics.(Vaines 1990) An eco-centred person cares for people and surroundings whereas the egocentric only considers their own needs.

3. Desire vs. satisfaction

The goal of consumption might on the one hand be seen as satisfaction and on the other as dissatisfaction, which leads to new demands, as one of the girls aged 18 expressed:

‘My biggest wish is a Gucci handbag! My last best buy was a Cerruti 1881 handbag.’

Consumption or consumerism does not aim at, want or desire satisfaction or if it does, it is for only a short time, exploited by the fashion companies. Specific brands in particular were of very high value for these young people. The consumption of accessories was furthermore

a very gender-oriented part of consumption. ‘I think it means more to girls to buy all that small stuff like accessories’. Their buys highlight another point of consumption, the difference between the meaning of action and the meaning of objects.¹⁶ The boys did also have desires or wishes like boats, bikes, special cars or sports equipment whereas the girls’ desires were more related to the personal level of their own fashion style and image in their present situation.

4. Rationality vs. irrationality

‘In the evenings when I cook for myself, I care about buying organic, quality foods . . ., but I am not very critical in my choice at lunch time, I just choose what I want to.’ (Boy, aged 18)

In one situation you may be the rational, critical consumer, acting consciously and considerately, whereas in another situation and setting you act irrationally.

In the middle of the day, the informant just follows his senses, whereas in the evening he examines the labels and chooses between alternatives on the basis of his rational thinking about food. There may be no connection between what the consumer chooses in one setting and in another. Yet the situation might be turned upside down: it may be concluded that it is

rational to pick the easiest fast food you can get your hands on in the school setting and use time to select and cook at home. Rationality vs. irrationality is both a question of thinking and sensing and of context and connection.

5. Creativity vs. constraint (adaptation)

‘I dress as I like – although fashion has to be followed to a certain degree.’ (Girl, aged 12)

To be creative, to do what one wants or to adapt to norms or rules, formal or informal, is another dialectic in the consumption pattern. Constraints from the immediate environment, the fashion industry, the group or others can be observed in the classes, interviews and

also on the mind maps. Adaptation can be expressed especially through commodities like clothes, equipment, and mobile phones. Creativity may be practised by a few of the respondents, expressed in ways such as ‘you do not need to follow the fashion’. Yet in order to keep up with the peer groups, creativity was also shown in the way some girls with limited resources obtain the wanted goods by buying second hand, or on special offers, or by making their own clothes. A 12-year-old boy showed another sort of creativity or coping strategy, as he recounted about clothes.

‘My mother buys most of my clothes, but I don’t always like them!’

Interviewer: ‘What do you do then?’

‘Oh, I just throw them in the back of my wardrobe. I don’t wear them!’

A variety of coping strategies are demonstrated in line with the old thesis ‘to keep up with the Joneses’ or with others in the social settings.

6. Pleasure/hedonism vs. asceticism/frustration

‘I feel pleasure when I buy handbags. But I can do without them!’ (Girl, aged 19)

Pleasure related to buying and obtaining commodities plays a major role in consumer experiences and feelings about consumption. I feel pleasure when, but I do not really need. On most of the mind maps pleasure was mentioned in relation to being a consumer. Asceticism, on the other hand, is part of our Christian heritage but does not emerge very clearly from this study. It may be said in a ‘low voice’ like ‘I can do without. . .’

or in relation to food behaviour, especially when girls express that after enjoying sweets, or other unhealthy foods, they skipped the next meal. This dilemma can be expressed as the aesthetic or sensual element in opposition to the ethical. It may also be seen as the battleground between formal consumer education, which stresses ethical behaviour,

and informal consumer cultivation through media and markets trying to sell pleasure through consumer goods. A central theme in asceticism is perhaps the need for ‘doing without’ for different reasons. Formal education has had, and to a certain degree still

has this moral perspective, aimed at concerns for health or the environment or other human beings and forgets to deal with the more aesthetic part of consumption.

Further discussion

The child learns to consume, to shop, and to use, through these actions the child becomes a particular sort of child. The child is a social construct and constructs herself in the exchange with the systems she takes part in. To the extent that they exist, histories of childhood indicate that the 'nature' of childhood, the relationship of children to each other and to adults, to the family, and to other social institutions such as work and school, have changed across time and place, Kenway and Bullen argue (2001) Indeed, many other researchers - as mentioned earlier - have argued that childhood has diminished or almost disappeared at the same speed as the consumer society has developed. Childhood has, in the last 100 years, within the Western societies been seen as the part of life where children can develop and mature through socialization and education at home and in school. The 20th century was 'the century of the child', the pedagogical philosopher Ellen Key claimed around the year 1900.(Key, 1908) What should we call the 21st century? The century of, or for consumers, or of young people,

or the young consumer's society? Consumption as a sort of employment can be seen as the descendent of the children's work in Western societies, which in Denmark was legislated around 1900. For many teenagers today, consumption requires a lot of work, but it seems to be an essential part of life to gain access to the consumer world or The World of Goods,

as described by Douglas and Isherwood.(1996)'Consumption decisions become the vital source of the culture of the moment.' People who are reared in a particular culture see it change in their lifetime: new words, new ideas, new ways. It evolves and they play a part in the change. Consumption is the very arena in which culture is fought over and licked into shape,' (p. 37). People play a significant role and their decisions are vital for culture. These decision-makers are also young people to a larger extent than before in history. In the work of Douglas and Isherwood in 1979, consumers are seen as households, families and adults. This consumer picture has indeed changed, which is part of the explanation of the interest in children as consumers, from both commercial and educational points of view. Consumerism is part of culture both as symbolic or non-material and concrete or material. Commodities have existed in people's lives since near the beginning of human history, helping people to manage their lives. New commodities pose a threat to the old culture and there exist goods for which we do not see the need, but who is going to define necessity? We are consumers of foods, commodities and services. For consumers, both the material and the non-material part of consumption make sense, varying between people and on the type of consumption. In recent decades, many new consumer goods have become part of children and young people's lives: mobile phones, PCs, walkmans, etc. These sorts of consumer goods are, together with clothes for example, related to what we may call the pleasure, society as experienced by the pupils, whereas consumption of food is much more closely related to the risk society, although food also gives pleasure. The risks of becoming too fat or becoming ill from foods is present in the consumption of food at the same time as the food may give rise to pleasure and hedonism. These

dilemmas put a greater pressure on the individual now than they did previously. The individual must reflect on why, how and what to decide: 'everything is set for discussion', as Giddens puts it. This individualistic approach offers possibilities and difficulties.^{13,20,21} 'The consumer is far from being a passive victim but is an active agent in the constructing of meaning', Elliott writes in the first part of his article on the dialectics in consumption.¹¹ The young people of this pilot survey agree with him, as seen in the study. Another Danish study by Birgitte Tufte based on interviews reveals this. She sees the child as a competent consumer. (Tufte, 1998.) The child is competent or becoming competent in some consumer situation but not quite so competent in other. The child is not born with knowledge and competencies in all fields and areas. Every generation has to acquire their own competences through learning situations. Today there are more choices to be taken than ever, the market is unlimited in the affluent world.

Perspectives for consumer education

What, then, is the problem concerning consumption today and tomorrow? One problem may be concern for the resources and the environment and another inequality in the world in relation to the possibilities of being a consumer. The oldest group within the survey, the

class from the upper secondary school, had just been working on environmental problems and problems concerning developing countries compared with the Western industrialised world. This was hardly evident in their mind maps and in the interviews. This demonstrates a

normal problem with regard to schooling – what is going on within the school is one thing, real life is something else: a sort of parallelism exists. School knowledge is synthetic, whereas learning outside school in the real world is a concrete part of their life-world as far as

consumption is concerned. The school aims at citizenship and action competence but the pupils do not seem to bother outside the school. The shifting life periods do also have a meaning for the consumption patterns of people. On the future mind maps a change could be seen from being the young thoughtless consumer – although family member – to

becoming a parent or the person responsible for a household might change views and actions. How much consumer education means for these future actions we do not know for sure, but it will surely depend on how this education is carried out.

Schooling, and consumer education or consumer information in the younger age groups must take into consideration the consumer life of pupils outside the school and all aspects of consumption; the dialectics involved in consumption show why.²³ The perspectives of being

'eco-centred' and egocentric 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. Two different roles come forward 'the ego-centric consumer' versus 'the eco-centred producer'. (Vaines, 1990.)

The ego-centric person sees solutions from a more egoistic, subjective point of view,

whereas the eco-centred person chooses more in the direction of the welfare and care of the ecos. Ecos comes from the Greek: Oikos, which means household.

"consumption for myself"	"consumption for others"
Individual level Characterized of preferences for: Special items taste time, place/environment pleasure	Collective level Characterized of considerations on: Items needed economy/ecology ethics prohibitions
"ego-centric" consumer	"eco-centred" producer ⁵¹

Table 3: "Consumption for Myself and Others"

An eco-centred person shows care and concern both for him- or herself, for the family and others plus the environment, whereas the egocentric person is focused on fulfilling his or her own needs without any concern for the consequences. As with all models these ideal types or 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. To be eco-centred 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.(Tones & Tilford 1994, McGregor 1999, 2002, Schnack 2000) Action competence requires, as Bruun Jensen describes: Insight, engagement, visions and acting experiences. (Bruun Jensen 2000) 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.

Final remarks

A lot of consumer education themes have been forwarded in different school projects. The problem is these at they omit the young person and her or his experiences, ideas, and relations to consumption. Consumer educators have to consider both the ideals for education and 'Bildung' and hold these in relation to learning theories and to the young person and her or his life situation, their experiences and concepts concerning consumption. Consumer education must take all these parts into consideration. Situated learning might give us some concepts to use as it involves the whole person as a member in the community. (Lave & Wenger 1995) Wenger has further developed

⁵¹ This expression has been inspired by the work of Vaines (1990) and Kurt Lewin.

the concept of learning. He emphasises 4 premises for learning: Meaning, practice, identity and community. (Wenger 1998)

Based on that I want to suggest the following. The starting point is: The pupils, their apprehensions, experiences which must be extended to a deeper comprehension through an introductory practice-related education. Next the theory-practice relationship must be held in a dialectic relation and more research about both he relationships, the practice and the theory must be carried out. Both didactic and educational considerations must match the pupil's needs and level of development together with a broader view of consumption.

To be able to put the critical questions 'at the table' so to speak, both socio-cultural, historical and critical dimensions of the problem must be discussed. Taking this into account, the work done up till now raises possibilities for further research 'into the mind of the consumer' and the understanding of consumption as part of identity and meaning for young people. It may be necessary to make a point of departure in the real consumer life in the consumer jungle and make the starting point for consumer educators there.

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Taking Responsibility for Learning

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I would like to share with you a story of curriculum development, of a project undertaken at Liverpool John Moores University, to enable students to reflect on their learning and to take more responsibility for their own learning. This was to be achieved by the introduction of Personal Development Portfolios to augment the other student centred learning activities in the curriculum of undergraduate programmes in Consumer Studies.

In the UK in 1997 there was a major report into higher education and an important recommendation was :

‘That institutions of higher education develop a progress file. The file should consist of two elements: a transcript recording student achievement to a common format and a means by which students can monitor, build and reflect on their personal development’ (Dearing 1997)

A transcript that contained student results in a common format was to enable employers to understand the achievement of students. Often the only result available to an employer was the final degree certificate that did not contain a great deal of information. Whilst some universities had transcripts that gave some indication of the course examined and marks obtained, there was no consistency across the universities. A common format was agreed by the universities relatively easily. The second part of the recommendation

‘a means by which students can monitor, build and reflect on their personal development’

was more problematic as it was not a part of the experience of many students. Further discussions took place and whilst there was a move away from a common format, all universities were charged with developing a policy objective on personal development planning by academic year 2005/2006. In 2001 the Qualifications and Assessment Authority defined personal development planning as

‘ a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect on their own learning and performance and/or achievement and to plan for their personal and career development’ QAA (2001)

Universities were obliged to have a policy on Personal development planning by September 2004.

The process of personal development planning aims to support students to: take responsibility - we want students to think about what they are doing and why plan– setting targets and identifying means to achieve them

reflect- thinking about what they have done, are doing and aim to do
recognise and discuss their strengths and weaknesses
be better prepared for seeking employment

These aims focus on learning as a process that is undertaken by the students and is the responsibility of the student, not just the tutors in the universities. The ability to think for themselves would make the students more skilful in decision making that would benefit their studying, their future working life in their career and in their continued professional development.

The university would have to have a policy by 2004, why did we decide to implement personal development planning in advance of being instructed to do so. Why not wait until the university decided to tell us what to do?

The course team already had experience in encouraging reflection in a first year module which had been recognised within the university as a model of good practice and the team received a curriculum innovation award from the university. There were second and third year modules of work based learning that required students to undertake reflection, using reflective logs. So there was a core team (myself, Drew Li and Deborah Pownall) who were strongly committed to improving teaching and learning and there was a basis on which to build.

In 2002- 2003 the core team were awarded a teaching and learning grant from the Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure to develop a personal development portfolio. The completion of the portfolio would provide a framework to support students in their development of reflective skills.

The team attended conferences, reviewed literature and discussed the issue of personal development portfolios with interested parties within the university. Key principles were established:

- not to re-invent the wheel but to build on existing practice.
- a simple system to be devised
- the emphasis was to be on the process of reflection not on the filling in of tick boxes on forms
- the student was to be responsible for the personal development portfolio but the team were to implement a structure to support the process

A format was produced that captured the information required and led the student through the process of reflection. We amended a format that had been used at another university.

The format could be paper based or it could be electronic but it involved the student with at least two personal tutorials per year to discuss with their personal tutor the contents of the Personal Development Portfolio. The first tutorial was to take place when the student had been in the university about six weeks, so that students had had time to settle in to the university and to have some idea of the work required of them in the first semester. The second tutorial was to take place in the second semester when there had been feedback on work submitted in semester one and demands of semester 2 were known by the student.

The core team of 'champions' of the personal development portfolio had to engage the staff who were to implement the process in the project. A meeting held away from

the university was held to allow the core team to introduce the process and to encourage ownership of the process by academic staff, also to allay any doubts and fears. It was important that the academic staff who were to be personal tutors took ownership of the process. Only one of the core team was a first year personal tutor. The major fear expressed was that of the time need to complete the individual tutorials.

In September 2003 the process was implemented for year 1 of the Consumer Studies Group of programmes approx 100 students in all, with six members of academic staff who were personal tutors to the students concerned.

The format of the portfolio began with factual questions and then a self assessment of abilities in reading and researching, speaking and listening, writing, time management, IT skills, numeracy skills and information on their work experience.

If a student identified a particular need or expressed a lack of confidence the member of staff could discuss the action required with the student. The member of staff was not to provide the answers but to refer the student for example to the learning development unit to arrange for extra classes in note taking or to student support for a problem of concern .

There were boxes to tick but the important part of each section of the portfolio was the Action section, together the student and the tutor would be able to identify action to be taken. There may be no need for action and in fact the student was encouraged to prioritise and identify those issues that needed action . There was a ban on more than five action to be taken!

For example:

Writing	always	mostly	sometimes	never
a) Do you enjoy writing?				
b) Are you confident about your spelling?				
c) Are you confident in the use of punctuation and grammar?				
d) Are you confident about taking notes in lectures?				
e) Can you put information into your own words without copying big chunks?				
f) Can you put your own ideas onto paper easily, and find the right words?				
Action				

Students were also encouraged to share details of concern.

For example:

Section 7 Further details

As you approach your study, you may have concerns about balancing the demands of study, and other commitments such as family, dependents, hobbies or work.

Please rate your level of concern

	High	medium	low	none
Family commitments				
Part time work				
Full time work				
Health problems				
Travelling to university				
Financial				
Other				
Action				

The staff were provided with guidance notes to help them to prepare for the tutorial and to ensure that the tutorial encouraged reflection.

Staff Guidance Notes

The aim of the meeting is to encourage the student to aim for success on their programme

Objective.

Together to identify the action points and to identify and refer students as necessary.

Prompt questions were also provided for those staff who needed them. A completed sheet at the end of the tutorial was to be agreed by the student and the tutor, again this could be on paper or electronic. An important section to be completed was the target degree classification. In the first semester in year 1, (and in every personal development planning tutorial) the student was asked to look ahead and identify the level of achievement they aspired to at the end of year 3. This was to provide a short term and long term planning goal, an achievement goal for the first semester and also to think about the future even though they had just started their university career.

Notes from First staff/student tutorial

Action boxes completed

Target degree classification for semester 1

Issues discussed

Actions required (no more than five!)

Date

The preparation for the second tutorial asked the students specific questions in relation to their achievement in semester 1 and to reflect on their action points from semester 1. The emphasis is on the reaction of the student to the assessment process in terms of their preparation for the examinations or coursework tasks, the feedback from the assessment and their interpretation of them.

Staff Guidance Notes

The guidance to tutors indicated:

The aim:

To review the student's progress towards a successful completion of the first year, encouraging higher levels of achievement and retention

Objectives:

- to review semester 1 progress
- to develop an action plan to take the student into the second year
- acknowledge success
- to identify possible problem areas.

A key point was to recognise and acknowledge achievement. The students who are successful are often not acknowledged and encouraged to further achievement.

Key Findings at end of Year 1.

All tutors involved took part in an evaluation of the process.

1. The key finding that was a surprise concerned the identification of special needs. On the application form for UK universities students are asked to declare if they have any special need or disability. The first tutorials found a minority of students who had not declared dyslexia as a special need on their application form. Therefore we may not have identified this until assessments had taken place and students already disadvantaged. The students felt able to share this information in a one to one discussion and we were able to provide the students with the support mechanisms required.
2. Staff were able to learn more about their individual tutees to improve their understanding of individual students.
3. Time management was a major issue for many students who found they had underestimated the amount of time needed to prepare for assessment tasks.
4. The tutorials took about 20 minutes to complete and were not considered to be too time consuming. What was considered time consuming and frustrating was the time taken to arrange the tutorials and to follow up students who did not respond to the first request to arrange a time to meet.

Student response.

1. The tutorials made them realise there was someone interested in them and in their progress
2. That they could succeed and were more realistic in semester 2 in their targets, usually setting them higher.

The personal development portfolio was amended for the on coming first year and the second year part of the portfolio was devised. The second year contained a period of work experience that involved a reflective log and therefore the personal development portfolio was amended. Again the key is target setting with students, not for students. Strategies for encouraging students to respond to requests for tutorials were identified with extra administrative support to ensure this happens. The students and the personal tutors moved into year 2 together in September 2004.

In September 2004, a new team of academic staff had to be inducted into the personal planning process. Our policy is that all academic staff are personal tutors for a group of students. The new team who were to be personal tutors to the first years in September 2004 contained members of staff who were not entirely convinced of their role. Their view of their role as a university tutor was as a subject expert, to teach and assess their subject, very much in the analytical-empirical role of the tutor. A meeting was held again away from the university to underline its importance and to provide a comfortable setting in which to discuss and exchange views. This was a crucial meeting for the core team to convince other academic staff that the process was important. Managing change is always difficult and the co-operation of the academic staff is essential. The most critical member of staff at the end remained unconvinced but agreed to undertake the process to the best of her ability. The core team will be available for support if necessary but if the process is to work every member of staff will need to carry out the process. The evaluation from this group of staff and students will be interesting to see if we have managed to convince the staff of the value of the process.

The portfolio will change as the student moves through their academic career.

The academic tutor will have knowledge of the student which will allow them to write a more informed reference at the end of the third year. The process of evaluation will continue in 2005-2006 when the portfolio will be extended to the third year.

We are at the mid point of this curriculum innovation. So why are we continuing with this project?

The core team remained convinced of the value of the process of reflection in personal development planning. These are to provide support for students to:

- increase their self awareness of their own skills, qualities and capabilities
- improve their own learning and performance by developing the necessary skills for independent learning, taking responsibility for their own development
- identify their own strengths, weaknesses and needs, and directions for change
- set goals and plan actions to develop, monitoring and reviewing their own progress

- develop skills of reflection on their academic, personal and professional development
- to plan realistically for their career progression and manage their own development.

The personal development portfolio is holistic as it can take into account not only the academic profile of students but also the contribution of experiences outside the curriculum e.g part time work, voluntary work, contribution to clubs or societies. Together with other opportunities within the curriculum it allows the students to follow the Liverpool John Moores mission for its students which is expressed in three words:

dream plan achieve

As reflective teachers we are on a never ending journey, and Eleanor Vaines refers to reflective teaching as ‘a map which is meant to empower, enlighten and emancipate teachers’ (Vaines 1997 p9) When our students are engaged with us in enlightening, empowering and emancipating learning experiences, it is education at its best.

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Primary student's responsibility development in Latvia

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“Responsibility is only a drop in the sea,
but the sea would not be without this drop”
Mother Teresa

Introduction

The last decade of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century for Latvia are the periods of development of a new civic society. Changes in the society determine new demands to the education system. Formation of the responsibility in the teaching and educating process is one of the basic directions of the Latvian state policy in the sphere of education.

Responsibility is one of the most complicated phenomena in the theory of volitional qualities. It is called a “quality of the highest nature” because of its close interconnection with the emotional, moral and world outlook personal qualities. This quality reflects the individual's aptitude for adhering to common accepted social standards in his or her behaviour, for fulfilling duties and being responsible for his/ her actions to the society and oneself.

Development of responsibility becomes more significant when the child starts going to school. The transition to school studies causes fundamental changes in the child's way of living. A range of new requirements appears. However, children are not able to subordinate their behaviour to the established rules due to the insufficient development of the volitional qualities.

The present paper contains information on the research made in the primary classes in Latvian schools.

The main objective of the research is to investigate the display of responsibility and development of this quality in primary students in Latvia.

In the paper the author analyses the concept of ‘responsibility’, the manifestation of this quality in primary students in their studies and also examines the methodology of investigation and development of responsibility.

1. Responsibility and methods of its investigation in Latvia

1.1 The concept of responsibility

Currently due to the processes of globalisation in many countries it is preferred to talk about the sense of civic duty or loyalty.

What is common in concepts of a citizen and a patriot? First, responsibility for one's country, people and relatives. Thus, responsibility is closely connected with sense of civic duty, patriotism and loyalty.

The concept of responsibility requires a presence of a subject and demands a reference to the object, where the subject is a specific person, who interacts with the

world, but the object is the thing that the subject is responsible for.

During the process of taking a decision, the individual chooses between his/her individual interests and interests of the wider social surroundings, between “I must” and “I want”. We are talking about a normative regulation, a particular device of regulation of individuals’ behaviour in a situation of free choice. There are two types of the normative regulation:

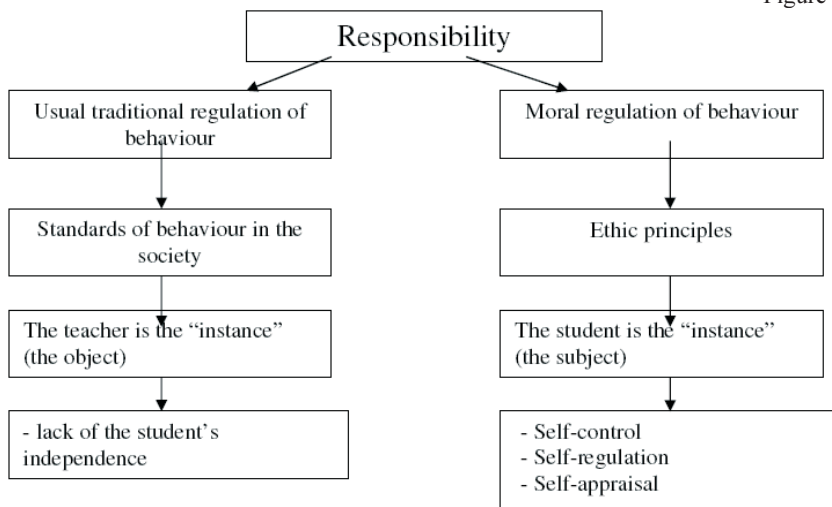
- **Usual traditional regulation**

The main criteria for this regulation of behaviour are the standards that nowadays exist in the society. The fulfilment of these standards is observed by so-called “instances”, which we are responsible to [5]. The instance appraises the subject’s action and imposes sanctions according to the level of fault and merits. Such an approach is observed in a traditional education system. Owing to the ages qualities the child is not able to manage his behaviour and to be responsible for sequences of his actions on the necessary level. That is why the teacher organises the common task, distributes duties, and checks the accuracy of the task and assignment fulfilment. The teacher does not allow the children to act independently.

- **Moral regulation**

In this case the criteria are generalised ethical principles from the sphere of duties and values of the very personality. The role of the “instance” is performed by the subject. Here the responsibility is a means of the internal control (self-control) and the internal regulation (self-regulation) of the person’s actions, which performs the necessary actions “using his/her own discretion, conscientiously and voluntarily” [5].

Figure 1



Thus, the responsibility requires a presence of a definite level of self-regulation, self-control and self-appraisal. The system of learning, which reflects this situation, is substantially different from the traditional one: students plan task fulfilment independently, they distribute the duties, control the performance and determine the system of sanctions for themselves. The pedagogue renders an unobtrusive assistance at all stages of the task fulfilment.

Components of the responsibility are a range of other qualities and skills of a person. These are: honesty, fairness, adherence to principles and readiness to be responsible for sequences of actions. These qualities cannot be successfully realised, if the individual's emotional features are not developed: fellow-feeling, sensitivity to other people. Fulfilment of any duty demands manifestation of other volitional qualities: insistence, endeavour, strength and resistance. Thus, the responsibility displays itself not only in the character, but also in feelings, perception, comprehension, world outlook and other behavioural forms of the person.

We will investigate the display of this quality in the children of the primary school age. We can highlight the following indicators of responsibility of this age group:

- ✓ the child's understanding of the necessity and importance of fulfilment of the tasks, which are significant to others;
- ✓ the direction of actions towards the successful fulfilment of the entrusted tasks (the child starts duly, tries to overcome difficulties and finishes the task);
- ✓ the emotional experience of the task, its character and the result (the child is happy that he is given a serious task, he is worried about its success, experiences satisfaction of the successful fulfilment and others' evaluation);
- ✓ the child's understanding of the necessity to be responsible for the fulfilment of the entrusted task.

Many researchers regard volitional qualities, incl. responsibility, as a constant and stable personal feature. During the primary school age this quality is in the process of development. This process depends on how the child's actions are developing and getting more complicated (game – studies – work); what kind of action is leading at the moment; how his place in the system of social relations is changing. That is why we can speak about the primary student's responsibility as a relatively stable quality, which is displayed on the level of habit, emotional push or on the level of a conscientious volitional strain. It is appropriate to consider the display of primary students' responsibility separately in different types of actions.

The main criteria of manifestation of responsibility during the studying process can be:

Table1. Criteria of manifestation of responsibility during the studying process

Criteria of manifestation of responsibility during the studying process
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ the ability to fulfil the teacher's requirements at once and to finish them;✓ the ability to plan and to organise one's actions;✓ the ability to work during the lesson and to do the home assignments independently;✓ the ability to give a moral appraisal to one's behaviour and to the behaviour of classmates;✓ the display of a positive attitude to the studying process and the teacher's requirements, getting satisfaction of overcoming difficulties in studying;✓ usage of volitional efforts in fulfilling tasks, etc.

The responsible student comprehends the social values of studying, displays criticism in his/her appraisal of the attitude to the teacher, his/her behaviour, personal qualities; he/she is able to acknowledge mistakes and to interpret their reasons.

The investigations showed that the volitional qualities, including responsibility, are mainly displayed by primary students:

- in playing
- in working
- in studying.

1.2 Methods and methodology of investigation of responsibility.

For investigation of the primary student's responsibility it is possible to use different methods.

Investigation of the concept of responsibility. In order to discover, how primary students understand the concept of "responsibility", and what kind of a student they think is responsible, it is possible to organise a questionnaire:

- ✓ How do you understand, what is responsibility?
- ✓ What kind of student would you call responsible?
- ✓ Name the most responsible person in your class. Why?
- ✓ Name the least responsible person in your class. Why?

Investigation of the self-appraisal of responsibility allows determining, how the student evaluates his personal responsibility. The instruction is offered: "Read attentively and underline the things that describe you".

- ✓ I am a very responsible student.

- ✓ I am responsible, but not always.
- ✓ I am not very responsible.
- ✓ I am unreliable/ irresponsible.

After that the teacher asks the student to explain why he/ she chose exactly this variant of answer. It was discovered that for the primary student it is rather difficult to separate one concrete action from the overall image: “I solved the task correctly, so I’m responsible”, “Yesterday I cleaned the room, and my mother praised me”, “I’m irresponsible, because I lost my maths workbook”. Rarely there were answers like: “I’m not always responsible, because I do some things appropriately, but some things – not very well.”

In order to examine how students of the primary school evaluate their level of responsibility development, it is also impossible to use the **method “Self-appraisal of volitional qualities”**. The technique is a modified variant of Dembo-Rubinstein’s scale of evaluation of personal qualities. Students are given sheets of paper with 5 step stairs (figure 1). They are instructed: "Imagine that fairy-tale characters, who you know, are put on 5 steps of the stairs, so that the most responsible are on the highest step (the fifth step), and the most irresponsible are on the lowest step (on the first one)." It is stipulated what the “responsibility” is, what characters (fairy-tale characters) can be called responsible. The experimenter writes down or draws children’s answers, putting the fairy-tale characters on the five steps. After that the children are given a task: “And now you tick the step, where you are, with which character”. The number of points collected is equal to the number of the step.

