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Assessing Information



The Consumer Citizenship Network Conference Proceedings Tallinn 2008

Alexandra Klein and Victoria W. Thoresen (eds.)

SOKRATES

Hedmark University College

CONSUMER CITIZENSHIP NETWORK

Assessing Information as Consumer Citizens

Assessing Information as Consumer Citizens

Proceedings of the fifth international conference of
The Consumer Citizenship Network, Tallinn, Estonia 2008

Alexandra Klein and Victoria W. Thoresen (Eds.)

"*Paradoxically knowledge has made us more uncertain*"
Jose Joaquin Brunner

Høgskolen i Hedmark
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INTRODUCTION

Acquiring, evaluating and applying information are three keys to consumer citizenship. Scientific fact, moral principle and emotional reaction combine to influence the decisions the consumer citizen makes. We are all challenged with the increasingly complex task of integrating information into meaningful units of understanding which can then motivate our behaviour. The fifth international Consumer Citizenship Network conference on ***Assessing information as consumer citizens*** focused on how consumers and citizens deal with the information which they encounter daily and how critical assessment of information can be taught. 130 persons from 32 countries attended.

The conference focused on:

- What information consumers want and what they need
- Which information goods and services improve market transparency
- What information scientists, producers, governments, media, teachers and interest organizations should provide to enable consumers to make responsible shopping decisions
- What is necessary for information to be effectively and reliably transmitted and analyzed
- To what extent does consumers' trust in prices and labels as valid indicators of quality encourage or undermine the consumers' interest and ability to acquire information
- How consumer citizenship education can deal with the cognitive, emotional, social and economic influences on consumer's capacity to process information
- How consumers can break codes and identify hidden messages in commercial information

36 presentations and posters were made at the conference dealing with such topics as:

- Information overload
- The quality of information
- The role of the media
- Cultural differences in assessing information
- The right to be informed
- Democracy and the consumer assessment of information
- Implementation of consumer citizenship education
- Indicators for sustainable consumption



Marike Kompus van der Hoeven



Conference participants

The conference was organised by The Consumer Citizenship Network, an Erasmus thematic network of educators and researchers. The conference was coordinated by the Hedmark University College, Norway and hosted by the University of Tallinn, Estonia. The conference was made possible with the support from the SOCRATES programme and the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality and the Ministry of Education. The conference chair was Victoria W. Thoresen and the conference manager was Dag Tangen, both from Hedmark University College. The conference coordinators were Hindrek Lootus, Tallinn University and Hanna Turetski-Toomik, Estonian Consumer Protection Board. The conference committee consisted of Declan Doyle, peer review committee chairman, Institute of Technology, Carlow, Ireland; Bjørg Quarcoo, financial secretary, Hedmark University College; Helena Hansen, Estonian Consumer Protection Board and Natali Zagorulko, Tallinn University.

The plenary sessions

The conference opened with speeches from Vice Rector, Rein Raud, University of Tallinn; Kjell Erik Øie, Norwegian Secretary of State for Children and Equality and Consumer Affairs; Marike Kompus van der Hoeven, Deputy Secretary General, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication, Estonia; Helle Arnuiit, Director General of the Consumer Protection Board of Estonia; Victoria Thoresen, Hedmark University College, Norway; Bjarne Pedersen, Consumers International, London, UK; and Ron Byrnes, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Washington, U.S.

The conference contained key note speeches, a panel discussion, video films, 26 papers presented, quizzes, the first CCN student essay competition award, exhibitions and social events.



KEY NOTE SPEAKERS

"Assessing Information as a Consumer Citizen" **Kjell Erik Øie** is State Secretary in the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality, which also deals with consumer policy and protection. Øie's education is in the fields of nursing and criminology. He has previously served as Head of Department at the Church City Mission. He has functioned on numerous boards and organizations working on issues of gender and human rights. *"It is essential that curriculum development which strengthens consumer citizenship education takes place nationally and internationally on all levels including that of teacher training."*

"Challenges of Sustainable Consumption" **Bjarne Pedersen** is the Head of Policy and Advocacy at Consumers International where he is responsible for leading and managing the CI policy research team worldwide. Academic qualifications include a MSC in Human Nutrition, as well as a Masters in International Environment Policy. Recently Bjarne Pedersen has been Head of CI delegations to the Commission on Sustainable Development and the WHO World Health Assembly as well as the ISO SR WG. *"Governments and companies should 'edit choices' by removing the least sustainable products and services before sale thus making the ethical choice an easier choice."*





"Consumer Citizenship around the Globe" **Terry Haffner** is the Executive Director of The American Council on Consumer Interests. The ACCI is a consumer policy research and education organization consisting of a worldwide community of researchers, educators and related professionals dedicated to enhancing consumer well-being. ACCI promotes the consumer interest by encouraging, producing and communicating policy-relevant research.

"Media Literacy in the Digital Age" **Ronald Byrnes** is a Fulbright scholar from the Pacific Lutheran University in Washington, USA where he is a member of the Department of Education. Byrnes has focused on global education, media literacy and curriculum development. He has carried out comparative research in education, examining among other things educational reform and initiatives for peace. Byrnes has worked and done research in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. "*Young people are more familiar with the media but not necessarily more sophisticated in their use of it."*





"To know or not to know—that is the question"
Victoria W. Thoresen, CCN project manager. Through an old Estonian tale about a woodcutter, who listened to the trees, Thoresen described the serious dilemmas related to knowing and not knowing that consumers are facing every day, dealing with highly complex and specialized information related to risk perception and safety in order to make a "diagnosis" leading to simple actions. She also stated that "*the key to reducing the information overload for consumers seems to be to make information as simple (prices, labels, etc.), as timely and as highly relevant to the consumer as possible. In other words, it needs to fit into the window of the consumer's social context.*"

Other speakers and professional events
The second conference day opened with speeches from Arthur Lyon Dahl, International Environment Forum *on "Assessing Information at Multiple Scales. Taking some burden off the consumer"* Dahl emphasized the need for coherence and mutual reinforcement between the different nested levels of information assessment; Francois Jegou, Strategic Design Scenarios, Belgium provided examples of creative solution making and the project of "Creative Communities for Sustainable Lifestyles".

"Consumer Citizenship Education around the Globe" Under this theme Terri Haffner, Executive Director of The American Council on Consumer Interests, U.S., presented the beginnings and history of the ACCI; Yuko Ueno, OECD presented a progress report about OECD's survey on consumer education; and Rosella Bannister, East Michigan University, U.S. presented the programme "Jumpstart Personal Financial Clearing House", a tool to help people find personal finance materials.

Panel and plenary discussions
"Hidden Information and Righteous Rage" On this topic a panel debated about advertisements, prices, labels and quality assurance. Ulf Schrader, Technical University, Berlin, Germany; Kristoff Dewaele, KATHO University, Belgium; Lewis Akenji from the Association of Conscious Consumers, Budapest; Luisa de Silva,





Universidad Aberta; and Peter Daub, Free Consumers Association, The Netherlands, composed the panel.

Multimedia approaches and displays Among the various multimedia approaches to the conference theme several short videos were shown which were parts of Consumers International's "Marketing Overdose" campaign.

With the short "factual" film, *It´s too good to be true*, Gustavo Morales provided a fascinating advertisement for a new product *Nothing* (photo left). Other videos and examples of relevant "consumption" art were also shown during the breaks. There were interesting displays from the Humanities Archipelago of Thematic Networks, the EU Safe Foods project and the Ubuntu-project on education for sustainable development from Ireland.



Presentation of award and contest winners The Tower Person Awards for Consumer Education were presented at the conference. Rosella Bannister (photo left), U.S. received the international award for 2008 and Mike Kitson from The United Kingdom received the European Topace Award for 2008. The blue TOPACE tower symbolizes the outstanding achievements of dedicated consumer educators.

Elien Gevaert (below) from the University of KATHO in Belgium was the winner of the first CCN student essay contest with her essay entitled "Good and bad information – who can you believe?" Elien received from Victoria W. Thoresen a certificate of recognition for her efforts and attended the CCN Tallinn conference.



"Consumer citizenship education" On the second afternoon, participants had the opportunity to attend one of the following sessions:

"Indicators for sustainable consumption. Limitations and potentials" Laura Terragni, SIFO, Norway; and Arthur Lyon Dahl, UNEP.

Launching a new resource material for education for sustainable consumption

The active methodology toolkit "Images and Objects" of the CCN Task group 8 and sponsored by the CCN and the Ministry of Education of Ireland was presented by Miriam O'Donoghue and Mella Cusack, Curriculum Development Unit, Ireland. The toolkit was distributed to all participants in the CCN conference in Tallinn.



Hands-on Workshop

Was conducted by Miriam O'Donoghue and Mella Cusack and CCN Task group 8: "Education for sustainable consumption in action: The Use of Learning Centres to promote transformative learning"

Presentation of the external evaluation of CCN

The Eastern Norway Research Institute has completed an external evaluation of the CCN network. The evaluation was based on a review of CCN documents and a set of interviews taken at the Athens CCN task group meetings. Asgeir Skålholt from ENRI presented the report.

Alexandra Klein and Victoria W. Thoresen
Hedmark University College, Hamar, Norway

Work shop presentations

Author	Country	Title
Tove Brita Eriksen	Norway	How can Consumer Citizenship Education deal with cognitive, emotional, social and economic influences on consumers' capacity? A glance on health information and decision-making in schools
Birgitta Vilpas (presentation)	Finland	How preschool teachers see the role of consumer education in their work
Helen Theodoropoulou	Greece	Children's' involvement in family business
Peter Daub	Netherlands	Information360. Assessing information for consumer governance
Pia Valota	Italy	Civil society and consumer associations' role in interpreting citizens' needs for information on products and services
Joanna Kostecka Lukasz Jurczyk	Poland	The assessment of GMO products perception by chosen groups of Polish consumers
Leena Lahti	Finland	Radical deep ecology a background to the Jokela school scooting in Finland. A global dimension of consuming and citizenship education
Mari Eggen Sager	Norway	How the development of participative democracies can affect the assessment of consumer information
Joanna Kostecka Barbara Mazur	Poland	Evaluation of the presence of the decade of education for sustainable development in awareness of agriculture, economy, production engineering, marketing and management students in Poland
Diana Rumpite	Latvia	Implementation of "Consumer Citizenship Education Guidelines" in creative E-course of English for engineering students
Ifakat Karsli	Turkey	Inclusion of CCE themes into existing courses of English language teaching
Ulf Schrader	Germany	The responsibility and the right to be informed: Two Sides of the Same Coin

Nadia Boyadijeva	Bulgaria	The role of information on consumer rights and the mechanisms of their protection in Bulgaria
Müberra Yüksel	Turkey	Consumer citizenship under construction: Is media the culprit or the mediator?
Rieko Hanashiro Lakshmi Malroutu	Japan	Information, values, and decision-making that influence the world
Igors Ivashkins	Latvia	Information environment as a key factor of contemporary education in Latvia
Sevgi Kalkan	Turkey	Quality of information produced by producers: Greenwashing or we can really trust?
Ingo Schoenheit Ulf Schrader	Germany	The good, the bad and the consumer: Reward and penalty attributes as a basis for CSR-communication and consumer policy
Dana Voukonova	Slovakia	Who is the young generation?
Sylvia Karlsson	Finland	Institutionalized knowledge challenges in pesticide governance: The end of knowledge and beginning of values in governing globalized environmental issues
Vija Dislere Iveta Lice	Latvia	Some aspects of consumer citizenship education in home economics – students' knowledge, practice and experience
Joanna Boboryko Marta Dawidzuk Barbara Mazur	Poland	Cultural differences in gathering and using market information
Irina Liokumovica	Latvia	Some peculiarities of assessing information in higher economic education in the focus of consumer citizenship
Søren Breiting	Denmark	Avoiding information overload for consumer citizens
POSTER		
Marino Melissano	Italy	SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION: Reality or utopia?

The Consumer Citizenship Network

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

The Consumer Citizenship Network (CCN) was established in 2003 as an interdisciplinary network of educators, researchers and representatives of non-governmental organisations (as well as UNESCO, UNEP and Consumers International) who share a common concern about how the individual's role can contribute constructively to sustainable development and mutual solidarity. By focusing on social responsibility on the part of business and consumers, the CCN has addressed the growing international concern for implementation of norms and behaviour which support sustainable development and global solidarity.

The Consumer Citizenship Network has, since 2003, developed interdisciplinary approaches to central issues dealing with the balance between material and non-material well-being and with how one can translate ethical values into everyday practice through conscientious participation in the market.

The Consumer Citizenship Network 2 (whose project period is 2006-2009) seeks to continue, expand and improve the work which has been begun by the CCN. CCN2 continues the work begun in its first phase as well as working to promote the UN Decade for Education for sustainable development and contribute to the UN Marrakech Process on production and consumption in defining education for sustainable consumption. CCN2 aims also to implement the outputs of CCN and initiate new activities.

The Network presently has 133 institutions from 37 countries working together to develop good practice for teaching and accessing consumer citizenship education. The Consumer Citizenship Network 2 is an Erasmus 3. Thematic Network supported by the European Commission Socrates-Erasmus Programme and the Norwegian Ministries of Education and Children and Equality.

The Consumer Citizenship Network 2 is based on the following descriptions of consumer citizenship education:

"Consumer citizenship education encompasses attitudes, knowledge and skills connected to functioning in today's society. It is responsibility learning which aims to contribute to the individual's ability to manage his own life as well as participating in

the stewardship of the global society's collective life. Consumer citizenship education is interdisciplinary and cross curricular."[1]

The Consumer Citizenship Network has brought 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.
The Consumer Citizenship Network 2 consists of partners representing the following fields:
education, psychology, sociology, political science, biology, nutrition, chemistry, economics, home economics, languages, religion and ethics, physical education and health, environmental studies, future studies, business education, consumer sciences, information and communication studies.

Direct beneficiaries of the project are lecturers, researchers and teacher trainers in higher education in Europe, students, professionals working with children and young people, public authorities, and associations dealing with citizenship training and consumer issues.
The general objectives of the Consumer Citizenship Network are to:

- analyse consumer citizenship in general and in higher education in particular
- stimulate and coordinate research about consumer citizenship
- survey curriculum provision of consumer citizenship education
- describe and analyse different practices
- identify common competences
- develop good practice for teaching and accessing consumer citizenship education

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

The outputs of the CCN Network relating directly to communications systems, group meetings, and yearly conferences all intend to provide the university lecturers, teacher trainers, professionals working with children and young people and consumer issues with the opportunity to discuss, debate and research important themes connected to consumer citizenship. As the conferences are also open to participants outside of the network (at their own expense) other staff from institutions of higher education is able to attend and build their capacity as consumer citizenship trainers. The same is true of

[1] From the Consumer Citizenship Education Guidelines, vol 1. p.11, 2005

the published materials that the Network provides after each year of activities. Not only do staff at institutions of higher education and those working with consumer citizenship issues benefit from these. Public authorities as well as teachers in primary and secondary school, to the extent the outputs are disseminated, are able to gain relevant insights in how consumer citizenship is practiced in their country and in others. This in turn can contribute to a greater understanding of the need for and content of consumer citizenship education. Access to relevant literature and teaching material/guidelines and assessment criteria are essential for the furthering of consumer citizenship education. The CCN website has close cooperation with other networks and groups working in this field.

