Taking Responsibility
Consumer Citizenship: Promoting new responses

Vol. 1

Taking Responsibility

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INTRODUCTION

Consumer Citizenship: Promoting new responses is a series of publications presenting articles dealing with the diverse dimensions of consumer citizenship. Consumer citizenship acknowledges that

“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.”

Taking Responsibility comprises a selection of papers written by members of the Consumer Citizenship Network*. The papers published here represent a geographic as well as philosophic distribution of the ideas, examples, and practices concerning the area of consumer citizenship education across Europe, and indeed Canada.

The nature of 'responsibility' and the various definitions of 'responsibility' are numerous. A simple web-search for the term 'responsibility' yields 349,000,000 hits! How can consumers be educated into taking responsibility if the term itself is so vague. A dictionary definition suggests that responsibility is a 'duty, obligation, or burden'. Yet some of the examples contained within this collection show that the taking of responsibility need not be a burden; though it may be a duty and may become an obligation. An alternative online dictionary defines responsibility as 'the social force that binds you to your obligations and the courses of action demanded by that force'.

I would suggest that these papers are forming part of the debate on the courses of action demanded by a social force. This force is leading us towards demanding a sustainable future, one in which
all consumer citizens play an active part in determining the social and ecological landscape we are shaping for ourselves and future generations. We, as educators, have an important role to play in guiding future consumer citizens and we must accept this responsibility also as our duty -- not as our burden.

Declan Doyle, editor

* The Consumer Citizenship Network (CCN) was established in 2003 as an interdisciplinary network of educators, researchers and representatives of civil society organisations (as well as UNESCO, UNEP and Consumers International) who share an interest in how the individual’s role can contribute constructively to sustainable development and mutual solidarity. The participants work to 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. By focusing on social responsibility, the CCN addresses the growing international concern for implementation of norms and behaviour which support sustainable development and global solidarity. The Consumer Citizenship Network brings together expertise in the fields of citizenship-, environmental- and consumer education and provides channels for dialogue and cooperation in research and development work related to consumer citizenship education.
AWARENESS, ACTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Victoria W. Thoresen

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Introduction
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 lead 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 globally- acting locally

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

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“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”
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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. 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 Doppler effect) in which there is a significant time lag between the public demand for 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 lead to reversed ideas about the “naturalness” of consumption first and cleaning up the mess afterwards. The global society’s new interconnectedness has lead 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 grassroots participation in development, opening the way to new approaches to policy making.

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 seemed possible but despotic power. The poor began to talk of violent revolt. The rich prepared condition, and no other means for freeing it from disturbances 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)
**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, grassroot 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 mindset, 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 Sceptical 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 sceptical means being cautious when drawing conclusions about the world and willing to change one’s minds if new information appears (Alberta Sceptics, 2005). Also, as a caveat, being sceptical is not the same thing as being cynical. Sceptics 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. Sceptics 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 of 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 do it even with help, or (c) able to 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 centred) 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.

Transdisciplinary 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, we move closer to creating a conscience in the marketplace and creating principled consumer citizens.

References


CREATIVE COMMUNITIES AND ENABLING PLATFORMS

AN INTRODUCTION TO A PROMISING LINE OF RESEARCH AND ACTIONS ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

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Introduction
The aim of this paper is to introduce to a line of research and action on 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.

The background
Transition towards sustainability requires radical changes in the way we produce and consume and, more in general, 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.

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 relationship 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

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

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\(^2\) 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. (End date: 2006-03-31 Duration: 24 months. Instrument: Specific Support Action)
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 creative communities are expressing? What enabling solutions\(^3\) 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?

**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

\(^3\) *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.
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.

**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 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.
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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Introduction

Kofi Annan, the UN secretary general, put 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 it’s 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 the 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 republican 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 consumershup and citizenship.
Ochender (1999), in her discussion of the two subject positions presented to the young of today do 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 as 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.
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:

1. 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.

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.
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)

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

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.
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 throw 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. 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 to “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.

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6 Home, Society and Nature, 7,5 ECTS- credits is the first course in Home and consumer studies at Uppsala university.
The students are grouped into teams (4-6 persons) and they practice the method cooperative learning. Each team examines activities in the family by focusing on one material resource a family uses, 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 the help of the concepts and models offered by the human ecology theory. Every team does 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.