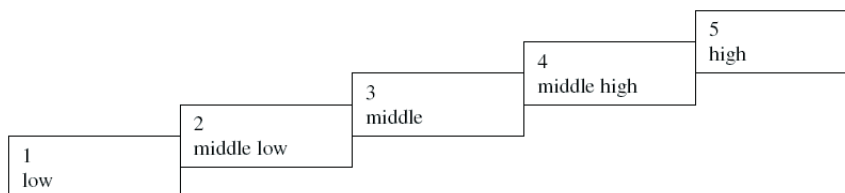


Figure 2 Responsibility stairs

At the same time the teacher is offered to evaluate students’ responsibility according to a 5 point scale. If a student almost always displays responsibility in studying, he gets 5 points; not always, but rather often – 4 points; sometimes – 3 points; rarely – 2 points; never – 1 point. The levels of responsibility are divided as follows: 5 points – the high level, 4 – the middle high level, 3 – the middle level, 2- the middle low level, and 1 – the low level of responsibility.

Results of the technique “Self-appraisal of volitional qualities” are compared with teachers’ opinion in order to determine, how critical the students are in evaluating their volitional qualities. If the student’s and teachers’ assessments coincide, we can say that responsibility is self-appraised adequately. If the student evaluates display of this quality higher than a teacher, then the self-appraisal is not adequate, excessively increased. In case of the student’s appraisal being lower than the teacher’s evaluation, the self-appraisal is not adequate, excessively decreased.

Investigation of the direction of responsibility.

It is indisputable that people, who tend to take the responsibility for events, happening in their lives, are better adopted, than those who usually attribute responsibility for everything to external factors. Some people feel like masters of their destinies, but others prefer to “go with a stream”. In the former case the responsibility for everything what is happening in an individual’s life, is attributed to one’s skills and efforts, in the latter one – to the external forces (other people, environment, the destiny and the chance).

We are speaking about different types of the locus of control, that means “the quality, that characterizes the individual’s disposition to attribute the responsibility for a result of his/her actions to external forces (the external locus of control) or to his/her own skills and efforts (the internal locus of control)” [8]. In G. Potter’s opinion, who suggested these terms, the internality and externality of the locus of control are stable personal qualities, which have been developed during the process of socialization of a personality. People possessing the internal locus of control, are more self-confident and persistent in achieving their aim, they have a tendency to self-analysis, they are balanced, social and independent. The motive of striving for the success dominates in them.

For investigation of qualities of the personal responsibility of a primary student, its direction (internal – external) a method of imaginative situations can be used, when children are proposed to imagine 10 concrete school situations, connected with non-fulfilment of teacher’s tasks or the school’s rules by students. Possible reasons for non-fulfilment of the teacher’s tasks can be divided into *two types*:

- 1) the reason of non-fulfilment is the student himself, his/her qualities (subjective reasons);
- 2) the reason of non-fulfilment is another person, external circumstances (objective reasons).

Students have to analyse the proposed opinions and the reason of their behaviour in a similar situation. In creating this technique, the authors reposed on the fact that the responsible student does not blame other people, circumstances, but explains the non-fulfilment of obligations by his/ her own subjective qualities.

Every student is given a card with a description of 10 events and their possible reasons. Students are given instructions: "Everyone of you can have troubles: we can leave a text-book at home, not do a home assignment, be late for a lesson. On the cards that you have received there are 10 such situations. Imagine that they happened to you. Try to explain the reason, why it happened. To do this, read attentively two variants of answers that explain a possible reason of the event and choose only one of them. Circle the chosen answer." For instance:

- ✓ I have not fulfilled the task, because:
 - I am not disciplined,
 - we were cleaning the house
- ✓ I have not kept the promise, because:
 - my parents and I went to visit our neighbours,
 - I forgot about my promise.

While processing the results, only the number of answers, showing the subjective reason of the event is counted. Thus, every student may get from 0 to 10 points. If a student gets 0-5 points, we can speak about the external direction of responsibility, if he/she gets 5-10 points the responsibility is internally directed.

In case of success or a failure, the student explains reasons. For investigation of the attribution type it is possible to offer a questionnaire to the students. The questionnaire consists of two questions and a list of answers to them. Responsibility for success and failures in studying is attributed to two internal factors – efforts and skills, and to two external factors – difficulty of the task and accident. To the question "What do you think is the reason of your success in studies?" approximate answers are: "I am a hardworking person"; "I think well"; "The task is easy"; "I am successful". To the question "What do you think is the reason of our failures in studies?" - "I work too little"; "I think little"; "The task is difficult"; "I have no chance". If the student sees the reason of success or failure in himself and attributes them to his efforts or skills, he has an internal attribution. But if the reason of success or failure is explained by the external circumstances, he attributes the reason of success (failure) to the level of the task difficulty or an accident, chance, he has an external attribution.

The researches proved that it is appropriate to explain the success by the internal factors to the children who strive for success, but, in their turn, those children who explain their success by the external factors are trying to avoid failures. Thus, the responsibility attribution is closely connected with students' motivation; they strive for achieving good results in their studies. However, it is necessary to remember that any extremities: both total attribution of responsibility for the life events to the internal factors (skills, efforts) and total attribution of responsibility only to the external circumstances (chance, destiny, force of circumstances) can worsen the productivity of actions.

It is very important that children should explain their failures by the lack of efforts. It does not cause a strong feeling of disappointment, since it does not make a person doubt in his/her skills. The researches show that if students experience a failure, and they are made to feel responsible for it, attributing the failure to insufficient efforts, such an "attributive therapy" facilitates improvement of actions and increase of success.

2. Particularities of responsibility display at the primary school age

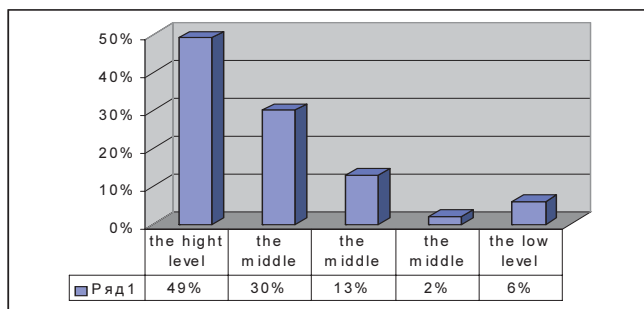
The given chapter contains materials of the investigation of students of different primary schools in Latvia. The main task of this work is the investigation of the way of responsibility display amongst the primary school students, the clarification of common regularities, and on this basis creation of the programme of development of this quality in the process of studying. Teachers of the involved classes participated in organisation of the investigation.

We have not discovered any relevant age differences in responsibility display between the primary school students in the first and the second forms. It allows us to consider the responsibility as a stable, individually displayed quality of a person and not to concentrate on the display of this quality amongst the students of every class, but to work with a whole selection.

The method "The self-appraisal of volitional qualities" gave a possibility to clarify

how students of the primary school age evaluate their manifestation of responsibility. The execution of the method required a large preparatory work. Many children did not imagine clearly what responsibility was, what kind of student could be called responsible. This word was a synonym to the words “an excellent student”, “kind”, “a friend of everyone”. We examined concrete situations, learned to mark out the responsible behaviour. We draw the attention to the fact that it is impossible to display responsibility in all situations, but the person should try to do so. The children put fairy-tale characters on the “poles of our stairs” independently and they were given a task to evaluate their level of responsibility. Results of the research are shown in figure 2.

Figure 2 The primary school’s students’ conception of the level of the personal responsibility



You can see in the figure 2 that the largest part of the students (49%) evaluates the display of this quality on the highest level, putting themselves on the highest step of the stairs. In appraising their personal qualities the students of the primary school use the adults’ opinion (the comparison with other students’ results, appreciation, a good note). Many students (37%) pointed out their unwillingness to be on a lower step: “I’m not worse than others”.

30% of the investigated students put themselves on the 4th step (the middle high level of responsibility): “I’m responsible, but sometimes I can be irresponsible”, “Today I’ve got a bad mark for reading”, etc.

On the 3rd step (the middle level of responsibility) there were 13% of students. On the 2nd step (the middle low level) there were 2% of the investigated students. And only 6% of students evaluated their level of responsibility display as low, and they put themselves on the lowest step of the stairs. The children, who manifested this criticism, took to heart that they are similar to the irresponsible fairy-tale characters: “I leave workbooks at home”, “I like playing the computer, but I must do my homework”, “I don’t clean my room”.

We asked the children what they should do in order to become a more responsible person. Almost all students (93%) connect development of this quality with determined efforts, which must be made in fulfilment of any task. They told that “it is

necessary to do one's best", "if you promise something, you must keep the promise", "to do the lessons", "to obey adults". 7% of students think that this quality cannot be developed – it exists or it does not display at all. These children admitted that a person becomes responsible when he/she receives a passport, but before a child attains his majority; his parents are responsible for him. "But are you responsible for your studies?" the student of the second form was asked. He replied, "Not now, but I'll be responsible in upper classes".

The comparative analysis of children's conception of their own level of responsibility and its correlation with the adults' evaluation gives us a possibility to clarify adequacy and inadequacy of the students' self-appraisal. (Figure 3).

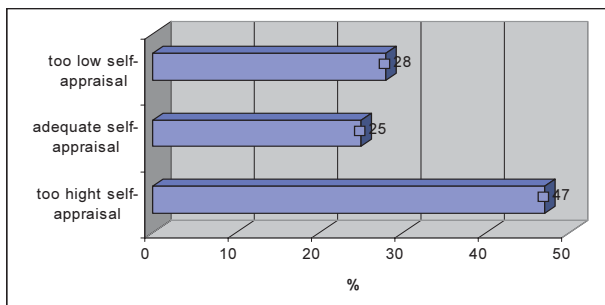


Figure 3. Adequacy of the Latvian primary school's students' self-appraisal

Conclusions:

The investigation showed that 26% of students of the primary school age evaluated their display of responsibility rather precisely. Their self-appraisal coincided with the teacher's opinion (the adequate self-appraisal). 75% of students could not evaluate adequately the display of this quality: 47% of the students participating in the investigation had a too high self-appraisal, but 28% - too low.

The investigation shows that the responsibility of a primary school student is an insufficiently developed quality. He/she suffers if the teacher's task is not fulfilled, however he is not ready to take the responsibility for his studies, and he is trying to justify his behaviour by different external reasons. The investigation results ("Methods of investigation of the direction of responsibility") show that only 26% of the investigated students had an internal locus of control. In the largest part of situations they try to take the responsibility on themselves. Only 2% of the students in all 10 situations do not rely on the destiny and chance, they are fully responsible for their possible actions. 13% of the students in 5 proposed situations attribute responsibility to external factors, but in the other 5 situations they take the responsibility to themselves, connecting all events with their own behaviour, character and skills. The largest part of the students (62%) has an external locus of control. In the proposed situations they explain the events mostly by the external factors. 6% of them never feel responsible for the situation. For the primary school student it is necessary to look "excellent" and "responsible" to the teacher and the experimenter, it is very difficult for him to

acknowledge that he is responsible for non-fulfilment of a task given by the teacher. It is much easier to refer to other reasons, how it happened in our case.

The investigation showed that the students, who perceive studies with responsibility, achieve good results.

Summarizing the things described above, it is possible to draw some conclusions about the development of responsibility of a student of the primary school:

- Responsibility at the primary school age is not a sufficiently developed quality. In our selection only 37% of students were ready to perform the teacher's tasks at once and finish them.
- Students of the primary school do not have a clear understanding of the concept of "responsibility" and "a responsible student", and often do not evaluate adequately the display of this quality. 7% of the children think that adults are responsible for their actions and results of studies.
- The self-appraisal of responsibility influences the real display of this quality. The investigation showed that the students with a little decreased self-appraisal have a more responsible attitude to their actions.
- 62% of the investigated students have the external locus of control. They tend to look for reasons of non-fulfilment the task in external circumstances and do not take responsibility for their actions.
- The student, who has a responsible approach to his/her studies, achieves good results.

The investigation gave a possibility to trace the close connection between the students' display of responsibility and their progress in studies.

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VII. HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Consumer survey of eating habits in the algarve region: Potential impact in regional sustainable development

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Placed in the South of Portugal, the Algarve is the third richest national region, with an average *per capita* net internal product of 97% of national average. However, very severe asymmetries are observed between the coastal area (where most jobs, mainly in tertiary sector can be found, with consequent population increase), and the interior, with a predomination of the primary sector, where a very accentuated decrease and aging of the population has been identified. Amongst the last is the Monchique region, where it has been traditional for farmers to raise a few pigs, as source of meat and meat sausages, mainly for own consumption, although surplus was sold. The high quality of these meat products has increased demand, which turned these into an alternative source of income, and in the last two years some SME's have been implemented, which aim to produce sustainable high quality traditional meat sausages. This work reports the results of a consumer survey, relating to the meat sausage eating habits in the Algarve. Results revealed a very marked preference for traditional meat sausages, generally obtained from the producer. Appearance was the most important product attribute for the potential buyer

Introduction

It can be said that, having moved from a *per capita* income of 49% of the European Union population in 1988, to 71% by 1999, a slightly higher value than the Portuguese average, the Algarve region has been able to make a good use of funding resulting from the Portuguese integration in the European Union (1, 2).

However, a detailed analysis of county *per capita* income clearly shows a large disparity, and in some cases even poverty, with values ranging from less than 45%, for inland inhabitants (including those living in Monchique), to higher than 130%, for seaside areas, tourist areas or areas near the border, such as Albufeira, Faro, Portimão and Vila Real de Santo António (3, 4). This reveals a deficient intragenerational equity situation, which has resulted in a localised progressive decrease in the population. This decrease has been an ongoing process since the 1950's, firstly due to emigration, mainly to European countries, and later, since the 1970's, to migration towards the seaside, mainly to well known towns such as Albufeira, Portimão, and Faro, resulting from the region's rapid development of tourism (2, 5).

In some counties, Monchique included, concomitant with the decrease in population, a significant aging of the remaining residents has been observed. This negative factor

has been particularly felt in inland counties, with some specific areas starting to show a tendency towards human desertification (1-3, 5, 6).

Regarding the productive structure, a considerable decrease has been observed, between 1970 and 2003 in the primary sector, from 28.6% to 9.6%, with an expansion of the tertiary sector, from 51 to 69.7% (2, 7). These variations resulted in a drastic reduction of employment in the agriculture and fisheries sector, whilst the significant increase in jobs in commerce and services amounted to 66% of the total, in 1998 (2, 3, 5, 8).

To try to overcome these tendencies, several traditional products, of recognized quality, produced in these economically depressed counties, have been identified, including Monchique's meat sausages.

Raising and transformation of Iberian pig (*Sus ibericus*) into a large diversity of traditional meat sausages, such as 'chouriço de carne', 'morcela', 'morcela de arroz', and 'farinheira de milho' has been an ancient practice amongst farmers in the Monchique region (9, 10). These sausages were usually produced to be consumed by farmers, the surplus being sold to neighbours, at fairs, or in local markets (11, 12). It is worth mentioning that at times, this surplus production represented a relevant income for the farms (11, 13). After integration in the European Union, specific legislation, for application to these small units, and which led to the implementation of some direct selling units, was passed in 1999 (11, 13, 14).

With the aim of both to valorise this important cultural patrimony and to economically develop the Monchique region's farmers, a yearly fair, "Feira dos Enchidos Tradicionais de Monchique" (Fair of Traditional Monchique Meat Sausages) has been organised since 1994. It is expected that this now well known event will also result in the preservation of the Iberian pig and related activities, as well as in the development of eating and other tourism facilities (9, 15, 16).

Local and regional authorities, amongst which the 'Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Algarve' (Commission for Algarve's Regional Coordination and Development), 'Câmara Municipal de Monchique' (Monchique County Council), the 'Direcção Regional de Agricultura do Algarve' (Algarve's Agriculture Regional Directorate) have also put into motion an intervention plan, supported by several financing instruments, mainly through European Union funding (16-18). Two SME's, where the different varieties of traditional meat sausages are produced, and also directly sold, were implemented in Monchique. Several projects, regarding technical support, technological innovation, product certification, setting-up of commercialisation networks, and ultimately, the creation of the 'Algarve' trademark, are also being set up (19).

The aim of this work was to survey consumer eating habits of Algarve's population, regarding meat sausages. The identification of product's attributes relevant to consumers' preference was also envisaged. Consumers' preferences, relating to product commercialisation were also investigated.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire⁵² had three separate parts: a first one, which aimed at consumer characterisation (e.g. gender, age, literacy, and job description); a second one, with a view to determine consumer's habits, regarding the different kinds of meat sausages; and a third one, to ascertain consumers' product acceptability (e.g., main product's characteristics affecting consumers' preference).

Enquires were made in the Algarve region, during 2002. Interviews took place face to face, with individuals circulating in the streets. 303 persons were chosen at random, bearing in mind the representativity of Algarve's population.

All the data was processed using SPSS software.

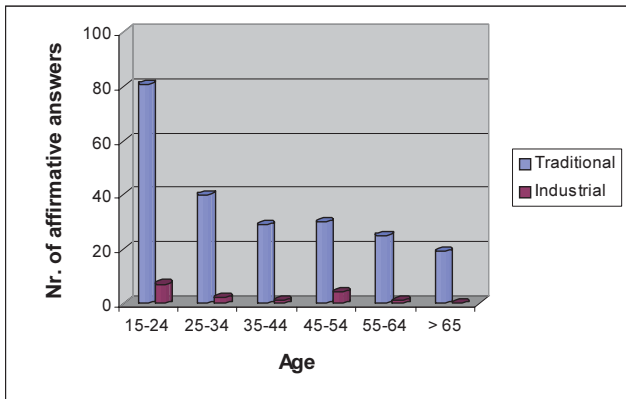
Results and Discussion

Most of the enquired were females, aged between 15 and 34 years, who had studied up to secondary school, were either students, or worked in the area of services (only a minority of the enquired worked in agriculture), and lived by the seaside.

78.9% of these were used to consume meat sausages, with 27.6% eating them at least in a weekly basis. A marked preference for traditionally produced meat sausages (93.72%) was observed, which is mostly determined by family traditions (59.83%), with products being mainly purchased either directly from the producer, via corner shops, or at thematic fairs (Fig. 1 to 3).

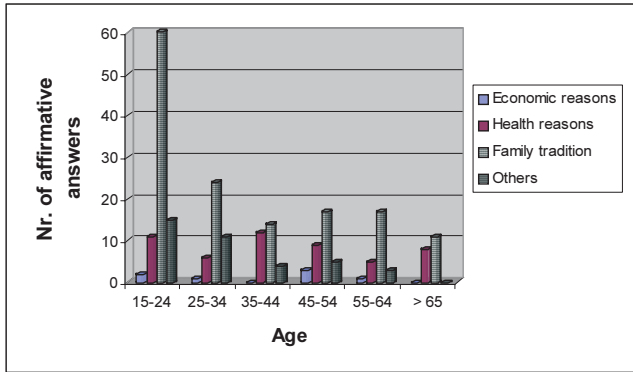
A shift in consumer preferences, favouring traditionally produced meat sausages, has also been observed, in the last few years, by Garriga *et al.*(20). These authors reported that consumers show an increasing tendency towards less industrialised food products. This behaviour may be due to a succession of problems, such as the BSE crisis, recurring meat contamination cases, namely with dioxins, or the potential use of additives or GMO products, which would have undermined consumers' trust in industrialised meat products (21).

Fig. 1: Type of meat sausages preferred



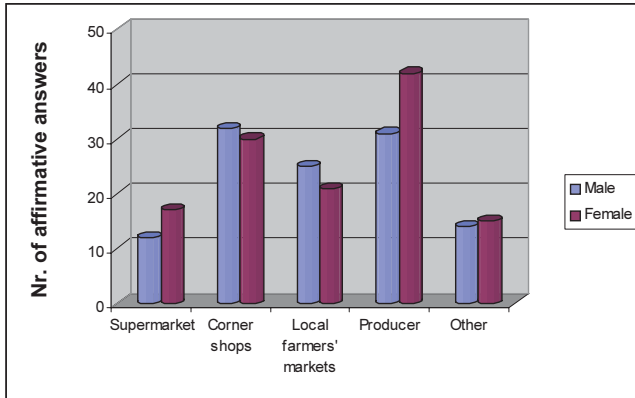
⁵² The questionnaire is available from the authors, under request

Fig. 2: Reasons for preference



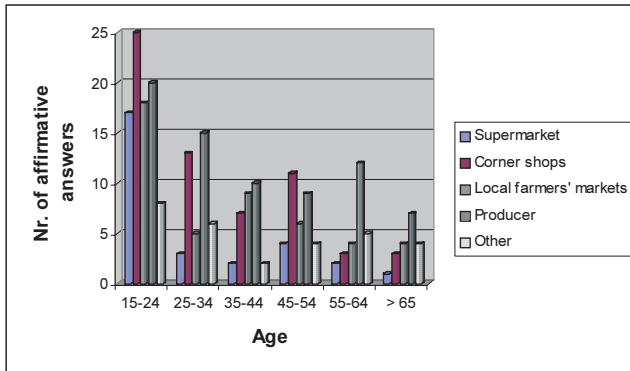
A more detailed analysis of results revealed that it's mostly females that buy meat sausages from the producer, whilst males rely more in corner shops (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3: Preferred purchasing place, according to gender



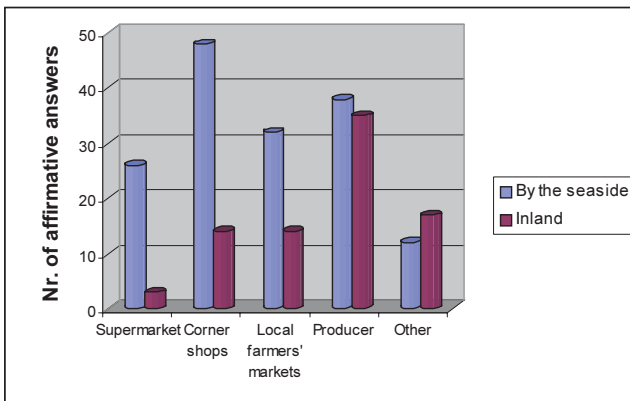
Also, consumers between 15 and 25 years old buy preferentially directly from the producer, whilst older consumers (between 45 and 54) prefer the corner shops (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4: Preferred purchasing place, according to age group



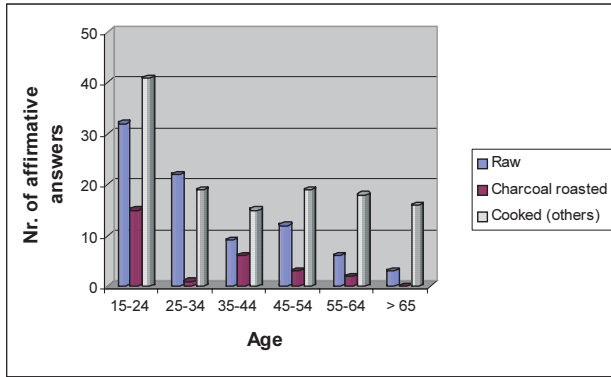
As expected, population living near the seaside buys their meat sausages in corner shops, contrarily to inland consumers, who acquire them directly from the producers (Fig. 5). It has been observed that the sale of this products in a short circuit is often preferred both by the farmers, who can then optimise the economical value of their products, and by the consumers, who are able to obtain products that meet their requirements, namely for authenticity and links to the rural world (12, 22).

Fig. 5: Preferred purchasing place, according to living area



Regarding the different types of meat sausage available, a marked preference for ‘chouriço’, which is the most noble of the products covered in this questionnaire. Chouriço is mostly eaten cooked, although a preference for the raw product could be detected for consumers between 25 and 34 years (Fig. 6).

Fig. 6: Eating preferences, according to age group



The main parameters affecting consumer preference are both product appearance and the absence of packaging (Fig. 7 and 8). This tendency was also observed by Ricci *et al.* (23), who suggested that this preference for unpacked and also unlabelled products might be part of the image that consumers have of a farm product. This, according to François *et al.*, (24), instead of being detrimental to the product, is perceived as an added value, by potential consumers.

Fig. 7: Product attributes relevant to purchasing

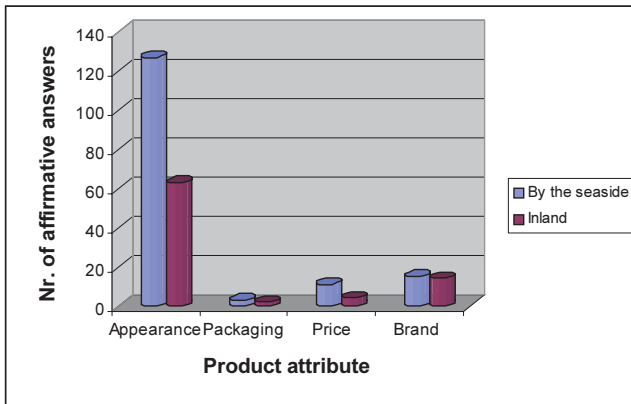
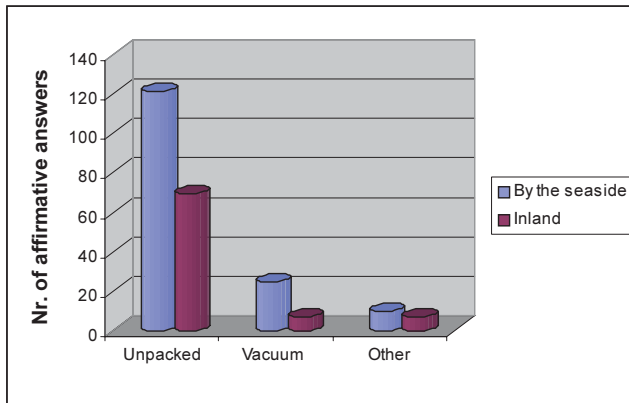


Fig. 8: Product's packaging attributes, relevant to purchasing



Conclusions

Consumers in the Algarve region showed awareness of their right and personal responsibility to choose how their food (in this particular case, several varieties of meat sausages) is produced.

A very significant number of the enquired revealed a marked preference for traditionally produced and presented (not packed) products. These are usually preferentially purchased from small, local farmers or industries, local corner shops, or local farmers' markets, possibly with the objective of ensuring product quality and/or traceability.

Such behaviour indicates a tendency to support the production of food without agrochemicals, such as hormones and antibiotics, and the purchasing of locally grown food.

This tendency may result in supporting agricultural practices that are better for consumers, animals and the environment.

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Health and citizenship education in Finland

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This paper is concerned with the situation of health education, citizenship education and education for sustainable development for 7-12 year old children in Finland. The main purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how the new health education for the primary school in Finland is very similar to the earlier citizenship education in text books. The basic ideas of sustainable development are also contained in geography and biology text books.

In Finland the government and National Board of Education dictate the curriculum in schools. The government names the school subjects. After the last rule (2001) the author analyzed a primary textbook series for classes 1-6. The textbooks analyzed were those for biology, geography, citizenship education, physics and chemistry. The result was that health education in Finnish text books for primary school is very similar to earlier citizenship education. This paper describes the situation in those school subjects in Finland. The paper has three parts:

1) Introduction: the situation of citizenship education, education for sustainable development and health education in the thematic entities in the school curriculum of Finland (age group 7-12), 2) What is health education in Finland 3) Citizenship and health education in the national curriculum and textbooks.

1. Introduction

Finland has a very new national curriculum for the primary school (age-group 7-12). In the previous primary curriculum (1994) citizenship education was combined in nature and environmental studies with biology, geography, physics and chemistry. In the new primary curriculum (2002, 2004) there is no citizenship education. There is health education integrated with the science subjects geography, biology, physics and chemistry for classes 1-4 and with biology/geography and physics/chemistry for classes 5-6 or 11-12 years old children.

The previous curriculum (1994) was very free with only 3 pages for environmental and natural studies together. The schools and teachers had more control over the more detailed curriculum. The new national curriculum is a little more exact. The subject of sustainable development is to be connected to all subjects with the roots being in biology, geography and environmental and natural studies.

Considering consumer citizenship education in nature and environmental studies in Finland is the idea of the sustainable development, the knowledge and the awareness about the environment, the recycling, to save energy, to think about the costs and responsibilities of transport etc. There also is the idea of "do local think global". This idea is close to the curriculum of geography. In Finland pupils study a lot about foreign countries in the classes 1-6. In primary school they study the regional

geography of Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia. Children should understand the idea of global sustainable development, connected to global knowledge about different nations and health.

2. Health education, education for sustainable development and citizenship education in the thematic entities

The Finnish national curriculum health education is also contained in the thematic entities and in environmental and natural studies for the age group 7-12. The thematic entities are close to citizenship education. There are 7 themes. Theme 1) grow as a human being contains:

- to understand that physical, mental, social growing and changing are continuous throughout life, recognize the emotional changes, the strands for the mental agility, creativity
- to estimate ethically and to understand what is right or wrong
- to recognize the importance of aesthetic experiences for the quality of life.

These objects the school can have in separate projects or include it in all subjects.