The CCN2 has achieved the following so far:

1. CCN2 has strengthened cooperation between institutions of higher education (HEI) in Europe as well as between HEI's and civil society and research organizations. This cooperation has taken the form of research, development work, debate, dialogue, and collaborative preparation of pedagogical materials. Institutions from Central and Eastern European countries, particularly institutions from the newest EU member states, have been very active. Staff and student exchange between CCN2 partners continues.

2. CCN2 has contributed to the harmonizing of courses in higher education in Europe. This has occurred through the inclusion of common elements about consumer citizenship education in existing courses and modules; by creating courses on consumer citizenship education based on common guidelines, literature, competences and learning outcomes; and by preparing an application for a Joint European Masters.

3. CCN2 has created interdisciplinary approaches to teaching sustainable development in general and responsible, sustainable consumption in particular. This has taken place at the conferences and meetings on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and related topics; by research and development work connected to ESD; by translating and spreading the CCN Teaching and Learning Guidelines into Portuguese, Latvian, Slovakian, Norwegian, Italian, Turkish and Bulgarian; by contributing to the translation and increased use of the YouthXchange teaching materials; by beginning to compile new handbooks for teachers on consumer citizenship education and ESD; by holding a series of teacher training seminars in different European countries about consumer citizenship education and ESD; by making numerous presentations at international conferences on these topics; and by facilitating cooperation between national ministries which represent different aspects of ESD as well as cooperation between different departments at HEI's.

4. CCN2 has attempted to inspire innovation and reform. The CCN2 has systematically begun approaching authorities in EU countries about consumer citizenship via the CCN public appeal, letters, and meetings. In close collaboration with the UN Marrakech Process Task Force, CCN2 has encouraged and facilitated creative practices related to education for sustainable consumption at international conferences and teacher training seminars. The CCN2 has also further developed and systematically spread the use of the LOLA toolkit (Looking for likely alternatives) by which students identify, evaluate and document examples of social innovation. CCN2 has contributed to the OECD project on consumer education and the EU, UNDP and OECD's process for redefining life quality entitled, "Beyond GDP". And within the CCN2 use of films and digital art presentations as well as theatrical techniques have acquired a significant place at conferences and meetings as well as being the subject of a proposed project on risk assessment which CCN2 is a participant.

5. CCN2 has attempted to stimulated civic involvement. This has been done by focusing through research and teacher training on active citizenship-- its characteristics, forms of expression and how it best can be taught. Understanding consumer citizenship involves developing insight into new methods of stakeholder involvement and this was the central theme of CCN2's last conference. CCN2 has continued to participate actively in the international process creating guidance standards of social responsibility for organizations (governmental, civil and commercial)

6. CCN2 has developed the use of ICT and information exchange both in the project and in teaching. The CCN2 website (www.hihm.no/concit) has been reorganized and improved, providing better access to links and more updated news. The site includes news, calendar, information about the network, links to CCN publications and documents, and a directory over CCN partners, their expertise, relevant publications, etc. CDs with reports and other materials have been made and distributed. Teaching and learning Guidelines for consumer citizenship education have been modified for digital use and made accessible online in hypertext format. Digital links to Pdf formatted files of CCN2 publications have been made available. The Software "Think Tank" has been used to develop online learning materials for distance learning based on the CCN2 Consumer Citizenship Education Guidelines. The LOLA project continues to use ICT an essential element of this teaching methodology and the LOLA website is continually manned. Advice and assistance is given to users. CCN2 partners have created several online arenas for discussion and debate within their task groups.

7. CCN2 has increased cooperation with institutions of higher education outside of Europe. The Consumer Citizenship Network has had a tradition of inviting experts from outside of Europe as keynote speaker to CCN's annual conferences in order to ensure perspectives which might not otherwise be presented. This tradition has been continued

and this year, in addition to visitors from South America with extensive experience in consumer citizenship education, Japan was also represented. CCN2's associated partners, particularly from Africa, have been involved in the work of several task groups, participating actively in discussions and contributing to publications. As mentioned previously, CCN2 has had close collaboration with UNESCO and UNEP in relation to the Decade for ESD and it has assisted OECD in their present project on consumer education. The CCN2 has established links and planned cooperation with comparable networks in the USA (ACCI) and international teachers organizations such as the International federation of Home Economics teachers**.**CCN2 has continued to be actively involved in the international process for the creation of guidance standards for social responsibility for organizations, governments and businesses (ISO-26000-SR)

8. Evaluation of the Consumer Citizenship Network. The CCN2 has continued to carry out internal evaluation and assessment of its activities. In addition, CCN2 engaged external evaluators who have completed a general evaluation (for more details see section on evaluation in this report). The researchers carried out a study of documents and publications, a set of interviews and a survey in order to assess the design, management and outcomes of the Consumer Citizenship Network. More information can be found in section 11 of this report.

9. Dissemination of the work of The Consumer Citizenship Network has progressed more rapidly than expected. This is partly due to the publicity from having been chosen a "Success Story" by the Socrates Programme and presented in their information booklet and display. It is also in part because of the website which has attracted numerous interested institutions who have requested materials. The CCN has had to reprint several of its publications a number of times to keep up with the demand.

The following task groups function during this second cycle of the CCN project: In the first 3 year cycle CCN had thematic groups which both discussed broad issues and accomplished concrete tasks. In this cycle, 2006-2009, the CCN2 has modified these groups and they are now nine task groups with specific work packages to do.

Task group 1
Inclusion of consumer citizenship education themes in existing courses and modules
Task group 2
Speeches and articles about consumer citizenship at conferences and in journals and other relevant publications
Task group 3
Compilation of Consumer Citizenship Education Guidelines (vol. 2) for elementary and (vol. 3) for secondary school

Task group 4

Development of the LOLA (Looking for Likely Alternatives) project

Task group 5

Coordinating cooperation with associated partners from countries outside of Europe Preparation and, if possible, carrying out of Africa seminar on consumer citizenship

Task group 6

Further development of indicators of responsible consumption

Task group 7

Preliminary actions towards the initiation of a Joint European Masters in consumer citizenship

Task group 8

Preparation and carrying out of teacher training seminars on education for sustainable development

Task group 9

Preparation of teaching materials: "Images and Objects (This was originally: "Compilation of Guidelines Vol. 3 for vocational school" and was changed in connection with the contractual amendments as the CCN2 discovered that the variety of vocational school systems throughout Europe made this task impossible within the timeframe and on the basis of available resources)



CCN "Beyond 2009…and after the bubbles open?"

KEY NOTE SPEECHES

To know or not to know—that is the question

Victoria W. Thoresen
Hedmark University College, Hamar, Norway

"Information, communication and knowledge are the core of human progress, endeavour and well-being…Knowledge societies are about capabilities to identify, produce, disseminate and use information to build and apply knowledge for human development."

World Summit on the Information Society (2004)

Information, communication and knowledge may well be the core of human progress; but it cannot be denied that many people claim that they know more yet understand less. Why does increased knowledge make us more uncertain? How does this uncertainty affect us in our roles as consumer citizens? Perhaps a woodcutter from Estonia can help clarify the matter.

Once upon a time, long, long ago, in a land called Estonia lived a woodcutter. One day he took his axe and went into the forest. Just as he raised his axe he heard the birch tree in front of him cry out; "Don't kill me, I am young and have many children!" The woodcutter took pity on the birch tree. He walked over to an oak tree and raised his axe when he heard the oak tree say in pleading tones: Don't kill me, I'm not fully grown and my acorns aren't yet ripe!" The woodcutter took pity on the oak tree. He came up to a rowan tree and as he raised his axe he heard the tree say tearfully, "Don't kill me, I have only just flowered. Clusters of berries will soon grow on me and feed the birds in autumn! What will become of them? " He moved close to a cherry tree and raised his axe, but stopped when he heard the cherry tree cry out: "Don't kill me! If I am chopped down where will the nightingales go to sing their songs?" The woodcutter sat on a stone, perplexed, sad and amazed…[2]

Before continuing with the rest of this tale, let us look briefly at some interesting and relevant similarities. The woodcutter in this tale found himself in a situation not unlike

that of a car mechanic, a medical doctor or a consumer—dealing with highly complex and specialized information related to risk perception and safety in order to make a "diagnosis" leading to simple actions. They are all faced with several serious dilemmas related to knowing and not knowing:

- how to acquire necessary information and interpret it
- how to determine the relevance of the information received
- how to decide which actions to take on the basis of the information
- how to identify the consequences of applying the information

Acquiring and interpreting information

The woodcutter received his information from the trees. Consumers get theirs from market, media, government, public and personal contacts, as well as from our impressions and our emotions. We no longer simply absorb available information, place it in our memory and draw upon it when stimulants call forth association. The process of acquiring, interpreting and applying information has become more complex as environments and social interaction have become more complex. Information is not merely transferred, filtered and accepted. The woodcutter not only gets messages from the trees, he sits, ponders and puts it in a social context. The woodcutter examines this information by looking at parts of it through a kind of window created by the interplay of his goals, the environment, the actors involved and the specific situation. (1)

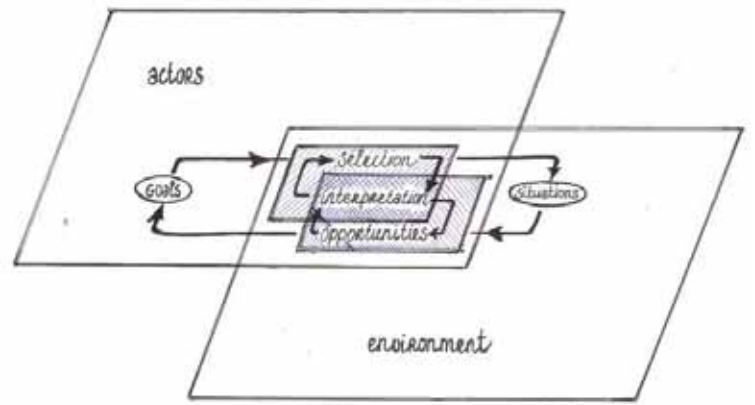


Fig. 1 *Actors' goals and characteristics of situations interact in a space shared by both actors and environment*

[2] Adapted from "The Kind Woodcutter", an Estonian folktale from *Tales of the Amber Sea*. Compiled by Irina Zheleznova, Progress Publishers, USSR, 1974. (Illustrated by Anatoly Belyukin)

In short, the woodcutter is asking himself, ***"What are the trees trying to tell me?"*** He maps the messages, searches for hidden messages and uses all the well-established tools of information literacy. Yet this he cannot do ad infinitum. Information is the raw material of the survival process in today's society but individuals can only absorb a limited amount in relation to any one specific situation. Information overload is due to the rapidly increasing rate of new information being produced, the ease of duplication and transmission of data across the Internet, an increase in the available channels of incoming information, large amounts of historical information to dig through, contradictions and inaccuracies in available information, and a the lack of methods for comparing and processing different information.(2) Our friend, the woodcutter could not have continued to approach all the trees in the forest, hearing each one comment.

Consumers are faced with the same problem. At some point the product or service must be bought or not. Life must continue. There is much debate about consumer information overload. The keys to reducing the overload seem to be to make information as simple as possible (prices, labels, etc), as timely as possible, and as highly relevant to the consumer as possible. In other words, it needs to fit into the "window" of the consumer's social context. (3) According to Giuseppe Mantovani:

"Actors cut the potentially available information down to size, so to speak, so that the situations they have to face are within their capabilities, and can be managed in order to meet their interests…Actors simplify situations by opening variously sized windows through which they can focus on what interests them and intervene on the aspects of the situation nearest to their goals. Although the creation of these windows drastically reduces the amount of information to be examined with respect to that potentially available in the environment, it does allow for deeper analysis of important aspects, thanks to the intensive allocation of attentional and practical resources." (4)

Determining the relevance of the information received

A deeper analysis of important aspects of information includes identifying the relevance of the information to the individual's goals and the situational opportunities. Another way of describing what Mantovani refers to as "goals" is: the individual's spiritual infrastructure, a spiritual infrastructure being a framework composed of the values held by the individual. Numerous elements come into play when determining the relevance of received information. The spiritual infrastructure of the woodcutter included elements of environmental awareness (caring for nature), appreciation for beauty (in this case the shade of the trees, the song of the nightingale), and respect for the expressed concerns of others (in this case, the trees).

Nonetheless the woodcutter wondered as most consumers do, "***Why should I care***?" The answer is multidimensional. Heeding the information would strengthen the

woodcutter's integrity since it would be in accordance with his values; but what if the information was in fact, only an attempt by the trees to avoid being cut down? What if information consumers get is merely a means of marketing a product and not true? How does one determine the reliability of certain information?

For consumers this is done in many cases by legislation which sets standards for products and by control testing. It is also done through documentation carried out by "watch-dog" organizations. In a world dominated by Internet, collaborative popular information is increasingly being used as a source of validation. Blogs, customer feedback systems, client ratings, etc inform the consumer of the status of the information or product. The debate about the scientific quality of mass-produced knowledge continues, while initiatives such as Wikipedia receive evaluations claiming their content to be as reliable as that of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. (7)

Another dimension of reliability concerns the misuse of information for criminal purposes. Aspiring to be "responsible citizens who care and assist their friends, many would answer the email below (which was sent in the name of a person I knew well) by responding positively to the appeal for monetary help.

Subject: Emergency
Dear Victoria, How are you today? I went to Nigeria for a program called (Empowering students to handle conflicts and promote peace). And I was attacked by arm robbers here in Nigeria and with that shock I was taken to the Hospital and was admitted in the Hospital for three days now. I have just recovered from the shock and now am very stranded here because my wallet was stolen by the robbers and my ATM card and other valuable things like my I.D card is missing along with the wallet.
The Problem now is so bad because I have to pay for my hotel bill and the Hospital bill and my Flight ticket back to B--. Please at this point I really need your help urgently. Please send money and I promise to return the money as soon as I return to B--. Please help me send $3500 to help me pay all this bills.