**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 a more 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

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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](http://www.co-operation.org)).
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 feedback 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 singe 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 in 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 by 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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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 everyday activity of 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:

- How the responsibility is shared between those elements? Who is responsible for what?
- How to bring together the different interests of individuals, businesses and governments and develop understanding of their mutual interest towards sustainable future? Is it possible to turn individuals, businesses and governments into real partners?
- How to measure the way individuals, businesses and governments are taking responsibility?

First step: Dividing tasks between actors towards sustainability
Fulfilling his/her needs the individual behaves differently 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:
1. Personal responsibility for consumer behavior conformed to the criterion for the efficient utilization of resources.
2. Personal responsibility for consumer behavior conformed to the criterion for environmental protection.
3. Personal responsibility for ‘being a citizen of the world’, i.e. for engagement in social activities and seeking the possibilities to influence decisions at all levels towards sustainable values.
4. Personal responsibility for accepting the diversity of values, cultures and behaviors and for refusing to decide problems by force.

5. Personal responsibility for handing down mentioned above values to the future generations.

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 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’. Very important part of the job is to answer that very question rightly as well. So we need to know how sustainably 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.” 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).” But what the complete content of ‘sustainably responsible product/service’ should be then? 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:

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’) 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 from 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 tremendously 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.

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It will be not 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 increase as well having in mind that those people are exactly the same who will vote later on.

**Second step: Developing mutuality of interests**

Is that 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 – individual, 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 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. System is a passive actor only and can’t 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’ how the system have 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 the inanimate Nature deterministic relations are dominant. With the increase of systems’ complexity the presence of self-organization also increases and the importance of determination is going down. And it is 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 those kind of relations through which the ‘reverse determination’ appears also, 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 biological but as psychological and social system, and also the organizations and the society as a whole are typical representatives of self-organizing systems. That means, social systems in fact create by themselves 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 the 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 issue 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 entirely personal decision. Results from those measurements then could 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 form 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 now about the formal measurement of governmental responsibility. Firstly, because it is difficult to develop standards, and secondly, because the appraisal institution has to be international. We need to consider as well the complexity and uncertainty of 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 the responsibility about how the world is looking 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.

References:
CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING OF RESPONSIBILITY

Barbara Mazur
University of Finance and Management, Bialystok, Poland

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 social context. Many different classifications of cultures exist, as there are several variables influencing the existence of those pigeonholes. 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.

Classification of cultures according to G. Hofstede
Geert Hofstede, the Dutch scientist investigating cultures of societies, in 1970s described culture as collective programming of the mind differentiating certain parts of the global society from the 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, labelled as

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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.
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.

**Table 1 Power Distance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Power-Distance</th>
<th>South Korea</th>
<th>60</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>104</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab countries</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
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<td>Indonesia</td>
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<td>India</td>
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<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
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<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
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<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 perceiver 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 Individualism versus Collectivism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individualistic</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Great Britain</th>
<th>Turkey</th>
<th>Uruguay</th>
<th>Greece</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individualistic</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Index</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
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<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>East Africa</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Italy</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
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<td>Malaysia</td>
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<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>Hong Kong</td>
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<td>France</td>
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<td>Ireland</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
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<td>Norway</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (West)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Salvador</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
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<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
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<td>Colombia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Venezuela</td>
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<td>Iran</td>
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<td>Panama</td>
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<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brasil</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab countries</td>
<td>38</td>
<td><strong>Collectivistic</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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?

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 Hofestede’s research was conducted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculinity</th>
<th>Femininity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>79</td>
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<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>73</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
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<td>Mexico</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (West)</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The last dimension is labelled as 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uncertainty Avoiding</th>
<th></th>
<th>Uncertainty Tolerating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>Germany (West)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
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<td>Iran</td>
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<td>Belgium</td>
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<td>Finland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salvador</td>
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<td>Switzerland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
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<td>West Africa</td>
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<td>Yugoslavia</td>
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<td>Netherlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
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<td>East Africa</td>
</tr>
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<td>Argentina</td>
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<td>Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>Norway</td>
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<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
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<td>France</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
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<td>Mexico</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>India</td>
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<td>Israel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
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<td>Taiwan</td>
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<td>Singapore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arab countries</td>
<td>68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 are the country most often mentioned as perfect example of society dominated by individualism, while Japan is frequently quoted as an ideal of collectivist society.