Close to the previous citizenship education and geography are in the thematic entities for example the theme 2: the culture identity. The aim is to understand the Finish and European culture identity. The contents are

- your own culture, the culture in the home district, Finish, Nordic and European characteristics
- other cultures and multiculturalism
- human rights and confidence, mutual valuation as changes to a successful cooperation
- internationality, the meaning of customs

In the thematic entities are also 3) media education, 4) participant as a citizen and enterprise 5) education for sustainable development, 6) safety and traffic, 7) man and technology.

The aims of education for sustainable development are:

- ecological, economic, cultural and social sustainable development in the own school and surroundings
- individual and community responsibility on surroundings and human welfare
- environmental values and sustainable lifestyle
- ecological efficiency in production and society and during the weekly activities, product life cycle
- control of personal economic and consumption behavior
- desirable future, selection and action for it

7 thematic entities can be taught in different subjects in projects etc. For example in Ireland they seem to be in health education.

3. Health education and citizenship education in finland for age group 7-12

Within the new Finnish national curriculum (2004) the school subject health

education was created. Most of the subject teachers thought that health education should be a thematic entity because it was already included in many subjects. In 2002 the government decided that it will be a school subject. It is a separate subject for classes 7-9. It is also a voluntary subject for student degrees. For the age group 7-12 health education is combined into natural and environmental sciences in classes 1-4 and into subjects biology/geography and physics/chemistry in classes 5-6. In Finland most of the teachers for age-group 7-12 are class teachers. For class teachers it is not necessary to train oneself for the new subject. The subject teachers in biology and geography, psychology, social sciences, physical education and home economics can teach until year 2012 health education. After that they have to learn this subject within departments of medicine (60 points).

Previously health education was taught within citizenship education for classes 1-6. In the curriculum for years 1994 –2004 it was integrated in environmental and natural sciences with biology, geography, physics and chemistry. Before 1994 citizenship education was a separated school subject. The textbooks contained ideas of citizenship education.

In the 1985 national curriculum the content of citizenship education was:

- traffic
- together with others: the school society and rules
- myself
- healthy food and lifestyle
- economical lifestyle
- young consumer
- jobs

We analyzed with class teacher students the textbooks of environmental and instructing citizenship education will no longer be in the curriculum but health education would. We received the preliminary contents of health education on that time. We found all viewpoints of health education in that time already in Otava's textbooks "Ympäristötietä, Kolun Ympäristötieto 1-2", "Kolun Ympäristötieto 3-6".

In the new curriculum pupils should be able in the part of health education environmental and natural education (the new national curriculum) to:

- describe the growth and life cycle, to name the main parts of the human body and basic physiology
- know healthy weekly practice: the day rhythm, sleep sufficiency, food, regular eating, daily exercise, correct working positions, posture, mouth health, hygiene, dressing
- can identify the basic rules in a group, polite behavior, can identify and name different feelings and know that we can regulate expressions of feelings
- can describe general children's diseases; know the basic rules of how to use medicines; can use simple first aid skills and how to rise an alarm or find help when in need.
- safety: pupils can describe bullying and violence; know human rights in relation to

individual bodily integrity.

After class 6 that basic idea is that the pupils can describe the basic things of human body, puberty, human physiology, how to regulate feelings and knows the rights and responsibilities of his/her age.

In Finland for age group 7-12 we have citizenship education in health education and in thematic entities for all subjects. Because the government had the idea to create health education as a theoretical subject most of the themes of health education are contained within environmental and natural studies. The textbooks were ready for the new subject in primary school in 2002. In new textbooks (2005) we have more health education and even special textbooks for health education.

10-20 years ago in Finland people tried to get sustainable development education into a school subject. The subjects had competition in terms of who "owns" the environmental education. Finland did not get this subject. For many the new health education was a surprise.

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Why consumers eat what they do: An approach to improve nutrition education and promote healthy eating

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Summary

There is a general scientific agreement that diet and nutrition are important factors in the promotion and maintenance of good health throughout the entire life. It is currently estimated that an unhealthy diet and a sedentary life may be responsible for over 4 million deaths per year in Europe due to cardiovascular diseases. Although people seem to become aware of what healthy eating means, and healthy eating seems to be regarded positively in terms of benefits by general population this may not be translated into practice. Different studies have demonstrated that there is a low level of perceived need among European population to alter their eating habits for health reasons, mainly because people believe that their diets are already adequately healthy. The current article discusses the major barriers to the adoption of a healthy diet and the main factors that influence individual food choice. Different approaches and actions to be taken for modifying consumer's food intake in the direction of healthy eating are discussed.

1- The role of nutrition in a healthy lifestyle

Health is a condition of physical, mental and social well-being and implies the absence of disease (ILSI, 1998). Health is not simply the absence of illness or injury, and is an important part of well-being, of how people feel and function, and also contributes to social and economic well-being. Many factors determine and influence health, a combination of modifiable and non-modifiable risk factors. While age, sex and genetic susceptibility are non-modifiable; many of the risks associated with age and sex are modifiable. Such risks include lifestyle or behavioural factors (including smoking, type of diet, alcohol consumption and lack of physical activity), biological factors (e.g., hypertension, overweight) and many other aspects of their social and cultural environment, which include a complex mixture of interacting socio-economic, cultural and other environmental parameters (WHO, 2003). While, standards of living have improved, food availability has expanded and become more diversified, and the access to services has increased, there has also been significant negative consequences in terms of inappropriate dietary patterns (towards a higher energy density diet, reduced intake of complex carbohydrates, and reduced fruit and vegetable intake), decreased physical activities and increased tobacco use-often referred to as the "nutrition transition". In short, nutrition is being emphasised as a major modifiable determinant of chronic diseases, restating the idea that chronic diseases are largely preventable diseases.

1.1- Definition of healthy eating: experts and public views

Traditionally, recommended dietary allowances have focused on adequate and safe intakes to avoid deficiencies and to ensure that energy is adequate for the needs of nearly all adults, and for the growth development and activity of children. More recently, however, dietary recommendations and guidelines reflect growing concern about diet-related non-communicable diseases, and recommendations now frequently include alerts and notes regarding intake of those dietary components that are associated with increased/decreased risk of these diseases. According to the basic guidelines in many developed countries, individuals should eat a balanced and a varied diet, decrease the consumption of total fat, increase the consumption of fruit, vegetables and cereals grains and maintain energy balance.

On the other hand, for the majority of EU-15 population (lay people) “less fat”, more “fruit and vegetables” and “balance and variety” were amongst the most frequently mentioned items by respondents when asked to name food characteristics that would form the basis of a healthy diet (Lappalainen *et al.*, 1998). Although people seem to become aware of what healthy eating means, and healthy eating seems to be regarded positively in terms of benefits by general population this may not be translated into practice. Indeed, it is estimated that at least one third of premature deaths from cardiovascular disease are attributable to unhealthy diets. This means that every year in Europe approximately 60,000 premature deaths could be saved by dietary changes (Eurodiet, 2000).

2- Perceived barriers in adopting a healthy diet

Changing food consumption is not an easy task, even for those who have actual personal health reasons for doing so, because of personal, social, economical and environmental factors. In fact, according to the pan-European survey, conducted between October 1995 and January 1996, 71 % of Europeans believe that there is no need to change their diets, as they are already healthy enough (Kearney, M. *et al.*, 1997). Other authors have reported such a high level of satisfaction with current diets among different countries (Mendelson, 2002; Worsely and Crawford, 1985). This “optimistic bias” (optimism in self-perception of diet quality) suggests that people believe that healthy eating messages are targeted at people more vulnerable than themselves and do not see such advises as personally relevant. In other words, a perceived need to undertake change is a fundamental requirement for initiating dietary change. Indeed, it has been shown that people tended to underestimate their fat intakes, with most subjects regarding their diets at lower fat levels than they actually were (Lloyd *et al.*, 1995) and overestimate their vegetable and fruit consumption (Lechner *et al.*, 1997; Bogers *et al.*, 2004).

Once the need for change is recognised, there are many reasons why nutritional advice may not be followed. These difficulties can be related with lifestyles and personal behaviours. Taste preferences consistently represent a barrier to healthier eating, in the sense that people experience difficulties to give up their favourite food. On the other hand, lack of time, busy lifestyle and food preparation factors are frequently mentioned as a difficulty in following nutritional advice (Lappalainen *et al.*, 1997; Kearney and McElhone, 1999). People with perceived time pressure may think that

they do not have time to prepare healthy meals and may seek out convenience foods (such as frozen main courses or ready-made meals, take-away meals, eating out) rather than cooking from basic ingredients.

As a result, it is necessary to understand the major perceived influences on individual food choice, in order to investigate the most effective approaches for influencing dietary patterns and to promote health.

3- Individual determinants of food choice

Food choice is a complex behaviour and it is influenced by many interrelating factors. These factors may be categorised as: those related (i) to the food, (ii) to the individual making the choice, (iii) and to the external economical and social environment within which the choice is made (Shepherd, 1999). In fact, some of the chemical and physical properties of the food are perceived by the individual in terms of sensory attributes (e.g., taste and texture), and the liking of these attributes influences the choice of the food product. Other chemical components in the foods (such as amount of protein or carbohydrate) will have physiological effects, such as the reduction of hunger. The environmental domain include factors such as: (i) family and peer pressure, cultural, religious and demographic variables, (ii) marketing variables, and (iii) economical considerations and political values (Furst *et al.*, 1996; Nestle, *et al.*, 1998; Bellisle, 2005). Within the limitations of those dietary domains, personal preference is most often concerned with the more immediate aspects, such as taste, energy-density, convenience, well-being (health), variety, monetary constrains and self-expression (Drewnowski, 2002). That is, individual food choice determinants range in scope from sensory preferences and psychological (mood, stress and guilty) to practical reasons (convenience, price/income, variety) and personal concerns (well-being, self-expression), and all together are interrelated.

3.1- Sensory attributes

The biological drive that impels individuals to search for food is hunger. In fact, humans need energy and nutrients in order to survive. Researchers interested in the control of intake tend to assume that eating is controlled by internal physiological mechanisms, reflecting either nutrition deficit or surfeit and consequently involved in the regulation of body weight (Woods *et al.*, 1998). The energy regulation system regulates energy intake (that indicates our energy deficit) and is complemented by an innate ability to sense and prefer two characteristics that within nature come associated with high energy density: sweet taste and fatty texture. Sensory responses to taste are consistently reported as a major influence on food behaviour (Stephoe and Pollard, 1995; Glanz *et al.*, 1998; Eertmans *et al.*, 2001; Alves *et al.*, 2005). These results come in agreement with the fact that concerns about reductions in the “taste quality” of the diet are the most often mentioned obstacles to adopting a healthful diet, as discussed previously (see § 2). That is, individuals do not eat solely based on hunger.

Palatability is a subjective measure of the pleasantness of food. It is dependent on the sensory attributes of the food such as taste. In general, foods that are described as more palatable tend to be more energy dense (calorie/g) than foods that are not. Foods with

lower energy density (raw vegetables and fruits) invariably contain more water per unit weight. In contrast, foods with higher energy density tend to present a higher fat content. Energy-dense foods are highly preferred across all geographical, ethnic, and cultural boundaries, suggesting that sensory preferences for sugar and fat may be under physiologic control. However, according to current theories, high energy density foods tend to be palatable (chocolate, cookies and cakes) but not satiating, whereas low energy density foods yield a marked satiating power, while less palatable (Drewnowski, 1998). Not surprisingly, these considerations are consistent with the principles of the basic guidelines of healthy diet (see § 1.1), however, few consumers are willing to sacrifice palatability in the pursuit of an energy-dilute diet.

3.2- Monetary considerations

According to neoclassical microeconomic theory, demands for different goods are interrelated due to the generally limited budget and may therefore not be considered separately from each other. In fact, whether price of food is affordable or not depends fundamentally on household's income and socio-economic status. In fact, although food prices affect everyone, the issue of food cost as a barrier to dietary change is particularly relevant to low-income families (Lloyd *et al.*, 1995; Dibsall *et al.*, 2003). Indeed, their food consumption pattern is characterised by a low consumption of fruit and vegetables and a high consumption of cereals (Krebs-Smith and Kantor, 2001; Blisard *et al.*, 2004). Two main reasons could explain this unhealthy eating pattern: the low price of higher energy-dense foods (often containing refined grains, added sugars, and vegetable fats) and its taste preference for high-fat energy dense foods, as discussed above. Generally speaking, diets based on added sugar, oil, shortening, margarine and refined grains are more affordable than the recommended diets based on lean meat, fish, fresh vegetables or fruit (Drewnowski and Specter, 2004). This is economically logical, because cereals, added sugars and fats, which are dry and tend to have a stable shelf-life, are easier to produce, process, transport, and store than are perishable meats, dairy products or fresh produce, with high water content. Thus, paradoxically, economic constraints, by inducing the selection of energy dense diets (a deliberate strategy to save money), could be indirectly responsible for the high prevalence of obesity in low-income groups in industrialised countries (WHO, 2003).

3.3- Physical factors

Convenience is a major concern in food purchases, particularly by members of urbanised societies. According to Darian and Cohen (1995), convenience in food can be categorised along two dimensions: (i) the type of convenience (what kind of effort is being reduced: time, physical energy or mental energy?) and (ii) the stage of the consumption process at which convenience is obtained (these stages include: deciding what to eat, purchasing, preparation, consumption and cleaning up). That is, consumers' convenience orientation not only relates to physical activities but also to thinking activities involved in meal preparation (culinary skills). Considering that women continue to become increasingly important in workplace and that they are still the "food gatekeeper" at home, the extra income from working wives enables the household to purchase convenience goods and many new technologies for the kitchen.

Additionally, younger housewives have grown up with almost no experience of foods in a raw state, and with only limited exposure to certain food types. Candel (2001) found that convenience orientation was negatively related to the use of self-prepared warm meals, and positively to the use of restaurants and the use of take-away meals. Eating in restaurants takes out the burden of food preparation and cooking, and of dish washing, while the use of frozen foods demands for planning.

3.4- Variety

Humans are omnivorous, meaning that they can consume and digest a wide selection of plants and animals found in their surroundings (Rozin, 1999). Dietary diversity or dietary variety (defined as the number of different foods or food groups consumed over a given reference period) has long been recognised by nutritionists as a key element of high-quality diets (see § 1.1). Increasing the variety of foods across and within food groups is recommended internationally by most dietary guidelines (WHO, 1996), because it is thought to ensure adequate intake of essential nutrients and thus to promote health. However, particularly in the urban context with the abundance of processed foods, increasing dietary variety could be counter productive in terms of the aim of this recommendation, particularly in relation to increasing high-fat and high-caloric foods. In other words, the proliferating “variety” in the supermarkets does not reflect an equivalent biological variety (Gussow and Clancy, 1986). McCrory *et al.* (1999) found that high variety is associated with fatness when the variety comes from foods with high energy content (sweets, snacks, condiments, entrees and carbohydrate food groups). Inversely, increased amounts of low-energy vegetables, prompted by high variety, may replace rather than supplement intakes of higher-energy items, lead to an overall decrease in energy intake, and hence of body fatness.

3.5- Attitudes, beliefs and knowledge about food and psychological factors

There still exists a gap between dietary recommendations and actual food use at the general population level in many Western countries (see § 2). Although health is not the only factor affecting food choice, many studies conducted in Europe and in the United States have shown health-related attitudes to be an important factor affecting food choice (Steptoe and Pollard, 1995; Bowman, 2005; Alves *et al.*, 2005). According to Roininen (2001), one can choose a healthy diet for many reasons, among them to prevent chronic diseases, to reduce weight or for ideological reasons.

Concerning the benefits from healthy eating among Europeans (EU-15), the pan-European survey found that the most selected benefits were “stay healthy” (67 %) and “prevent diseases” (66 %), and more than half of the subjects selected “be fit” (53 %) and “control weight” (53 %). In addition, the main driver of the growth for organic products is the public concern for health: consumers believe that organic foods are healthier than conventional foods (Cunha e Moura, 2004).

Otherwise, there is a greater concern among Western women about weight, body shape and appearance. Rozin *et al.* (1999) found that females in all countries studied (US, Japan, Belgium and France) had higher scores across issue of worries about food and nutritional associations as opposed to the savouring of food (culinary associations to

food). This might be the result of accumulating practical and emotional pressures that have been most exposed to the discourse of health and the glorification of the slim body. Although females have more positive attitudes towards eating healthily, they have the higher ratings on the craving for sweet (Grogan *et al.*, 1997).

Nevertheless, other factors such as ideological reasons (concern of ecological welfare, political values or religion) can also change behaviour into a healthy eating pattern. According to Lindeman and Stark (1999), eating vegetarian, healthy or non-fattening food may nowadays serve as a similar basis for identity, social categorization and moral valuation, as religions characteristically have served before. However, at a higher level the driving-forces that engage consumers to choose a healthy diet are, moderated by the motivation that they have in following this orientation, which in turn, are related to nutrition knowledge and perceived present state of health. In fact, consumers had never such an abundance of nutrition information as they do today, yet they remain challenged to use the information in making decisions about food and nutrition. Two main reasons explain this behaviour: the effectiveness of the sources of consumer information and the credibility of these sources. Considering that mass media are the primary sources of consumer information related to food and nutrition, particularly the television, consumers hear the message transmitted but do not heed it, because of the distracted state in which the audience receives many of the messages (Krugman, 1965). Moreover, the media sources that consumers most trust are those that are less used by them. According to the pan-European survey, the main sources of information on healthy eating most frequently mentioned in the EU-15 were (TV/radio, magazines and newspapers) were the least trusted sources. That is, the nutrition behaviour change requires much more complex motivators than simple information.

The motivation may come from one's present state of health (a nutrition related disease, such as diabetes or food components allergy) or one's awareness of present behaviour and its implication on health in future (Roininen, 2001). In this case, when a person is motivated, then the knowledge of dietary recommendations can affect his/her behaviour.

Conclusions

Diet related diseases became a public health issue due the large number of related deaths and to the increased budgetary burden occurring all over Europe. Thus, it is clear that reducing risk via improved nutrition and an increase in physical activity is of paramount importance. However, individuals do not feel they need to change, because they feel that their diets are already healthy. This "optimistic bias" suggests that people believe that healthy eating messages are targeted at people more vulnerable than themselves and do not see such advises as personally relevant. Moreover, the gains of health oriented dietary changes are mostly related to the far future, uncertain and hardly perceivable. In contrast, losses induced by dietary change are certain and immediately perceivable. Thus, efforts in attempting to improve the public's eating patterns should help people to evaluate their own diets correctly and thereby recognise the possible need to alter their diets. In addition, intervention measures need to convince people that the modification of their diets provide substantially higher gains

than losses and messages about positive benefits must continually outweigh the barriers to making and maintaining the dietary behaviour change.

Considering that taste preference consistently represent a barrier to healthier eating, it is also important to convince people that healthy eating does not have entailed strange or unusual foods, neither it necessarily means entailing the total exclusion of favourite foods; for instance, it should be stressed the pleasant taste of fruit and the enjoyable texture of vegetables. Moreover, given that energy-dense foods (high-fat and high-sugar) tend to be more palatable, the promotion of the consumption of low-fat, high-fibre and low-energy- dense foods to the public must be accompanied with the dialogue with food suppliers and producers in order to make these types of foods as inexpensive and palatable as possible, while advertising and packing them aggressively to increase their appeal and convenience. In this context, restaurants in general and fast-food restaurants in particular should make an effort to offer lower fat/calories menu alternatives.

Otherwise, considering that low-income households and individuals with lack of time for food preparation are targeted to following a less healthy diet, health policy should supply those households with information regarding the importance of consuming a healthy large variety of foods. Additionally, nutrition education programmes should be implemented in order to provide individual instructions on how to identify low-cost nutritious foods, how and where to make food purchases, and how to store and prepare foods. On the other hand, for the food-processing industry, it could be a challenge to offer a larger variety of convenience products adjusted to the specific needs of the households.

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Challenges facing consumer responsibility, information and education towards organic products

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Introduction - trends in the consumers new choice

The major consumer and lifestyle trends that will mark the organic industry in the coming years could be seen as more responsible for personal cares and for the environment - healthy food, a life in harmony with nature. The consumers are more conscious about their consumption which deals with food quality and safety; and it puts the requirements for extending the consumer citizenship (CCS) from theoretical into practical values.

During the last decades the food production and consumption system has changed considerably. The global trends which were influenced in the 1990's by a series of health scares, the increasing threat of genetically modified contaminations, faulty labeling, etc. affected the consumer confidence in food safety. Environmental, economical and social issues have to be met in a very competitive, increasingly global environment. The growing concern of consumers regarding the quality, traceability and environmental friendliness of products and processes call for fundamentally new ways of developing, producing and marketing products which should be long-term oriented. One of the concepts dealing with these problems and aiming to answer the present-day desires of people concerns organic products; after all it has long represented values like transparency, dependability or consumer proximity. Tomorrow's markets are breaking down the classic boundaries between industries in order to meet the key buying motive assumed as: health and safety. The organic food chain involves a number of actors at different levels: farmers, processors, wholesalers, retailers, consumers and many non-government and government organizations. All actors have a shared responsibility to change the modern industrialized food system and to incorporate economic, social and environmental criteria in their collective activities (Welford, 1998). But consumers are the driving force and they play a key role in changing the modern industrialized food system. This role is determined by the following features: level of knowledge, awareness, and responsibility in the purchasing process.

Considering the specific nature of organic products we have launched one appropriate solution focusing on enhancing sustainable consumer behaviour: i.e. responsibility, information and education. In this paper we summarize the highlights of the consumer response and some correlation of their attitudes towards environment-friendly products as organic products. Such estimation is necessary if niches for organic products have to be generated and incentives for green entrepreneurs have to be provided.

Enhancing Sustainable Consumer Behaviour – consumer responsibility, information and education

1. Responsibility

One of the keys to success in achieving sustainability through the market is the responsibility to enable the consumers to make an informed choice. There have been many concepts aiming to explain the increasing role of the consumers, e.g. in the early seventies the concept of the Social Responsible Consumers appeared, which perceived social responsibility as traditional social consciousness including aspects of environmental concern; the concept of Ecologically Concerned Consumers (ECC) came next, this concept failed to focus on actual behaviour. The initials ECCs are still in use today, only with the replacement of “concerned” with “conscious”. The concept of Ecologically Responsible Consumption was introduced during the eighties. During the nineties, ecological marketing reflecting the mountain of public concerns began to expand. Today consumers are becoming increasingly aware of their role in transforming economic relations simply through the choices that they make. They want to know more about the products they buy... What is in them? How are they tested? What is their environmental profile? This “need to know” is particularly strong and it is different from consumer to consumer. To realize consumers’ behaviour more deeply it is necessary to find the “crossroad” between their desires and expectations, and those of the public services defended by the business. On the one side we are focussing on the question “What do consumers want?”, and on the other side we are aiming to present “What does business want?”.

For years, the food industry has publicly explained its behaviour in the market place by claiming it was responding to what consumers wanted. Mass produced and inexpensive food, convenience, packaging and extensive product variety have been explained as responses to market signals. But the consumer market place is less homogeneous than earlier times. Consumers have been rebelling against mass produced foods. Historically, attention has focussed on perceived consumer concerns about food price, quality convenience and safety. Now consumer interests are more diverse and complex, challenging the traditional way in which companies have both informed consumers and merchandised food products. In order to answer adequately to the required information, firms have changed promotional strategies, and have invested in sophisticated market survey instruments. Some consumers, once offered new kinds of choices, have responded and changed their purchasing patterns. All these developments confirm the interactive and dynamic interconnections between product availability, consumer information and desires. It is increasingly clear that consumer demand is a product of individual and collective wants and needs, access and availability, and the type and manner of information provided.

There are two main trends determining consumer activity. On the one side modern consumers demand more convenience food due to changes in their habits and lifestyles. On the other side, consumers are more conscious about their health and well-being, which lets them focus on food quality and safety. Their interest and knowledge about nutrition and health is growing. Thus, avoiding harmful additives, preservatives and agricultural chemicals has become consumers’ top concern. Even though some studies point out that there is significant motivation to buy organic food

on environmental grounds (Irish and Ries, 1987; Hack, 1995; Vogtmann, 1988). Results from studies indicate that motivation varies across different consumer segments. But most studies show that consumers primarily buy organic food because of health considerations (Sylvander, 1995; Infood, 1997; Land, 1009).

Considering the part of business there are several main considerations:

1) Businesses believe that the interests of consumers come first

Most marketers have not spent many hours critically thinking about what it really means to satisfy consumers. In fact, many are not familiar with issues that preoccupy some consumers, including biotechnology, gene manipulation, antibiotic and hormone usage, pesticides, and farm worker rights. It seems, then, that there exists some gap between intention and practice. Also, it appears that firms are not really willing to pay for consumer education. Particularly with regard to nutritional and environmental concerns, they hope that the media and government will do most of the work for them.

2) Marketers want to reduce the hassles around packaging/labeling regulation compliance so that they have the ability to think about meeting real consumer needs regarding product information

Trying to observe all government regulations and legal requirements, marketers have not identified sufficient consumer demand for more information. Many marketers were referring to nutrition education and other food issues affecting consumer decisions. They believe there is consumer concern about healthy eating and environmental issues. Price, taste and convenience come into line with health and environment as factors influencing consumer product choice.

3) Food safety is a prerequisite for all products

Marketers direct their affords to internal food safety concerns considering expert assessment to prove that food ingredients have been handled well, and that the product will be produced in compliance with the internally approved standards.

2. Information-Transparency

According to the market theory, consumers are presumed to be acting rationally when they make purchases. In order to act rationally, they need all the relevant information which allows the market to send clear signals to buyers and sellers. One of the most significant barriers to modified purchase is the absence of food information systems that alert consumers to the type of production system used to produce the food. Only certified organic products, and in some cases transition to organic products, have any recognition in the market place. Only well-informed consumers will more frequently choose organic products.

Transparency provided by confidence in the quality of products very much depends on the product standards and the efficiency of controls.

Codex Alimentarius standards enhance the availability of organic products to the consumers, based on their expectations and needs with the aim of environmental and social sustainability, healthy high-quality goods, and animal welfare. Codex Alimentarius claims to follow principles of sound science, analysis and evidence, involving a thorough review of all relevant information, in order that the standards assure the quality and safety of food. It should help promote the main goals of the organic agriculture and its concept maintaining high standards.

The European Action Plan launched by the EC involves new initiatives setting out the Community policy for organic farming to develop the market for organic food and improve standards by increasing their efficacy, transparency and consumer confidence. On a worldwide scale, organically managed areas have increased in recent years to a current 24 million hectares and approximately 460 000 farms. Methods of control and inspection must be adapted to the new significance and the growth rates. To protect the consumer, a thorough control and inspection system should be assured by steadily develop harmonization of rules, efficiency of organizational structures, and functioning information networks. Efficient, globally applicable control and inspection systems based on the principles of transparency, traceability, and credibility will considerably determine the consumer confidence and their perception for organic products.

When considering consumer information needs, regulators have focused primarily on price, quality and convenience. The market place, however, rarely provides broader information on price, quality, and convenience, and on the social, environmental and health impacts of food production, processing and distribution.

Information and transparency is regarding simultaneous production, processing, and product characteristics. To convince the consumers of the high product quality and to legitimize higher product prices, it is important to give a clear message through full transparency. It could be achieved through various ways. One very important tool for product transparency is its **label**, the information and recognition it gives: typical original design, packaging materials, available information (list of all ingredients, production code). In general, consumers who wish to buy organic products should have access to clearly and conspicuously labeled products that state the use of organic production. The various uses of different organic labels do not contribute to consumer understanding and could reach only a small part of the consumers. A question of key importance in the process of transparency – recognition and reliability is the **logo**. Some well-known organizations like Bioland, Demeter, Naturland, etc. have higher standards in organic farming and production and their logos are used in addition to the official bio logo. Wider use of the EU logo will facilitate consumer trust but its use should not be mandatory within the European Union.

The higher reputation of the **family owned brand** as well as the personal promise and guarantee of the owner are sufficient for the majority of consumers. This form provides personal interactions and dialogues with present and potential customers. Stoyanov's farm-Bachkovo is an excellent example for this kind of communication. They organize open-day each year where many people and representatives are invited. It is an attractive event including demonstration on field, product testing, interactive gaming, and presentations. People come to taste, smell and feel the organic products. The intention is to raise environmental awareness and make the consumer think about food and food consumption. Apart from this they organize guided tours with education purposes for students and guests not only from Bulgaria but from distance places abroad. The direct contact with nature is an element of education with the aim to raise environmental awareness of children and consumers.

Information in the context of health promotion, social marketing and media advocacy

In a market context, a consumers right to know is both about providing people with appropriate information and allowing them to make choices in a way that ultimately

changes the way goods and services are provided. In the case of food, it means providing information in an accessible way that allows people to more readily make health promoting decisions. In the context of health promotion, food information related to personal values and beliefs, cultural norms and community relations may all be relevant. Knowledge of food origin, how it is produced, the technologies involved, the impacts of food production, processing and distribution on rural communities and the environment may all be important to the food-health relationship. The full information empowers consumers, by providing opportunities to express “informed consent” in their purchasing patterns.