Fortunately, I knew my friend does not sign his e-mails to me using his title of professor and this cue warned me this might be a hoax. Identifying identity theft and digital fraud is a skill which is greatly lacking in the world today as statistics clearly indicate. According to the Gartner study "the 2006 victim population of identity theft in the USA alone was at 15 million victims. That means that every minute about 28 people become a new victim of this crime, or a new victim in just over 2 seconds. The incidence of victimization increased 11-20% between 2001 and 2002 and 80% between 2002 and 2003(Harris interactive)" (5)
Pseudoscientific facts and expedient exaggerations are two other elements which indicate whether information is to be trusted or not. An interesting example of this is an

article which appeared in a Swedish newspaper recently providing a simple solution to climate change problems. Since the act of turning our clocks to summertime adds an extra hour of sunlight and warmth to our days, and thereby adding to the melting of glaciers, we can reduce the impact by avoiding turning our clocks to summertime. What measure of meteorological insight or common sense is required to recognize that this is an April Fools' joke? According to the newspaper, many people fell for this pseudoscientific explanation. Neil Postman explains:

The average person today is about as naive as was the average person in the Middle Ages. In the Middle Ages people believed in the authority of their religion, no matter what. Today, we believe in the authority of our science, no matter what. There is almost no fact - whether actual or imagined - that will surprise us for very long, since we have no comprehensive and consistent picture of the world which would make the fact appear as an unacceptable contradiction. We believe because there is no reason not to believe. (6)

Yet no matter how illogical, incomprehensible and uncertain the world seems to be, individuals are faced with the challenge of trying to assess the reliability of information or they become the pawns of those who manage to decipher between authentic, dependable information and manipulated, misused information. Critical assessment is the skill all citizens—and particularly consumers—have use of in modern society, and the woodcutter in the legend sat on his stone struggling with this very dilemma. But assessing the validity of the messages of the trees was not all he had to do.

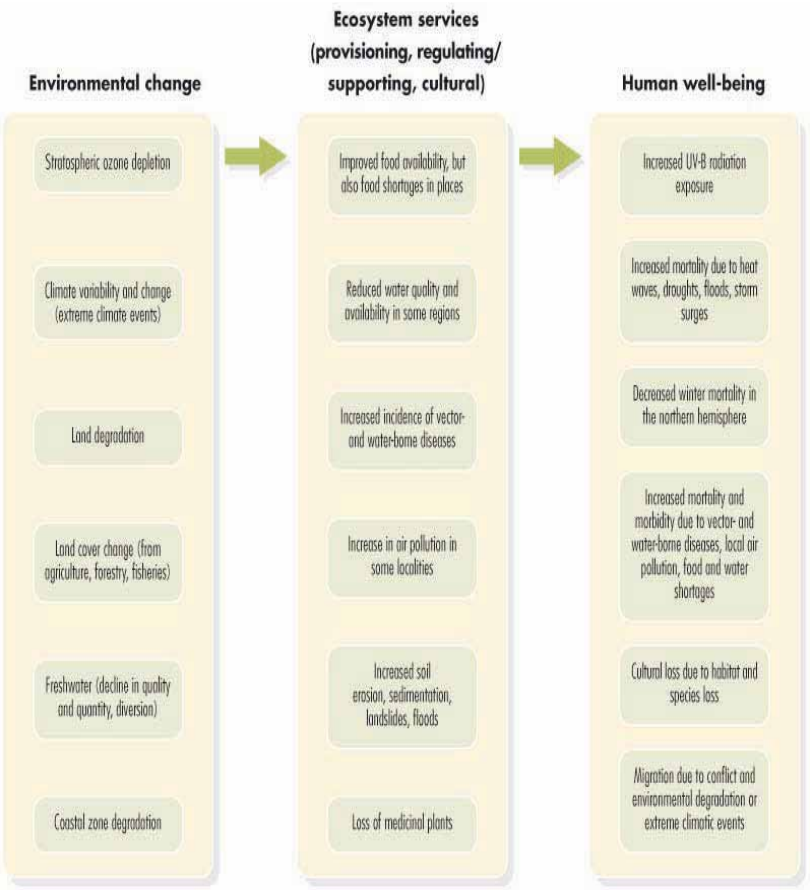
Identifying the consequences of applying the information

The woodcutter also asked himself ***"What will this cost me?"*** He had a sense of duty to his family and the need for physical survival. If he did not cut down the trees, he would go home empty-handed, unable to support his family, unable to carry out his profession. He was forced to make a cost-benefit analysis in the same manner any consumer would when confronted with a choice in the market. Were there economic, physical, social, personal or spiritual benefits to doing as the trees implored? It was not clear for the Estonian woodcutter in the legend what consequences he could anticipate until…

Suddenly a little old man came out from behind the stone and thanked the woodcutter for listening to the needs of the forest and offered the woodcutter a magic rod of gold which when he tapped twice with it would provide him with all he would ever need. "But, be careful!" the old man warned. "If you are greedy, the rod will punish you severely." The woodcutter went home and lived to a ripe old age and never knew a day's unhappiness, for he lived sufficiently but not luxuriously. Before he died he left the rod to his children cautioning them not to wish for what would endanger others. But one day the rod passed into the hands of a foolish man who demanded the sun to come

down and warm his back. The rod made the sun blaze fiercely causing houses and fields to melt into flames. Only the trees were there to see what happened and they were so terrified that they quite lost the use of their tongues and have been speechless to this day.

Fortunately for the woodcutter, the immediate as well as the long-term sacrifices and consequences were laid out simply for him by the little old man. “Don’t be greedy and you will have all you need. If you are greedy you will be punished”. It is not always as clear for the consumer what the recognizable consequences will be in contrast to the unforeseen ones, or what the controllable consequences might be as opposed to uncontrollable ones. The impact of environmental change on both ecosystems and human well-being is only slowly being uncovered. The WHO has described some of them as follows (8):



Multiple environmental changes and their effect on human well-being constituents and determinants. (Source based on WHO 2003).

Deciding which actions to take on the basis of given information

Our woodcutter accepted the offer and requirements of the little old man of the magic wand. He chose to live sufficiently rather than luxuriously. He posed the question, "***What must I do",*** reflected on the alternatives, and made an informed choice.

In attempts to be ethically and environmentally responsible consumers, we are constantly reminded of the complexity of making choices. For example: prices reflect social conditions of those employed to make the products. In countries where the government provides social benefits, industry is not burdened with providing for these. In countries where industry and business must provide social benefits for its employees,

the product prices often reflect these expenses but the consumer is seldom aware of this. Another, rather different kind of example is that of the online classified ad agent who unwitting provided a platform for criminals by allowing unedited advertisements, one saying: "I need a hit man. Now." Police in the U.K. traced the perpetrators of a murder back to the website ad. Should "open" websites which advertise be restricted? There is a growing need for being able to make probability calculations and to recognize risks (be they emerging risks, calculated risks or confirmed crisis).

Identifying the benefits

The responsible consumer citizen who acts after dealing with the information he/she has acquired and assessed may occasionally be hoodwinked or tricked but he is no fool. Consumers must deal with the uncertainty of never knowing everything or being able to prophecy all the consequences. Such uncertainty is not a new condition. It is what defines the human hunger for learning, and the curiosity that drives scientists, explorers and philosophers. Humanity has, however, learned many painful lessons that emphasize the importance of heeding the precautionary principle and thinking globally while acting locally.

The woodcutter finally asked himself: ***"What do I get out of it?"*** He recognized that by heeding the trees and doing what the old man demanded he would gain security for himself, his family and future generations. He achieved peace of mind and established a harmony of sorts with nature. He thrived in a manner which could be compared to that which today is referred to by the United Nations Development Program as positive "human development", in which there is informed, responsible action based on awareness of the positive and negative impacts of one's actions on the environment and society.

Whether or not the informed consumer still holds a golden wand that will guarantee all one needs is not easy to say. But we do know that the sun is burning on our backs, our fields and our homes, and the trees have quite lost the use of their tongues and can no longer give us any warnings.

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The ethical challenges of global change as a motivator for consumer citizenship

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Introduction

This paper is not a scholarly review, but an effort to distill, for the benefit of the Consumer Citizenship Network, forty years' experience in applying science to the solution of environmental problems in many parts of the world, for audiences from primary school through postgraduate instruction to gatherings of government leaders, combined with efforts to understand, measure and apply the concept of sustainability in its larger ethical framework.

The challenge

Global change has become headline news. Yet anyone who tries to explain the challenges of environmental protection and sustainability to others, whether to students, the general public, or leaders of government, business or public opinion, is faced with a great difficulty: how to motivate people to positive action when so much of the scientific news is negative. Do you emphasize scientific objectivity and the lack of certainty about any future trajectory, with all the difficulty of explaining risks and probabilities? Do you try for a shock treatment, putting forward the most recent alarming developments and the real possibility of catastrophies on the horizon? In this case, you can easily be discounted as an extremist again crying wolf, or a Cassandra forever telling the truth that nobody wants to hear. Do you paint a rosy picture of the wonderful society that could emerge if only people did the right thing, and risk accusations of being a utopian dreamer? The challenge is made even greater by the widespread scientific disinformation produced by vested interests, and the resulting confusion of messages in the media and the public mind. This is one of the fundamental issues in consumer education that influences the way citizens assess information.

The problem is perfectly illustrated by the issue of climate change. The recent awarding of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize to Al Gore and the WMO/UNEP Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in recognition of their two complementary approaches to consumer education about climate change and its implications, highlights the challenge. The IPCC was designed to be the instrument of scientific objectivity, with extensive consultation among hundreds of leading experts to achieve consensus on the scientific facts, confirmed by the approval of governments (http://www.ipcc.ch/). The results are conservative, with many of the more extreme possibilities left aside. Al

Gore mastered the use of the media to alert the public to the shocking realities of climate change and its human implications (http://www.algore.com/). Both have emphasized the science of climate change, and the resulting need to reduce drastically our emissions of greenhouse gases.

However, the message of the science is basically negative. The documentation of the planet's environmental problems and the resulting accelerating global change show how the inhabitants of the Earth are threatened in fundamental ways. Our economy and way of life are at serious risk, but there is no obvious villain or easy solution. Every consumer is both a cause of the problem and a victim. Forcing scientists into the role of bearers of bad news has contributed to the rise of anti-science movements. No one likes bad news (except the media who thrive on it), and the tendency is to shoot the messenger. More seriously in the context of consumer citizenship education, bad news does not motivate positive change, but denial or despair, and a feeling of powerlessness before the enormity of the problem. The poor feel like helpless victims and the rich, at best, guilty.

The complexities of global change add to the difficulties. We can no longer think in terms of single problems and single solutions. The growth of the human population, the economy and resource consumption have reached planetary limits. Environmental impacts are now on the same scale as natural processes, and globalization has integrated all nations into one world community. As a result, the level of interaction between problems has increased. We have come to appreciate that there is a single global system with many interacting parts and processes operating at multiple nested scales (Dahl 1996). A small but critical change in one part of the system can have widespread repercussions. However, we are still far from having scientific tools adequate to understand and model this complexity and to predict possible consequences. We are even farther from having the institutions and management tools necessary to manage and respond to the global changes that we have already triggered.

Next steps

Our society is not well structured to deal with complex multidisciplinary global problems. Governments are divided into ministries or departments, and the academic community into disciplines. There are strong pressures for increasing specialization. Perhaps a first step would be to encourage a specialization of generalist, integrator, or systems manager with an accepted role in bridging disciplines. Education also can include systems thinking and integrative approaches as part of general education. The attentive consumer needs this capacity to assess and integrate many kinds of information.

Institutional changes are also needed. The system of governance based on national sovereignty has great difficulty in addressing global problems effectively. We need to evolve institutions of governance at all of the scales of the problems we face in global change. There is presently a strong prejudice in many quarters against global government, often reflecting a philosophical or political position that government is essentially inefficient and bureaucratic and the less we have of it the better. Yet effective government is an essential component of any civilized society. Even the business community recognizes this and calls for strong government environmental regulation, fairly enforced, as essential to business competitiveness (Dahl, 2004). Europe is already a pioneer in creating institutions at a regional scale and reducing national sovereignty, and this example will be equally appropriate as we consider how to deal with global change. One component of effective government is the ability to communicate information to its citizens effectively and reliably.

In education and public awareness where the CCN is particularly active, these issues should be treated proactively. The next generation, at least, should feel comfortable with integrated thinking and consider it normal that there be institutions of governance at all levels. These should be among the foundation principles of consumer citizenship. However more is needed to motivate action. The challenge is to be both scientifically objective and realistic about the threats and risks of global change and its implications for the economy, society and consumer behaviour, while also inspiring hope and a desire to act, seeing the necessary sacrifices in a positive light.

The ethical component

What has often been missing is the ethical component. Scientific information is necessary but not sufficient to motivate change. It can convince at an intellectual level, but this does not naturally lead to emotional commitment or action. Scientific information needs to be placed in a larger ethical framework of responsibility and solidarity, highlighting the positive social outcomes of uniting in the face of a common challenge.

An ethical or moral framework of what is right or wrong underlies most systems of human organization, whether in traditional cultures, religions, or legal systems. Central to all these frameworks is the necessary balance between individual freedom or satisfaction and the collective well-being of society. A mature citizen with confidence in the government will voluntarily accept to obey laws and pay taxes in the common interest. One of the prominent features of the last century was the rise of materialism as the dominant value system, expressed in the prominence of economic thinking in government and business (Adam Smith's "invisible hand of self-interest") and the rise of the consumer society focusing on individual satisfaction, while traditional ethical frameworks were abandoned. Although Western society has emphasized individualism

and Asian versions have been more collective, both have centred their efforts on material satisfaction, based often on a rather superficial description of human potential and needs. Even the communist system, while putting forward social goals, was basically materialistic in orientation. None of these gave any real priority to the well-being of the planet and its sustainable environmental management as an essential pre-requisite for our emotional, ethical and spiritual well-being as well as our physical survival (BIC 1998).

Each culture and nation has evolved and institutionalized its own ethical framework within the context of its religious, cultural and philosophical heritage, representing the ethical consensus of its society. However rapid globalization has taken the ethical issues and challenges to the planetary level, for which the self-contained national sets of values are poorly adapted. In response, there have been efforts at the intergovernmental level to adopt declarations of ethical principles, such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UN 1948) and subsequent declarations and conventions, and in the environmental area the Stockholm Declaration (UN 1972), the *Rio Declaration* (UN 1992) and other similar documents. Civil society has tried to go farther with texts like the *Earth Charter* (Earth Charter Initiative 2000). However, it is not always easy to translate these general principles into guides for practical action, whether at the governmental level or in the behaviour of each individual. Where self-interest and ethical principle are in conflict (as they frequently are), self-interest has too often won out.

Given the materialistic values behind the consumer society, it is essential that the concept of consumer citizenship include an underlying ethical framework to help in assessing information and guiding consumer choices. There is already a potential conflict between the values associated with "consumer" and those relevant to "citizenship". Marrying them is at the heart of consumer citizenship. Even the concept of citizenship, usually associated with one's nationality, must be expanded to global citizenship in acknowledgement of our globalized world. Today the challenges of sustainability and global change must be addressed primarily in their planetary context before being translated down to the national, local and individual levels.

What then are some of the ethical principles most relevant to global change? The first must relate to responsibility, since every individual consumer contributes in some way to the driving forces for global change. Concepts of responsibility and liability for damage are well enshrined in national law, but there is strong resistance (rooted in self-interest) to extending them to the global level. When there is collective responsibility, it is even easier to hide behind the group and deny any individual implication. Closely related is the principle of solidarity as the number of victims of global change continues to rise, recognizing that every individual human being is a trust of the whole, and in a

globalized world where information flows freely, it is no longer possible to claim ignorance. Again, while developed countries usually pride themselves on their social security, and the assistance provided to the handicapped, the elderly, the unemployed, and victims of disasters, we have not yet scaled up these mechanisms to operate at the planetary level. As global change destabilizes societies, increases famines, droughts and natural disasters, and produces tens or hundreds of millions of environmental refugees, the ethical implications of solidarity will become extremely challenging. Finding solutions to such critical problems will require the application of other ethical principles of justice, self-sacrifice, collective security, consultation/participation, and moderation, among many others.