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.

Fundamental role of lord/father/husband was representing the entire system to the outside world. An individual in such 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 still can 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 community. 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 most
influential economic work ever done. The following extract from
the work provided the definition of individualism from 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.”

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 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

10 Hampden-Turner, Ch., Trompenaars, A., Siedem kultur kapitalizmu.
11 Smith, A.: An Inquiry Into the Wealth of Nations., after: Hampden-
Turner, Ch., Trompenaars, A., Siedem kultur kapitalizmu. Dom
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 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 to ourselves and to 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 ca 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.
Economic, Philosophical And Social Definition Of Responsibility In Collectivist Cultures

In congruence with Tao philosophy, people from the Far East represent 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 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 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 Confucian system of values underlying it. Salient features of such system are:

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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 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. Opinion 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 top-ranking position in society puts the burden of responsibility on the winners for supporting those who occupy lower positions in social hierarchy.

Collectivist culture is characterized by collective responsibility. For violation of 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, 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 individual.

**Conclusion**
Each culture of the mentioned above can boast off 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. No unanimous answer to the question, whether a synthesis of such attitudes within the frames of today’s global economy exists. One may merely speculate that some form of their coexistence would become indispensable. The best of all available solutions in the era of world’s global economy would be the fusion of individualist attitude, with man being entirely responsible for himself, and collectivist approach in which responsibility is spread on entire social groups. It would benefit the entire human society.

**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, making 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 possible combination of the two approaches.
The education of children as consumers begins early in societies of the late modern world. The informal education is acting through surroundings and medias. The formal consumer education is carried out in the school in different subjects. The aim of the formal consumer education has mainly been to teach and educate students to behave as informed, rational consumers.
This understanding of consumption as reasoned behaviour or action is inadequate in the late modern society, where consumerism is first and foremost characterised by globalisation, cultural change and the liberation of the individual.
Further elaboration of results from a research study using mind maps show that for Danish pupils aged 12-19 consumption is both connected to material and non-material aspects of life. The dialectics and dilemmas related to consumption are not sufficiently presented and raised in the formal consumer education. This study presents some introductory suggestions and considerations for future consumer education., as consumer education is located in the field of tension between “consumership” and “citizenship”. This study seeks to integrate consumer socialisation and consumer education in order to reflect on empowerment as part of education.

Introduction
Consumption is part of our living conditions 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. 13(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 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’.

13 Colin Campbell has documented this in The Romantic Ethic and Spirit of Modern Consumerism
(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. 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

14 In Denmark all students over 18 receive a study grant, regardless of their financial state and living conditions
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.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of being a consumer today</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>positive aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• being ‘a happy consumer’</td>
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<tr>
<td>• pleasure</td>
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<td>• ‘buying when bored’</td>
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<td>• consumption larger than needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>• ‘ruled by majority’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ‘no ends of choices’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ‘we are spoilt’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• identity created by society</td>
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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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of being a consumer in future</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>positive aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>same premises for being a consumer as today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technology will have a great impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intensification of marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>easier consumption made possible by technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consumption demands a large labour effort and big earnings</td>
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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. 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 construct 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 minds 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. 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-centered person chooses more in the direction of the welfare and care of the ecos. Ecos comes from the Greek: Oikos, which means household.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;consumption for myself&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;consumption for others&quot;</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual level</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collective level</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characterized of preferences for:</td>
<td>Characterized of considerations on:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special items</td>
<td>Items needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taste</td>
<td>economy/ecology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time, place/environment</td>
<td>ethics</td>
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<tr>
<td>pleasure</td>
<td>prohibitions</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;ego-centric&quot; consumer</td>
<td>&quot;eco-centred&quot; producer</td>
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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.

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15 This expression has been inspired by the work of Vaines (1990) and Kurt Lewin.
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 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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Haalbara laster, konsumtion för en ljusare framtid (Sustainable habits, consumption for a brighter future, in Swedish) SOU 2004:119


Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in Norway –
A context for shared responsibility

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National Institute for Consumer Research, Norway

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 about 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 lead 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 200016. In Europe there seem not 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 CSAs17. In principle, there are no specific connection between CSA and organic agriculture, but in practice they have proved to be combined18.