Within a health promotion framework, provision of information is a key strategy to increase healthy and decrease risky behaviour. But the information delivery system within this framework is rooted much deeper in an analysis of the forces and factors that cause people to pursue unhealthy behaviour, rather than just assuming that choices to be healthy are determined solely by the individual. (Table 1)

Table 1 Factors affecting food choice – building relevant patterns

Psycho-Social factors	Economic Factors
Education, formal and informal	Income/Employment
Beliefs, attitudes	Food costs
Knowledge, food and nutrition skills	Food advertising and food information systems, cosmetic appearance
Gender, age	Access to quality retail outlets
Language, culture, ethnicity	Housing, child care and costs of other basic needs
Social norms: appearance, body image, self-esteem	Structure of the food economy
Social and community support – access to community food programs	Type of food quantity and quality available
Personal taste	Food production and processing

Socio-economic factors, such as income, employment, food costs, and the structure of the food industry, as well as culture and social factors are determining for the purchasing patterns.

3. Main directions for education of the organic consumer

Consumer education means equipping consumers with knowledge, attitudes and skills concerning matters which are relevant to them and ways of managing this knowledge and these attitudes and skills. Consumer education is one of the tools for influencing consumer behaviour: (1) It can help consumers to choose products or services they intend to purchase; (2) It can improve consumers’ ability to handle information selectively and ask the right questions; (3) It can result in changes in the consumer behaviour, including as regards the external effects of their consumption.

Consumer education is provided in different ways: through education and consultancy, and through information in its widest sense. Different players are involved: government, business people, and consumer organizations. According to the CCA

(Committee for Consumer Affairs of Netherlands) report, 2000, there are gaps in the system of consumer education, calling into question whether consumers are sufficiently equipped with the know-how, attitudes and skills they require.

Contributing to the development of a more civic society we aim to focus on the education system, and how the universities are willing to participate actively and improve this system.

Studying the main patterns for consumer behaviour towards organic products, as well as considering the question of consumer education responsibility, we suggest an analytical framework from three points of view:

- 1) Consumer values and behaviour, including the following directions:
 - a) Making Responsible Choices
 - To understand who are organic consumers
 - To understand the needs of specific groups in society in relation to consumer choice
 - b) Managing Resources
 - To understand the need for effective and responsible use of organic products (resources)
 - To explain the factors which influence choices including resource availability
 - c) Consequences of organic consumer behaviour
 - To understand the role of the consumer and the supplier of organic products in the market place
 - To be able to analyse consequences of the choices in environmental and social context
 - To be able to identify the results of specific consumer behaviour and evaluate the costs versus needs of that behaviour
 - To understand the impact of organic consumer behaviour - locally, nationally, globally
 - d) Consumer influence
 - To recognize that consumers can have an influence in the way organic produce is supplied
 - To identify ways that consumers can influence the farming, processing and delivering of organic products through their actions
- 2) Consumers in the market place, within:
 - a) Product information
 - To be able to identify product information and be aware of the purpose and origin of such information
 - To be able to use a variety of consumer information to make an informed choice on organic products
 - To analyze consumer information from different sources and understand the status and purpose of different information
 - To understand how consumer information or access to consumer

information may effect the choice of product

- b) Advertising and Sales techniques
 - To know that producers, processors, traders and government and non-government actors advertise organic products and foods
 - To distinguish the differences between consumer and advertising information
 - c) Sources of advice and information including new technologies
 - To know that there are government and non-government organisations there to help the consumer
 - To understand how new technologies like the Internet can change the interaction between producer, consumer, and retailer when choosing organic products
 - d) Using organic products
 - To know the difference between organic and conventional products
 - To be able to explain the reasons for making choices between different organic products
- 3) Consumer rights and responsibilities – as a final focus, but not with less importance, including the following directions:
- a) Rights and responsibilities
 - To know that consumers have rights
 - To understand that the consumers and suppliers have a duty to behave responsibly as individuals and toward the family and the wider community
 - To understand that the consumers have responsibilities as consumers in the market place as well as rights
 - b) Communicate satisfaction and dissatisfaction
 - To know that consumers should expect to receive good service
 - To be confident and efficient in resolving conflicts and seeking redress when appropriate
 - To recognize when it is appropriate to register a comment or a complaint in written and/or oral form.

Agro-ecological Center, as part of the Agricultural University of Plovdiv serves as a practical sample for training students and organic farmers. There they obtain specific knowledge and education which raise their environmental consciousness and behaviour as socially oriented individuals who are able to take responsible decisions. Students are trained to be skilled and informed consumers. In this way, they understand their rights and, more importantly, their responsibilities, within an increasingly complex market place. Following this appropriate example, more research and education via separate programs could give specialized knowledge. The curricula and modules of environment and food training, and developing specialization on all levels could facilitate the consumer's conscious behaviour.

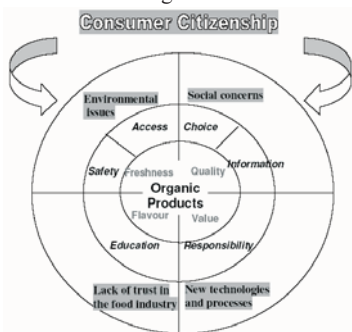
Consumer behaviour model concerning organic products

The consumer citizenship within organic products is presented as a model (fig. 1) which could clearly prove the implementation of theoretical knowledge into a practical one. Organic agriculture is defined as self-sufficient and a sustainable agri-environmental system in equilibrium. It delivers products with certain characteristics, e.g. **freshness, quality, flavour and value** which determine the consumer choice. Important factors concerning the consumer's attitude towards organic products are: environmental issues, social justice concerns, animal welfare concerns, long term impacts on health, lack of trust in the food industry, and global food trade issues. These factors are driving forces in consumer behaviour and they determine the consumer as an active individual from a social, ecological, and economic aspect. They present consumer motivation in relation to the purchasing power of decision making processes within organics. The guide principles which create consumer conscious activities with social concerns could be found in the following aspects:

- **Access-** – *available at a price consumers can afford, where and when they shop*
- **Choice-** – *to meet a wide variety of individual needs, values and aspirations*
- **Safety-** – *ingredients and processing perceived as safe and free from significant risk – provide evidence to ensure and assure safety*
- **Information-** *to make fully informed decisions and appropriate food choice for all the family*
- **Redress-** *appropriate customer care to address and meet consumer concerns and complaints*
- **Responsibility-** *to take responsibility for individual decisions and behavior*

The model performs interaction between: product characteristics, macro-factors, and consumer principles, which leaves consumers as more self-confident and decision-responsible in their choice. It imposes the close connection between consumer information, education and responsibility within an increasingly complex market place. This model could be used to develop the consumer citizenship concept serving all actors in the organic sector.

Figure 1



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VIII. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES; CIVIL SOCIETY RESPONSIBILITY

Could the “Responsible Care” initiative of the global chemical industry be a case model to all other industries to increase the awareness and social involvement in the consumer citizen?

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Methodology:

Various sources were used with the purpose of collecting relevant information in the literature, material from the internet, surveys from NGO, legal texts, articles from journals, working papers and handbooks. Additionally, managers in the implementation of Responsible Care in the companies and executives and experts in consumer and industry associations have been contacted, who have provided valuable information.

Introduction:

Today's dominant and economic paradigm promotes ever expanding economic disparity and ever increasing resource extraction and consumption at the expense of the earth and future generations. Collaboration between government, business and individuals is vital to moving forward with sustainability. All sides have to be willing to engage in honest dialogue for continuous improvement and new models and leadership for socially and environmentally sustainable life in the 21st century. As McNamee and Gergen pointed out, only dialogic process for promoting mutual learning and applying relational responsibilities (Payne and Calton 2003) within all parties could strengthen the community and help realize this shared vision.

Community forums, initiatives and principles have been developed to advance the movement for a more sustainable world where all sides can connect, learn, educate, brainstorm, execute ideas and make a difference. In the 21st century, the most successful societies will be those that embrace solidarity where corporations, local communities, individual and governments join together to build a better world for all. Confronted with increasing pressures to limit government spending on social welfare, more and more public policy makers welcome the growing social involvement of corporations. Global Compact, ILO's Tripartite Declaration of Principle Concerning MNC and Social Policy, OECD Guideline for MNC and EU Green Paper are some of them. (Buyukuslu, 2001). World Bank has put its shoulder behind corporate citizenship to forge key partnerships with companies and communities alike in its founding quest to banish poverty and improve the lives of millions of the world's poor. (Asiaweek 1997)

On the other side, the need has arisen for discriminating consumers who can

interpret relevant information and corporate messages and become consumer citizen in order to make choices that emphasize the demand for corporate social and environmental responsibility. Prudent choices that contribute to universal human development and intra-generational equity as declared by UNDP in the Human Development Report (Thoresen , 2003)

Corporate Citizenship :

Multi-sided dialogues emphasize goals of dialogic learning, relationship building, and social responsiveness within a more reflective practice of corporate citizenship (Payne, S. & Calton 2003). Corporate Citizenship (CC) functions as a new way of presenting existing concepts in Corporate Social Responsibility but applied to a wider range, or perhaps a different set, of issues. According to Maignan and Ferrell (2001) the notion of CC has been tackled more or less directly by two streams of management research: firstly the social performance model (Carroll, 1979) and secondly the stakeholder management framework (Clarkson,1995). Carroll's widely cited CSR model conceptualizes four types of responsibilities for the corporation:

- The economic responsibility to be profitable
- The legal responsibility to abide by the laws of society;
- The ethical responsibility to do what is right, just, and fair;
- The philanthropic responsibility to contribute to various kinds of social, educational, recreational, or cultural purposes.

Secondly in the stakeholder theory, stakeholders are persons or groups that have, claims, ownership, rights, or interests in a corporation and its activities, past, present, or future (Clarkson, 1995). These groups are sometimes also called fellow citizens. Clarkson (1995) counts five groups of primary stakeholders including shareholders or investors, employees, customers, suppliers, and the government and communities that provide infrastructures and markets, whose laws and regulations must be obeyed, and to whom taxes and other obligations may be due .

The corporate social responsibly and stakeholder management frameworks can be combined to define corporate citizenship as the extent to which businesses assume the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary responsibilities imposed on them by their various stakeholders (Maignan & Ferrell, 2001).

Conceptual model for Interactive Citizenship :

Consumers are obviously one of the most important stakeholders for any organization, since without the support of customers of some sort, such as through the demand for or purchase of goods and services, most organization would be unlikely to survive for very long. (Crane & Matten, 2004).Therefore the role of the consumers in shaping the social and environmental impact of corporations become evermore critical. Consumers' support of corporate citizenship is very important as Maignen & Ferrell (2001) point out that the Corporate citizenship is likely to be acknowledged by businesses as a worthwhile investment if its activities clearly supported by consumers through their evaluation of purchasing alternatives .

Although accepting the existence of many factors influencing the consumers' evaluations process, As Willmont (2003) argues that the individual's ethical decision making process is triggered by combining a variety of information on the performance of businesses in terms of economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary citizenship. With a series of laboratory experiments, Brown and Dacin demonstrate that negative corporate social responsibility associations can have a detrimental effect on overall product evaluation, whereas positive associations can enhance product evaluations. Based on a survey of managers (Maignan & Ferrell & Hult, 1999) establish a positive relationship between proactive citizenship and customer loyalty. A number of industry surveys suggest that consumers are willing to make an effort to support proactive corporate citizens. For example, a 1997 Cone/Roper study shows that 76 percent of consumers are prepared to switch to brands or stores that seem concerned about the community. Similarly, a Walker Information national survey showed that 14 percent of US households actively seek do-gooders when making purchases, while 40 percent judge corporate citizenship as a tie-breaking activity (Business Wire, 1997).

As surveys show that consumers increasingly scrutinize company's records for environmental protection, workplace fairness, product safety, and human and labour rights when considering their purchases (M2 Presswire. 2002), on an other word they have started to make prudent choices and become consumer citizen. Consumer Citizenship should be stimulated and supported by corporations also. Because encouraging consumers to integrate corporate citizenship in their evaluation of purchasing alternatives is contingent upon the information they receive. Corporate citizenship communications increase the awareness and social involvement of the consumer citizens. Corporate citizenship communications refer to the promotional instruments produced by the company (or the reports provided by the media) that depict the initiatives undertaken by the firm to meet its economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary responsibilities.

By using this evidence it can be suggested that there is an interaction between corporate citizenship and consumer citizenship as shown below and a conceptual framework for an interactive citizenship model can be proposed.

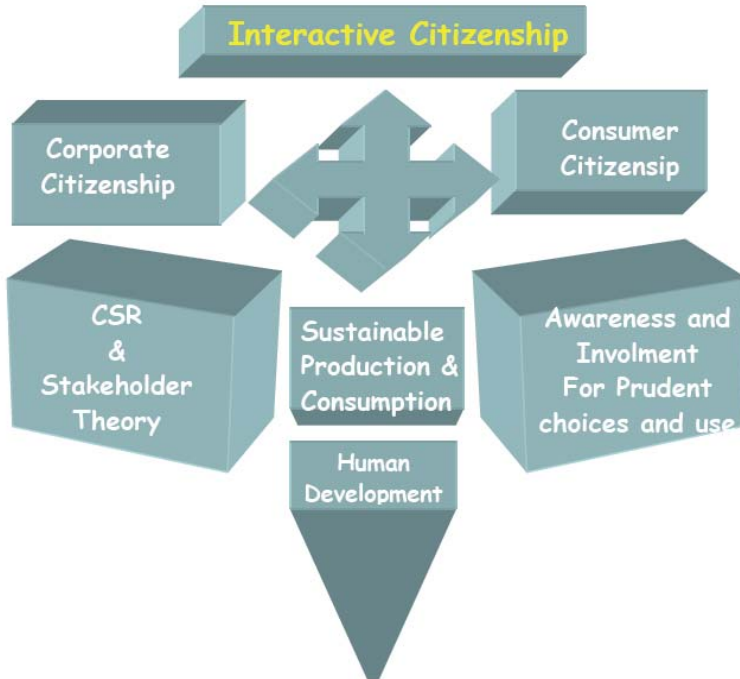


Figure 1. Conceptual model for Interactive Citizenship

Dimensions of corporate citizenship and types of initiatives trigger consumer awareness. Because of the interdependence between corporate and consumer citizenship, businesses could learn about the most desirable means of communicating corporate citizenship. According to Maignan and Ferrell (2001) there are two dimensions of corporate citizenship communications: intensity and trust in the source - likely to influence consumers' evaluations of corporate citizenship and impact on his/her attitudes and behaviours. One could assume that up to a certain point, the more consumers are reminded of the corporate citizenship of a given firm, the more likely they are to integrate these initiatives in their purchasing decisions. However, boundary effects may also take place: when corporate citizenship is promoted extremely heavily, consumers may perceive that it is mainly used as a promotional appeal, and may become suspicious about the intent of the firm. This reasoning entails that consumer's trust in the source of the corporate citizenship communications is also likely to affect the relationship between evaluations of corporate citizenship and consumer behaviours. Information regarding the activities undertaken by an organization to meet one or several of its social responsibilities may influence consumer decisions only if individuals judge this information as objective and trustworthy. According to Willmott (2003) corporate citizenship (as well as transparency and, to a lesser extent,

communications activity) helps to increase trust in the company.

Today, the impact of Corporate Citizenship is beginning to be seen in communities throughout the world from human rights and labour practices to health care and the environment. (Lockwood , 2004). Corporations have started to organize their community and consumer involvement activities to provide the greatest strategic benefit to the firm in the long term by applying Corporate Citizenship. On the global level where the administration of citizenship rights may be beyond the reach of the nation-state government, corporations may take on a role in reforming or creating transnational institutions that administer rights where national governments cannot act effectively as explained by Dirk and Crane (2005). With increasing privatization of regulation, through programs such as the Chemical Industry's Responsible Care or the Apparel Industry Partnership, corporations have stepped in and taken an increasingly active role in the global political arena (Ronit & Schneider, 1999; Schneidewind, 1998).

Responsible Care Initiative:

As one of the remarkable corporate citizenship examples, Responsible Care can be defined as a transnational institution and voluntary initiative of the global chemical industry in which companies, through their national associations, commit to work together to continuously improve the health, safety and environmental performance of their products and processes, and so contribute to the sustainable development of local communities and of society as a whole. It is managed by industry and focuses on improving performance, communication, transparency and accountability. Starting in 1985 in Canada, this initiative has been spreading in many countries by identifying good management practices through the publication of codes , guidance documents and checklists.

Responsible Care Implementation in Turkey :

Turkey's chemical industry through the national association called Türkiye Kimya Sanayicileri Derneği (TKDS) has adapted to the transnational initiative at the beginning of 1993. Responsible Care is mandatory for all new members since 1994. By the end of 2004, 57 companies had signed up and members represent about 60% of Turkish chemical industry by turnover and 20% by employees. Revised guidelines on Codes of Management Practices including management system guidelines published in 1999 and these are :

- 1 Pollution prevention
- 2 Process safety
- 3 Distribution
- 4 Employee health and safety
- 5 Product Stewardship.
- 6 Community Awareness and Emergency Response

For the implementation assurance, annual facility visits are carried out by the TKSD technical staff to evaluate Responsible Care performance. Codes of

Management Practices checklists are completed by the company and reviewed with a company representative and TKSD staff. Facility units are visited and graded, recommendations made in an audit report. Members are requested to report annually and indicators of performance revised in 2000 to enlarge the scope of monitoring and evaluating activities.

Responsible care through the Community Awareness code encourage companies and associations to inform their publics about what they make and do, about their performance, including reporting data and about their achievements. In the implementation of this code TKSD staff attends many national technical symposia and make presentations on Responsible Care to communicate with interested parties. TKSD continues its active participation in the Istanbul Chamber of Industry's Environmental Affairs Commission, the Ministry of Environment's regulatory review committee and local government regulatory committees, and publicizes the principles of Responsible Care to emphasize the commitment of the chemical industry to environmental protection efforts. Seminars are held at different universities. A Responsible Care course is designed and run by Istanbul Technical University. In addition to the lecturers from TKSD, member companies present case studies and offer site visits for students. TKSD continued a program of meetings and workshops. Seminars are held regularly at plant level for members.

Community outreach is a priority for the company's Responsible Care activities. Both companies and TKDS have found that putting time and effort into organising Open Door events helps bring a different and more positive view of the chemical industry to the public. An example from one of the manufacturer named Soda Sanayii AS opened up its plant gates to the public in May 2004. The event targeted school children from the local community and invited them to bring their families and teachers along too. Starting from the school gates, Soda Sanayii staff accompanied over 300 visitors to the manufacturing site where groups went on guided coach tours and heard about the company's health, safety and environmental efforts relating to their production activities. Visitors also enjoyed snacks, live music and a performance by a school folk dance group during the open day, and the company reports very enthusiastic feedback on the event. Visitors expressed their very positive impressions about the overall appearance of the site and sincerely wished that this kind of event would be organized more frequently in the future.

In 2002, the company provided support for the local Kazanlı primary school by financing general repairs and construction of two additional classrooms. Meanwhile, Soda Sanayii sought to raise environmental awareness at Mersin district primary school by organizing painting contests with the theme 'nature and environment' in both 2002 and 2003, with the prize-giving ceremony held during World Environment Week. Responsible Care activities were also organized to improve awareness of the initiative and help employees connect it with company activities. Soda Sanayii has detailed these and other activities in a Responsible Care report which also covers objectives and targets for 2004-2006

Another example of community reach implementation is that the leading acrylic

fibre producer AKSA has established the first community advisory panel that promotes mutual support between companies and associations through experience sharing and peer pressure, replacing the competitive approach of the past in health, safety and environmental areas. Launched in October 2001, the CAP included 23 representatives from regional NGOs and the authorities from surrounding municipalities, army officers, representative of religious affairs, environmental experts, housewives, civil defence experts, agricultural experts and elected representatives of villages. At the end of the panel, company had many recommendations on AKSA projects related to environmental, public health, emergency response preparation and risk management issues. AKSA says it established the panel to gain access to the concerns of the community, to exchange ideas and contribute sustainability to regional development. AKSA's achievement was recognized at the national association's Responsible Care awards.

Responsible Care initiative as a case model :

Responsible Care helps the industry to engage and work with stakeholders at local, national and international levels to listen and address their concerns and aspirations through the community awareness code as it can be seen by examining Turkey's implementation examples. This code requires Responsible Care practitioners to design and implement extensive community outreach programs that requires companies to be open and transparent with all their stakeholders from local communities to environmental lobby groups, from local authorities and government to the media, consumers and of course the general public.

Companies are expected to be sensitive to community concerns and respond to them, and develop a process of regular communication with the community through local outreach programs. It is also expected to provide information about the hazards and associated risks of chemical products and operations to employees, people on site and interested members of the community and work with governments to develop public policies, legislation and regulations governing community awareness and emergency response. These programs are based on openness and cooperation. Company representatives embark on a series of information sessions by going door to door or by other means. These representatives invite their neighbours and other members of the community to visit their plant, ask questions and voice their concerns. The company is obligated to answer these questions and take action... It has driven a transformation in the way that companies operate: from being secretive and defensive about their activities, to being more open, honest, and actively seeking dialogue and partnerships with stakeholders. Through this code, citizens and the environment are central to the planning and execution of chemical industry initiatives for the future. The most significant result may be how the industry and an informed public determine their needs relative to those of the environment and future generations. By assisting producers and consumers in balancing these competing needs, Responsible Care truly may be seen as a catalyst for trust and provide its greatest contribution to the creation of Responsible Care consumers.

As Manzini and Formentini (2004) explained that good and best practices can contribute to the social learning process that the transition towards more sustainable production and consumption patterns. Globally the process that is underway when realizing case histories on good practices mainly follows three steps: Telling the consumer what and how has been done and giving them the tools to actually change. Responsible Care initiative of the chemical industry could be a model to all other industries especially in terms of its achievements on awareness-raising process. This has focused on identifying what tools can be used to extend the programme to new companies and industries. The use of the conceptual framework of the elements of interactive citizenship as given earlier can be suggested to develop similar initiatives either for a company or another industry sector in order to create Responsible Care consumer as shown below Figure 2.



Figure 2: Responsible Care as a case model in awareness rising

Conclusion and Future challenges

In conclusion, a global ranking report notes that the world's 100 largest companies have a poor record of accounting for their impact on society and the environment. A range of measures that include strategy, governance and stakeholder involvement show these companies scoring an average of 24 out of 100 points with only five companies scoring more than 50% (Financial Times. June 23 , 2004). These evidences suggest that companies have a long way to go to clearly demonstrate

substantive Corporate Citizenship. With the growing importance of sustainable production and consumption, corporations and consumers will increasingly adopt a comprehensive view of interactive citizenship that includes interdependence between features of corporate citizenship, consumer awareness and involvement.

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One learning approach for stimulating social responsibility of business

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The purpose of the paper is to present one learning approach for stimulating the business, as a part of the economic system, to be responsible for creating the consumer citizenship society. It has subscribed to the opinion that the concept of social business responsibility has grown out of consumer pressure and stems from the main business interest of superior performance and creation of sustainable competitive advantages.

The approach is a problem-based learning (PBL). We offer components of the technology- rich learning environment, including intelligent computer systems.

1. Background.

The business and consumers are parts of the business system with own needs and interests. All business firms create essentially for one purpose: to increase the wealth of their members. Consequently, profit maximization as a basic goal for business behavior stays in the focus of the economics education. Without profit the firm cannot stay in business to satisfy anybody's needs. And the question is how to balance economic development with human needs.

The stimulating of business towards social responsibility requires revealing the relationship between the major components of social responsibility and benefits from business. The traditional methods of teaching students economics are not efficient so as to reveal a network of intricate connections and interdependencies. Traditional teaching faces real problems, which necessitate a quest for new and more efficient approaches in the teaching process. Some of these problems are:

- A large part of the learned matter is quickly forgotten and the remembered portion is difficult to apply in concrete cases;
- Many students cannot reason efficiently in order to arrive at a professional decision.
- The students cannot take responsibility for their education and are not well motivated to reach the best quality
- The obtained team-work skills are not sufficient.

In order to overcome these shortbacks and obtain high results from the educational process the problem-based-learning (PBL) approach is proposed.

2. What is PBL:

The essence is to create a learning medium in which learning is guided by the stated issue. The latter is so defined that the students see the necessity of concrete knowledge for its solving and become active in order to acquire this knowledge. The approach is centered around the students. The students are the ones that meet the intellectual challenge and decide what logic to apply for the solving of the problem, the students are the ones that open and introduce data and seek new knowledge. In the PBL the students know why they need to learn this new knowledge that they need. As it is

known, learning in a context facilitates the later applying of learnt knowledge. In this process the teacher is not a passive participant and the center of attention is shifted from the teacher to the student. The teacher turns from a center of all knowledge into a coach and facilitator for the extraction of new knowledge. The teacher's task is to shape diverse strategies aimed to solve the problem, to ask meta-cognitive questions of the type "what suggestions have you made", "how did you arrive at this conclusion", to direct the reasoning process, etc. In this manner the students are provoked to ask themselves questions about their process of learning and thinking. They have to use the information that is available to them, to find new information and to draw out knowledge as a process of thinking, discussion and analysis.

Each issue is defined in the form of case studies that are narrower than the comprehensive real-practice cases discussed in the studied discipline. The answers are not assessed as right or wrong but as reasonable and unreasonable solutions based on knowledge and skills. The decision is as result of the understanding of the available information and the ability to think critically. The difference from the traditional learning by case studies is that it applies already accumulated knowledge while PBL starts a process of quest and accumulation of new knowledge.

The advantages of PBL are:

- The students become more responsible and motivated for their learning;
- Ability to generate successful problem-solving strategies is obtained;
- A life-long model for successful learning is set.

3. Application of PBL for stimulating of the social responsibility of business

The issues that are set before the students may include formulating the major components of the social responsibility of business and their relationship to the main benefits of business. Let us suppose that the following issues have been placed for discussion:

- Why business should be socially responsible?
- How is the social responsibility of business expressed?
- What are the existing possibilities to stimulate the social responsibility of business?
- What is the benefit of business from being socially responsible?
- What is the relationship between the social responsibility and profit and return of assets?

In order to answer the raised questions the students should discuss diverse theoretical statements, should find out the factors that influence the social responsibility of business and should find ways for its stimulation based on the examples of concrete cases. The relationship and interdependencies among the factors can be presented by the model cited here below (fig. 1).

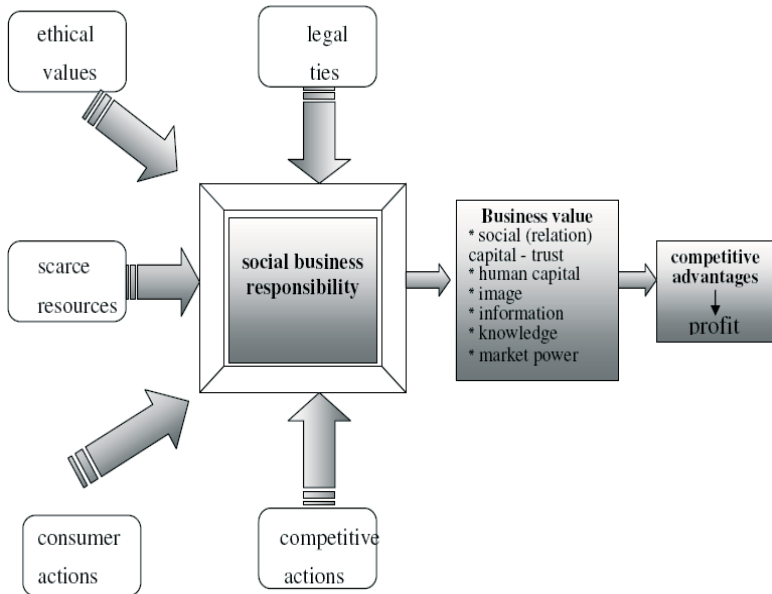


Fig. 1 Drivers of social business responsibility

For example, the relationships between the social responsibility of business and the main business interest can be deduced out of conception of superior performance and creation of sustainable competitive advantages. To maximize its long-run performance, the business must build and maintain a long-run, mutually beneficial relationship with its buyers. With these contentions we have subscribed to the opinion that the concept of business social responsibility has grown out of consumer pressure. Using the ground of the stated theses, the application of the PBL approach can be efficiently used in the process of:

- Making a decision for purchase and selection of supplier: producer or vendor, for each stage of the business cycle, including the end users;
- Assessment of the consumers' preferences and perception by the companies in order to define the advantages of the competition.

4. Information technologies in PBL:

Since PBL is a teaching approach closely related to the handling of much information, the creation of a technology-rich learning environment is required.

The information technologies can be used as a tool to organize the arisen ideas, holding of consultancies with specialists on the issue, quest of current information, presentation of ideas, etc. The focus should be on the providing of access to the experience gathered through learning.

This approach, being an educational process, also requires:

- Internet access for finding new on-line resources;
- Presentation of ideas: Power Point and the other components of MsOffice,

i.e. Excel, Access and Word.