An excellent specific example of ethics applied to the issue of climate change is the work of the Collaborative Program on the Ethical Dimensions of Climate Change (http://rockethics.psu.edu/climate), with its secretariat at the Rock Ethics Institute of Penn State University (USA), and in particular its *White Paper on the Ethical Dimensions of Climate Change* (Rock Ethics Institute 2006). It explores a series of specific ethical issues that require international consideration, and that illustrate how fundamental ethics are to the challenges of global change. Some of the questions raised concern decision-making and responsibility at the global level: Who is ethically responsible for the consequences of climate change, that is, who is liable for the burdens of adaptation or paying for unavoided damages? What ethical principles should guide the choice of specific atmospheric greenhouse gas targets? What ethical principles should be followed in allocating responsibility for greenhouse gas reductions among people, organizations, and governments at all levels? What is the ethical significance of the need to make climate change decisions in the face of scientific uncertainty? What principles of procedural justice should be followed to assure fair representation in decision making? Other questions concern the tendency of governments to put national interest above global interest: Are the commonly used justifications of the cost to national economies, or that any nation need not act until others agree on action, as reasons for delaying or minimizing climate change action, ethically justified? Is the argument that we should minimize climate change action until new, less-costly technologies may be invented in the future, ethically justifiable? (Rock Ethics Institute, 2006) These ethical issues around climate change have also been debated in a side event at the United Nations during the 15th Commission on Sustainable Development in April 2007 (ENB 2007). Such issues must be addressed to achieve any international agreement on climate change action, but governments tend to avoid them because admitting their validity would require taking difficult decisions and open the door to significant claims for liability and compensation.

These questions are primarily addressed to government leaders and diplomats. They are not really relevant to actions individual consumers can take. Two further steps are

needed. First, the scientific evidence and understanding that link global changes such as climate change to the consequences of individual consumer actions must be made clear and understood. How is a decision to drive rather than take public transport in a European city causally related to the melting of Arctic ice and the plight of the polar bears? How is it possible to link eating a beefsteak, through the international grain market, to the inability of a poor village woman in south Asia to feed her children? Why does the rush into biofuels for energy security in the USA lead to food riots in Mexico? Citizens need some basic understanding of the working of global environmental, economic and social systems. Then the ethical questions relevant to the individual contributions to these larger system processes need to be asked. For example, how would you be willing to change your dietary habits to make more grain available for drought-stricken populations? Is it reasonable and just for Europeans to accept voluntarily a reduction in their purchasing power and level of consumption to allow millions in Asia to rise out of poverty? Obviously the answers to such questions are intimately linked to the effectiveness of global systems to deliver food in disaster areas and to ensure that rapid economic growth really benefits the poor, meaning good governance and trustworthiness in the institutions concerned. Examples of efforts to bridge the global to local levels in an ethical discussion of climate change are the last two annual conferences of the International Environment Forum on "Science, Faith and Global Warming: Arising to the Challenge", Oxford, 2006 (IEF 2006) and "Responding to Climate Change: Scientific Realities, Spiritual Imperatives", Ottawa, 2007 (IEF 2007) for which full proceedings are available on line.

Consumer education needs to empower people to take responsibility for their individual lifestyle while recognizing that collective action is also needed, and that a supportive social framework and sense of community are important to reinforce individual efforts. Getting individual consumers to change their habits is essential but not sufficient. Individual citizens also need to contribute to larger efforts in their communities as an extension of their ethical commitment, and also to encourage and support their governments to collaborate in international processes that strengthen global environmental governance for sustainability. If political leaders do not feel that public opinion is behind them, they will rarely have the courage to act even where the common interest is clear.

A positive vision

The final necessary element in motivating positive change is a vision of what the results of difficult efforts and short-term sacrifices can lead to. The gloomy, if not apocalyptic, environmental scenarios can be counterbalanced by visions of their role in the transition to a more united world society able to repair the damage and to continue the onward march of civilization. An athlete supports endless hours of training and the often painful pushing of bodily limits, motivated by the ultimate satisfaction of winning, or at

least of a race well run. To motivate consumer citizens, and to counteract the negative scenarios of environmental, economic and social catastrophe (which may represent a realistic probability in the short term), it is necessary to follow the scenario planning through beyond the catastrophe (assuming our leaders do not have the wisdom and courage to avoid it) to the constructive process of building a new global society on the other side. Uniting before a common threat can be very beneficial in building a strong and resilient community. The trials and suffering of World War II provided the impetus for the creation of the United Nations and the European Union. It unfortunately always seems to take such extreme events to break out of old paradigms and take civilization another step forward.

Furthermore, in such insecure times, there is a natural tendency to want to return to the safety of old values and old ways of living, producing the driving force for the rise of fundamentalisms in many parts of the world, with accompanying intolerance and even terrorism. In consumer citizenship, we need to offer a positive alternative, not looking to the past but to the future. Globalization is opening up vast new potential for the advancement of human civilization, and many of our present difficulties are in fact the growing pains of the necessary transition. Global change is just one of the processes forcing us to recognize the reality of this trend and our responsibility for it. Presenting visions of possible sustainable societies that can result from implementing ethical values and encouraging young people to imagine their own ideal futures, can create in their minds a goal worth sacrificing for. The new generations of consumer citizens should not just be passively choosing what to buy from among what society offers, but actively preparing themselves to contribute in some way to the society they would like to live in. An ethical component in consumer citizenship education can inspire them to become ethical leaders in their family, school, community, business, associations or governments. The positive force of ethical commitment is the best motor for constructive change.

Conclusions

Any effective concept of consumer citizenship must include a foundation of ethical principles such as justice, responsibility and solidarity. The successful consumer citizen will come to be defined not only by a scientific understanding of the issues of global change and their implications for individual consumption, but also by the emotional commitment necessary to sacrifice the consumer ideal of immediate material satisfaction in favour of a larger vision of human prosperity and well-being justly shared among all peoples. Only when there are enough such consumer citizens around the world able to assess information in the light of their ethical principles can we begin to respond effectively to the challenges of global change.

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Indicators of sustainable consumption: From awareness to action

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Indicators of Sustainable Consumption (Mike Kitson, Bianca Friundi, Laszlo Borbas, Pavel Hurby, Joanna Kostecka, Richard Szabo, Miro Tulak, Elena Wolf and with the assistance of Arthur Lyon Dahl)

Introduction

The main aim of this paper is to discuss the role of indicators for sustainable consumption as a pedagogical tool for increasing awareness on the impact of consumption practises and promoting change in lifestyles. The paper has to be regarded as a "work in progress" of the CCN task Group "Indicators of sustainable consumption". A final more comprehensive document on this topic is planned by the end of the program (2009).

Sustainable consumption has been on the political agenda for a long time. In the very last years, however, the attention and political pressure towards this topic has significantly increased and a wide number of initiatives have been launched. To be able to evaluate and to change our consumption is regarded as an important step towards the goal of sustainability. Indicators of sustainable consumption are tools for measuring some aspects of our consumption habits: i.e. how much energy we use, how much waste we produce

Governments, international institutions, as well as NGO's, have developed detailed indicators aimed at measuring a number of aspects related to consumption. Indicators for sustainable consumption are increasingly used in policy making, both at national and international level.
The list of indicators and the methods for measuring the impact of consumption is large, and there are different opinions about the validity of these tools. A recent study conducted by the British DEFRA, for instance, questioned the validity of "ecological footprints" (DEFRA; 2007[3]).
It has also been argued that indicators may be too complex to deal with in everyday life (Stø, 2008): because of the amount of information one has to cope with, and because

[3] http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/sustainable/index.htm

they tend to lack an understanding of the implicit, taken for granted aspects of ordinary consumption.

Despite some criticism, however, there is a wide agreement on the relevance of indicators of sustainable consumption as a tool for increasing awareness. In this paper, we will:

- describe what indicators of sustainable consumption are
- describe two different approaches towards indicators of sustainable consumption
- mention some examples of their use and application
- discuss potentiality and limitations of indicators
- suggest ways for utilising indicator is specific contexts (i.e. school)

2. What is an *Indicator of Sustainable Consumption*?

When we use the notion of indicators of sustainable consumption we ought to be aware that describing what and indicator for sustainable consumption is implies the definition of both what is and *indicator* and what we mean by *sustainable consumption*.

2.1. What is an indicator?

If we think to our everyday life we may easily see that many of our activities imply measurement and evaluation. One example is a thermometer. When we wake up in the morning we may look at the temperature outside and consider if it is warmer or colder than the day before. Based on this information we may decide which kind of clothes we need to put on.

Another example is a scales. The ones regularly getting on the scales see clearly the difference between days in which meals consisted mostly on salads and boiled fish and days in which, instead, one has been indulging too much in chocolate and French fries. Trousers we felt comfortable to wear may result too tight. In order to fit in again we may decide to drastically cut sweets and fatty food.

These are just some example showing how we daily deal with information and how this information may affect our decisions and plans.

Indicators of sustainable consumption are meant to have the same function: they help us answering questions such as: *Where are we now?* and *Have we been taking some steps forward?*

Referring to indicators of sustainable consumption, Stanners et al. (2007) utilise to the following definition:

Indicators always simplify a complex reality, focusing on certain aspects that are regarded as relevant and for which data are available. Indicators are meaningful only as part of a framework or story. Indicators are a necessarily part of the stream of

information we use to understand the world, make decisions, and plan our actions. Indicators are communication tools that:

- simplify complex issues, making them accessible to a wider no expert audience
- can encourage decision making by pointing to clear steps in the causal chain where it can be broken
- inform and empower policymakers and lay people by creating a mean for the measurement of progress in tackling environmental progress.

(Source EEA – quoted in Stanners & al., 2007 p. 135)

An example of use of indicators for communicating current trends, progresses and backlash is the UK leaflet "Indicators in your pocket", periodically published by the Commission for sustainable development. Here, the symbol f the traffic light is used for indicating whether or not things are moving in the right or wrong direction.

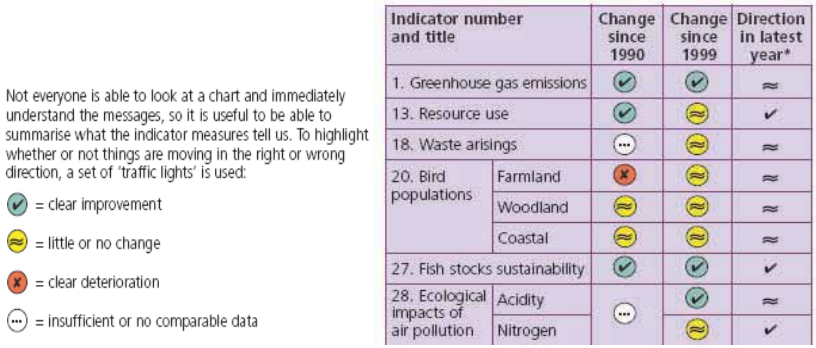


Fig. 1 *DEFRA- indicators in your pocket 2007- symbols and example of application*

2.2. What is sustainable consumption?

The term of sustainable consumption can be dated to the Brundtland report "Our common Future", to the related Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and to the main document of this meeting (Agenda 21). Here it is argued that "the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialised countries" (quoted in Jackson, 2006, p. 3).

From there on, a lively discussion has been carried on about the definition of sustainable consumption and how to promote it[4].

It is not the purpose of this paper to go deeply into this discussion. We would like however to point to the fact that the concept of sustainable consumption changes the

[4] More on this debate in Stø, 1995.

focus utilised in previous approaches (i.e. "zero Growth") from reducing consumption to changing patterns of consumption (Stø, 1995): As stated in the UNEP definition of sustainable consumption:

"Sustainable consumption is not about consuming less. It is about consuming differently, consuming efficiently, and having an improved quality of life
(UNEP, 1999; quoted in Jackson, 2006, p. 5).

An often quoted definition of sustainable consumption is the one produced in 1994 by the Oslo ministerial Roundtable. Here it is stated that sustainable consumption is "the use of services and related products which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimising the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle of the service and products so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generation"

As the time goes by, we see that definitions of sustainable consumption tend slightly to change, involving not only aspects related to the environment but also aspects concerned with equity and human rights.

An example of this tendency is, for instance, the UNESCO definition of sustainable consumption used for the UN decade for sustainable development:

Sustainable consumption asks us to consider issues that go beyond the individual when we shop. These include not only the ecological impacts of what we buy but also the equity, human rights and political dimensions of sustainability in the production and consumption process. These aspects of sustainable consumption provide guidelines on how to reduce the social and ecological impacts of what we consume.
(http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/TLSF/theme_b/mod09/uncom09t06.htm)

Similarly, YouthXChange provides the following definition:
Sustainable Consumption – hence – is about finding workable solutions to imbalances – social and environmental – through more responsible behaviour from everyone. In particular, SC is linked to production and distribution, use and disposal of products and services and provides the means to rethink their lifecycle. The aim is to ensure that the basic needs of the entire global community are met, excess is reduced and environmental damage is avoided. (YouthXChange)

Another visible change is the tendency to exchange the term consumption with the one of lifestyles, which includes not only what on how we consume, but the more general way we organise our life (and societies).

According to a definition presented at the meeting in Sweden (2007) of the "Marrakech process", sustainable lifestyles are patterns of action and consumption, which: meet basic needs, provide a batter quality of life, minimise the use of natural resources and do not jeopardise the needs of future generations. Examples of sustainable lifestyles can be found, among others, in EMUDE "Sustainable Everyday Project" http://www.sustainable-everyday.net/SEPhome/home.html#scenarios.

Although the literature shows definitions of sustainable consumption which may differ from each, it is possible to enlighten some common dimensions characterising the core of sustainable consumption.

- Satisfying basic human needs (not the desire for 'wants' and luxuries);
- Favouring quality of life over material standards of living;
- Minimising resource use, waste and pollution;
- Taking a life-cycle perspective in consumer decision-making;
- Acting with concern for future generations.

(Source: UNESCO)

3. Indicators of sustainable consumption: The institutional and the grassroots approach

A scan in the history of indicators for sustainable consumptions reveals the presence of – at least – two main approaches.

The first one, which can be referred to as the "institutional approach", can be traced back in the initiatives started with the Brundtland report "Our common future", in the following Conferences of Rio and Johannesburg, and, lately in the Marrakech process.

The second one, which can be defined as the "grass-root approach", can be traced back in the initiatives focussing on a critique to the current model of production and consumption and to the exploitation of the resources of the planet. Ecological footprints may be considered as one of the most known contribute of this approach.