16 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,
18 We have not as yet become aware of any CSA where conventional production methods are used.
1.2. Key Aspects

1.2.1. Dialogue and binding agreement 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 behind 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 CSA19: 1) Community Building, 2) Sustainable agriculture, and 3) Food security. He points at “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 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.

19 He uses the term Community Shared Agriculture.
One way of viewing this from the farmers’ point of view is that “economical insecurity is substituted with social challenges”\textsuperscript{20}.

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 ones 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).

\textsuperscript{20} 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-farms\textsuperscript{21}, 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 \textit{maintenance of the farming activity} as such (they are passive farmers), it is beside 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 keeping them accessible as traditional cultural landscapes.
2. At one of the rural CSA, with cooperation between three organic farms, \textit{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

\textsuperscript{21} Fokhol Farm, February 16\textsuperscript{th} 2004, seminar about Community Supported Agriculture.
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.

2. The CSA project in Norway

“Something has to be changed – otherwise everything will be changed” (Guiseppe di Lampedusa in “The Leopard”)

2.1. Relevant background

The government give 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 and 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 National Institute for Consumer Research. Two organizations promoting organic products and production are also included in the project, - i.e. 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, like the Norwegian, 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 loosing the competition with import products from countries with lower production costs?
3. Are there anybody out there who prefer locally produced products, and 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 outskirt 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 to 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 kilometres 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 system (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

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22 1 300 miles (2 092 km). The Packer 1992 referred in Hendrickson et al. 1995
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:

“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 through the 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 consumers24.

Small-scale, “alternative” or “direct” systems have quite 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 marketing 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

24 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.
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 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 that 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.

References


Soil Association (year not given): *A share in the harvest – An action manual for Community Supported Agriculture.*


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 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 (Jensen 1997, Svedbom 2000).

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 “is done” is targeted at solving the actual problem or not. According to this definition, only section no. 4 in Figure 1 presents the concept of action needed in order to create an action-oriented CCN education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unconscious activity</th>
<th>Conscious activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity solely as a counter-weight to academic tuition</strong></td>
<td>1. 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).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity as a reason and targeted at solving a problem</td>
<td>3. 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.</td>
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<td>---</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. 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.</td>
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</table>

**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 section no. 4 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.

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**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. 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
The pupils should also gain a knowledge of the main factors, both external and personal, that determine consumer choice 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 i) the production of society ii) the organization of day-to-day life iii) food and subjectivity and iv) 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 section no. 4 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Negative (absence of illness)</th>
<th>Positive (well-being and absence of illness)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrow (lifestyle)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad (lifestyle and living conditions)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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**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 and 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investigation of a theme</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Is your lunch choice important now and in the future for the health of you and other people?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Is your lunch choice important for the environment, locally and/or globally?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>How does your lunch choice affect the environment and your health, now and in the future?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>How do you rank your lunch choice from a perspective of responsibility and solidarity?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>What factors affect your lunch choice?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Do lifestyle or/and living conditions have an influence on your lunch choice?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>What was lunch like in the past and why has it changed?</em></td>
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<tr>
<th>Development of visions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>What is lunch like in other cultures and countries?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>What alternatives could you imagine to your lunch?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Do you prefer an alternative lunch choice that considers the environment and your health from a perspective of responsibility and solidarity?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Why do you prefer this alternative lunch?</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Action & Change

What changes will bring you closer to the alternative lunch (the vision)?
Do these changes include modifications to your lifestyle and/or living conditions?
What action possibilities dealing with lifestyle and living conditions exist to achieve these changes?
What barriers exist between the change and the possibilities for action?
How can you overcome these barriers?
Can the actions be divided into sub-actions?
Should you take action alone or together with other people?
What actions will you carry out?
How can we evaluate these actions?