What we offer is the use of intelligence computer systems in the learning process. The latter apply the artificial intelligence technologies for handling and interpreting of knowledge. The intelligence systems support the process of decision-making and are user-oriented. Because of their natural-language interface they are suitable for teaching of non-specialists in informatics. The intelligence systems are intended for solving of problems where the decision-finding algorithm is not known in advance, the current information does not have digital expression and quite often it is incomplete and controversial. In such cases knowledge and specialized methods for interpretation are used. The quality of the suggested decisions is comparable to that of the experts in a particular field. These major characteristics of the intelligence systems allow for their use as advisors and consultants in the process of problem based learning.

Depending on whether the used knowledge is implicitly presented or explicit models for presentation of knowledge are used, the intelligence systems are divided into digital- (calculating) and symbol ones (fig.2).

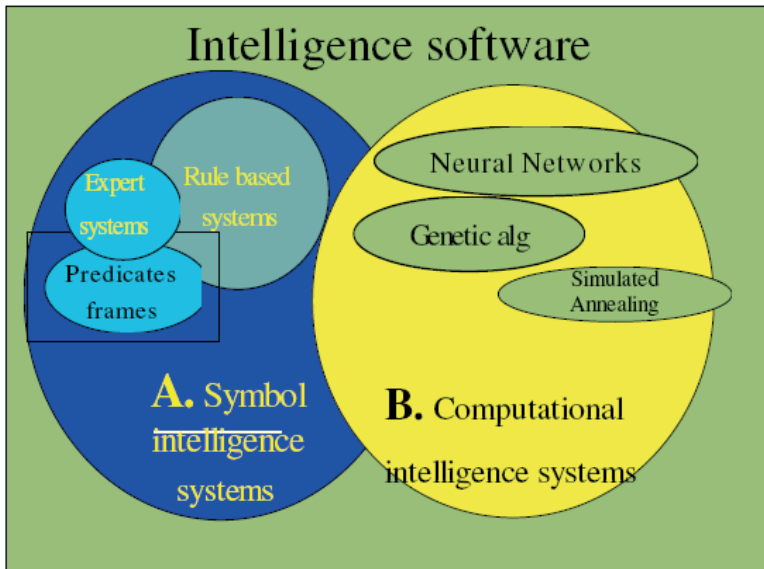


Fig.2. Intelligent computer systems software

If the data in the issue are predominantly verbal and conceptual model of the discussed issue can be made, the symbol intelligence systems are applied. The digital systems are preferred when it is impossible to create a conceptual model for the solving of the problem and there exist numerous parameters of concrete values for the observed quantities.

- A. The intelligence systems of symbolic type contains bases of knowledge in the form of production rules, frames, scenarios, semantic nets, and Horn's clauses.

The decisions are drawn out through the processing of these models. An important specific of the application of the symbol systems in the teaching is that they can offer explanation of the reached solution and knowledge used for that purpose. This possibility facilitates the learning process since it explains the route to the offered solution or why the system requires the introduction of additional data. The intelligence systems train and adapt themselves to the newly received information, which makes them extremely flexible and applicable to similar issues.

In the process of work the learners may use consulting from the intelligence system under the form of model solutions on similar issues, explanations of the decisions or strategies, which the learners may select to use in their work. For example, appropriate is the applying of the ESTA-shell for expert systems used by non-specialists of informatics. In this pattern, under the rules of the type if <condition> < action>

The teacher can direct the students to starting points to reason on a selected issue or to present similar cases. The use of ESTA is not difficult owing to the natural manner of expression of knowledge.

In the digital systems, on the basis of a series of simplifications and hypotheses, an attempt is made to stimulate the activity of the central nervous system of man. Neural networks are calculation models composed by multitude of connected processing elements (neurons) and each of these perform digital operations and exchanges results with its neighbours through attracted connections. Their power is in their ability to present both linear and non-linear dependencies and in their ability to learn these connections directly from the data, which they model. The principally difficult approach to the data processing compared to that of the conventional systems provides opportunity to work with incomplete and incorrect data.

In order to obtain reliable result from the neuron network it is necessary for this network to be trained through selected examples on the issue called *teaching multitude*. This is a combination of concrete values for the observed quantities and their respective result. Learning is a process in which the network draws out functional dependencies from the input data. These dependencies are memorized in the connections between the neurons and are used later. The learning is effected through repetitive interactive process of changing in the weight coefficients of the connections between the neurons.

We made an experiment with the EasyNN software applied to assess the influence of the consumer expectations and opinions for the service, what is the relative meaning of the separate purchase-defining criteria at the formulating of the purchase preferences as a main driver that stimulates the social activity of the business.

The choice of neural networks as a research tool has been dictated from both the type of discussed factors: qualitative, verbal and missing digital equivalent, and the non-linear dependability between these and the source quantities.

The conducted research reviewed seven major factors that define the consumer choice of supermarket-type trade point: convenient location, prices, diversity and availability of assortment, quality of offered goods, quality of direct services and image of the facility. The indices have been selected on the grounds of applied expert assessment and results obtained from previous research work of the authors conducted on the purchase-defining criteria in the supermarket sector (fig.3).

When the teaching process has been completed, the network rates the input quantities by their importance:

1. Prices of offered goods
2. Atmosphere in the trade point
3. Quality of the goods
4. Availability of goods variety
5. Image of the trade point
6. Diversity of assortment
7. Direct services

The prices as synthetic element of the commercial offer on which the decision making by the other trade conditions is based are rated on the first place. The consumer perception of the price is closely related to the assessment of the quality level of the remaining elements of the trade service culture. The latter supports the thesis for the quest of balance between the costs and benefits from the offering of different level of trade services stated at the beginning.

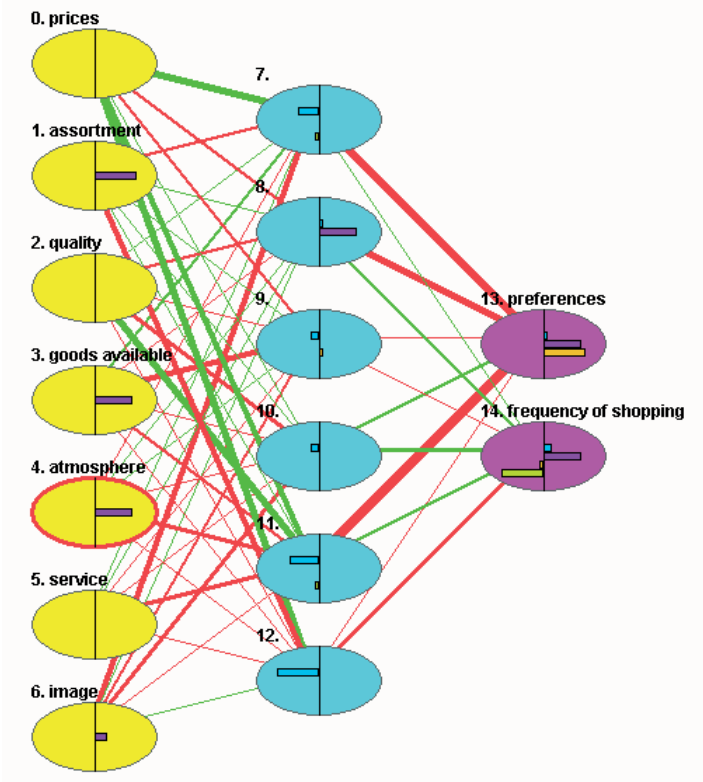


Fig.3. The neural network architecture

The students can “ask” the network for a concrete assessment by introducing concrete values for the monitored indices. The results that they’ll obtain will reflect the influence of the consumer assessments on the choice of a concrete trade point. They will use the obtained decisions later in their work on the problem.

The concrete results, which are obtained as answer to the queries give us grounds to offer the use of neuron networks to define the social effect from the activities of the companies and its relation to the economic results and also how to distribute the investment and current costs when selecting a level on which to materialize the major characteristics of the trade service that define the consumers’ choice.

Conclusion

PBL is a method that encourages independent learning and gives students practice in tackling puzzling situations. It helps to develop a deeper understanding of problems. Based on the business system approach and the social networks approach, the education in the area of the social business responsibility require interdisciplinary background and continuously searching for effective tools.

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Corporate vs. consumer social responsibility in a knowledge-based economy

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Introduction

At the beginning of new millennium, many of us sensed that society is in a state of upheaval. Something fundamental has happened to the way in which we interact with others. Most concretely, perhaps, more and more of us find ourselves in continuous exchange with a growing number of other people, and, associated with that, in learning processes that are different from what was experienced in the past. Referring to society at large, concepts such as the “learning society” and the “knowledge-based economy”, have become popular in recent years. At the same time, whereas we apparently seem to be on a downward slope as regards growth, the fact remains that accelerating structural changes make it more difficult to measure economic performance. In spite of the disappointments, there is little doubt that, in the light of *knowledge-based economy*⁵³ models built upon the endogenous model of economic growth, the world *sustainable development*⁵⁴ will crucially depend on the ability of citizens, companies and institutional infrastructure to utilize their *intelligence*⁵⁵.

Management of natural resources and of the environment, and societal changes such as those associated with reduced birth rates and the ageing society, still all matter in a knowledge-based economy for productivity and growth. In this paper, however, we underline the key importance of yet another factor, i.e. that of *organizational change*. Rather than approached in isolation, organizational changes should be conceived of as a response as well as an enabler in regard to a range of opportunities and challenges brought about by contemporary world. In particular, the systems (evolutionary) approach provides strong support for the thesis that intelligent behaviour of individuals and organizations, and consequently, their ability to innovate is both enabled and constrained by existing social structure. Social embeddedness of innovation is crucial to understanding the impact of knowledge residing in a particular socio-economic system onto its interior structure and external relations. It is suggested, that structural differences between socio-economic (sub)systems determine not only the patterns of knowledge distribution but also the patterns of knowledge creation. Organizational change is commonly mentioned as a key factor but less often addressed explicitly. However, in the school of thought focusing on **clusters**, organizational issues have

⁵³ We might consider a European distinctive economic and social model that has combined productivity, social cohesion and a growing commitment to environmental sustainability. The model outlined in the Lisbon strategy and refocused on in the Report by Wim Kok (EC, 2004) offers Europe a new frontier for the development of a knowledge-based ‘social’ economy.

⁵⁴ “Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Hart 1995:4)

⁵⁵ We may follow Veryard (2000: 52) in understanding the term ‘intelligence’ as a phenomenon comprising the following five mental abilities: perception, information processing, memory, learning and adaptation.

been put in focus. Here, the role of space, proximity, and the idiosyncratic features of a specific place, is stressed. From this viewpoint, untangling the paradox of location in a global economy has brought about an insight about how firms continually interact with their immediate socio-economic environment in order to gain competitive advantages and simultaneously promote the sustainable development of location. The progress in stakeholder approach to strategic management has, at the same time, revealed that the systems model of stakeholders contributes to address social responsibility of all local actors.

This paper investigates the ‘mapping’ of stakeholder approach onto the learning clusters model. In Section 1, there has been outlined the modelling approach to learning cluster as a territorially bounded open system of knowledge pools and flows with a focus on its sustainable development. Section 2 involves the knowledge-based notions of corporate and consumer social responsibility that follow the modelling approach to competition and cooperation outlined in Section 1. These are shown to be equivalent to the specific local and global knowledge exchange ties, with a particular responsibility of ‘formalised knowledge producers’ and institutional endowment. Finally, in Section 3, there has been proposed the *hypothesis* that learning economy enhances concurrently corporate and consumer social responsibility for it enables both supply-side and demand-side actors to display intelligent behaviour.

I. Knowledge-based local economies as generators of socio-economic growth

Presumably, spatial clustering always contributed to economic growth through enhanced learning processes stimulated by socio-economic co-evolution, but the shift towards a knowledge-based economy has certainly amplified our interest in understanding the nature of this proposition. This had led some scholars to propose that the localized cluster is *the* territorial configuration most likely of enhancing socio-economic interaction.

In particular, the interaction between the social and economic dimensions of any system is exposed through the analysis of parallel models of innovation processes (Tushman, O’Reilly, 1996; Van de Ven, 2000)⁵⁶. These prove that modeling of innovation processes within a particular socio-economic subsystem coincides with the process of creative learning, i.e. ‘double loop learning’ (Argyris, Schoen, 1992:18-19) taking place inside the subsystem as well as between the subsystem and its enveloping systemic environment simultaneously in all phases of the innovation process. Consequently, the structure and organizational form of the system makes a key factor determining the logic of innovation processes. In this light, the notion of innovation means any intentional attempts to introduce changes. And as such, **innovation boils down to the intelligent behaviour of individuals and whole systems**. The survival of any socio-economic subsystem in its changing system environment is conceivable

⁵⁶ These include the model of organizational chaos, of ecological evolution, the autopoiesis model, and the model of adaptive and creative learning. For further references see (Góra, 2004d)

only if the subsystem is able to convert its pooled **knowledge**⁵⁷ into particular behaviours in interaction with its environment. These leads either to better adaptation of the subsystem to the external environment or to the modification of the external environment to suit the needs identified by the subsystem itself. Thus, the survival of any subsystem derivates from the concept of **individual and collective (group) intelligence** (Veryard, 2000:52). Each socio-economic subsystem possesses a certain ‘dose of intelligence’ that enables its reasonable actions. It is the subsystem’s need to survive which forces it to develop all components of intelligence. In this light, any socio-economic subsystem may be perceived as an intelligent (sub)system, in which the internal knowledge states and learning processes related to them make its passive elements, while the active elements are understood as ‘double loop learning’ occurring between the (sub)system and its enveloping environment. The interaction between active and passive components of the (sub)system is based upon its ability to perceive and memorize. In the light of this model, **any intelligent socio-economic (sub)system is capable to innovate, whereas its capability to innovate is determined by its ability to reveal its intelligence in a particular systems environment.** The differences between environments of subsystems, which include dissimilarities between **institutions**⁵⁸ residing within them, influence the development of intelligence components. The boundaries set out by the common institutions developed over time by the components embedded in a particular system confine the interactive learning processes occurring between them (Edquist, Riddel, 2000). Consequently, there are **two fundamental mechanisms of innovative processes recognized as the intelligent behaviours of subsystem: the adaptive learning that enables the subsystem to innovate iteratively** (March, 1999), **and the creative learning that facilitates the subsystem with its ability to generate radical innovations** (Van de Ven, 2000).

Porter (2000: 254) defines a **cluster** as “a geographically proximate group of interconnected companies and associated institutions in a particular field, linked by commonalities and complementarities”, while also stating that the geographic scope of a cluster can “range from a single city or state to a country or even a group of neighbouring countries.” In the systemic approach, the interconnections in a cluster can be perceived as knowledge exchange ties related to the interactive learning (Maskel, Malmberg, 1998, 1999; Maskell *et al.*, 2004). These knowledge flows create

⁵⁷ The contemporary concept of *knowledge* is very complex and there have not been its precise definitions formulated. It has been developing together with humankind and science. At the beginning of third millennium the concept remains still one of the fundamental and multilateral philosophical problems. The author defines *knowledge* as a certain state of a system that results from the interactions of the five components of intelligence: ‘*Knowledge is information gathered from the environment, that is amplified by the mental process in human minds. Human beings may, in turn – individually or collectively – undertake efforts to integrate the information converted in their minds with the environment*’. (Góra, 2004 c, d)

⁵⁸ We might follow North (1994: 360) in defining *institutions* as ‘*humanly devised constraints that structure human interaction. They are made up of formal constraints (e.g., rules, laws, constitutions), informal constraints (e.g., norms of behaviour, conventions, self-imposed codes of conduct, routines), and their enforcement characteristics...*’ while explicitly adding Smiths (1997) economic (knowledge) infrastructures that result from conscious policy decisions and investment programmes and include special programmes in local schools and universities, government-supported technical institutions and training centres, specialized apprenticeship programmes, etc. Some of these institutions are of a general nature, equally applicable to any socio-economic subsystems, other institutions have, however, a definite scope and will differ from one subsystem to the next or at least in a large number of subsystems (Lundvall 1992, Nelson 1993).

the web interconnecting the knowledge pools gathered within respective organizations. The horizontal dimension of a cluster consists of those firms that produce similar goods and compete with one another. These firms do not necessarily have close contacts to one another or intensive input-output relations involving substantial physical transactions. Rather, the respective firms benefit from their co-location through 'free' continuous monitoring and benchmarking. This creates rivalry and serves as an incentive for product differentiation and variation.

The vertical cluster dimension consists of those firms which are complementary and are inter-linked through a network of supplier, service and customer relations. In locating close to these markets, the suppliers can gain economies of scale and distribute large parts of their production at low costs (i.e. transportation costs). As a consequence, one would expect the development of dense networks of transaction and material linkages within a cluster. However, it has been well-known for a long time that it is not a case.

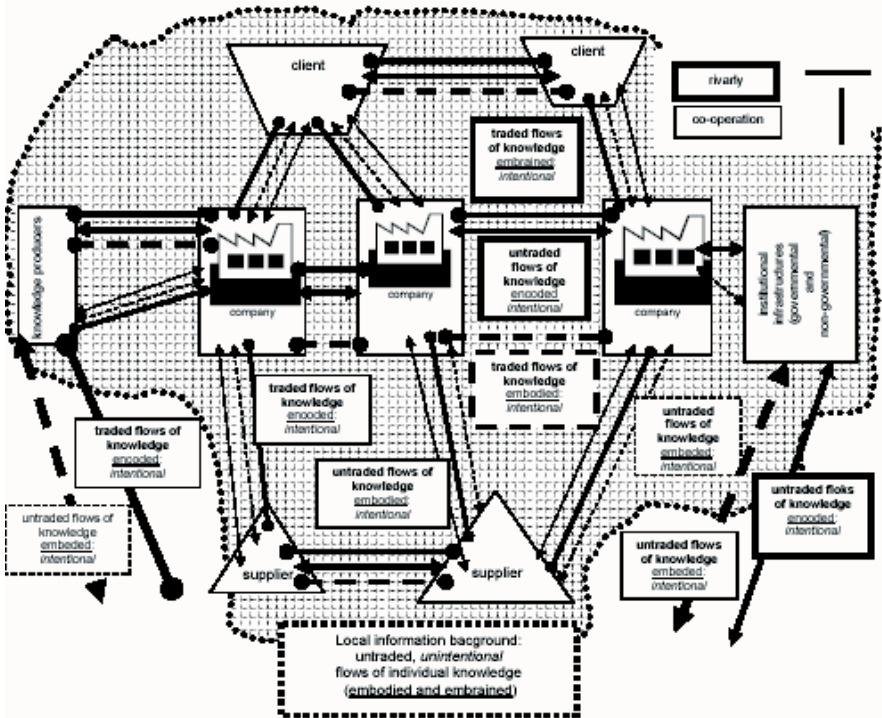
On the grounds of a knowledge-based economy, it has been emphasized recently that the decisive role in spatial clustering is played by the untraded interdependencies. It has been shown that socio-institutional settings, inter-firm communication and interactive processes of localized learning play decisive roles in processes of innovation and growth (Maskell *et al.* 1998, Gordon and McCann 2000).

Locating within an industrial cluster brings these advantages identified in the systemic approach only for intelligent organizations that can participate in the knowledge exchange network (Góra, 2004b,c,d). Any organization located within a cluster has also further advantages that are not available to organizations situated elsewhere. It can be referred to as '*local information background*' that denotes the information and communication ecology created by face-to-face contacts, co-presence and co-location of people and firms within the same industry and place or region. It consists of specific information and continuous updates of this information, intended and unanticipated learning processes in organised and accidental meetings, the application of the same interpretative schemes and mutual understanding of new knowledge, as well as shared institutions, which stimulate the establishment of conventions and institutional infrastructure. Actors continuously contributing to and benefiting from the diffusion of information, gossip and news by just 'being there'. Over time, these structures of social relations stimulate fine-grained knowledge transfer, joint problem-solving arrangements and the development of trust and reciprocity.

The local knowledge exchange networks enable the clustered organizations to innovate iteratively, and 'radically in a local scale'. This system of innovation, however, would not be able to innovate radically in a global scale, if its intelligent behaviour did not occur in relation to its wider systemic environment. As a consequence, the cluster must develop 'global pipelines' (Maskell *et al.*, 2004) enabling the exchange of knowledge between the local and global networks. These global knowledge exchange flows can be of traded or untraded character. Decisive, non-incremental, traded knowledge flows do not just result from local and regional interaction but is often acquired through strategic partnerships of inter-regional and international reach. Unlike in the case of local networks between cluster organizations, in case of untraded global flows there is no shared trust implied by common institutions from which the new partners can benefit. The establishment of global pipelines with new partners requires that new trust

is being built in a conscious and systematic way. This process of building up trust takes time and involves costs. These tend to make the explicit knowledge flows and interaction in global pipelines targeted towards a certain, often pre-defined goal. The situation is even more complex in case of tacit knowledge residing exclusively within institutional contexts. This requires complex capabilities. In fact, it is quite possible that through a lack of understanding of different institutional contexts communication might be almost impossible. In this case, firms would continue ‘speaking different languages’. It would be impossible to translate messages between these institutional contexts and to establish common interpretative schemes. In this sense, the intermediate role of ‘cluster gatekeepers-translators’ becomes crucial for translating externally produced knowledge into a form that can be understood by internal organizations. The role is mostly taken up by formalized knowledge producers (e.g. R&D institutes, universities, educational centres, professional services providers) and institutional endowment organizations (governmental and non-governmental). In this light, the industrial cluster understood as intelligent (sub)system and thus capable to innovate iteratively and radically, can be described with a map of its local and global knowledge flows (Figure 1).

Figure 1 A map of knowledge flows and pools representing an intelligent cluster



II. Social responsibility in gaining competitive advantages

In the knowledge-based, intelligent clusters, the famous ‘diamond of competitive advantages’ by Porter (2000: 263) developed further with the GEM (*Groundings - Enterprises - Markets*) methodology (Padmore, Gibson, 1998), extends to a more complex model covering the socio-economic interactions (Góra, 2004d). It may be visualised with the use of interaction between passive and active states representing the intelligent cluster (Figure 2).

The comparative analysis between the ‘classical’ and ‘intelligent’ models of competitive advantages shows us how the social responsibilities on both demand and supply sides become components of gaining the competitive advantages in a knowledge-based economy.

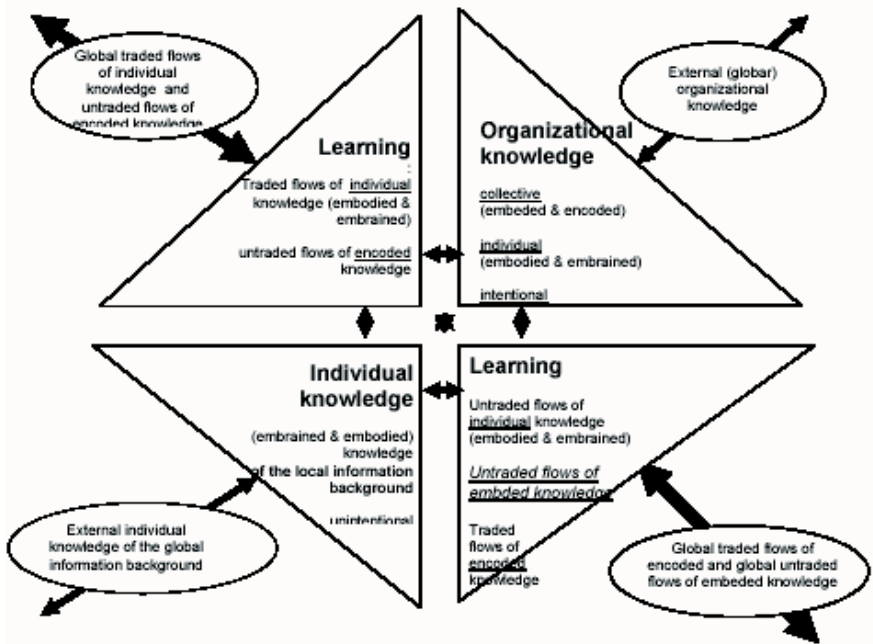
Groundings – referred previously to the material infrastructure – become developed to the organizational knowledge pooled in the clustered organizations. The interaction occurring between particular types of explicit and tacit knowledge suggest **the possibility to compensate some shortages of codified knowledge with other types of it residing in the social interrelations**. As a consequence, **the institutions residing in a particular organization become its core resources**.

Enterprises – comprising previously the structural determinants, namely, the suppliers and relative industries (vertical dimension) on one hand, and the structure and strategies of companies (horizontal dimension) on the other – turn widened to the vertical and horizontal processes of inter-organizational learning. The vertical bunch of knowledge flows comprises individual interactive learning and traded codified knowledge exchange between the members of marketing chain, with the prevailing role of the first one. It proves that **co-operation** in a knowledge-based economy **requires the exchange of untraded tacit knowledge, and consequently, the modification of institutions**. The horizontal bunch of knowledge flows is made up of traded individual learning and untraded codified knowledge exchange. Unlike in the knowledge-based co-operation, **rivalry does not contain the exchange of tacit knowledge**. Accordingly, **the institutions** residing in horizontally clustered organizations **become a part of their competition**. The presented systems approach highlights a key role played by the interactive learning processes between the clustered business organizations, knowledge producers and institutional endowment organizations for economic development through innovation. In the intelligent cluster, **all competing companies must include social responsibility aspects in their strategies if they want to survive in a changing environment**. Without modification of their internal institutions, in order to comply with external institutions built up by both local and then global citizens, they cannot gain competitive advantages.

Local markets - determined previously by the demand capability of local consumers – are now covering all types of individual knowledge flowing in the local information background. The access to this knowledge is easy and completely free, equally to both demand and supply sides. The knowledge often flows in an unintentional way, and consumers and companies seldom remain aware of it. Since the local consumers have always higher expectations so as to the quality of products than the clients from elsewhere, this knowledge, which reflects their present and future needs, stimulates the iterative innovation of clustered companies. As a consequence, **the local information background**, it becomes a key source of gaining competitive advantages of locality,

shapes dynamically and simultaneously social responsibilities of consumers and companies.

Figure 2 The ‘intelligent diamond’ of competitive advantages of localization



III. Sustainable development - corporate or consumer responsibility?

The intelligent model of competitive advantages spreads its wings from the pure economic concepts of innovation through systems and organization theories to the social economy based upon the dynamics of stakeholder theories comprising corporate social responsibility issues on one hand, and the institutional economy theories⁵⁹ on the other. In all these, however, the key concept in a systems approach is ‘survival’ of social and economic systems perceived as a complex system with interaction of the two dimensions. **Without the interaction between social and economic dimensions - resulting from their intelligent behaviour - the growth, and especially sustainable development of humankind cannot be realised.** The concept of intelligent behaviour of individuals and organizations developing towards a

⁵⁹ Researchers in the stakeholder field differ in their worldview on stakeholder concepts, but most of them acknowledge Freeman’s book (1984) as a landmark in stakeholder literature. In his book, Freeman defines stakeholders as ‘any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm’s objectives’.

knowledge-based society is essential for the socio-economic systems design and their mutual survival. **The knowledge-based systems approach emphasises intelligent participation of the demand and supply sides in sustainable development problem definition and solving.** The model discussed in the paper argues rather for mutual **intelligent responsiveness between consumers and companies instead of their separate responsibilities.**

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IX. GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

Sustainable consumption and consumer education: analysis of the Italian situation

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Introduction: The Concepts of Health and Sustainable consumption

The concept of Sustainable consumption, consumption joint to environment, is a developments' model that put to centre the people and the environment, therefore it intertwines with the concept of Health how *social well-being*.

In the European culture the concept of "health linked to diseases" is widespread: health means having a lack of diseases. This limited perception persists even though; a more expansive theory has been set by WHO in the seventies. According to this belief, health is synonymous with *total physical, psychic, and social well-being*. In this context, a sustainable consumption increases own psychic well-being, therefore, own health.

The health, educational, and socio-cultural process is formed upon this basis. This is where all the thoughts about the different and complimentary dimensions of health come from. The **physical dimension** is close to the popular and traditional concept of health, because it includes exercise, correct nourishment, and awareness of the negative effects of drugs and alcohol on our bodies.

The **mental dimension** is a recent development birthed from new discoveries in the symbiotic relationship between mind and body (*mens sana in corpore sano*), psyche and soma. We are now aware of the fact that the mental, affective, emotional, spiritual conditions are an essential part of our health condition. The **social dimension** might seem less obvious, though the social behaviour, the interpersonal relationships and culture itself have a main role according to health. That is exactly what the European Council stated in a document: *health -much more than a lack of health- is a quality of life having a social, mental, moral, spiritual and affective dimension: it is an unstable condition that must be conquered again and again, defended and re-built all through our life.*

Over the last few years the concept of well-being has been indicating the existence of a personal and environmental "living-together" condition, which is strictly linked to quality of life, where factors encouraging growing-up, developing, achieving and maintaining the psychophysical and relational balance of a person prevail.

Within the dissertations about health, the concept of "quality of life", which can be sometimes ambiguous, is used to indicate, from one side, the quality of the relational system of society in which a person is integrated, on the other side, the ability of people to develop a positive attitude when they have to face and solve their own

conflicts.

This approach to the health issue can be defined as **functionalistic** –that is, a perfect integration within the social role which an individual is linked to, in contrast to the **medical-sanitary** approach (perfect functionality of the body) and the **phenomenologist** approach, according to which, health is a result of the achievement of positive daily inter-subjective relationships.

In this context, health protection coincides with positive conditions for an individual's growth and development.