3.1. The institutional approach

One of the aftermaths of the Brundtland report, published in 1987, was the first global conference on environment and development, the Rio conference, which took place in 1992. In this conference a commission for sustainable development was appointed, leading to a plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally (Agenda 21). With its 338 pages and more than 40 chapters, Agenda 21 provides guidelines for taking steps towards sustainability ("*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*"). In the document it is stated that "all countries should promote sustainable consumption and production patterns", developing national strategies for sustainable development. Chapter 40 calls on countries and international community to develop **indicators** for

sustainable development. The most recent set of indicators has been provided in 2007 (http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/indicators/guidelines.pdf)

Consumption and production patterns	Material consumption	Material intensity of the economy	Domestic material consumption
	Energy use	Annual energy consumption, total and by main user category	Share of renewable energy sources in total energy use
		Intensity of energy use, total and by economic activity	
	Waste generation and management	Generation of hazardous waste	Generation of waste
		Waste treatment and disposal	Management of radioactive waste
	Transportation	Modal split of passenger transportation	Modal split of freight transport
			Energy intensity of transport

Fig. 2 *UN Indicators of sustainable production and consumption (2007)*

A specific focus on initiatives promoting sustainable consumption and production has been given by the UNEP program known as the Marrakech Process (from the city which hosted the first meeting in 2003). The Marrakech Process is a global effort to promote progress on the implementation of SCP and the elaboration of a 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP). To identify reliable indicators of sustainable consumption and production is among the goals of this initiative
http://www.uneptie.org/pc/sustain/10year/home.htm

In addition to these initiatives, others have been promoted by international agencies. Just to mentions a few, OECD has been actively working on indicators of sustainable consumption and production and has recently published a report on the status of indicators of sustainable consumption and production in OECD countries.
The European Union, as well, has also been promoting several initiatives related to this topic.
Particularly relevant is the report “Measuring Progress Towards Sustainable Europe. Sustainable Indicators for the European Union”.

THEME 2: SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION		*Key SDS challenge:* Sustainable consumption and production *Key SDS challenge:* Conservation and management of natural resources
Level 1	**Level 2**	**Level 3**
1. Resource productivity	*Sub-theme: RESOURCE USE AND WASTE*	
	2. *Generation of total waste*, by economic activity and GDP* (proxy: Municipal waste generated per inhabitant)	3. Components of Domestic Material Consumption 4. *Environmental impact of material consumption** (proxy: Domestic Material Consumption, by material) 5. Municipal waste treatment, by type of treatment method 6. *Generation of hazardous waste, by economic activity** 7. Emissions of acidifying substances, ozone precursors, and particulate matter by source sector, and GDP
	Sub-theme: CONSUMPTION PATTERNS	
	8. Electricity consumption by households	9. Final energy consumption, by sector 10. Consumption of certain foodstuffs per inhabitant 11. Motorisation rate
	Sub-theme: PRODUCTION PATTERNS	
	12. Enterprises with a registered environmental management system	13. Eco-label awards 14. Area under agri-environmental commitment 15. Area under organic farming 16. Livestock density index
Contextual indicators	- Number of households (for sub-theme Consumption patterns) - Household expenditure per inhabitant, by category (for sub-theme Consumption patterns)	

Fig. 3 *EU Indicators of sustainable consumption and production*

Parallel to the actions undertaken by international organisations, initiatives aimed at promoting forms of sustainable consumption and production have been developed by several national governments. A global map on the status of National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS) shows significant variations in the geography of the implementation of those planes: while most of the European countries (as well as Canada, Australia and Japan) have approved and implemented them, USA and most developing countries have not.

The plans developed at country level include indicators aimed at measuring "progresses towards the goal of sustainability". UK has been one of the countries which most actively has put sustainable consumption on the political agenda. Both the Governmental DEFRA and the independent Council for Sustainable Consumption have been promoting a number of initiatives for increasing awareness and promoting change.

3.2. The grassroots approach

Environmental activism has been for a long time concerned with the way we use our resources and on the impact of industrialisation, pollution and other human activities on the ecosystem. As early as 1962, Rachel Carlson's wrote "The silent spring", describing the impact that pesticides had on the environment and particularly on birds. In 1972, the

book “Limits to Growth” commissioned by the Club of Rome, gave an important contribution for increasing the awareness about the consequences of our productions an consumption patterns

It is beyond the purpose of this paper to go in details of the history of the green movement, its initiatives and political influence. We would however like to point to the relevance of this movement in making the environmental issue a problem for everybody. Without lessening the relevance that institutional actors have in making political choices on behalf of the environment, many grassroots groups pointed to the relevance of autonomous, bottom up initiatives. Using washing powder that does not harm the environment, drop the use of the car, recycle waste, purchase organic food, are just some few examples of remedies suggested for minimising the consequences of our consumption.

There have been several initiatives of measuring the effect of individual consumption on the planets’ resources. Friends of the Earth, in the early 1990s, introduced the concept of “environmental space”, defined as “the total amount of resources we can use (in a given time period), without compromising future generations’ access to the same amount.

Another concept introduced in the early 1990s was the one of ecological footprints, which measures the human demand on the Earth’s ecosystems and natural resources. This method, developed in the yearly 1990s by Mathis Wackernagel and William Rees, compares the human consumption of natural resources with planet Earth’s ecological capacity to regenerate them. “Ecological footprint” is today probably the most known and most widespread tool for assessing the pressure of consumption on the resources of the planet.

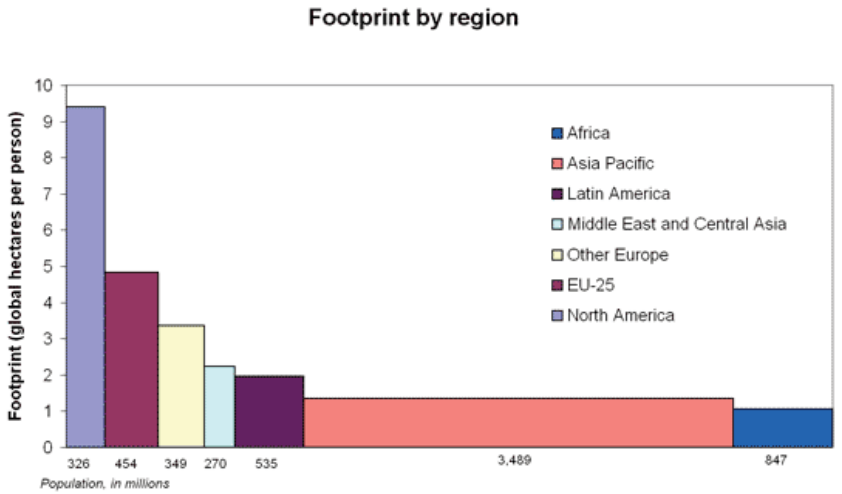
“The ecological footprint of a designated population is the area of productive land and water ecosystems required to produce the resources that the population produces, wherever on Earth the land and water is located”

(Wikipedia, ecological footprint)

A simple way for describing the “footprint approach” is to say that it measures how many planet-heart we need if everybody should live like us: any result higher than one indicates that we are deviating from sustainability.

Since its introduction, a number of initiatives have been promoted in order to calculate the ecological footprint at different levels: individual, household, communities’ nations.

The Global Footprint network indicates that there are considerable differences in the national footprints. While North America may need more than 9 planets Earth, Africa needs less than one planet.



http://www.footprintnetwork.org/gfn_sub.php?content=national_footprints

However, what is probably the most innovative aspect of the "footprint approach" is the fact that each and every one of us can measure its own footprint.
Having the possibility of having a PC connected to internet, it is enough to answer to some simple questions in order to get a prompt result.
Examples of how to calculate individual footprint can be found in the website of the global foot print network[5].

List of the questions asked in the footprint calculator:

How often do you eat animal based products? (From *Very Often* to *Never*)
How much of your food is processed packaged and not locally grown?
Compared to the typical (American) how much trash do you think you generate? (More – The Same – Less)
Which housing type best describes you home?
Do you have electricity?
How many people live in you households?
What is the size of your home?
How far do you drive by car each week?
How far do you drive by motorbike each week?
How often to you drive the car with someone else?

[5] Other organisations provide similar tests. See for instance http://footprint.wwf.org.uk/

What is the mileage of your car?
How far do you travel on public transportation each week?
How many hours did you spent on a flight last year?

Following is an example of a possible result: showing that the person taking the test would need 6.5 planet Earths.



4. Possibilities and limitations

In the previous section we have seen two examples of indicators of sustainable consumption (and production). One, defined as the institutional approach, mostly addressed at giving figures at national level; another, defined as the grassroots approach, concerned with the effects of individual consumption.

As we have described, indicators provide information which simply to understand to a general public.

However, whether we refer to the first or to the second type of indicators, their validity has been object of discussion: both in terms of choice of which kind of indicators have to be chosen and on the accuracy of their measurement.

Defining new sets of indicators, as well as revising measurement methods are discussed issues. However, the question if we really need new indicators does not necessarily imply a positive answer. As Stø points out:

"We all know which part of our consumption that contributes most to the CO2 and where the ecological footprint is largest. Food, transport and housing *count for more than 75% of the environmental impact of consumption. If we want radical changes – in*

short-term or more long-term perspectives - we have to address these strategic areas; otherwise our effort will be of more symbolic value. There are no reasons to believe that further development of tools for calculating the environmental impact of various consumption areas will come up with fundamentally alternative figures."

(Stø, 2008)

We find however a wide consensus on the fact that indicators are useful tools for increasing awareness: Whether they are addressed to policy makers, communities, households or individuals.

The main challenge seems not to define more accurate measures, but how to transform awareness into change.

When indicators tell me that my patters of consumption are unsustainable, when I'm aware that if everyone consumed like me we would need four planets, what can I do?

A number of studies indicate that changing habits is a complex task: information alone is not enough as there several aspects that can hinder change. Some of those are easier to detect while other may be more difficult. As said in the British report "I will if you will": we find ourselves sometimes "locked into" consumption patterns that are unsustainable". Consumption, is not just a matter of making unlimited choices, is, mostly a routinized activity into a pre-defined context.

An example that illustrates the importance of the context is the "walk/bicycle" to school campaign organised by a school in a Canadian town. The campaign did not achieve the expected results, as a minority of students dropped to be driven to school by parents. An evaluation of this unsuccessful initiative revealed that the problem was not the unwillingness of the students to walk or cycle but the parents' fear for children safety. Organizing a "traffic school" and giving children cycle training, gave positive results[6].

This example indicates that while indicators can give as information about the performance (i.e. number of children walking to school), an assessment of the context is needed for evaluating the result (i.e. why so few children walk to school).
Indicators for sustainable consumption should be seen in correlation to the opportunities and to the existing barriers. If further indicators are needed, we suggest introducing an "indicator for practising choices of sustainability".

Referring for instance to the footprint questions mentioned above, together with answering to the questions we may also ask: what are the alternatives? In which

[6] (http://www.toolsofchange.com/English/firstsplit.asp).

circumstances I find myself "locked up" in consumption patterns that are unsustainable?

For example, if we answer "most", to the question *"How much of your food is processed packaged and not locally grown?"* it may be relevant to try to understand the reason. Which are, for instance, the opportunities of finding fresh local produced food in my local store?
Another problem faced by individual indicators such as footprint is the fact that they address a general public. As the list of "footprint" questions shows, age, living conditions, working place, are not taken into account. This may make people questioning the relevance of answering some questions. The standard "footprint questionnaire" for instance, is not appropriate for children. Other questions or approaches that better fit with specific target groups may hence be considered.

A brief scan in the net has shown that there are sever attempt of "customising" footprints. One example is the "Ecological Footprint" website of the Environmental Protection Authority of Victoria, Australia. Here is it possible to find footprint calculators for schools, households, offices, retailers' stores[7]. Accreditation as the "eco-school initiatives" or the Norwegian "Green State", provide also examples of how to contextualise indicators for sustainable consumption

A further important aspect related to the choice of indicators and their use is the possibility of assessing progress and achievements. To have clear in mind aims and be able to make monitoring and evaluation should be considered as an important aspect of the indicators. An example of a tool that is particularly meant for monitoring progress over time is, for instance, the Norwegian "take the step". Here people are invited to make some priorities in relation to their consumption habits (i.e. walk to work; purchase used goods; eat more fruit and vegetables) and to submit their "promises". Another example of "active monitoring" is the Danish "1 ton [Co2] less", where also people are invited to submit their goals and to evaluate their actual achievements after a given time.

Finally, we should not leave out the fact that consumption is most of all a social activity. Consumption is a way for being part of a group, and participates to activities and values of our society. We do not eat just because we are hungry: we eat to lunch with our colleagues or schoolmates, or have dinner out with our friends as part of enjoyable activities that contribute to the quality of our days. We visit new towns as part of experiencing the world we live in; we buy a particular product because we know that it is exactly that one the person we care for wants.

[7] http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/ecologicalfootprint/calculators/default.asp

Discourses related to consumption, particularly when related to the issue of "sustainable consumption" tend easily to fall into the "do" "don't do" trap, which fails to recognise the role that consumption can have in producing changes. More than seeing consumption "as a problem" we may recognise the relevance of consumption "as part of the solutions".

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The Consumer Movement and the ACCI

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Introduction

Good morning! It is my pleasure to speak with you today about an organization that is near and dear to my heart, the American Council on Consumer Interests (ACCI). ACCI is a professional association composed primarily of academics, plus other educators, government agency staff, and staff of non-profit consumer organizations, all devoted to improving consumer well being through education and scholarship.

I have been the Executive Director of ACCI for nearly four years and thoroughly enjoy my work with the people of this organization. To introduce myself, I currently live in Ames, Iowa in the United States. I am not a researcher. My background over the last ten years is in association management, although I do have a Bachelor's degree in Home Economics Education from Iowa State University. Thus I am able to relate to and have an interest in many of the issues that our members are focused on.

I thought it might be interesting today as I talk about the American Council on Consumer Interests, to weave in ACCI's beginnings and history as it relates to the most recent consumer movement in the United States. This movement affected universities and it began and influenced ACCI. The movement began in the 1950's, some would say, with Vance Packard's book "The Hidden Persuaders", John Kenneth Galbraith's book "The Affluent Society", and the thalidomide scare, which happened in 1959.