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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References
Learning how to take responsibility is a process that starts early in individuals’ childhood and involves us in our role of 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. But what are the trends, in terms of teaching materials and themes, in CE for the future? We try to answer the question by showing the results of an exploratory study carried in December 2004 - January 2005 involving consumer educators from all over the European Union. The paper starts with a short description of the evolution of consumer education in Italy and its main features. We interviewed some Italian teachers and consumer educators in order to capture, firstly, what they appreciated the most in CE projects and, secondarily, their difficulties or criticisms. Then, the paper presents the results of an exploratory research divided in two parts. The first was a documental analysis (carried out on the most important magazines, journals, books and website dedicated to CE, 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) 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 (themes, tools, policies, relationship with consumer associations, with government etc. etc.). Preliminary results will be discussed and compared to the Italian experience. The cross-national perspective allows one to highlight the cultural differences, in terms of values, norms and pedagogical approaches, which characterize European nations.
1 INTRODUCTION: CONSUMER EDUCATION IN ITALY

Learning how to take responsibility is a process that starts early in individuals’ childhood and involves us in our role of 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. Starting around the ‘80s and encouraged by the European Community, it slowly spread within schools mainly thanks to the initiative of a private cooperative society of consumers, producers and retailers (called COOP)\(^{25}\). 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 was left (till nowadays) to 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 a few, motivated and innovative teachers. In the last 10 years, luckily, more and more professionals have become carefully tuned to non-traditional aspects of young people’s lives, such as environmental, sexual, civil and also CE, and the number of projects about these topics significantly increased (Rinaldi, 2000).

\(^{25}\) 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 cooperatives 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”\textsuperscript{26}: a number of public meetings (free of charge) started in the ’80s, aimed at the 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 teenagers, exploring the fashion’s 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 the 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)\textsuperscript{27}. One of the main characteristics of these initiatives was an interactive, 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 follows:

\begin{itemize}
  \item[a)] schools or teachers are contacted and receive - or teachers request - a list of different animations on various CE issues (for example: balanced-diet, OGM food, money-management, consumer rights, fair trade, fashion and identity…);
  \item[b)] the teacher, together with the school council and after listening to parents’ opinion, considering the specific class’s needs and interests, select a proposal of animation;
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{26} 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).

\textsuperscript{27} For an overview of some of these campaigns, see Baruzzi and Di Vittorio (1998), www.e-coop.it and www.coop-pandora.it
c) consumer educators encounter teachers and prepare meetings with the class. There is usually a minimum of 2 meetings: one is more “theoretical” and informative and one more is “practical” – held sometimes 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 to 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 greater weight is given to students’ and teacher’s initiative to explore new pattern of knowledge;

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-COOP 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 have felt the need to understand what is going on in the other European nations and compare different experiences, practices and 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 has been researched 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 educators.

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28 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”.

29 “ANCC” indicates “Associazione Nazionale delle Cooperative Consumatori” and it is a representative organ which promotes institutional and political interests of the Italian COOPs.
educators in order to capture, firstly, what they appreciated the most in CE projects (themes, materials and practices) and, secondarily, their difficulties or criticisms. 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 websites dedicated to 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). 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 Örberg (Swedish Consumer Agency, Sweden), Nievez 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 (regional 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 national policies on CE.

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.

See: http://www.norden.org/nicemail/, participants list.

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 CE find in their everyday work?; 8) What
Being a preliminary study, ideas and consideration explained here must be considered as provisional. Further research will be carried out in order to deepen what was found at this stage: suggestions, comments or criticisms are welcomed.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Themes Of The Past Years
The documental analysis (carried out on the most important magazines, journals, books and websites dedicated to CE in the European Union, published in the last 2 years) revealed that the 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 growing teenagers’ purchase power, in fact, advertising is becoming an issue more and more critical, as Örberg pointed out, as well as the issue of “health and beauty”. A few years ago for example, most experts affirmed that the problem of obese and over-weight children was very limited, but it is now dramatically growing. Recently, the concept of sustainable future has also 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 on projects of food, nutrition and 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, food/nutrition/diet, sustainable development/responsible consumption as well as the always-present money management.