The creation of these peculiar conditions can be traced back to either an autonomous or external action, in which case education has a main role throughout the process, especially within prevention sector. Of course, education can only have a positive function, avoiding prohibitions and helping young people grow up and realize their own personal project.

The introduction of sustainable and health education into school: the normative basis

The normative basis of the health education's introduction into Italian schools can be traced back to the ministerial memorandum n. 173 of 12.05.1970 about prevention from drug addictions, where the next law 162/90, among the initiatives for such a prevention, identifies health education into schools. Title X, article 10 states that, *"the Ministry of Public Instruction promotes and coordinates the activities related to health education and information about damages provoked by alcoholism, tabagism, use of narcotic and psychotropic substances and related pathologies"*. Within article 105, the local education directors are invited to organize "updating courses for teachers of every kind of school about sanitary and environment education."

Within article 106, for the first time, the new C.I.C (Information and Consulting Centers) for high school are mentioned.

The financial resources which were put at disposal by law 162/90 allowed the promotion and the execution of the "Young People Project" first, and the projects "Rainbow" and "Kids and Parents" after, as both an expression and a symbol of a pedagogical policy which fostered the integration between school and extra-curricular activities.

Amongst the several goals to be achieved, the slogan that was brought out in that occasion was:

"Feeling good about ourselves and other people within the institutions."

The concept of "**feeling good about ourselves in a world feeling better**" has specific objectives:

helping young people accept their own identity as a necessary condition for the acceptance of the "other", solidarity, ethic and the ability to face risks that endanger the achievement of well-being.

The notion of "**feeling good with other people within our cultural environment, in touch with other cultures**" focuses upon solving socio-cultural difficulties. The idea of "**feeling good within institutions, in a Europe that leads the world**" is aimed at shortening the distance between vital social and institutional worlds. In other words, the projects underline the premise that, "to successfully make the transition from adolescent, teenager, and then on to adulthood in a happy healthy

manner, requires people to meet, interact, and integrate with other people and institutions. “**Feeling good**” is synonymous with positive well-being which is the antithesis of “**discomfort**”, the main cause of academic, social, and professional failure”.

This educational approach led schools to add a new subject –health and sustainable education- and to re-elaborate its teaching methods, its relational system and its curricula, in order to give the student the chance to experience the exertion of responsibility, the balance between training and information means, social roles and the relationship between other people and environment.

Besides this general goal, health and sustainable education offered other specific goals –didactic and educational.

The intended goals of the curriculum are:

- providing the students with basic knowledge of health education and environment protection, that they will develop for their future life;
- creating a critical knowledge in the individual regarding health and the code of behaviour to maintain and a critical consciousness regarding sustainable consumption;
- teaching health education and sustainability, in order to prevent risks inside and outside the school environment;

To reach these didactic and educational goals, health education and sustainability have been developed around the concept of educational/didactic planning.

The health education and sustainability project should adhere to the following criteria:

- giving up the traditional approaches, such as normative prohibition;
- educating people with a particular emphasis on the interdependence between health and life style;
- searching for contents and methods which are appropriate for kids;
- maintaining a long-lasting relation between information and education;
- observing school reality from the view point of students and teachers who face discomfort;
- determining available resources and potentialities;
- educating people on concept: to live well with less resources it’s possible;
- educating young people on re-use of materials.

The reference teacher in health and consumption education

The development of health and consumption education introduced a new role: the reference teacher, thanks to the Ministerial Addendum n.6 of 11/3/94, which states: “the concepts of school prevention and health/consumption education brought into schools of any level and degree a specific figure, whose task is to plan and coordinate –within school- projects that revolve around consumption and health education. The reference teacher has been introduced by a law which is valid all over the national territory. The functions of the reference teacher –chosen by the school director after being proposed by the teacher staff- are hereby described:

- fostering the spread of information within the school;
- promoting training activities for the other teachers;

- being a reference figure for the realization of projects linked to consulting and information activities of CIC;
- offering consulting and support to the initiatives brought out by the students;
- involving families and local infrastructures in prevention activities.

Further functions can be:

- monitoring discomfort situations, by using the proper resources which can be found within schools and on the territory;
- assisting planning work groups in facing problems that rise at school;
- helping school directors realize the projects;
- constantly monitoring the activated projects.

Realizing the above tasks requires a proper training that depends on the level and degree of schools and on the local socio-cultural conditions.

Proposal of training route

Since the year 2000 the training courses for referent teachers of elementary and middle schools of first degree combined into one main course.

Every training route made use of a method that provided three different learning forms:

- the introductory lesson, whether in psychological or psychopedagogical transposition, took into consideration the influences of social environment on the students and their possible reactions to it;
- group workshops in which the reference teachers exchanged their own experiences, cognitive researches, expression activities and relationship experiences;
- project activities within their own schools together with colleagues and school director.

The common subjects of the lesson

The common subjects, that have been chosen for the last courses implicate:

- the concept of health within complex society;
- the propagation of health in the age of development;
- the educational challenges of the social complexity;
- the condition of adolescence in the social complexity;
- the educational relationship;
- the group “class”: its dynamics, evolution, and educational management;
- the educational and curriculum within health/consumption education and within sustainability;
- the educational and teaching evaluation within health/consumption education and within sustainability;
- the educational cooperation and the respect of others;
- the equitable work and the agree consumption;
- the interpretation of needs, risk factors and resources;
- new perspectives of health education according to the new school reform.

Specific subjects of the didactic route of high schools can be:

- the information and consulting centers: history, evolution and normative aspect of a CIC planning;
- the role of a reference teacher within the CIC management;
- the role of CIC within the working and consumption formation of the adolescents;
- awkwardness of adolescence and its indicators;
- listening to the needs and problems of adolescents;
- ethic education and new consumption style;
- the social system of prevention for human people and environment.

All in all, the specific goals that should be reached within high schools are:

- 1) planning, implementation and management of a CIC together with its integration within the social system of total prevention and well-being;
- 2) ability to understand the adolescent condition, with special reference to the needs of every single teenager and possible indicators of awkwardness;
- 3) ability to introduce the use of multimedia technologies for the swift researches.

Workshops and planning

The workshops, focused on the subjects mentioned above, are an important point of synthesis of the approach and very important for the teachers' training.

The participants, in their own schools, can develop the planning activities in joint training sessions with one another, in accordance with the directions and the supervision of the trainers.

In fact, the projects can be developed in order to give the students a broad range of cultural experiences, intended to counterbalance possible deprivations within familiar and social environments.

Through cooperation, the projects should give the students the chance to take part – by full right and as protagonists- in a common project, which can increase their “sense of belonging” to their school and their classroom.

Attaining this “distinction of achievement”, as *Bruner noticed*, is an important condition that allows the students to give importance to learning and school, in case they don't receive sufficient inspiration in their personal and social environment.

Every year the reference teachers, together with one of their workshop groups designated by the teaching staff and the psychologists of the CIC, develop one or more school projects which can be financed thanks to their introduction within the “Plan of School Training Offer”. This represents the totality of training, planning, and educational vision, which characterize everyone one of our schools.

Other initiatives

As far as the well being amongst young people is concerned, many initiatives are promoted every year also outside the school context.

With regard the “sustainable development”, meant how “ *a process of change like*

that the resources exploitation, the investments flow, the technological development's trend and the institutional changes are made coherents with the future and present plans" -----, on 2th August 2002 the Italian CIPE has approved of the "National Strategy for the Sustainable Development", that expresses, for next decade, the main aims and actions on 4 priority areas: climate; nature and biodiversity; life and environment quality in the towns; sustainable consumption and natural resources and wastes management.

For each area it's indicated aims and actions, following from international and national engagements, equipped with a lot of Sustainable Development benchmarks that estimate the achievement.

Among action's means it finds the development of the "**Agenda 21**" **proceedings**, document of programmatic aims on "Environment, Economy and Society, undersigned by more than 170 Country of the World, during the Rio de Janeiro Meeting. This document consisting of 40 Chapters; the Chapter n° 28 recognizes a crucial role to local Communities to implement the Policy of Sustainable Development.

In this context the Municipality of Rome has deliberated on the project: "*The town of other economy*"

In 2006, in Rome, there will be a whole space dedicated to development and promotion of "Other Economy" The works have already been started.

Enterprises and organizations will work and produce using environmental sustainability criteria, equitable value distribution and respect for people.

This space will become, in Rome, an instrument to promote a real "district of solidal economy", fostering integration and innovation of economic relations both at a local and global level.

In the city we will find exhibitions and permanent sales of biological, solidal and recycling-friendly products.

The Operators who will present at the event work in the following sectors:

ethical finance, design and environmental-friendly systems, responsible tourism.

The guests will have the possibility to enjoy food and drinks produced through biological agriculture and equitable commerce.

"Other Economy" includes all the initiatives regarding equitable marketing associations, ethical finance, biological agriculture, critical consumption, responsible tourism, material recycling, renewable energy, non - monetary exchange systems, open information systems (as "free software").

It is an experience coming from the work of cooperative societies and associations that, for a long time, have trying to build a different economy in Rome; to increase the value of relations instead of capitals; to guarantee respect for environment and society.

Another very interesting initiative, called "Towards a local sustainability – European Common Indicators", has been organized by the European Commission together with a pool of urban environment experts, who –in 1988- worked on the definition of a number of urban sustainability indicators reflecting "the interactions among environmental, social and economical aspects", in order to "collect comparable information about the improvements in matter of local sustainability all over Europe" (Margot Wallström).

In this way, 10 basic indicators have been determined; they include some of the most important aspects of local life (social equality, participation in decisional processes, relationship between local and global dimension, sustainable development of entrepreneurial class and employment promotion, environmental protection, protection of world cultural heritage).

In 2001 the European Commission entrusted Ambiente Italia, Eurocities and Legambiente with the coordination of the project. In January 2002, 32 Italian municipal districts agreed to the initiative (75% of the total included districts of center-northern Italy).

EUROPEAN COMMON INDICATORS	
n°	Indicator
1	Satisfaction of citizens with reference to the local municipal district
2	Local contribution to global climate change Equivalent CO ₂ emissions (absolute values and time variations)
3	Local modalities and passengers' transportation
4	Accessibility to green areas and local services Distance of citizens' houses to green areas (parks, gardens, open spaces, equipment, direct access to private green areas,...) and basic services (sanitary fixtures, transportation, education, food stores,...)
5	Quality of local air Number of overcomings of threshold limit value. Esistence and realization of clearance plan
6	Transportation "house - school" for children Transportation used by children to reach school from home and viceversa
7	Sustainable management of local authorities and enterprises
8	Acoustic pollution Existence and realization of clearance plans
9	Sustainable use of the territory
10	Sustainable products Local consumption of products showing eco-labels, certified as biological, energetically efficient or coming from sustainable commerce

**Municipal districts that joined the initiative:
"Towards a local sustainable consumption" (data updated at 31st january 2002)**



Pic. 1: Territorial distribution of the municipal districts that joined the initiative:
 "Towards a local sustainable consumption - Indicatori Comuni Europei (ICE) - "

Note: data processing by Ministry of the Environment and Territorial Protection – source: AmbienteItalia

Page updated at 11th april 2002

Conclusions

The path to sustainable consumption

1972	Stockholm - Sweden United Nations Conference on the Human Environment
1980	World Conservation Strategy
1983	World Commission on Development and Environment
1987	Brundtland Report – Our Common Future
1992	Rio de Janeiro – Brasil United Nations Conference on Environment and Development / Earth Summit /UNCED V EU Environmental Action Plan "For a sustainable Development" 1993/1999
1993	National Plan for sustainable development in Italy
1994	Aalborg – Denmark 1st European Conference on Sustainable Cities
1996	Lisbon - Portugal 2nd European Conference on Sustainable Cities Istanbul – Turkey UN Conference on Human Settlements /Habitat II
1997	New York – USA 19th Special Session of the UN General Assembly /UNGASS (Rio+5) Treaty of Amsterdam
1999	Ferrara - Italy Conference in Ferrara Rearrangement of the Ministry of Environment – Realization of the Sustainable Development Service
2000	Hannover – Germany 3rd European Conference on Sustainable Cities Millennium Declaration
2001	6th EU Environmental Action Plan 2002/2010 "Environment 2010: our future, our choice" EU Strategy for Sustainable Development Action Environmental Strategy for Sustainable Development in Italy Doha - Qatar WTO Summit
2002	Monterey - Mexico International Conference on Financing for Development Rome – Italy FAO World Food Summit Johannesburg - South Africa World Summit on Sustainable Development
2005	I still miss a systematic project and the process organization in the school: whatever has been done and is being done is certainly praiseworthy, but also "random"/"accidental", voluntaristic, not mandatory. Not all the reference teachers of health/consumption and sustainability education have been trained; some of them have been simply elected even though they don't have the proper qualifications. On the other hand, the training courses are still not a constant and widespread practice. If we really want sustainable education to enter all the EU schools and the sustainable conscience of our students to grow together with their educational interest, then this kind of training must be mandatory for those people who want to start a career as a teacher, including it in schools for high school teaching. When every teacher is properly/accurately trained –and not only attending courses once in a while- we will be able to require a mandatory, interdisciplinary introduction of sustainable consumption education into schools of any level and degree.

TIPS FOR....SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

1. Buy less

Every product, even a glass of water, includes an invisible "ecological bag", made with nature, energy and work consumption

2. Buy light

Choose products with a small package!

3. Buy smart

Durable goods are too often changed and replaced before time. We could for example, change our car after 15 years instead of 7!

4. Buy easy

Avoid products working with batteries and electricity if it is not necessary. Simplicity and soberness are a sign of beauty!

5. Buy close

Buying local products reduces environmental damages due to transportation and make the economy stronger.

6. Buy healthy

Buy fresh and local products, produced by biological methods, with no preservatives or colorants.

7. Buy fair

Buy products that come from solidal markets and equitable marketing associations. To us, it means paying a little more, to the small producers it means doubling their income.

8. Buy carefully

Avoid synthetic products or materials produced by big industrial enterprises. Too often, the legislation is created according to economic lobbies, hiding environmental and health problems.

9. Buy honestly

Avoid products that are too much advertised. Remember that you pay for advertising as well.

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Sustainable future as a shared responsibility of individuals, businesses and governments

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Introduction

The fulfilment of “The Agenda of 21st century” requires not only political decisions. The tasks proceeding from sustainable development must become an everyday activity for individuals, business organizations and public institutions. A lot has been said about the responsibility of each of those elements of the society so far. What we need to do now is to ‘create the whole picture’, i.e. to answer the next three questions:

- 1 How is the responsibility shared between these elements? Who is responsible for what?
- 2 How to bring together the different interests of individuals, businesses and governments and develop understanding of their mutual interest toward a sustainable future? Is it possible to turn individuals, businesses and governments into real partners?
- 3 How to measure the way individuals, businesses and governments are taking responsibility?

First step: Dividing tasks between actors towards sustainability

The individual behaves differently at fulfilling his/her needs in different aspects of life. In respect to sustainable development any individual plays three main roles: of consumer; of organizational member and of citizen. That means three levels of responsibility exist: personal, organizational and governmental.

Personal responsibility for the sustainable future could be described through five different responsibilities [4]:

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 resolve problems with force.
5. Personal responsibility for handing down mentioned above values to the future generations.

Organizational responsibility is the responsibility of all organizational members that their organization will behave sustainably. Discussions on the content of corporate social responsibility (CSR) have a long history already. And it is not necessary to further it here. I will only mention that till now this concept was understood as a

management tool for obtaining a good image of the organization. It always has been associated with the external interactions of the organization only, with its 'standing' in society and for a lot of managers it still is something like 'a necessary evil'. From the sustainable development point of view however there are no 'internal' and no 'external' aspects of organizational behaviour. Everything that happens inside the organization is transferred into the external environment and everything that happens in society is transferred into the organization as well (through people, technologies, laws and so on). That is why I have suggested in [5] the understanding of CSR to be transformed into 'sustainably responsible behavior' and my definition for that concept is as follows:

Sustainably responsible behavior of the organization is a purposeful change of its state leading to the increase of synergy between economic, social and environmental components of its internal and external interactions towards the balanced satisfaction of stakeholders' interests, including future generations.

It is not only a matter of definition however even if that means 'to ask the right question'. A very important part of the job is to answer that very question correctly as well. So we need to know how sustainable responsible behavior of the organization could be achieved.

Resting on the above definition it is necessary to look for the answer at the intersection of internal and external interactions of the organization on the one hand, and the three key dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – on the other hand.

External interactions of the organization are concerned with the choice of the products/services to be offered, their production and market performance. Within the framework of sustainable development that means - the organization has to offer sustainably responsible products/services. The concept of 'sustainably responsible product' is comparatively well known among scientists dealing with sustainable development and some business organizations. Unfortunately too often, in fact always, this concept is misinterpreted as 'eco-product' or 'green product' having in mind environmental characteristics of products/services only and forgetting entirely the two other dimensions of sustainable development – economic and social. This concerns the last introduced concept – Integrated Product Policy (IPP) – as well. A lot of discussion is still going on and it is at an early stage of concept development, but one representative definition belongs to the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety according to which IPP is "Public policy which aims at or is suitable for continuous improvement in the environmental performance of products and services within a life-cycle context" [2] In his editorial for the ninth issue of a specialized magazine 'The Journal of Sustainable Product Design', Martin Charter points out, that "IPP does not deal with the complex 'triple' (economic, environmental and social) or 'quadruple' bottom line (the above plus ethical)." [1, p.5] But what then, should the complete content of 'sustainably responsible product/ service' be? The answer of this question will take time, necessary both for theorists and for the people in practice, to find out the most important elements and so, to develop the appropriate

evaluation criteria without which the usage of the concept looks impossible. An initial attempt in that direction was offered in [5]:

1. Sustainably responsible product/service has systematic nature, i.e. each of its aspects is interrelated with all the others, couldn't have its 'own territory' and is subordinate to the common synergy. In that case aspects should be examined in two directions. From one side these are economic, social, and environmental characteristics of product/service. From the other side – all the life cycle stages of product/service should be considered.
2. The sustainably responsible product/service takes into consideration the requirement for optimal nature resources utilization and particularly the un-renewable ones. It is well known that the increase of 'quality of life' in some countries resulted in over-consumption. Taking the emergent potentialities, producers reacted by the decrease of product life span (or as V. Packard coin it 'planned obsolescence' [3]) and by offering new product modifications but with only minor differences from the existing ones. This marketing behaviour however, causes waste of natural resources (a big part of them non-renewable) for the production of unnecessary products. So producers are responsible for their product and innovation policy and for their advertisement tools and other marketing methods as well.
3. The sustainably responsible product/service meets the requirement to support balancing of all the stakeholders' interests and not that of owners only. It is a result of integrated efforts of suppliers, producers, clients, governmental and civil institutions.

As we can see the concept of a sustainably responsible product/service is substantially richer and more complicated than the way it has been understood until now, i.e. having in mind the environmental characteristics only. Yet that is a promising beginning. The problem is that even eco-design is developed in a small number of countries and organizations.

Internal interactions of the organization are all interactions between its members with regard to the choice and implementation of decisions. The very existence of the organization as well as the quality of decisions and their implementation depend on the motivation of organizational members, i.e. on the degree of their satisfaction to be members of that particular organization. Because of that, and as the aim of sustainable development is to ensure a certain 'quality of life' for people on the Earth - the aim of internal interactions should be to reach a certain 'quality of working life at the organization' for all its members and to provide them necessary motivation to keep on being its members. The importance of that concept could be drawn if we only imagine how a big part of our life is spent in different organizations. Of course there is already a well known concept of 'quality of working life'. What I am suggesting here however is its development towards a richer content, meeting the requirements of sustainable development. I consider that the components of 'quality of life within an organization' should be the following ones: [6]

- Monetary compensation, reflecting the economic aspect of development and offering personal chances for sustainable consumption;
- Development of human resources, showing organizational attitudes and the contributions towards the social development of people;

- Environmental model of working life, presenting organizational concern with occupational safety and health;
- Individual job design through which the work environment for every organizational member would be matched with the personal needs as far as it possible;
- Organizational decision making system, ensuring the involvement of all organizational members in management and its effects.

It is clear, that those five components should not be considered separately. On the contrary, they would act as a tool for management of internal relationships only if they are not contradictory to each other, rather, tied together by one philosophy – ‘one value system’.

Governmental responsibility. Governmental responsibility is, of course, the responsibility of its members that all their decisions and actions will be sustainably responsible. The problem is what does it mean? In my opinion sustainably responsible behavior of government requires:

1. Foreign policy and especially military and environmental policy to be subordinate to the decisions of the UN.
2. Obligatory state requirements to be developed for all educational institutions concerning provided education in the field of sustainable behaviour.
3. All governmental decisions and actions to be a result of precise evaluation of their short term and long term economical, social and environmental effects on human life.
4. Efficient control mechanisms to be created to ensure responsible behaviour of all organizations and especially of business organizations.
5. Full and detailed information to be provided to people about governmental decisions and their impact from sustainable development point of view.

It will not be easy for any government to fulfil such requirements. A lot of the issues concerning sustainable development are controversial. Decisions towards environmental protection for instance could lead to the increase of social problems, especially in poor countries. And we all know that responsible governmental policy sometimes needs unpopular decisions which means that taking those decisions any government is exposing its political party to the danger of not be elected again. So that will be a step by step process. That is why I have placed educational requirements right after the foreign policy ones. They are easily achievable and have a very important role to increase the awareness of young people about sustainable development issues. In that way not only individual behavior will be changed, but chances for responsible governments to be elected in the future increases as well, having in mind that those people are exactly the same who will vote later on.

Second step: Developing mutuality of interests

Is mutuality of interests really possible and why?

Yes, it is. And what makes it possible is that man, human organizations and the entire society are systems with one and the same element – individuals, making choices about his/her life, i.e. they are self-organizing systems.

A little piece of theory:

It is well known from the system's theory that the interactions between 'the environment' and 'the system' are two-folded: relations of determination and relations of self-organization. Typical for the first ones is that the environment 'orders' how the system should behave. A system is a passive actor only and can not freely change the program of functioning. When self-organizing relations exist, the environment still exerts influence and is very important but it doesn't contain 'instructions' on how the system has to react to that influence. The environment is like a pool of conditions and the system is the active element which perceives environmental influences and reacts to them. In inanimate Nature, deterministic relations are dominant. With the increase of a systems' complexity, the presence of self-organization also increases and the importance of determination goes down. And it is at the level of social systems where self-organization obtains its full potential. This understanding eliminates the one-sided interpretation of the relationships between the environment and the system, adding the kind of relations through which the 'reverse determination' also appears, i.e. dependence of the environment (understood as totality of interacting systems) on the characteristics of each and all of them.

So, a man, (taken not as a biological but as a psychological and social system), and also the organizations and the society as a whole are typical representatives of self-organizing systems. That means, that in fact social systems by themselves create their environment. It becomes clear then, that being the biggest self-organizing system, the society is both a result of and a 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.

The learning message

A very important issue could be drawn from that:

People can't any more deny their responsibility of what is happening on the basis that the world is too big and it is not possible for the single individual to make a difference. On the contrary. We are responsible because the individual is the only actor who is taking choices – as a single person, as a member of all organizations (including governments), and as a member of the entire society.

Third step: Measuring responsibility

It is necessary to measure responsibility because we need to influence the behavior of all elements of the sustainable development process. But the influence on the behavior could be informal and formal. The informal influence is taking place in everyday human relations and in my opinion is always the first step. If you want to change something what you need first is people sharing your ideas. That's why we all are here. I also think this kind of influence is the most important and much more convincing than the formal one. Later on, when most of the people realize certain issues as very important, they create formal mechanisms to influence the behavior as well. And those formal mechanisms require:

1. To have standards or laws (to measure deviations)
2. To have institutions powerful to apply those very laws.

So we need to develop standards about individual, organizational and governmental sustainably responsible behavior and to create appropriate institutions. This is a long way to go. Having standards means we already know what exactly responsible behavior means. But we don't. And even if we can measure responsibility towards sustainable development we don't have institutions – national and international - to apply formal influence. The most reachable goal at present is to develop standards and measure individual sustainable consumption. At least from the environmental point of view, because the amount of consumption will remain a personal decision. Results from those measurements could then be used to trace the progress of sustainable responsibility and to take the appropriate actions. It is possible to develop standards to measure organizational responsibility as well. In fact, this already is a normal practice in the field of environmental requirements. What we need here is to rethink those requirements from the broader point of view, and to consider ways to influence irresponsible organizational behavior within a framework of free market economy. I don't think it is realistic to speak about the formal measurement of governmental responsibility now. Firstly, because it is difficult to develop standards, and secondly, because the appraisal institution has to be international. We also need to consider the complexity and uncertainty of the global political environment. As system theorists say, the system becomes too complex to be controlled. I think in the long future this kind of control over responsible behavior could happen. But only if in the short run we realize that any request for responsibility is directed to ourselves.

Back to the beginning

If someone wants to take a picture of society, the only thing he/she needs is to know what every single individual on the Earth is doing in that particular moment. The state of the society is nothing but the summarized result of the behaviour of 6 billion people exactly now. That means that the responsibility of what the world looks like is shared between those 6 billion. Not equally, of course, because some of them are unable due to the age, disabilities or other reasons. But the remaining number is big enough. There is no other way for the world to be changed than the change of individuals' behavior. And when we are speaking about the responsibility of organizations and governments we should be quite precise and realize that we are speaking about the individuals' responsibility again, but this time the responsibility of individuals behaving in groups.

It is our behavior, and our companies' behavior, and our countries' behavior that creates the picture of the society. So we deserve our destiny. And we can change it as well.

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Enhancing Conscious and Providing Social Involvement of Consumer Citizen Through Places of Consumption

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Citizenship in Ancient Greece

Public Spaces in Ancient Greece and the Active Citizen

The thought of life in the city that sprouted in ancient Greece around 7th and 8th centuries BC resulted in the constitution of the city-state, the “Polis”. The two most significant elements of this political organization that Greeks referred to as the city-state were people (*ethnos/demos*) and city (*polis*). Although not a state in modern terms, with regard to administration, power and independence of the society that dwells in it, the city was a “state”. The political-economical changes took place in Greece in the middle of 5th century BC, and especially the transition to democracy, opened the way to many alterations. For instance, with democracy the number of those who had the right to vote increased, education and moral instruction of the youth became necessary. (Akarsu, 1982:30). The “polises”, around which the political, cultural, ethical and economical lives of people gathered, were surrounded by “agorae”, triangular open places specified through houses and public buildings around them (Roth, 2000:266). The agora was a centre for trade and education; there social, economical, political and religious elements were entwined.

Aristotle presupposes an equal horizontal plane among citizens. For the Athenian “polis” meant city, it was the place where people attained unity (*civitas*).⁶⁰In antiquity, the possibility of urban civilization was grounded upon the tense economy inherent in it. In Athens, active citizens were slave-owning men. In various traditional systems of servitude, except in Ancient Greece, the human rights of the servants were not denied and the bare essentials of safety and happiness were instituted. While women and slaves strived in the field of economy, the active citizen was engaged in sublime matters like politics. An active citizen devoted his entire self to public and politics, his home life is of secondary importance to him – he does not care much about his home or whether or not he cares about his home is of no interest for others. He spent most of his time in public meetings, taking part in decision-making. The aristocracy of Athens could spare their entire day to active citizenship (in modern times, the widest category of citizenship is of course “workers”, which constitutes of both working class and professional middle class) (Gülalp, 2002). In the social and political organization of Athens, active citizenship was not a right or a matter of choice, it was a duty. In this precise sense, the active citizen was the one who had to devote himself to politics due to his duties.

In ancient Greece Polis was a school where the highest virtues of the citizen was shaped and expressed. Politics did not only corresponded to administrative issues of

⁶⁰ Latin: The unity of citizens.

the city, it also implied the education of citizens that were to become real members of a society behaving in such a way that is always fit to public interests. In ancient Greece, citizenship was an educational, ethical and political process of maturation, it was not an extra occupation but the common destiny of Athenians (Bookchin,1999 :97-98). In Athens, *arete*⁶¹ and *paideia*⁶² were not an involuntary burden that implied the renunciation of the political body in political life that was grounded on the combined process of acquiring the feeling of unity and development of character. On the contrary, it was a fact of self-realization. Citizenship was not a totality of rights concerning regulation or chain of duties. It was a social quality, a creative art, a cult that belongs to the public. The democracy of Athens provided the possibility for the citizen to join in the chain of institutions of the polis as an active individual. However, these institutions were designated by *arete* and *paideia*. (Bookchin,1999:111). In Greek thought, freedom becomes possible only through materialistic self-sufficiency and personal autonomy. However good the conditions of a servant might be, he cannot think or judge in the absence of an outside authority and interests, because his own life depends on these things (Bookchin,1999).