The U.S. Consumer Movement and ACCI in the Early Days

In 1952, consumer economist Colston Warne (who was serving at the time as President of Consumer's Union—the major non-governmental product-testing organization in the US) saw the need for a consumer education association. It was for this very reason that the Council on Consumer Information (CCI) was born in 1953. In 1969, CCI changed its name to the American Council on Consumer Interests (ACCI). From the very beginning, ACCI was an interdisciplinary organization. Before ACCI began, the field of Consumer Economics existed as an issue of interest to isolated scholars and as an integral part of family management and household economics in departments, schools, and colleges of home economics. ACCI membership grew rapidly. In the early days, the focus of the new organization was two-fold: 1) to serve as a clearinghouse for educators and, 2) to provide information to consumers. ACCI became the national organization for professionals interested in both consumer education and consumer

rights. In 1964, ACCI made a decision to be non-political, taking no stand in issues of public policy—but dedicated to informing policy decisions through education and research. Because there were many ACCI members who were personally committed to activism, they helped to establish other organizations that do take positions on consumer policy issues such as the Consumer Federation of America.
In the early days, one of ACCI's main activities was to publish and sell a series of educational pamphlets. Two of the pamphlets, "The Consumer Looks at Deceptive Packaging" and "Truth-in-Lending Act" supported passage of the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act (1967) and the Truth in Lending Act (1969). Interestingly, the most popular of ACCI's pamphlets was entitled "Consumers Look at Burial Practices". Publication of consumer pamphlets ceased in the mid-1960s, when the organization decided to focus on its first goal, to serve as an information clearinghouse for educators and, subsequently, researchers.

The U.S. Consumer Movement and ACCI in the 1970's and 1980's
Membership in ACCI reached its peak in the early 1970s at about the same time that consumer activism, and federal legislation focused on consumer rights, reached a peak. SOCAP (The Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals in Business) was incorporated about this time, becoming the home of business professionals who work for the welfare of consumers, while ACCI continued as the organization for academics, consumer educators in federal agencies, and some businesses.

According to W. Keith Bryant, professor emeritus at Cornell University and author of "Riding the Wave: Consumer Economics and the Consumer Movement in the United States", "the field of consumer economics/studies has shrunk in the last few decades. Prior to the mid-1970s, the field grew. One cannot help correlating the rise and fall of ACCI membership, and by extension the field of consumer economics/studies, with what Robert Mayer, in *The Consumer Movement: Guardians of the Marketplace* (1989), has called the "third era of the consumer movement." Mayer dates the beginnings of this era of consumer activism and federal consumer legislation with the publication of Vance Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders* in 1957 and J. Kenneth Galbraith's *The Affluent Society* in 1958. The drumbeat of federal legislation began in 1962 with the Kefauver-Harris Amendments to the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, the same year that U.S. President John F. Kennedy introduced his Consumer Bill of Rights. The passage of consumer legislation reached a crescendo in 1966-1968, and the era ended in 1975-1976 with the Magnuson-Moss Federal Trade Commission and Warranty Act and the Toxic Substances Control Act.

These successes put in place most of the agenda fought for by the consumer movement in the United States. The issues that came to dominate the nation's political agenda beginning in the late 1970s fragmented the movement or were irrelevant to it. These

included: deregulation introduced by President Carter, environmental protection, congressional reform, abortion rights, cost containment and efficiency in government, and free trade. None of these issues engaged the scholarly attention of more than a few consumer researchers or educators. Students who were interested by these issues went elsewhere in the university.

Another force that contributed to the growth and subsequent decline of consumer economics/studies was the baby boom and subsequent bust. University programs and departments grew as the baby boom generation entered college. Since the late-1980s, college applicant pools have shrunk. The academic field of consumer economics/studies ceased growing and contracted.

A third set of forces influencing the decline of ACCI membership and of the field was the state of the economy combined with the rising cost of higher education in the 1980s and 1990s. Academic cost-cutting in Midwest universities and colleges, as a result of economic hardships in agriculture and manufacturing, began to trim consumer economics/studies budgets, shrink faculties and merge consumer departments with departments in adjacent fields. In the 1990s, many programs refocused their curricula on corporate consumer affairs. Others moved toward the traditional center of consumer and family economics by emphasizing family financial management and planning."

The U.S. Consumer Movement and ACCI in the 1990's and Early 2000's

There is a continuation of the fragmentation that has been happening since the mid -80s. The focus is now on particular issues (health care, environment, food safety). Individual movements have built up around these issues. The consumer movement is no longer an umbrella group. So, the consumer movement is less viable. ACCI is less influential because it isn't center stage. By the mid-80s, the consumer movement had worked itself out of a job. Bryant doesn't see the consumer movement being able to influence things such as the credit crisis, for example. Bryant also thinks that the consumer movement is not well suited to handle issues of health care or the environment. Those will be the "hot topics" for U.S. consumers for the next while. Organizations dedicated to those issues will have more leverage. University students in the United States, who used to be idealistic, shifted to a focus on succeeding in business, and are now –perhaps--shifting back to idealism. However, they are expressing that idealism in more focused and effective ways. Now, a student interested in healthcare reform, for example, may pursue a government, economics or sociology bachelor's degree, then go to a policy school for a master's degree. They might enroll in a consumer economics seminar, but would most likely not pursue a consumer economics degree.

The U.S. Consumer Movement and ACCI Today

Since the consumer movement has fragmented, other organizations have emerged that are focused on "hot topics", such as health care, the environment, and so on. Consequently, consumer economics programs at universities continue to contract. It is predicted that ACCI will continue as a small organization. ACCI's membership continues to be a small, yet dedicated force of researchers and educators who have a deep and abiding interest in the welfare of consumers.

ACCI promotes the consumer interest by encouraging, producing and communicating policy-relevant research. This vision is accomplished by:

Providing an organization dedicated to providing venues for members to network through a monthly e-newsletter, a quarterly newsletter and the annual conference, which this year will be held joint with the American Agricultural Economics Association, July 27-29 in Orlando, Florida. At that conference, attendees will explore issues such as the world oil markets, nutrition and the politics of food, ethanol, obesity, credit, the elderly, and a wide range of issues in financial literacy.

Another way ACCI's vision is accomplished is by publishing - ACCI publishes the *Journal of Consumer Affairs* and *Consumer Interests Annual*, which is the proceedings from the annual conferences. The *Journal of Consumer Affairs* began in 1966 and continues to be the premier publication of ACCI. The journal is currently published twice per year by Wiley-Blackwell Publishers. In 2008, the journal will expand to three issues, with a special issue this month on Financial Literacy: Public Policy and Consumers' Self-Protection. In 2009, there will be a special issue on Consumer's Health Literacy of Services, Medications and Insurance. A call for papers for that issue can be found on the ACCI Web site, with a deadline for submissions of May 30, 2008. There is another special issue in the works on Privacy Literacy: How Consumers Understand and Protect Their Privacy. The call for that issue is also on the ACCI Web site, with a deadline for submissions of June 1, 2008. It is anticipated that the Journal will become quarterly in 2010. The *Journal of Consumer Affairs* continues to grow in reputation and prestige. JCA is the sole journal that is dedicated to issues from any discipline that deal with the problems of consumers in the marketplace and, in general, a research perspective that explores issues from the consumer perspective.

ACCI also fulfills its vision through special projects. A good example of this is a project that addressed the growing debt load and associated financial problems facing US university students. Seeing a gap in available consumer education materials, a guide for college and university educators and a series of brochures for students were recently developed by ACCI's Consumer Education Committee in collaboration with the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, the Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education, and the Direct Selling Education Foundation. The "how-to-guide"

is designed to help campus administrators and financial professionals develop and implement successful financial education programs on college campuses.

Even more popular than the guide has been the series of brochures called "Get Financially Fit!" This three-part brochure series highlights valuable information that every college student needs to know about financial management. The brochures provide students with tips on how they can get started with their financial fitness plan. Using this series, students can take charge of their financial future with a Warm-Up, a Work-Out, and Weigh-In with topics such as spending, using credit, saving money and avoiding identity theft.

I have brought samples of these materials and welcome you to take a copy. They are also available on our Web site. The series has been so popular that ACCI is planning to do a second printing.

While these materials are a good example of the work that ACCI does, I would also like to mention that the majority of the influence that ACCI enjoys comes from the work that the individual members do. ACCI has a broad membership base. The majority of the membership comes from universities, however we also have members from many U.S. Federal agencies –including the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the Dept of Commerce, research and Extension divisions within the Dept of Agriculture, educators at the Citizen Information Center, and researchers in the Dept of Housing and Urban Development. We also have members from other non-profit organizations who share ACCI's concern for consumers—such as Consumers Union, AARP and the National Consumers League, as well as from private industry. ACCI members continue to influence policy-makers, government agencies and consumers. To give you several examples:

ACCI member Jim Morgan, Professor Emeritus, from the University of Michigan, did a study of auto accident costs and compensation that was the basis for Michigan's no fault auto insurance law,

ACCI member Larry Kirsch, Managing Partner of IMR Health Economics in Portland, Oregon, recently worked with Consumers Union, the City of Philadelphia and a coalition of consumer groups to prompt the state of Pennsylvania Insurance Department to conduct hearings against the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Insurance Company concerning an amassing of billions of dollars in surplus funds. Dr. Kirsch did an economic study of the issue, arguing that the funds were, in fact, excessive. The Insurance Department was unsympathetic to the case and approved the surplus. The case went on to litigation and the court awarded complete discretion to the Insurance Department. In spite of this disheartening development, there were positive outcomes. Other states picked up on the

case and held hearings. Another positive outcome was that in the Pennsylvania case, Blue Cross/Blue Shield agreed to use a percentage of the surplus funds to provide insurance for some of the uninsured in Pennsylvania. They have agreed to do this for six years.

Another example – ACCI members throughout the years have been appointed to presidential councils and committees. Attorney Suzanne Lindamood, was named Chair of the National Institute of Building Sciences "blue ribbon" commission to recommend the research priorities for the U.S. Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. The commission was established pursuant to Congressional mandate, and after a year of study, Lindamood reported the commission's findings to the U.S. Congress.

The most recent example of ACCI members being appointed to presidential councils is Dr. Tahira Hira, Iowa State University, and Ted Beck, National Endowment for Financial Education, who were appointed this Spring to President George Bush's new advisory council on financial literacy.

Beyond policy, many ACCI members are involved with research and consumer education that has direct benefit to consumers. ACCI members at the U.S. Federal Trade Commission produce many types of publications that are available free to consumers, such as information on identity theft, Internet fraud, energy and environment, and credit and loans. Members at AARP are involved in providing a wealth of consumer information to U.S. consumers who are age 50 or older. ACCI members at the Bureau of Labor Statistics publish findings from the annual Consumer Expenditure Survey which is used by a wide range of other federal agencies, educators and researchers to track changes in US consumer spending patterns.

How ACCI Got Involved With CCN

So, how did ACCI become involved with CCN? At the 2007 ACCI annual conference in St. Louis, Victoria Thoresen gave the Colston Warne Lecture, speaking on "The Role of Consumer Information in Defining Social Responsibility". While she was at our conference, she had the opportunity to meet many attendees, attend paper sessions, as well as learn about our organization. As a result, she issued this invitation for me to speak at your conference, I believe, with the hope that as both organizations become aware of each other, opportunities for collaboration and synergies may develop. I would also mention that ACCI is an international organization, and would welcome new international members! I will be here for the rest of this conference and invite any of you to ask questions or talk about opportunities. I have also laid some materials out on a table in the back of the room and will be there after this session to talk with anyone who desires to talk with me. Thank you very much for allowing me the opportunity to speak

with your group about ACCI, and I hope that you enjoy the rest of this conference! Thank you, and thank you, Victoria!

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Interview with ACCI member W. Keith Bryant.
Interview with ACCI member Jim Morgan

PRESENTATIONS

The responsibility and the right to be informed: Two sides of the same coin

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Introduction

The responsible, informed consumer is "en vogue". After a period in which the unconditional satisfaction of individual consumer wants was an unquestioned mantra not only of corporate marketing but also in some fields of public policy, social responsibility is not only requested from big corporations but seem to be a reasonable demand with regards to consumers too. No least the Consumer Citizenship Network stands up for a responsible consumer behaviour, which is based on information about consequences of the buying and using of products and services. This new focus on responsibilities has somewhat pushed away considerations about consumer rights.

The main concern of this paper is to show, that emphasizing consumer rights is not in contrast to acknowledging consumer responsibility. On the contrary, extended responsibility requires and is created by an extension of consumer rights. Before I will illustrate these two sides of the same coin for the example of the right/responsibility to be informed in the fifth section, I will first show the significance of the debate on the responsible, informed consumer. This focussing on responsibilities is contrasted in the third section – by recoursing to modern citizenship theory and moral philosophy – with the general interrelatedness of rights and duties. This forms the basis for the deduction of consumer responsibilities from related traditional consumer rights in section four. Some conclusions will finish the paper.

Significance of the responsible, informed consumer

Consumers play an increasingly significant role in the discussion about sustainable development. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly, consumption has a huge direct impact on the ecological und social living conditions of people today and in the future

(e.g. The Worldwatch Institute 2004); only a reduction in resource-use of private households in the developed world would allow consumers in developing regions to enhance their living conditions sustainably (United Nations 2006). Secondly – and maybe more importantly – consumers' role as potential influencers of companies and corporate behaviour is gaining importance. Since globally-operating corporations can only partially be controlled by nation states or the rudimental system of global governance (e.g. Matten and Crane 2005; Scherer and Schmid 2000), a growing number of academics and politicians point to the consumer as a possible step-in to increase the morality of the market. The German sociologist Ulrich Beck uses the example of the Shell boycott in 1995 to stress his idea of consumption as an arena for responsible world citizenship. According to him, "The citizen discovers the buying act as a direct ballot sheet which can be always and everywhere applied politically. […] This resembles – exemplarily – Kant's utopia of a global citizens' society […]" (Beck 1997: 124; own translation). The current UNEP director, Achim Steiner, stresses the future potential of this behaviour when he says: "With our power as consumers […] we do have unlimited unused opportunities [to act against climate change]" (Steiner cf. Grefe 2007: 6, own translation). Klaus Töpfer, the former director of UNEP, sees responsible behaviour as a fact and emphasizes the information aspect when he states that "consumers are increasingly interested in the world that lies behind the product they buy. […] This increasing awareness about environmental and social issues is a sign of hope" (Töpfer 1999, cf. Leeuw 2005: 7).
While these statements stress the descriptive aspect that consumers do or could act responsibly on the basis of adequate information, others argue normatively and point out that consumers should act like this to support a necessary shift towards sustainability. One important voice in this direction is the Consumer Citizenship Network which defines a consumer citizen as:

"(…) 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." (CCN 2005: 7)

According to this definition, consumer citizenship is about fulfilling responsibilities. Two responsibilities in particular can be identified: (1) to consider "ethical, social, economic and ecological"[8] issues and (2) to make an active choice on the basis of these considerations. Although the importance of rights is acknowledged later on in the "Consumer Citizenship Education Guidelines" (CCN 2005: 12), the source of the CCN definition, the main focus of the consumer citizenship discourse is usually on

[8] It is debatable whether this list is disjunctive. Social and ecological issues are both ethically relevant.

responsibilities. A negligence of rights would however contradict the interrelatedness of responsibilities and rights as pointed out in modern citizenship theory and moral philosophy.

The interrelatedness of rights and responsibilities

Citizenship generally describes the membership of individuals in political communities. The two main streams of theoretical reasoning about citizenship, liberalism and republicanism, both deal with rights and responsibilities of citizens. However, while liberalism focuses on rights republicanism is much more concerned with responsibilities (e.g. Heater 1999; Oldfield 1990; Oliver and Heater 1994).