The preliminary study that we carried out among Italian teacher and consumer educators\textsuperscript{33}, 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 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 subjects for them....Afterwards – as I am their Italian Literature teacher - I chose books, film and articles which dealt with these topics... I mean their needs and fears about future, about adulthood and gender identity. To talk during the ordinary lesson about the themes which 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” (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-sites, 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,

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.
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 readily allow children to go to supermarkets, in order to avoid any form of “indirect marketing” for any retailer or supermarket company. Teachers’ fear of being strumentalized 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 aids (as in Spain and in Germany). They can be ordered via e-mail or phone at public institutions, as well as from National Consumer Agencies. Internet use is higher in Nordic European countries compared to the Mediterranean ones. In Sweden, for example, explains Marianne Örberg, 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-site 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 remembered, in fact, that not all families have got a computer at home, and some schoools still have a very limited number of computers available. Moreover, Örberg states, teachers are the real
people who in the end translate contents and information into interesting work with the class.\footnote{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 megazine for young consumers www.yomag.net}

\textit{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) regularly organize specific courses on CE for teachers (for example in Norway). The situation is much 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 deliver 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 much appreciated.\footnote{In order to evacuate teachers’ opinions, ideas, suggestions and critics, ANCC-COOP has organized a “National Conferences on Consumer} Most
opinion leaders interviewed, nonetheless, criticized 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 this is mostly 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’s identity and ordinary life, therefore they find 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 had been 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 a socially responsible attitude 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 also will be given to new forms of beauty/health-issues (plastic surgery, tattoos, amphetamines…) especially in projects targeted to teens-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 setting in order to promote efficient management as well as prevent problems like debt and wrong economic decisions (Gnieczyk, 2004). Recent education considerations would like a broader involvement of teenagers in the economic organization of 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) and absolutely necessary to communicate. Feelings for mobile phones are much various 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)

\[\text{Fig.3 – Projecting in the next 4 years, which are the themes that you plan to develop the most? (% of positive answer)}\]
4 Discussion
Basing the discussion of our results on the model outlined by Professor Heiko Steffens (see also Hellman-Tuitert, 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/persuasion) 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 highlighted 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 the mad cow, 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 European level there is a standard package of goods (electronic devices such as mobile phones, CD-players, play-stations, and clothes, travel, 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 more and more asked to decide and be responsible for his/her own action, therefore there is a strong need of clear and
impartial information in order to overcome a spreading 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 maths, and are not much encouraged to integrate it in the national curricula. In some nations, like in Norway, the Ministry of Education send 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 Steffen’s 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 some 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 defense” 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 a more sustainable and ethical pattern of consumption. In a certain way, having a well-informed consumer who appreciated 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 need to be elaborated), nevertheless we believe that our results could be considered as interesting starting points for future considerations and projects in consumer education.
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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 (Steptoe 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 an 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; Dibsdall 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 exits a gap between dietary recommendations and actual food use at the general population level in many Western countries. 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 an 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.

CONCLUSION
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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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 in society definite duties, 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 of 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;
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, begging 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 socialization of the children on the street.

*Socialization.*
Socialization 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. Socialization begins at birth and continuous 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 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.

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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 9 years 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 is children and teenagers from social risk families, as well as their parents, step-parents, 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. They meet in the centre 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 he 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.

Elder children take part in kitchen duties, doing it together with adults or without, - it’s cooking and laying the table for approximately 12 up to20 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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INTERACTIVE CITIZENSHIP : 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 NGOs, 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 had 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 realize this shared vision.

Community forums, initiatives, principles have been developing to advance the movement for 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-sides 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 of 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, claim, 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 responsibility 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 organizations would unlikely 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 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 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 labor rights when considering their purchases (M2 Presswire, 2002), on another 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 these evidences 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 behaviors. 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 behavior. 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) help 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 labor 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 have 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 Turkish Chemical manufacturers Associations (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: Pollution prevention, Process safety, Distribution, Employee health and safety, Product Stewardship, 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 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 organizing 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 Kazanli 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 fiber 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 defense 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 implementation examples. This code requires Responsible Care practitioners to design and implement extensive community outreach programs that require 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 chemicals 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 neighbors 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 program 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. 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 and consumer awareness and involvement.
THE INTERNET AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE. 
PROMISES AND PROSPECTS FOR THE CONSUMER 
CITIZEN

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Introduction
In the last few decades the world has witnessed great transformations in 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 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 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 globalized 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. 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.

Theoretical 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 or 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 seize 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**

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 inform and 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 and 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 consumer information 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, government departments and 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 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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