Unlike the ancient Greek civilization, in modern times individuals have two different ways of becoming active citizens. First, there is the position of active citizenship, which one may choose – here we have a matter of choice, one has to do it voluntarily. Then we have the model of citizenship that was formed within the thought systems of enlightenment. According to this model, the citizen is the one who has rights, not duties. Here the citizen does not have to take part in politics, the state (or in general politics) serve citizens. In this model of citizenship instead of democracy as a platform for public decision-making, some individual interests came to foreground, and as a result, in the enlightenment model democracy turned into the right of political participation of the citizens (Gülalp,2002). Here we have a notion of citizenship formulated in terms of individual rights, not political responsibility. However, for Arendt active political participation is the pre-requisite of emancipation – only through policing can we become really free. According to her, freedom is the only reason of becoming political, and its field of experience is action (Defter,2001). According to the notion that can be traced back to Plato, action and its consequence, i.e., change, is not desirable and should not be sympathized with, because it brings ambiguity and imperceptibility. Action and change are regarded as obstacles which may prevent philosophy from grasping the definite, the truth. Although the consequences of this kind of thinking emerged especially in modern times, we can come across with its traces even in antiquity. On the other hand, according to Arendt politics is a matter of fact, not a matter of spirituality. Politics is an occupation that needs onlookers, and the public space is a stage. On this stage, quite naturally, there is plurality and diversity (Defter,2001). In this context, it would not be untrue to propose that, considering the notion of Poiesis, the Greek citizen was freer than the modern citizen is. Poieis, i.e., the desire to do something because of the importance attached to what was seen, transforms those people who lived in the Greek cities from onlookers to active citizens.

⁶¹ Aréte: The totality of virtuous qualities that form the personality. The sum of virtue + goodness + excellence.

⁶² Paideia: School in Athens, centre for personal and political education.

In ancient Greece, there was no distinction between material-spiritual worlds or public-private spheres. Gods lived on earth just like people, and their existence influenced almost all the aspects of daily life. With Augustine, this chain of thought was broken. Judeo-Christian thought from the beginning had emphasized departedness and homelessness⁶³. The thought that settlement could result in “opening” and so externalization of the spiritual life was a source of fear. With Augustine, this attitude towards settlement began to change. His contribution to religious perspective and his approach lead people to search for god and faith. The distinction between inside and outside that we could say began with Augustine means that, God is not in earthly life any more, and one has to strive to reach Him. “With the distinction of human-made and God-made worlds, sacred subject is substituted by human-subject (the internalization of the external); as a result, this whole edifice which constitutes of personal qualities integrated to social roles begins to loosen, and consciousness in self-anxiety and the ideals of freedom and responsibility became problematic. In ancient Greece the conception of morals bound to conscious integrates people with the social world. It makes people deliver themselves completely to collective consciousness, the common good and the established power. With the disintegration of the holistic edifice in which individual was one with society, a new Subject was formed, here man is not confused with citizen and the role of subjectivity, which is not familiar to Greco-Roman tradition, is accepted (Touraine,1994 :56).

It is clear that Athenian democracy was in interaction with public places. While at the edges of the agora there were stoas where trade, bargaining and gossip took place, in agorae rituals and political events took place, even slaves (that were essentials for the city’s economy) and foreigners could attend to these events. In this social, political and cultural climate of ancient Greece, the virtue based notion of citizenship rendered citizens active, they were not only onlookers but also acting individuals, and they had the chance to express their political discourses in the agora, i.e., the heart of the social life. The buildings and open places were so designed that citizens could all take part in public events.

The fact of citizenship in modern world, which was formed in the context of freedom and rights and was conceptualized as passive citizenship, can be traced back to places in the public sphere. Today, when we examine the modern city, we can make a reading of the distinction of inside and outside through public places. In ancient Greece the facades of temples and stoas had such surfaces that they were like human skin, they seemed self-sufficient they showed nothing more than themselves. However, in modern cities the facades of our edifices reflect outside what they have inside. The man of the modern world, whose life becomes more atomised each day, practices one of the main practices of his daily life, that is, shopping, in cathedrals of consumption. Shopping malls that first emerged in 1950’s in the USA are today places where mass consumption is staged. There are some differences between these shopping malls and the agorae of the ancient Greek cities. The reality of citizenship in ancient Greek

⁶³ Jehovah of the Old Testament was a wandering god. He was not the god of a definite place; he was the god of time. He promised sacred ends for those who would follow him in unhappy journeys. (Senett, 1999)

civilization and the reality of modern citizenship influence and transform the form and content of the practice of consumption, just as it does in any social event.

Places of Consumption in Modern World and the Phenomenon of Consumer-Citizen as a Rising Value

Plato's political philosophy, as the basis of thought and politics in ancient Greek civilization, attempts to grasp the metaphysical standards with which to define the "definite", the "truth". And accordingly, the skin of the city reflects the political and cultural life that was founded on this attempt. But today, it is widely accepted that it has become too difficult to reach for an ideal of "definiteness" and "truth, even that a unique principle of "truth" or definiteness does not exist. This situation, which is referred to as the post-modern situation, discloses itself through certain changes that can be traced in social, cultural and political realms. These changes brand the social life, and reflect to those places where we live. In modern cities, or rather mega-cities where the social, economical and cultural products are produced and then reproduced, forms and contents of places are quite diverse from that which was designed in ancient Greece. Today, in the modern city, instead of those people of the city who, with spiritual responsibility and ethical strength, attached importance to the virtue of citizenship, we have inhabitants who are in search for better care for a better life.

The ideology that gave birth to the construction of modern thought and modern subject involves a disinterested moral rationality, which gives way to abstraction from localized inter-personal and communal attachment and from the emotions and desires associated with these. (Gill,1996:11). As a consequence of this distinction, the Subject outside the man, i.e., the sacred Subject, was substituted with human-subject; and this lead to the annihilation of the person in the image of a network in which social roles and personal qualities stood side by side, and to the emergence of a conscience in self-anxiety, and the will for originality and responsibility."(Touraine,1994:55).

Since ancient Greece and until late Medieval age, city reflected a unified form, and thus sheltered real politics and a meaningful citizenship. After the 13th and 14th centuries, all around Europe and principally in Italy, new economical and social arrangements came on stage. The transformation of a continent of unified towns, cities, baronies and duchies into nation-states defined with certainty can not be explained with economical terms alone. For instance, although in 14th century Italy there was a capitalist model of production and also a capitalist economical organization, Italy joined in the process of transformation to nation-states later. Although having no capitalist system of economy, Spain joined the same process very early – until 1930's Spain preserved its social structure as an agricultural society. Though modern state defines politics as the formal will expressing the domains of professional legislative organs, military power and beurocracy, in ancient Greece politics was defined as a public activity expressing the domain of true citizenship (Bookchin, 1999:187).

The social aspect (20'th Century)-which gave birth to a welfare system- of citizenship consists of the whole range from right to a modicum of economic welfare and security

to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society. (Marshall,1976:78-79). The fullest expression of citizenship is possible, only when all of these rights are guaranteed and practiced. In this case, the individual feels him/herself to be a full member of society and is able to involve himself in the common life of the society. Since no obligation is required of the citizens, this approach is often called "passive" or "private citizenship. Essentially from the "passivity" point this perception of citizenship has been criticised in the following decades. Here the missing point is the absence of citizenship responsibilities and virtues. It is this sense of responsibility and virtue which enables social involvement and promotes awareness.

Social identities of citizenship are built as complexes of meaning and networks of interpretation. Since the social aspect of citizenship is concerned with a right to share the full social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society, consumption can be evaluated as an emancipatory, civilized and involvement-promoting activity. If we attempt to link the ideas of national belonging and citizenship to consumerism, CHOICE can be evaluated as a prime mechanism in the production of the consumer and citizen identities. (Cronin,2000:6-7) Although it seems that consumers and citizens are at the opposite poles, one common element of these two identities is that they both make choices. The level of their awareness affect their choosing process. On the other hand, social involvement is a product of choice mechanism. At this point, we should focus on the facts, which affect the way of choosing of the citizen as a consumer.

Construction of individuals as actors is evaluated as a basic right in modern thought. In this perspective, it is fundamental to have rights relevant to the important arenas of life. In the late 1900's acts of consumption and consumer roles are moved into focus of social and cultural life parallel to the economy-political changes (Cronin,2000). Family life, professionalized welfare state and local society are weakened in order to "force" the individuals to build their lives and "selves", their individual identities by means of consumer role (Jensen, 2004). Consumer- as an actor- should possess some basic rights and informations in order to materialize his/her individual authentic self and, has the liberty to choose. These rights should be structured independent from a specific political authority- by non-governmental organizations-, and they should enhance social involvement, awareness, pluralism and authenticity.

There are some basic differences between the notion of citizenship of ancient Greece, which we evaluate as the ideal form of citizenship, and that of today's consumer-citizen in terms of social involvement and awareness. The modern individual constructs the self through the act of consuming, which he/she performs with his/her consumer-citizen identity along with his/her other identities. In the context of this process of construction, the relation between practices of consumption and places of consumption must be evaluated in terms of certain symbolic, cultural and psychological patterns. In late 18th century, significant transformations concerning means and processes of production came on stage, goods began to be produced in factories. With the industrial revolution hand work and unit production was substituted

by factory production with machines. In the beginning of 20th century, as a consequence of some changes concerning administrative and productive processes, the transition to mass production was performed. The reflections of mass culture on social and cultural realms emerged as the culture industry. Culture industry nourishes the idea that persons can exist in society only if they play the roles of consumer and merchant, and determines symbolically what kind of needs they have and what exactly it is that they have to consume in order to perform the social role and statute. Another consequence of these changes in forms and processes of production is the constitution of the “consumer society”. A generalized shift in social practices and mentality (Appadurai, 1996:72) that unleashes desires to express individuality, directs these desires to consumer products, and creates new spaces where these products can be sampled, purchased and enjoyed. (Zukin et. al,2004)

As new meanings are attributed the act of consumption, an impressive change occurred at the places of consumption. “Malls” as cathedrals of consumption displaced the ancient Greek agoras, medieval markets and fairs, or passages of 19th century Europe. Malls emerged in 1950’s with the movement of suburbanisation. The main difference between malls and agoras or 19th century passages is that the mall differentiates between “inside” and “outside” with certainty. Its architectural and decorative forms which separates the inside from the outside with definite lines, provides an easy control and discipline on the consumers side. All social relations in malls were reduced to Marketing processes.

When we examine the form of the mall, we see that malls are closed, fortified and continually controlled places. Their quality of being closed emphasizes the distinction of inside-outside, and its main purpose is to create an original and separate world inside. The natural world can’t intrude; there is no rain or snow, heat or cold, or any other season changes. The space is protected so that people will not be distracted or feel threatened; they will open themselves to the environment and trust it. What’s more, there is unity, preplanning, single and centralized management in the malls which enables control. Malls banish rules of time and space. With its windowless enclosure and very uniformity, it inspires a sense of placelessness. By eliminating clocks and by controlling light and sound it also inspires a sense of timelessness. (Kowinski,1975:62) Malls are designed to affect people. “But in some ways, either by their nature or by side effect caused by their main ingredients, they do things to people that people are unaware of or don’t understand, but if they knew or understood, they probably wouldn’t like it. Malls incite a feeling of feverishness, sudden fatigue and high anxiety. There are some terms for describing the bad effects of the mall like dismallcumbobulation, which signifies the feeling of being lost. The hyped-up overabundance of similar products plus the bland sameness of many mall environments make people feel lost even when they aren’t. People can even forget their purpose in coming to the mall. People are walking nearby but they aren’t walking together in the mall. You can see people talking, but they do not look at each other’s face while talking. Thus, malls are places where people gather but can not communicate effectively. Since, it isn’t anyone’s civic, moral, spiritual or intellectual duty to stay or to go to the mall, people are free not to go to mall or stay at the mall for

hours. Nevertheless, it isn't always easy to leave the mall. Most of the time people stay at the mall for no good or apparent reason, and even beyond their conscious desire to be there. Its implicit promise of safety, sanctuary and salvation restrain the conscious behavior of the consumers.

Ancient Greek agoras, mediaval markets or 18th century European passages were not places emphasizing the distinction between inside and outside. Because in these periods, the individual in a modern sense, or a capitalist economy based on accumulation of the capital and market system, a system which enabled an unlimited global circulation of goods and services, simply did not exist. With all these developments, the focus shifted from production to consumption, from nation-state to over-national formations.

With modern thought, public and private spheres were separated with definite lines, and as a consequence of this the modern individual began to live in an atomized way. The modern individual shelters many different identities –like being student, teacher, officer, citizen, parent, producer, consumer etc.– all at the same time; and he/she can perform the roles of these various identities only in predetermined spheres which are always separated from each other with definite lines. As a consequence of contrasts and intersections between the qualities of the identity of citizenship and the identity of consumer, the identity of consumer-citizen emerges. In modern times citizenship is not an identity which presents a possibility of an active political life with a certain ethics and conscience of duty directed at self emancipation. It is a passive identity which is defined in terms of certain rights. Neoliberalism which spread all over the globe after 1980's created the self-managing, enterprising, model citizen of neoliberal societies who shoulder the responsibility for maintaining social order through his or her "good" choices. (Slater, 1997, Cronin 2000, Zukin 2004) Here, consumption is presented not as an option but as a duty and responsibility of consumer citizen (Baudrillard 1998; Zukin 2004).

In this study, citizenship in Athens that we regard as an ideal and the phenomenon of citizenship in the modern world is an object of a comparative approach. One of the most significant questions of this study is the question of the effect of malls –those places where consumer-citizen spends most of his/her time today– on consumer-citizen's social involvement and awareness. Do the malls promote social involvement and enhance the awareness of the consumer-citizen or do they individualize and turn the consumers into monotype, unconscious buying persons. Malls are places where people come together, but at the same time, places where people do not act together. As there were no distinction between public and private spheres in ancient Greece, and as the modern subject-individual had not yet been constituted then, there the urban places were designed in such a way that they provided the possibility for social mobility and unity, the possibility for everyone to pronounce an original political discourse. The individual is alone in malls, and the reason for that is the general form of the mall. There consumer-citizens with a high level of awareness can perform acts of consumption consciously – and free from every authority, they can profit from all the rights and freedoms that their consumer's identity provide them in the context of

constitutional and democratic rights. If we define social involvement as the ability of individuals to be active in matters of the social sphere, and their ability to carry their rights and freedoms of the public sphere to the platform of action, in the dimension of this situation which we can associate with practices of consumption, the civil organizations have a great role.

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Environmental policy and management in food industry – Two of the basic aspects of global solidarity

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The environment continues to change globally. The food industry has its specific significant ecological impacts. In the past, companies often introduced processes without consideration of their environmental impact. They argued that some level of pollution must be accepted if reasonable rates of economic growth are to be achieved. This argument is no longer valid.

The basic environmental problems of the food industry are the extensive use of raw materials, the high energy consumption level, the high water consumption rate, the considerable waste water disposal and the generation of large amounts of non-reused and non-recycled waste, including packaging waste.

In this paper, environmental policy and management in the food industry are defined as an integrated preventive environmental strategy aimed to increase overall efficiency and reduce the risk to consumers and the environment, and as two of the basic aspects of global solidarity which are essential on the way to sustainable development. This strategy can reduce or eliminate the need to trade off environmental protection against economic growth, occupational safety against productivity, and consumer safety against competition in international markets.

Introduction

Over the years, industrialised nations have progressively taken different approaches to dealing with environmental degradation and pollution problems. The gradual progression from “ignore” through to “prevent” has culminated in the realisation that it is possible to achieve economic savings for industry as well as an improved environment for society.

The food industry has its specific significant ecological impacts. In the past, companies often introduced processes without considering their environmental impact. They argued that some level of pollution must be accepted if reasonable rates of economic growth are to be achieved. This argument is no longer valid and the United Nations have established new goals for the world community that advocate environmentally sustainable development.

Regardless of its specific features, food production as a whole conforms to the general rules and demands related to industrial and environmental safety. Being comprehensive, diverse and specific in character, the food industry is to a large extent compelled to strictly observe and adhere to the sustainable development principle stipulating that economic effect can be evaluated after all environment protection costs have also been taken into account.

Environmental Policy and Management in Food Industry

The environmental policy of food companies should contain their mission and vision for continuous environmental improvement and compliance with legislation.

Various environmental problems arise as a result of the production processes in the food industry because of the wide variety of raw materials processed. A typical feature of food companies is the marked rebound effect of environmental parameters on technological processes, on the final product quality and safety, hence on consumer health.

The basic environmental problems of the food industry are the extensive use of raw materials, the high energy consumption level, the high water consumption rate, the considerable waste water disposal and the generation of large amounts of non-reused and non-recycled waste, including packaging waste.

A food company's commitment to the environment is manifested in an environmental policy set by its top management. This policy provides an overall vision of environmental concern that involves the entire food company, i.e. the policy is comprehensible to all staff members and everyone knows what is expected of them in order to achieve the company's objectives and targets.

The policy is based on a thorough analysis of the environmental aspects of the company's products and services.

The environmental policy builds upon three key concepts:

- Continual improvement.
- Pollution prevention.
- Compliance with the relevant legal requirements.

The environmental policy includes the following principles:

- **Compliance** with all applicable laws and regulations. Appropriate programs and procedures need to be implemented for that purpose. In case no adequate laws and regulations exist that can assure consumer health, safety and environment protection, the food company should set up its own quality standards and adhere to them.
- **Prevention.** Management systems and procedures should be specifically developed and implemented by all food companies to prevent activities and conditions that pose a threat to consumer health, safety and the environment. The application of safe technologies and production processes will significantly reduce the risk and protect the community. The measures should include prevention of releases into the atmosphere, land and water, minimization of the amount and toxicity of generated waste, and safe waste treatment and disposal.
- **Efficient liaison** with the company's employees, vendors and customers so that the company's environmental commitment could be communicated to them.
- **Continuous improvement** of the company's environmental policy, strict observation of its principles and regular progress reports to the company's stakeholders.

In formulating the priority environmental problems of food companies special emphasis has to be placed on the considerable waste water disposal which threatens to disturb the ecological balance, and on the generation of large amounts of solid waste, especially packaging waste.

Packaging waste management is an essential element of a food company's environmental policy. Transport, polymer, and metal packaging, as well as glass, paper and wood waste are among the most common waste generated. The problems demand the development and implementation of reliable and efficient management systems as part of a company's overall environmental policy.

Furthermore, with regard to the principle of food safety and quality assurance along the food chain from farm to fork, the degree of pollution of the raw materials of vegetable and animal origin should be a focus of special attention.

It is established that the environmental policy of food companies can be integrated with health and safety, quality or other organisational policies. An integrated approach is preferable.

Integration of Management Systems in Food Industry

The issue of integrated management systems has gained particular importance. There is a large number of case studies which indicate that the integration of a food company's environmental management system (EMS) and quality management system (QMS) has undisputable positive effects, such as rationalized operations, smooth decision-making, simplified employee training, efficient utilization of resources, cost reduction, etc. Health and safety management systems, as well as systems for managing other functions can also be integrated.

In general, some management systems elements are either the same or similar and can often be dealt with by a common procedure. Others are unique and are addressed by separate procedures.

Systems integration can have environmental benefits. When environmental policy and management are more closely linked with day-to-day planning and operation, environmental management becomes more easily recognizable as a central issue in the food company's operation.

Food companies further develop their abilities to deal with environmental issues by modifying their products or manufacturing processes to meet quality or consumer safety requirements.

Food safety and food quality are very important aspects of the food industry. In relation to food safety, Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HACCP) has gained particular importance as a food safety management tool and is widely spread throughout the world. Similarly, quality systems such as Total Quality Management (TQM) are based on a systematic approach to production processes with a view to improving product quality while lowering costs.

Environmental Management Systems (EMS) and Cleaner Production (CP) can work in a synergy with quality and safety systems. Their joint operation would contribute to the identification of areas for improvement in relation to sustainable development.

Conclusion

It has been demonstrated that environmental policy and management systems in the food industry are defined as an integrated preventive environmental strategy aimed at increasing overall efficiency and reducing the risk to consumers and the environment, and as two of the basic aspects of global solidarity which are essential on the way to sustainable development. This strategy can reduce or eliminate the need to trade off environmental protection against economic growth, occupational safety against productivity, and consumer safety against competition in international markets.

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X. Other

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in Norway - A context for shared responsibility

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Introduction

“When consumers from the overdeveloped North bite into a banana, they bite into a chain of production processes that links them directly not only to landlessness and labour conditions on plantations in Costa Rica or Venezuela, but also to the misuse of pesticides and the destruction of tropical forests”.

(Jack Kloppenburg and Sharon Lezberg, 1996)

Through our consumption of commodities, we take part in complex networks of relations to other people and we are linked to environmental realities and the welfare status of animals as well as fellow human beings across the globe.

These interrelations, which are eloquently described by Kloppenburg and Lezberg, are evident – but how consciously do we engage in these realities in our everyday-lives? And to what degree are we surrounded by structural and social environments, which encourages such involvement?

In this paper, we will present the concept of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) as one way of bringing the “citizen” to the forefront – as opposed to the mere “consumer” - in our dealings with one of the main everyday commodities, namely food. CSA may also be regarded as primarily a space for “non-market” relations, with focus on community, value-sharing, and the celebration of interdependence.

We will discuss the concept of CSA as a potential means for consumer/citizen involvement and shared responsibility in the food production – referring to the concept of CSA in principle, as well as preliminary findings from an on-going study of the up-start of CSAs in Norway.

1. What is Community Supported Agriculture?

“A partnership between farmers and consumers where the responsibilities and rewards of farming are shared”.

There are different definitions of CSA. We find the above, found in Soil Association: “A share in the harvest – An action manual for Community Supported Agriculture” quite to the point.

1.1. Short history

The concept seems to have occurred more or less simultaneously in Japan and Germany in the mid 1960s. In Japan, consumers reacted to an unwanted development in the food industry and recent food safety scandals by making contact with farmers, and inviting them to cooperate directly with them in producing the safe and healthy food which they wanted. The partnership was called TEIKEI, which means something like “*food which carries the face of the farmer*” (Henderson 1999, xvi). At about the same time, the first CSA farm – Buschberghof - was established in Northern Germany. In 1988, one of the founders of this CSA, Trauger Groh, travelled to USA, and presented his ideas there. This eventually led to the establishment of “The Community Farm of Ann Arbor” in Michigan (Donahue 1994). Today, the number of CSAs in USA has grown to more than 2000⁶⁴. In Europe it does not seem to be any large number of CSAs - at least if a restrictive definition is applied. There is, however, currently an initiative to form a European Network of CSAs⁶⁵. In principle, there are no specific connections between CSA and organic agriculture, but in practice they have proved to be combined⁶⁶.

1.2. Key Aspects

1.2.1. Dialogue and binding agreements between farmers and consumers.

The trust and dialog between farmers and consumers is most important in a CSA. It is common to establish a “core group” among the members, which takes on responsibility for communication within the CSA. This may be done through leaflets, internet, and physical meetings/arrangements every once in a while. A yearly “general assembly” is held in January/February, to inform about the year gone by and to agree on production, budget and events in the year to come. Soon after this winter meeting it is time for the members to commit themselves for another year of membership – or not.

1.2.2. Sharing of risks and rewards in the food production.

Paul Fielhouse (1996) refers to three dimensions of CSA⁶⁷: 1) Community Building, 2) Sustainable agriculture, and 3) Food security. He points to “sharing” as the central notion of CSA, where participants share the real costs of food production through fair prices for the farmer and by assuming part of the risk of poor harvests. They also share the rewards that come through a seasons supply of fresh produce, the development of fellowship, and the knowledge that they are part of an effort to “think globally, and act locally” (Fieldhouse 1996, 43).

1.2.3. Transparent economy.

One key principle is that the “price” of the food should equal the actual costs of the food. And an important principle is that the economy of the farm should be transparent

⁶⁴ According to Henderson 1999. The number of CSAs depend of the definition applied. Some include box-scheme deliveries of organic food in the list of CSAs. We are inclined to reserve this term for arrangements where there is a more pronounced committing relation between the producer and the shareholder,

⁶⁵ Urgenci – Network Urban – Rural: Generating New Commitments between Citizens - www.urgenci.net

⁶⁶ We have not as yet become aware of any CSA where conventional production methods are used.

⁶⁷ He uses the term Community Shared Agriculture.

for insight on the part of the shareholder. We experienced this in a very direct way when we inquired about the price we should pay for the supper we had enjoyed at a farm on our study visit. The prompt response was as follows:

“This food does not have a price. But it has a cost.”

At Buschberghof, they practiced “bids” once a year when the budget was planned and costs of the coming year was estimated. Members paid according to ability and voluntariness and their needs were met in return.

One way of viewing this from the farmers’ point of view is that “economical insecurity is substituted with social challenges⁶⁸”.

A survey made in USA showed that the food-cost for CSA members was about the same as buying the same organic food in the stores.

1.3. CSA and social responsibility

CSA involves shareholders intimately in the risks and bounty of farming, and the development of social relations is usually an important goal. However, there are accounts of CSAs which started out with a strong focus on building community, but had to adjust the course along the way towards the more instrumental function as an alternative marketing channel as several of the members proved to hold a different view of what the CSA was all about than the idealistic founders (DeLind 1999). One returned survey from a member was quoted to instruct the core group to “*concentrate on the vegetables, and stop forcing an artificial community*”. Such experiences underlines that CSAs are truly “joint ventures”, where the results depend on everyone involved. Cone and Kakaliouras (1995) discuss the two potential sides of CSA under the heading “Building moral community or an alternative consumer choice”. Which one of these aspects that will dominate, will ultimately be up to the various CSAs to decide.

The meaning which CSA-founder Traugher Groh put into the concept came out of what he felt as a “*need to share the experience of farming with everyone who understands that our relationship with nature and the ways that we use the land will determine the future of the earth*”, and a feeling that “*the problems of agriculture and the environment belong not just to a small minority of active farmers, (but) are the problems of all humanity...*”. (Groh and McFadden 1997 quoted in DeLind 1999, 5). In line with this, CSA may be viewed as “*a way of healing our soils and our souls*” (Kirschenmann 1998 in DeLind 1999, 5).

⁶⁸ This is how our colleague on the project, Joilen Perotti sees it. She has experience from establishing CSAs in Holland, and is now engaged at one of the pilot CSAs in Norway.

1.4. What do shareholders pay for?

At our recent seminar for the CSA pilot-farms⁶⁹, an interesting discussion from Buschberghof CSA in Germany was referred by Wolfgang Stränz. The issue at stake was whether or not vegetarians should pay less than meat-eaters because they did not use any meat. From a product-point of view, this was of course true, but from other perspectives, the case might look differently. From a diet-point of view, the vegetarians did get their full diet covered in an equal manner as the meat-eaters. And from a point of view that the shareholders are paying for *the maintenance of the farming activity* as such (they are passive farmers), it is besides the point what particular products they get from it. Another point is the interconnectedness (particularly in organic agriculture) between crop production and animal husbandry: also the carrots have been produced with the application of manure.

By the formulation “we are all farmers”, Stränz implicates that taking (co-) responsibility for a particular piece of land and the maintenance of a sound food production (on that site) qualifies for using the term. The active farmers are involved with the physical labour and take the agronomic responsibility, while the passive farmers contribute economically by buying a share. And then they don't count their carrots or litres of milk afterwards.

At our CSA pilot-farms, there are some specific examples of “common goods” which could be regarded as worth paying for in a similarly unspecific way:

1. At the urban farm close to Oslo, the issue of land protection has been on the agenda. Recently, surrounding farming areas have been converted into golf courses, and several of the citizens in the neighbourhood would rather keep these areas for food production and keep them accessible as traditional cultural landscapes.
2. At one of the rural CSA, with cooperation between three organic farms, *in situ* protection and maintenance of grain genetic resources is highly relevant. At one of the farms, there is production and research on rare varieties of grain, traditional to the Nordic region. Making use of baking facilities at another of the farms involved, there are plans for the development of particular recipes and baking of breads etc. with these special types of grain. Bread is a type of commodity with potentially a very long and complex chain, and where the origins of the grain, as well as information about the genetic variety may be obscured for the end-consumer. At the same time, the issue of securing genetic diversity is very much on the agenda. Membership and responsibility for local food production might be a nice supplement to signing up for saving the rain-forest.
3. And as a more general concern, the offer of organic food in the general food market in Norway does not seem to satisfy the demand (neither in terms of volume nor in terms of product variety). In this regard, being a shareholder in any of the CSAs currently starting up means securing the production of organic food – and even being given an opportunity to have a say in the types of food being produced.

⁶⁹ Fokhol Farm, February 16th 2004, seminar about Community Supported Agriculture.

2. The CSA project in Norway

“Something has to be changed – otherwise everything will be changed”
(Giuseppe di Lampedusa in “The Leopard”)

2.1. Relevant background

The government gives clear signals towards a more consumer oriented agriculture in the future. All links from farm to fork is responsible for improved information about products and production. More and more consumers want information about the origin of their food, and the consciousness of different ethical aspects, environmental aspects as well as regionalism is slowly increasing.

A political aim is to increase the organically grown land from about 4% today to 10% in 2009. The main obstacle for this goal is the market situation. The processing units, as well as retailers, are concentrated to a handful of companies, and their structure is not at all adapted to small product-groups. The path from farm to fork is thorny for small products like organic or regional specialities. In 2004, about 80% of the organic milk produced in Norway was sold as conventional. The number for organic meat was about 90%.

The Royal Norwegian Society for Development received economic support from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, to develop examples of CSAs adapted to the Norwegian reality (Bjune 2003). The project is implemented in close cooperation with the National Institute for Consumer Research. Two organizations promoting organic products and production are also included in the project,- Oikos and Grønn Hverdag.