The consumer citizen definition of the CCN implicitly follows the republican understanding of citizenship theory. This stream of thinking goes back to Aristotle (384-322 BC) and his book "The Politics", which is a mixture of Aristotle's normative ideal of a good political community and a description of the reality in the city-state (polis) of Athens 462-322 BC, where free (male, affluent, mature) citizens mutually ruled each other (Arblaster 1994). Consequently, for Aristotle, good citizenship in general means "knowing both how to rule and how to obey" (Aristotle 1988 [c. 330 BC]: 56=1277a). Citizens have the responsibility to take part in the creation and execution of rules that are intended to promote the public weal. For good citizens, those duties are not externally imposed rules, but intrinsic obligations, since "man is by nature a political animal" (Aristotle 1988 [c. 330 BC]: 3=1253a). The contemporary version of republican citizenship theory is formulated by various communitarian thinkers (e.g. MacIntyre 1981; Walzer 1983; Etzioni 1993; Putnam 2000), who stress that the promotion of the public weal is not only a task of the government but also of individuals and their communities. What is common to all republican thinkers is that they depict citizenship as a political activity (Oldfield 1990). The focus is on responsibilities that must be fulfilled actively. Thus, in this interpretation, at least some degree of intentional good citizenship behaviour is necessary to become a full member of a polity (Bauböck 1999).

The competing liberal tradition of citizenship theory can be traced back to the Roman Republic, where in the 1st century AD the first comprehensive system of legal rights was set up (Stokes 1999). Corresponding to this social innovation, the Romans defined a citizen primarily as a legal subject (homo legalis) (Delanty 2000; Pocock 1992). The direct origins for today's liberal citizenship concepts are the British liberal thinkers of the 17th century, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704). According to Hobbes (1965 [1651]: 64), only a strong government is able to prevent the war "of every man against every man" and ensure physical safety and individual property. Consequently, Locke (1970 [1689]) describes the guarantee of the triad of individual property, life and freedom as the main purpose of governments. Thomas H. Marshall (1994 [1949]), the last century's most prominent author on liberal citizenship, has shown that, at least in England, the implementation of these civil rights in the 18th

century was complemented by political rights (especially the active and passive right to vote) in the 19th century and social rights (especially protection against poverty, unemployment and consequences of illness) in the 20th. Today, especially neo-liberal thinkers question whether the existing extent of socio-economic rights really enhances individual freedom, or whether the welfare-state has rather developed into a "nanny-state" that is responsible for the heteronomy and dependency of many people (e.g. Heater 1999). While the extent to which a polity should provide its citizens with rights is controversial, it is common to all liberal thinkers that the focus is on rights being provided as a consequence of being a citizen. Thus citizenship is not regarded as an activity but as a status (Oldfield 1990). This status is independent of actual behaviour. It does not require active "good" citizenship (Bauböck 1999).

However, today, the citizenship discourse has departed from the antagonism of liberalism vs. republicanism and stresses the interdependencies between rights and responsibilities: On the one hand liberal rights provide the preconditions for good republican citizenship behaviour and on the other hand good citizenship behaviour is expressed in the active and conscious execution of political and civil rights (e.g. Stokes 2002). The interrelatedness of the two main streams of citizenship thinking becomes apparent in the merging of the terms, into "republican liberalism" or "liberal republicanism" (e.g. Buttle 1997; Kenny 2003).

By doing this, the citizenship discourse has taken over a train of thought which is established in moral philosophy since Immanuel Kant's "Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten" (Foundations of the metaphysics of morals) in 1785. He has shown that existing freedom to act makes people responsible for what they do – within the given degrees of freedom (Kant, 1986 [1785]: 103ff.). Since rights increase the freedom to act, they automatically lead to an increased responsibility of those who can use these rights – and who require freedom to act to behave responsibly (see fig. 1).

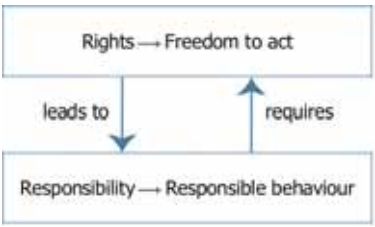

Fig. 1 *The interrelatedness of rights and responsibilities*

How rights and responsibilities are interrelated with regards to consumers and how the established set of consumer rights can be used to derive corresponding consumer responsibilities will be shown in the next section.

Deriving consumer responsibilities from consumer rights

The most prominent set of consumer rights is still John F. Kennedy's "consumer bill of rights" (Kennedy 1962):

"(1) The right to safety – to be protected against the marketing of goods which are hazardous to health or life.
(2) The right to be informed - to be protected against fraudulent, deceitful, or grossly misleading information, advertising, labelling, or other practices, and to be given the facts he needs to make an informed choice.
(3) The right to choose - to be assured, wherever possible, access to a variety of products and services at competitive prices […].
(4) The right to be heard - to be assured that consumer interests will receive full and sympathetic consideration in the formulation of Government policy, and fair and expeditious treatment in its administrative tribunals."

Kennedy's rights have provided the basis e.g. for the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection (United Nations 1999) and many other (national and international, governmental and non-governmental) activities in the field of consumer policy (Hilton 2005). Nevertheless, these rights have to be understood as goals, not as legal rights a consumer can pursue in court. Different consumer rights have been added, especially with regards to social and ecological aspects, but the original four still form the core.

When – as explained above – rights lead to responsibilities, consumer responsibilities can be deduced from these consumer rights. However, as shown by citizenship theory, the fulfilment of responsibilities requires active behaviour. The abovementioned right to safety does not require consumer activity since it is formulated as a negative right which entitles the consumer to be protected against specific corporate behaviour. The same is partially true for the right to be informed when it comes to protection "against fraudulent, deceitful, or grossly misleading information". However, the right to be informed is simultaneously a positive right which promises the provision of all needed information; making use of it requires the gathering and processing of information, and thus activity from consumers. This also applies to the other two rights: the right to choose is realised by actively choosing between alternatives, and the use of the right to be heard requires consumers to raise their voice. Thus, three types of consumer responsibilities can be deduced (see fig. 2).

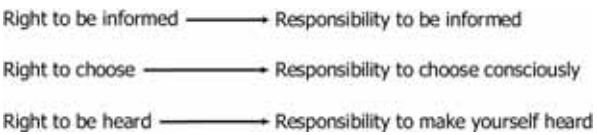

Fig. 2 *Deriving consumer responsibilities from consumer rights*

The right to be informed leads to the responsibility to be informed about relevant issues. This corresponds to CCN's definition of the consumer citizen which refers to the consideration of "ethical, social, economic and ecological" issues (CCN 2005: 7). The second responsibility included in that definition, i.e. making use of this information when choosing consciously among consumption alternatives, also corresponds to a consumer right, namely to the right to choose. The guideline for a consumer citizen's choice amongst consumption alternatives could be framed as follows: Do not contribute as a consumer to developments you oppose as a citizen who is interested in sustainable development, but, in contrast, support the sustainable development you would like to happen as a citizen with your consumption activities.[9] To do this, adequate information is needed. The same is true for the third duty, the responsibility to make oneself heard, which should – in contrast to Kennedy's limited focus – not only be considered with regards to governmental institutions but also important sub-political actors (Beck 1986) like corporations, NGOs, the media and also other consumers.

In many cases, the obstacles for consumers to be able and willing to fulfil the abovementioned responsibilities are prohibitively high. To reduce the barriers, it is necessary to reinterpret and extend consumer rights to allow extended responsibilities with regards to sustainability issues.

I will discuss this in the following for the example of the right and responsibility to be informed.

The example of the right and responsibility to be informed

Since traditional consumer policy has been focused on individual economic needs (e.g. Steffens 2006), the typical interpretation of consumer rights has been limited to aspects necessary for consumers to pursue the satisfaction of these needs. If consumption is also understood as a political activity to support sustainability, a reinterpretation of consumer rights is needed. This applies to all rights which correspond to consumer responsibilities. Governmental, non-governmental, and corporate actors and sometimes also consumers themselves need to create the basic conditions which allow citizens to fulfil the above mentioned consumer responsibilities. Thus, in the following I will present general demands and selected practical examples for the extension of the right to be informed which (would) allow and create a responsibility to be informed

Conscious sustainable consumption is based on information about social and ecological consequences of buying, using and disposing of products. Information on direct

[9] To characterize consumer citizenship which supports sustainability, it is not enough to propagate the idea of political consumption without further qualification. For example, boycotts of Jewish businesses in Nazi Germany and other countries (Micheletti 2002) or the boycott of the country band Dixie Chicks for their criticism of the war in Iraq (as depicted in the documentary "Shut Up and Sing") are also instances of political consumption, but definitely not of consumer citizenship in support of sustainability.

consequences of household behaviour can traditionally be gained e.g. from brochures and books which provide so-called consumer tips especially about ecological consumption. They deal with aspects, such as how to save energy or how to manage domestic waste. Often, these publications do not differentiate between "key points" (e.g. form of electricity) and "peanuts" (e.g. separation of waste) (Bilharz 2007) and thus tend to overburden consumer citizens. Web portals like utopia.de in Germany or greendaily.com also assemble consumer tips – by experts and by co-consumers. In addition they offer network opportunities to go beyond one-way information. In general, this kind of information supply via internet has the potential to increase consumer knowledge and power (Rezabakhsh et al. 2006). However, it requires specific competences to assess the quality of the provided information and to use it properly.

These web portals can also offer information about ecological and social aspects of products and corporations and thus take also into account indirect effects of consumption caused by production and producers (Hansen and Schrader 1997). Here, the challenge is that, from a consumer's perspective, social and ecological issues are usually "credence qualities", which – unlike most traditional buying criteria – can be assessed by neither inspection nor personal consumption experience (Darby and Karni 1973; Nelson 1970). Thus, the supply of credible and accessible information becomes crucial (OECD 2007; Schrader 2006). While some facts are systematically hard to collect and to evaluate, other relevant information is at hand in corporations. The question is how to overcome the existing information asymmetry between supply and demand side. One instrument which has been strongly developed in many advanced economies are labelling schemes, provided by credible, independent institutions. Traditionally, they have been focussed on ecological issues (e.g. Rubik and Frankl 2005), but the significance of social labels, e.g. on fair trade or child labour, is also growing (e.g. Brinkmann 2004; Hilton 2005; Steinrücken and Jaenichen 2007; Stolle et al. 2005). If well-known and widely accepted, these labelling schemes reduce the information costs for consumers, who get the relevant facts in a concentrated form (Karstens and Belz 2006) and thus make it easier for consumers to be informed. Eco-labels and additional product information can also be used to minimize the negative ecological effects of consumption during the use period. Products like cars or washing machines cause about 80 % of their environmental burden in their use phase rather than in their production, and the resource consumption and the polluting emissions of consumer products depend not only on consumer behaviour but also on the eco-efficiency of a product (e.g. Mont and Bleischwitz 2007). Although adequate labelling schemes have been implemented on these issues in various countries, the relevant information is still not easily available for every product (Rubik and Frankl 2005). In

addition, an inflation of questionable labelling schemes by companies themselves can contribute to an increase of consumer confusion and doubts in credibility.

If consumers are – according to the quotes in the introduction – willing to use their purchasing power like ballot sheets to punish or reward corporations, they need to take also into account "The World behind the Product" (De Leeuw 2005). Corporations themselves play an important role here. However, business communication on CSR has for a long time focussed on CSR reports for institutional stakeholders like financial investors, critical NGOs, academia or the media (e.g. Kolk 2004; Marshall and Brown 2003). Only recently have some bigger companies started to address also the ordinary citizen in their role as consumer, through, for example, advertising campaigns on their social responsibility. However, this information generally lacks completeness, comparability, balance, and sometimes – since consumers know about corporate interests – trustworthiness (Morsing and Schultz 2006; Schuler and Cording 2006). Thus, corporate disclosure usually needs the involvement of independent actors to transform the available information into credible and action-relevant consumer information.

Since they are generally considered as independent advocates of consumer interests, and provided they have the necessary communication skills, consumer organisations can take over the role of the necessary third party between corporations and consumers (e.g. Thøgersen 2005), as they have done in the field of labelling for a long time already. In line with these considerations, product testing organisations in different European countries have started to complement their product tests with CSR tests. In Germany, for example, the Stiftung Warentest published its first CSR test (on producers of functional jackets) in its consumer magazine (circulation: about 600.000 copies) in 2004 and has since conducted similar tests for different branches. They all include at least four dimensions of analysis: employees, environment, consumers and society, and suppliers. According to these dimensions, the affected companies are compared on the basis of a long company questionnaire, document analysis and investigation by Stiftung Warentest. A complex pilot evaluation study indicates that about a quarter of CSR test readers effectively consider these test results in their buying decisions (Schoenheit 2006). Nevertheless, the publication of consumer oriented comparative CSR tests is still an exception to the rule: In 2005 three CSR tests have accomplished, in 2006 three again and in 2007 only one (Brackemann 2008); small numbers in comparison to approximately ten product tests every month.

To sum up, the availability of information relevant for sustainable consumption has increased in most developed countries. However, neither the quantity nor the quality of the available consumer information indicates sufficient implementation of an extended right to be informed. What is more, the existence of adequate information does not guarantee that all good-willed consumers really are informed. The handling of this information often requires skills and thus consumer education (e.g. Benn 2004). Therefore, the demand for an additional right to get consumer education, as it is

implemented in the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection (United Nations 1999) or in the list of consumer rights of Consumers International (2008), becomes understandable. In some cases, even that could be too limited and an additional right for qualified advice might become necessary (Schrader 2006).

Conclusions

The paper has shown how strongly consumer rights and responsibilities are interrelated. The responsibility of consumers as citizens could be interpreted as the active use of consumer rights. The more rights are provided, the more responsibilities consumers do have.[10] Extended consumer rights are both a precondition and a call for morally responsible consumer citizenship.

For the responsibility to be informed this means, that its extent depends on the quantity and quality of the information supply. The more the right to be informed is implemented, the more consumers are responsible to be informed; the more responsibility to be informed is requested, the more the right to be informed has to be extended. Developments in the field of internet information, labelling schemes and consumer oriented CSR tests show an improvement of information supply, however, there are still many limitations.

Even if consumer rights like the right to be informed are fully implemented, not all consumers will accept their corresponding responsibilities. However – as diffusion studies have shown (e.g. Rogers 1995) – it takes not all, but rather a few innovative consumers, for industry to change markets and to start self-enforcing processes. These innovators need to be empowered by extended rights. As briefly mentioned in section 5, consumers can partially extend their rights by mutually providing information, but for big scale development they depend on structural changes. Thus, if politicians, NGO representatives and managers stress the importance of morally responsible consumer behaviour for a shift towards sustainability, they are obliged also to work for the necessary extension of consumer rights. Only when these rights are provided, the related responsibilities can be fulfilled by consumer citizens. However, (consumer) citizens can support these structural changes in their roles as voters, employees, business owners, teachers, researchers and many more.