2.2. Products; From multifunctional agriculture?

Most CSA-farms focus on vegetables, and present a long list of different vegetables and fresh salads delivered all year. We started to study CSA in early 2003, with the cold and snow outside and imported organic vegetables on the table inside. Examples from USA showing 46 different kinds of vegetables delivered from the local CSA-farm 8 months pr. year almost killed our enthusiasm, and hence the continuation of the project. We had to think differently about the product range.

Due to trade agreements with WTO and EU, the border is slowly opening up for import. Hence the need is definitely not food products with standard quality, competing on low price. High cost agriculture, such as the Norwegian one, must compete on quality and not quantity. One of the qualities might be closeness to and knowledge about a clean production.

The relevant questions were:

1. What do modern people need from the Norwegian agriculture?
2. What products, services and activities can Norwegian agriculture offer, without losing the competition with import products from countries with lower production costs?
3. Is there anybody out there who prefers locally produced products, and will pay the price of local costs?

CSA can be seen as one possible alternative to the WTO-policy: It provides local arguments for a local agriculture. And the cost of this agriculture is transparent to the shareholder.

2.3. Three pilot-CSAs

2.3.1. Øverland farm.

The farm is located in the outskirts of Oslo towards the “best west”. It is a point of departure for hikes and skiing into the surrounding forest area. The farm is owned by Norges Vel, - the organization running this project. One problem is that the present production is dominated by monoculture of grain, - it will take some time to achieve a manifold in the product spectre. The potential is substantial. In this CSA, there is a special opportunity for extended learning activities by cooperation with two local schools. Their first season is well in progress, and a particular part of the CSA-farm is devoted to a school garden. The curriculum refers to the farm as “the extended classroom”.

2.3.2. Solør – two farms.

Solør is a region located 2,5 -3 hours drive NE of Oslo, in a very scarcely populated area. There are two family farms already cooperating about machinery and marketing, and they want to extend their cooperation into a CSA. Together they have a wide range of organic products like vegetables, different kinds of meat, grain, as well as forest products, hunting and fishing. One of the farms is involved with social work as well, offering work for people with special needs.

2.3.3. Hadeland/Ringerike – three farms.

This is situated about one hour NW of Oslo in a middle populated area. Two family farms and one farm owned by a trust doing social work want to cooperate. Together they offer a wide range of products, like Solør.

2.4. Models for organization

One level is to organize the cooperation between the farms within one CSA. Another level is to organize the cooperation between the farm(s) and the consumers. The latter is the most interesting here, and there are many alternatives; There are examples of trusts, different kinds of companies with limited responsibility, or simply a looser association. This is partly a question of attitudes and ideals, and partly a question of more pragmatic legal adaptations.

3. How can CSA contribute to consumer responsibility?

“We are all farmers – active or passive”,
(W. Stränz, member of Buschberghof CSA, Germany).

3.1. Sharing of responsibility and rewards

CSA is based on the idea of cooperative ownership of the production, but not necessarily the farm. Consumers share the responsibility for the production by buying shares in the production for one year ahead, participate in the planning of the season, and in most cases they pay part of the cost in advance. In this way the consumers very

directly share the risk and rewards of any agronomic and climatic variation of the produce.

3.2. Alternative to global world market

Citizens may choose to buy food through local alternatives to the global conventional food system. CSA is such an alternative. Examples of the concerns one may address when choosing organic foods from the local community are the problems related to the environmental costs which are often externalised in the conventional food production. Calculations estimate that food in the United States travels an average of more than 2 000 kilometres⁷⁰ before it reaches the end-consumer, and that food processing, packaging, transportation, and marketing accounts for approximately 75 to 85 per cent of the energy consumed in the food system⁷¹ (Hendrickson *et al.* 1995). There is reason to believe that the situation is similar in Europe. In a recent calculation of the environmental costs of the UK food basket, the authors concluded that “*it is clear that actions to reduce farm and food mile externalities, and shift consumers’ decisions on specific shopping preferences and transport choices would have a substantial impact on environmental outcomes*” (Pretty *et al.* 2005).

In order to share responsibility in the consumer role, information, insight and knowledge is imperative. Several researchers have pointed out that the distance and complexity in the food system is a severe challenge in relation to taking responsibility as a consumer/citizen. Jack Kloppenburg and Sharon Lezberg are among them:

“How can we act responsibly and effectively for change if we do not understand how the food system works and our role within it?” (Kloppenburg and Lezberg 1996)

From this perspective, distance is a problem in terms of citizen involvement in how our food is produced. Several aspects of distance come into play - both in terms of *spatial distance*, *temporal distance*, and *distance of mind* (Lieblein *et al.* 2001). It is by means of providing an alternative to such situations characterised by distance, formalised systems of information, and trust in abstract systems that CSAs may offer a qualitatively different context for food provisioning and community building. Following the American author and ecologist Wendell Berry (1992), we agree that direct experience is a powerful way to involvement and care. Here is his advice about how to “eat responsibly”:

“Learn as much as you can, by direct observation and experience if possible, of the life histories of the food species”.

He further elaborates on the connections he sees between the enjoyments of the food products as such, and the insight into the history behind the food:

⁷⁰ 1 300 miles (2 092 km). The Packer 1992 referred in Hendrickson *et al.* 1995

⁷¹ Hendrickson, J. (1995) “Energy Use in the Food System”, Presentation given at Regional Food Systems Seminar, Centre for Integrated Agricultural Systems, University of Wisconsin-Madison, referred in Hendrickson *et al.* 1995.

“The pleasure of eating should be an extensive pleasure, not that of the mere gourmet. (...) The knowledge of the good health of the garden relieves and frees and comforts the eater. The same goes for eating meat. The thought of the good pasture and of the calf contentedly grazing flavors the steak. (...) A significant part of the pleasure of eating is in one’s accurate consciousness of the lives and the world from which food comes. The pleasure of eating, then, may be the best available standard of our health.” (Berry 1992; 378).

For this closeness to the story behind the product to lead to such an “extensive pleasure”, the story must be a good one. But discomfort about a product with a disturbing story may be a strong incentive for change. The key point is that the story is *real* and not some kind of fabricated image. Our key point is that CSAs may provide a context where people can become aware of and experience realities behind the food products. In the next section, we will elaborate further on the importance of the contexts in which “consumer choices” take place.

3.3. The framing of consumer choice

In order for citizens to share responsibility for the way in which our food is produced, there must be viable alternatives in the market and they must be experienced as a realistic choice (economically, practically etc.) in everyday life. Often, and particularly in the marketing literature, there is reference to “consumer demand” and “consumer choice” as a direct expression of the values and priorities of citizens, for example in relation to concern for the environment or for social issues in the food system. We find it important to take into account the context which frames the choices of consumers. Rather than being a matter of the choice and specific preference of isolated individuals, we understand “consumer demands” as referring to:

- 1) Norms and expectations in the contexts of shopping, cooking and eating
- 2) Everyday routine social practices
- 3) Complex, undifferentiated and contradictory concerns, usually described in a ‘lay’ vocabulary as: “natural”, “pure”, “quality products”, “good for the environment” and “good for us”.

The sales channel is normally the “interface” between consumers and other actors in food production chains. Different sales channels provides for quite different types of consumer “choices” and consumer involvement, and CSA as arena for food provisioning differs significantly from a supermarket context. In a study of different organic food chains, the following comparison was made between short chains and large, complex chains with regard to characteristics of importance for consumer information, means of involvement and trust (Torjusen et al. 2005):

A large-scale, “mainstream” food system is characterised by the following:

- Accountability is institutionalised and consumer trust is placed in the “system” as such
- Information is provided by media of mass communication
- Products are standardised, packaged and labelled
- Supplies are relatively stable, often partly based on imports
- Feedback from consumers is provided by sales figures and market surveys.

The information needs of consumers in these systems are mainly met by providing brand names, logos and packaging, labelling of ingredients, trade labels and logos, store display and point-of-purchase signs regarding price and price reductions. None of these media allow for the communication of comprehensive or detailed information to consumers⁷².

Small-scale, “alternative” or “direct” systems have quite a different character:

- The producer is personally accountable and trust is placed in particular people
- Transparency and traceability are high, and communication often takes place face-to-face
- Products are not standardised, often not packaged, and sometimes not labelled
- Customer service is given high priority in this kind of market setting
- Supplies are highly dependant on locality and season, and sometimes supplemented by non-local, non-seasonal supplies
- Feedback from consumers is provided in the form of personal communication

Communication in this system is mainly limited by the time available for exchange of information, which is likely to be highly variable. In principle, however, the consumer is free to ask any number of questions, while the salesperson is offered the advantage of being able to obtain first hand information about consumer requirements, preferences, wishes and concerns. In cases in which farmers and growers take on the role of sales personnel, experience-based expert information is available, but all such systems tend to offer some level of expertise as part of their customer service.

In this broad outline of the polarities between the global and the local, we find the concept of CSA to be a prime example of a personalised direct, marketing channel. CSAs may provide a context where people can get to know “real stories about real people”. This is what Daniel Miller (2003) set out to bring to school-children in his project concerning the internet as a means to “de-fetishising” commodities.

For commodities that are produced far away, such as cocoa or bananas, the internet may be an excellent means of establishing direct contact between producers and consumers – as well as to all the other people involved along the chain (such as managers, packers, transporters, planners etc.). Such contact is meant as a process of personalisation, where the commodity becomes “*the personalised objectification of the relationships that it creates*” (Miller 2003,10). But many of the goods that we consume may very well be produced in our more immediate environment, among them

⁷² Although some European supermarket chains appear to be aware of the gap between the information needs of their customers and the kinds and level of information made available to them at present. Attention is currently being given to methods of linking product labels with electronic media by means of bar coding, radio-frequency identification systems or other technologies that could provide consumers with more of the information many want, which can be accessed outside of the context of shopping.

many of the basic food products in our diet. And for these kinds of products, CSA may be an excellent way of bonding with the people behind the products.

A combination of the direct and personal CSA-relations with people nearby and contact over the internet with distant people with whom we also have food relations would be very interesting to try out. There are many ways in which such contact would make sense within the CSA-concept. For example, contact could very well be made with producers of input factors to the farm, such as producers of ingredients to animal fodder, or raisers of young animals (such as chicken), or with people who provide other commodities than those which can be produced at a local farm (such as bananas, citrus fruits, tea, coffee).

3.4. Concluding remarks

Stevenson (1998) has suggested the term “food citizenship” to grasp the way we may participate consciously within the food system – as eaters and citizens, and we find this term to be useful in exploring the potentials of CSA. Stevenson uses the notion of competencies, and explores what he sees as important dimensions of a “*human infrastructure for negotiating alternative agrifood systems*”. He finds these key competencies to include *analytical competencies* (of making connections and evaluating contradictions), *relational competencies* (focussing on new forms of food citizenship involving alternative organizational relationships between actors in the food chain), *ethical competencies* (including the valuing of non-market goods and the linkages between ethics and emotions), and finally, *aesthetic and spiritual competencies* to connect agriculture and food with beauty and with what he calls sacramental living (Stevenson 1998).

All the different types of competencies mentioned above may potentially be alluded to in a CSA context. By offering a rich variety of learning opportunities and a broad range of ways of experiencing and learning about food – both through direct experience, and through making information about the food available, we believe the concept of CSA may offer an opportunity for “food citizenship” and sharing of responsibility.

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**Utilisation of household organic wastes by the earthworm
eisenia fetida (sav.):
An introduction to polish schools during activities in favor of
sustainable development**

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Introduction

Waste organic materials from industrial and rural areas (including those originating from schools, households, offices etc.) should be regarded as a valuable resource which has to be used. This can be achieved with use of earthworms!

In Poland, scientific interest in earthworms is growing. For instance, the National Conferences on “Ecological and Economic Meaning of Earthworms” (1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, and 2003) took place in Rzeszow. Besides the scientific research we are conducting (Kostecka 2004), we are trying to co-operate with teachers at different schools and education levels. Among various possibilities of using earthworms as teachers tools in different variants of teacher’s or pupil’s activity, small-scale vermiculture (“*Eisenia fetida* worm bins = earthworm ecological box”) seems to be important.

The children at kindergartens, grammar schools, high schools and students of some universities participate actively in constructing the bins, preparing the bedding, and introducing the waste organic material to the bins. They become familiar with the earthworms, so it is a good way to introduce them to the idea of waste segregation processing and utilization, as well as to learn about advances in earthworm ecology and their influence on soil fertility and life underground. It is important, but still undervalued in education for sustainable development all over the world (Kostecka 2004a).

It is worth mentioning that usually when one becomes more familiar with a certain issue they originally did not fancy, they get rid of unjustified negative connotations. One may get to appreciate earthworms despite their appearance that is unpleasant for some people.

Organic wastes, especially those originating while preparing and consuming meals, at home, at school, kindergarten, etc. are still, in many places around the world, collected together with other wastes then transported to, often unauthorized, dumping sites. There the wastes may be the source of diseases and environmental pollution. However, if wastes are pre-sorted, they become a valuable resources for example, in the alcohol production industry, for building trace technology, and the glass and gum industry. This can protect soil and water and prevents air pollution.

Another current ecological issue relates to soil fertility, which is decreasing rapidly because of a lack of organic matter. Hence the organic fraction of waste should be recycled, especially if it is not contaminated by heavy metals, pesticides, aromatic

hydrocarbons and sulfur compounds, as well as human and animal pathogens. Talking about household or classroom organic wastes – all those problems can be overcome, because a well educated citizen or pupil can segregate wastes and utilize by vermicomposting only the part that is not contaminated!

Instead of wasting an uneaten sandwich and placing coffee grounds, apple peels, table scraps, and other food waste in a kindergarten, classroom, office or kitchen dustbin and then to dumping sites, we can compost them at source.

Composting can be faster with the help of large earthworm population (Gaddie & Douglas 1977, Appelhof 1982, 1994, Edwards & Bolhen 1996, Kostecka 1996, 1998). In european conditions for vermicomposting we can use earthworm *Eisenia fetida fetida* or *E. fetida andrei*. Knowledge of vermiculture techniques should be presented to young people.

The aim of the study was to present a simple experiment that can be easily carried out in every kindergarten, school or university in order to depict the usability of earthworms and break the contempt towards them. Earthworms as valuable soil organisms should hale their permanent place in consciousness of the children, students and adults.

Materials and Methods

An experiment was conducted to evaluate the attractiveness of different kinds of organic wastes as feed and breeding substrata for earthworms.

An *E. fetida* population was obtained from a big outdoor vermiculture based on cattle manure and was bred in a simple wooden box (1x 0.5m – base and 0.4 m height) in laboratory conditions over a long period of time. It was fed with the following food wastes: tomato soup with rice, cherries, salad with boiled vegetable and sauce, boiled potatoes, rotting apples, coffee grounds, boiled noodles, tea leaves, boiled cabbage, moist bread, and uneaten sandwiches. Features of *E. fetida* population changes were evaluated (Table 1), as well as the time for organic waste processing in the “vermi-recycling system = earthworm ecological box” (Fig.1).

The mean numbers and biomass of the *E. fetida* population were measured by manually sorting three 1dm³ samples, taken from the box before and after the experiment, of three months duration. Populations were divided into age groups: adult (with *clitellum*), subadult individuals (with *tuberculae pubertatis*), coloured immatures and hatched immatures smaller than 4 cm. This part of the experiment should be repeated by those who are interested in order to get familiar with *E. fetida* life cycle (Fig.2).

Wastes were put to the vermi-recycling system in 0.2 litre portions, simultaneously, into one of ten randomly selected hollow surfaces of the earthworms bedding. Three repetitions of each food combination were prepared and monitored.

To find the mean time of waste processing in the bedding, records were made on a daily basis in the morning (Kostecka & Nowak 1994), until all organic wastes were processed. The experiment was conducted at mean temperature $17 \pm 5^{\circ}\text{C}$, and at a moisture content of 75%.

Results

During a three-month long experiment, 6 litres of refuse was added to the “vermi-recycling system” and changed to vermicompost. The *E. fetida* population grew in both numbers and biomass, but the total increase in earthworm numbers was small (4%) (Tab.1), 13% of individuals reached maturity. Cocoons were observed, the number of just hatched individuals increased by 2%. Total population biomass increased by 30% (Tab.1). Combined adult and subadult biomasses increased by 20%, and the biomass of immatures increased by about 35%. The mean biomass of individual specimens grew slowly.

Of the household organic wastes tested as a food for *E. fetida*, tomato soup with rice and also cherries was processed in the shortest time (2 and 3 days respectively). Tea leaves and soaked bread were present for much longer (mean 12 days) – (Fig.1).

Table 1

Initial and final mean number (ind.·dm⁻³) and mean biomass (g ·dm⁻³) of the *E. fetida* earthworm population in “vermi-recycling system”

Age groups		Hatched	Juveniles	Subadults with <i>tuber-culae</i> <i>pubertatis</i>	Adults with <i>clitellum</i>	Total
Start of experiment	Number	291	136	56	35	518
	Biomass	9.6	13.9	10.2	10.7	44.4
End of 3 months experiment	Number	205	231	59	46	541
	Biomass	6.4	29.5	14.3	15.6	65.8

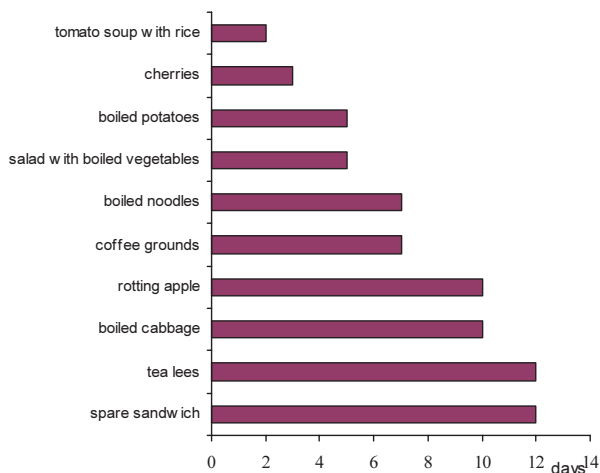


Figure 1. Mean time of waste processing in a small “vermi-recycling system”

All of the wastes tested were consumed by *E. fetida* and converted into vermicompost. Characteristics and mineral element content in vermicompost produced in a simple wooden box were measured (pH in water – 6.5; salinity – $3.4 \text{ g NaCl} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$; $141 \text{ mg} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3} \text{ NO}_3$; $570 \text{ mg} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3} \text{ P}$; $610 \text{ mg} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3} \text{ K}$; $1050 \text{ mg} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3} \text{ Ca}$; $230 \text{ mg} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3} \text{ mg Mg}$). The results showed the possibility for use of this product in agriculture as an element of horticultural bed.

The carried out research makes it possible to get familiar with the variety of earthworms within one species and think over their life cycle (Fig.2).

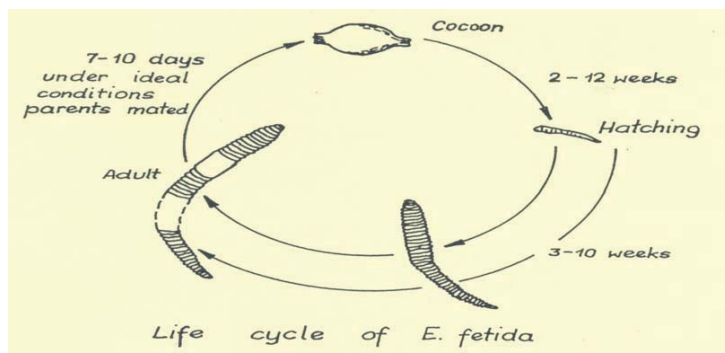


Figure 2. Different age groups of *Eisenia fetida* (after Reinecke & Kriel 1981)

Discussion

People always produce wastes which contain various compounds and can be reduced by segregating. The organic component of waste can be converted to vermicompost where it is produced – in a “home/ kindergarten/, school/, college/, university/, office etc. vermi–recycling system”. This system is simple and has obvious advantages in addition to increasing garden yields: saves water, energy, landfills and soils (Appelhof 1994, Kostecka 2000). Using worms we can bury different waste (Tab.2) and produce black, earthy-smelling, nutrient-rich humus. Earthworms can be also used to encourage environmental sensitivity in children [Kostecka 1999].

An experiment presented above can be also useful to stress the problem of earthworm populations in a small containers. In such conditions we have to be aware that we should not use the overcrowded population [Kostecka 2000], and also we have to remember about the unisipary effect of *E. fetida* populations (Mayer & Loots1999). During the experiment, earthworms processed the organic materials, but their numbers did not increasing significantly. This was probably due to problems in reproduction, because there is a difference in the population reproductive capacity in big outdoor earthworm beds (Gaddie & Douglas 1977, Kostecka 2000) and in a small containers. Mayer (Mayer & Bouman 1997, Mayer & Loots1999) noticed that in their small containers the earthworms hardly maintain their population due to hypopary phenomenon (male functioning). Male functioning was dominant in the small container population. Therefore, during the maintenance of an “earthworm ecological box” we have to remember to remove some amount of a population to keep reproduction of the worms more stable.

Table 2. Attractiveness of different kind of household refuses for *E. fetida*

Type of waste	Form of waste			
	morseled		unmorseled	
	attractiveness	group of earthworms	attractiveness	group of earthworms
raw cabbage	++	Mat., Inm.		
boiled potatoe	+++	Mat., Inm., Unc.		
peelings from cucumbers	++	Mat., Inm.	+	Mat., Inm.
boiled noodles	+++	Mat., Inm., Unc.		
mixture I*	+++	Mat., Inm., Unc.		
peelings from potato	++	Mat., Inm.		
tomato soup with noodles	+++	Mat., Inm., Unc.		
mixture II**	+++	Mat., Inm., Unc.		
rotten tomato			+++	Unc.

soaked bread			++	Unc.
gruyere cheese (moist)			+	Unc.
boiled red beetroots	++	Mat., Inm.	++	Mat., Inm.
lemon peel			-	
boiled carrot	++	Mat., Inm.	+	Mat.
slices of apple			++	Unc.
boiled cabbage	+++	Mat., Inm., Unc.	++	Mat., Inm.
raw cabbage			+	Mat., Inm.
apple			++	Unc.
vegetable salad	++	Mat.		
raw potato	++	Mat.	++	Mat.

Mixture I* boiled potato, boiled cabbage, peelings from cucumbers; Mixture II**
boiled cabbage, boiled potato, tomato soup with noodles

Attractiveness of refuses was evaluated as graduation:

+++ wastes very quickly settled and very quickly changed to vermicompost (2-4 days)

++ wastes quickly settled and quickly changed to vermicompost (4 – 10 days)

+ wastes slowly settled and slowly changed to vermicompost (more than 10 days)

- wastes not settled and not changed to vermicompost during one month

Mat.-specimens matured; Inm. -specimens inmaturred colored; Unc.- specimens just hatched

By introducing vermicomposting to schools, it is hoped that a great environmental awareness will develop (White 1996, Kostecka 1999). Earthworms can provide ecological education, and this subject should be the part of education at schools and kindergartens. Education of the children is the most important. How important and effective it is can be seen when comparing the following drawings interpreting events in underground world after reading „A scientific story –“Look Inside the Soil, A Play in Four Acts”(Kostecka 1996a), that introduces children to life underground (Fig.3, 4).



Figure 3. Reliable and proper text interpretation made by a pupil



Figure 4. Teacher's text interpretation warped by her „mature” view

It has to be stressed that well educated children will take care of education of their adult relatives.

Below, major benefits of introducing earthworm ecological boxes for the youngest are presented.

Working with worms in a “kindergarten /class /home vermi-recycling system” we can introduce a lot of various activities to the pupils. In order to increase their motivation we can grant them skills after a well performed task. The most obvious would be the skill of a worm breeder but apart from that we can introduce an activity that involves utilizing the humus produced by earthworms in order to acquire skill of a gardener. Another activity, this time on examining the earthworms, could give the pupils a skill of a scientist.

This system of skill reward can be made even much more complex and is limited only by the creativity of the teacher. There is no reason why pupils should not be able to obtain such skills as a skill of a journalist who reports on the value of vermicomposting to other classes and schools and other skills that at first might not seem relevant to the issue. Moreover, they should be informed that even a journalist should live up to the expectations of a sustainable society.

The earthworms' biomass multiplied in an ecological box is attractive for aquarium fish culture. The aim of some research [Kostecka, Paćzka 2004] was to find further arguments advocating the idea of vermicomposting in household and school conditions. The alternative use of *Eisenia fetida* biomass was feeding it to aquarium fish.

Poecilia reticulata was subject to examination, as they are commonly kept in households and schools. Fish were bred in two groups, with 6 specimens of both genders. The controlled group was made up of fish fed on standard food (Biovit) whilst the second group of fish was fed on earthworm biomass. Fish breeding was conducted in controlled laboratory conditions. It was found that earthworm biomass produced in ecological boxes can be used successfully for feeding *Poecilia reticulata*. Compared to those fed on a standard food, earthworm-fed fish increased the brood number and produced twice the offspring ($p < 0.001$).

This way, if there is a fish breeding, the school may save some food money as earthworm food is produced with no expenses. What is more, it is possible to earn

money using the earthworm ecological box and its products. The class that breeds the earthworms may earn money by selling flower seedlings potted into vermicompost medium (Fig.5), breeding and selling aquarium fish fed with earthworm biomass (that are usually beautiful specimens, valuable to aquarium fish breeders), or selling earthworm' population to an ecological box in a neighbouring class or schools (Fig.6) as well as fishermen to use the earthworms as bait.

The whole experiment can be incorporated with many courses, namely, on mathematics pupils can be taught how to calculate the vermicomposting rate, the biomass growth rate etc; elements of economy may be taught by preparing a business plan of the entire enterprise, financial social and environmental benefits should be pointed out and made clear to the children.

Again it is only the creativity of the teachers that limits the enterprise's scale. Pupils may learn how to make vermicomposting boxes of various types during a manual training course (Fig. 7) which is extremely beneficial as they may need to know how to make them in case they manage to encourage their parents to perform vermicomposting at home or at work.



Figure 5. Plants from vermicompost seedling in one of high schools near Rzeszow, Poland



Figure 6. Earthworms selling in one of high schools near Rzeszow, Poland

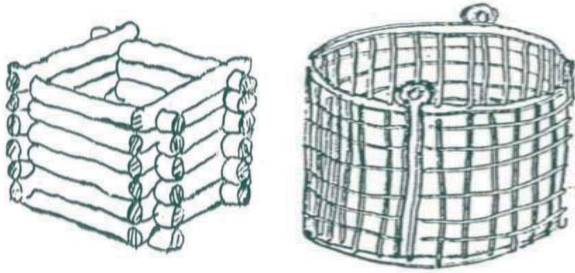


Figure 7. During manual training pupils make various types of vermicomposting boxes

Earthworms might be even included in physical education classes. Pupils can participate in various games with a barrel of organic waste and earthworms. It is essential to take care of earthworms and remember about watering the inside of the barrel after the game is over – earthworms live in moist waste (Fig. 8).



Figure 8. Pupils can participate in various games with a barrel of organic waste and earthworms. (After Worm Digest)

Children can become actors during supplementary classes, presenting their achievements to parents or younger colleagues.

Being responsible can be enjoyable for both, teachers and pupils! (Fig. 9).



Figure 9. „A scientific story –“Look Inside the Soil, A Play in Four Acts”(Kostecka 1996a), presented as a puppet show and a performance of children actors

Conclusions

1. Sustainable development has three pillars: economic, social and ecological. Large-scale presentation of the new ideas, especially within the third pillar, is immensely important.
2. In order to be a member of Consumer Citizenship Network we should read a lot, get acquainted with new possibilities of actions and discuss them with our families and friends.
3. Using an earthworm ecological box will help to develop and practice many skills needed in every-day sustainable activities.
4. When using earthworms for ecological activities in favor of sustainable development we can easily find that being responsible can be enjoyable for both, teachers and pupils!

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The Consumer Citizenship Network conference, “Taking responsibility”, May 2005 took place in Bratislava, Slovakia and was hosted by the University of Economics in Bratislava. This compilation is a selection of papers presented at the conference.

The participants of the conference examined how mature civic involvement can affect the development of a more just and caring global society. Issues which were focused on were:

- * how taking responsibility contributes to dignity and self-worth,
- * how the responsibilities of the individual, particularly in his/her role as a consumer, can be identified,
- * how the responsibilities of the individual differ from those of business and governments,
- * how the individual fulfils his/her responsibilities,
- * how one learns to be responsible,
- * how the spirit of selfless community service can be developed in children and youth,
- * how being responsible can be enjoyable

The conference also dealt with how “taking responsibility” can be taught in higher education particularly in relation to consumer citizenship education.

The Consumer Citizenship Network is an interdisciplinary network of educators, researchers and civil-society organisations, (including UNESCO, UNEP and Consumers International) who recognize the pressing need for constructive action by individuals in order to achieve sustainable consumption and global solidarity. The Consumer Citizenship Network has, since 2003, developed interdisciplinary approaches to central issues dealing with the balance between material and non-material well-being and with how one can translate ethical values into everyday practice through conscientious participation in the market. CCN brings together expertise in the fields of citizenship-, environmental- and consumer education to further develop research and good practice for teaching and accessing consumer citizenship education. The Network consists of 121 institutions in 37 countries.