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[10] The extension of consumers' responsibility as a consequence of the extension of rights would not apply to the right to safety. Here, the situation is the other way round. The more suppliers guarantee safety, the less important responsible behaviour from the consumers' side becomes. This explains once more why no corresponding duty to the right to safety has been formulated.

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Quality of information produced by producers: Greenwashing or can we really trust?

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Introduction

Globalization has helped to shift some of the responsibility for protecting citizenship rights away from governments to corporations. Corporations enter the arena of citizenship in circumstances where traditional governmental actors fail to be the counterpart of citizenship. One important stream of literature has been discussing that (Ronit and Schneider, 1999; Dirk and Crane, 2004; Oosterhout, 2005) corporations have stepped in and taken an increasingly active role in the political arena. Although some authors like Oosterhout (2005) against the idea, Corporate Citizenship however is described by Dirk and Crane (2004) as administering citizenship rights for stakeholders. Such a definition reframes Corporate Citizenship away from the conception that the corporation is a citizen in itself (as individuals are) and toward the acknowledgement that the corporation administers certain aspects of citizenship for their stakeholders, such as employees, customers, shareholders exc. Given the fact that Dirk and Crane's (2005) conceptualization is descriptive rather than normative, they justify their idea by arguing that "Corporations" and "citizenship" come together at the point (1) where government ceases to administer citizenship rights, (2) where government has not as yet administered citizenship rights, and (3) where the administration of citizenship rights may be beyond the reach of the nation-state government. Each of these contexts brings forward a range of mechanisms through which corporations might take over or sometimes are expected to take over certain functions with regard to the protection, facilitation, and enabling of citizens' rights – formerly an expectation placed solely on governments. Growing social involvement of corporations make them political actors especially in the global arena.

On the other side we have been witnessing that voter apathy in national elections is not the only instrument through which political choices and demands have been channeled. There appears to be a growing willingness on the part of citizens to participate in political action aimed at corporations rather than at governments. Hertz (2002) and others argue that given the power of big corporations, there is more democratic power in an individual's choice as a consumer (for or against certain companies, products) than in their choice at the ballot box. Whether through single-issue campaigns, anti-corporate protests, consumer boycotts or other forms of sub-political action, consumer citizens have increasingly required to effect political change by influencing the power

of corporations. Consumption choices have become 'purchase votes' for rewarding or sanctioning the corporate citizenship practices of many multinational and transnational companies.

Consumer sovereignty is an important concept within neoclassical economics. In theory, it generally suggests that consumers are sovereign and drive the market. But in reality, markets are not characterized by proper information flow. Existing market economies involve a situation with significant mismatches between access to and need for knowledge for consumer reactions. The consumers may turn to be a manipulated pawn rather than a sovereign because of misleading information, lack of relevant data, manipulated words, unethical advertising. After the liberalization and deregulation of the markets and industries in the last decades, consumer slavery may be suggested to describe the current period in the market economies rather than consumer sovereignty because of the fact that as Dirk and Crane (2004, p. 270) summarize, consumer have been experiencing creation of artificial wants, deception, misleading, promotion of materialism, perpetuating displeasure, exclusion, product insecurity, reinforcing stereotypes, excessive, deceptive, predatory pricing, violating privacy, targeting vulnerable consumers, exc. It can be claimed that consumer sovereignty can be achieved through proper information flow concerning to corporate citizenship practices of corporations. Consumers may arrive at an overall evaluation of the firm's citizenship give reaction by combining a variety of information on the performance of company's economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary citizenship.

Processing information in consumer citizenship

The availability and completeness of relevant data is the vital factor in the concept of consumer citizenship. How do consumers acquire and process the information regarding the corporate citizenship of various organizations? According to Thoresen (2005: 36) making choices as a consumer is related with assessing information and it is necessary to be able to pose relevant questions and master the art of making decisions. There are many theories, approaches about information processing in different disciplines like management, communication, computer science, exc. Widespread research over the years from different scholars from different disciplines have been made to explain the process of decision-making (Ferrell 1989; De Paulo, 1987; Trevino 1986). Many of them provide us with a relatively clear picture of the important stages and influences that are central to understand the processing information and making decision. Combining the elements of these theories by using system approach, Fig. 1 can be proposed to demonstrate the variables and elements at processing information in the consumer citizenship. In general these frame work represent the communication between source and consumer, stages in the processing information and the factors that influence this process. These variables and elements are based upon prior models (Daft, 2003; Ryen et al., 2007; Orey, 2001) in different disciplines and do not claim a

comprehensive theoretical framework, instead, it suggests some further development and research.

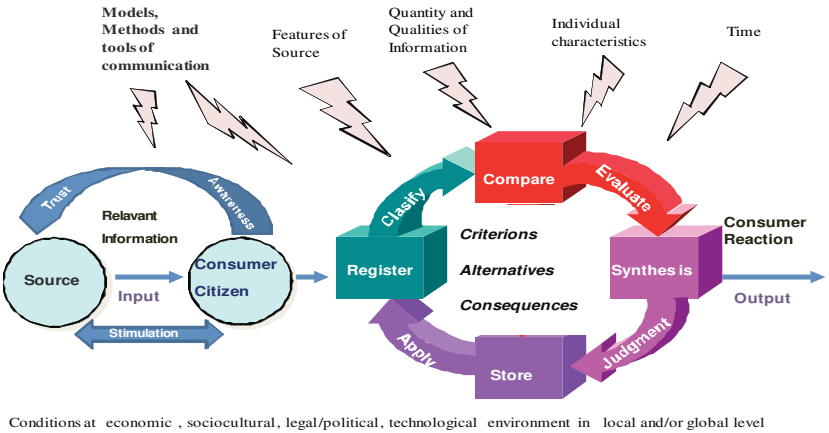

Fig. 1 *Variables and elements at the processing information in consumer citizenship*

The proposed framework itself is not empirically grounded yet because of the fact that the observation and measurement of consumers reactions is quite complex. It is not easy task to identify only one factor alone and measure its affects to the process due to many of the stages and variables related and interdependent to differing degrees. This could be considered as limitation of the framework. It is however hoped that the proposed framework could add to the conceptual base to develop researches for the future investigation of consumer citizens' reactions.

In this framework it can be suggested that acquiring, registering, classifying, evaluating, comparing, syntheses, storing and applying are the stages in the consumer information processing. In every stage criterions, alternatives and consequences might be considered by the consumer. That process is affected by different variables, as internal factor; individual characteristics (Kohlberg, 1969; Thoresen, 2005; Dirk and Crane, 2005) as external factors; model, method and tools of the communication (Maignan and Ferrell. 2001) qualities and quantity of information, features of the sources and time of the process. As far-external factors economic, socio/cultural, legal/political, ecological and technological conditions in the local and or global level might be regarded as the environment of the consumer information processing (Thoresen, 2005, p. 36; Dirk and Crane, 2005, p. 117).

Past researches on environmental consumer behavior has highlighted the importance of consumers' awareness of environmental issues to predict environmentally conscious consumer behaviors (Berger and Kanetkar, 1995). Based on this evidence, we can argue

that processing information in consumer citizenship begins with consumer awareness of a company's economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary citizenship. The consumer may research or come across relevant information about corporate citizenship activities. Or a source can stimulate the awareness of consumer citizen by giving relevant information. Corporations, governments, media, NGOs, universities, interest organizations etc. could be sources to provide information regarding corporate citizenship practices on protection, facilitation and enabling of citizens' rights (stakeholders rights) realized by a company. Given the fact that corporations are willing to disclose their positive practices rather than negative, trust in the source becomes vital element at processing information in the consumer citizenship. Information regarding corporate citizenship practices may influence consumer decisions only if individuals judge this information as objective and trustworthy (Maignan and Ferrell, 2001).

Given the complexity of the elements at the processing information in consumer citizenship, only the information originating from the corporation and trust in the source have been taken into consideration in order to limit the extent of this paper.

Measuring and reporting of corporate citizenship

Selection of corporate citizenship communication techniques, models and tools may differ by different stakeholders of course. But given the importance of the interdependence between corporate and consumer citizenship, businesses should choose the most appropriate means of communicating with consumer, as consumer can never collect all the details of corporate citizenship practices. These tools should be chosen and implemented by the companies in order to make consumer process information properly.

In the corporate citizenship communication, like any newly-emerging area, the field is overwhelmed with problems of terminology. There are ethical accounts, social audits, social accounts, ethical audits, social performance reports, human accounts, social reviews, just to name a few. In some cases these methodologies appear very similar (Zadek, 1997b,: 1374). They are synonymous with citizenship reporting, sustainability reporting, triple-bottom line reporting. For example, Triple bottom line (TBL) is a term coined and advocated by John Elkington in 1996. (Elkington, 1996) His view of the TBL is that it represents the idea that business does not have just one single goal- namely adding economic value- but that it has an extended goal set which necessitates adding environmental and social value too. Triple bottom line measures business performance against economic, environmental and social criteria in terms of corporate citizenship. The idea that the overall performance of a company should be measured based on its combined contribution to economic prosperity, environmental quality and social capital. Why measure it? One of the figure in social accounting, Zadek (1998a:1426) answers to this question that companies need to know the social, ethical, and environmental views of stakeholders (citizens) who do count. They also need to know how these views are changing over time and how they are likely to determine

attitudes and actions by stakeholders – whether individual or collective – towards the company. Thus, companies seek to measure and disclose their social and ethical performance in order:

- to understand what they are trying to achieve and how best to measure performance against their aims
- to know what they are doing
- to understand the implications of what they are doing
- to understand in what ways if any they can explain their actions to increasingly skeptical and aggressive stakeholders
- to understand whether there are practical options for improving their social performance

Social accounting is the generic term which summarizes the other tools and approaches on measuring and disclosing information in corporate citizenship communication. Because of high costs, inadequate information systems, lack of standards, secrecy and unwillingness to disclose sensitive or confidential data, most corporations do not practice any form of social accounting. According to Zadek (1998) however, companies are finding in a growing number of cases that they need to respond to stakeholder concerns not only by changing their practices, but by being more open in reporting how they have performed against key social, ethical, and environmental criteria's. Zadek (1998) gives an example: The clothing retail chain, Gap, understood this when it agreed to adopt a code of conduct covering the factories in the South from which it purchases the products it sells. It understood that its customer base was open to being influenced by the growing number of non-profit organizations campaigning around labor conditions in these factories, particularly those focused on the emotive issue of child labor. The Gap, furthermore, along with an increasing number of companies throughout the clothing, sportswear and toys industries, have also come to accept that those stakeholders who are willing to penalize them for not behaving according to norms that they consider acceptable want "proof" that they are keeping their promises. The fig leaves of codes of conduct are in themselves not enough (Zadek, 1998a, b). What is in addition demanded are reports of performance that is a fundamental element of the process of communication between the company and key stakeholders. In this sense, reporting is a way in which stakeholders can see if the company "listened" to their concerns, and over time whether they have responded in practical terms. Further, reporting is an essential element of the process of deepening the understanding of managers as to what is going on and how people view it. Reporting – seen in this sense as a link in the chain of events that secures high quality feedback – is an obvious requirement. In conclusion, therefore, reporting is essentially an element of the communication, dialogue, learning, and decision-making process, rather than the endpoint in a retrospective analysis.

Many companies around the world have started to measure and report information on their economic, environmental and social policies, practices and performance. But this information is generally incomplete, inconsistent and unverified. Measurement and reporting practices vary widely according to industry, location and regulatory requirements. So a whole bunch of different standards are emerging, all more or less trying to follow the track of cynicism or skepticism or concern over the quality of these different emerging voluntary processes of disclosure (Zadek, 2001). For stakeholders to be willing to offer insights into their own deeper interests and concerns, they need an atmosphere of trust and honesty. Consumers will simply not believe anymore the claims of companies without a more systematic, rigorous approach to disclosure. Companies seek to influence public perceptions about their corporate citizenship performance. Whilst this is a task that all companies take to with considerable rehash and vigor, the ways in which they have done this has generated considerable skepticism and indeed cynicism towards corporate claims of good behavior.

Given the fact that corporations are willing to disclose their positive practices rather than negative trust in the source becomes integral element at processing information in the consumer citizenship. Information regarding corporate citizenship practices may influence consumer decisions only if individuals judge this information as objective and trustworthy (Maignan and Ferrell, 2001).

Trust in the source

In 2005, Nike advertised the high quality of worker conditions of its factories and its supply chain in South-East Asia, and then a group of activists sued it on the grounds that this statement was misleading to consumers.

In an advertisement in National Geographic magazine in 2004, Ford Motor Company tried to convince readers of its commitment to the environment by announcing the launch of the Escape Hybrid SUV and the remodeling its River Rouge factory, just prior to the campaign's release, the Environmental Protection Agency announced that Ford had the worst fleet wide fuel economy of all major automakers.

More recently, Norway's consumer ombudsman has targeted automakers with some of the world's strictest advertising guidelines. The guidelines distributed to carmakers and phrases such as 'environmentally friendly', 'green', 'clean', 'environmental car', 'natural' or similar descriptions should not be used in marketing cars by claiming that "Cars cannot do anything good for the environment except less damage than others".

Even large and famous corporations are lying. Mismatched information flows are also a part of the profile of the present paradigm of shared responsibility as Thoresen highlighted (2005) Despite a veritable outpouring of information from companies about their social, ethical, and environmental performance, there is ample evidence to suggest that stakeholders rarely believe what they are told by companies (Zadek, 1998). Many surveys and writers (Laczniak and Murphy 1993; Assael 1995, Osterhus 1997) have highlighted that business and industry sources are likely to be considered the least

believable. We can discuss many reasons for the lack of public trust in business especially in the advertising and sales professions, one of the reasons that consumers do not find corporations trustworthy could be greenwashing.

Greenwashing

It is a negative term derived from the term "whitewashing," was coined by environmental activists to describe the efforts by corporations to portray themselves as environmentally responsible in order to mask environmental wrongdoings.

The term is now used to refer to a wider range of corporate activities. (http://www.businessethics.ca/greenwashing) It just looks like the expression "whitewashing" in politics. It's defined as a coordinated attempt to hide unpleasant facts, especially in a political context. A commonly cited example of greenwashing is the George W. Bush Clear Skies Initiative, which environmentalists have argued actually weakens air pollution laws. It's greenwashing when a company or organization spends more time and money claiming to be "green" through advertising and marketing than actually implementing business practices that minimize environmental impact. It is whitewashing, but with a green brush

(http://www.greenwashingindex.com/what.php). What are the consequences of green washing?

1. It attempts to deceive stakeholders, making them think that a company with an awful environmental track record actually has a great one.
2. Green washing could result in consumer and regulator complacency. If one corporation in a particular company gets away with green washing, other corporations will follow suit, thereby creating an industry-wide illusion of environmental sustainability, rather than sustainability itself. This creation of the illusion of environmental sustainability could have dire social consequences as consumers will continue to use products and support companies that further environmental degradation and reduce the quality of living conditions for future generations
3. Greenwashing may also engender cynicism: if consumers come to expect self-congratulatory ads from even the most environmentally backward corporations, this could render consumers skeptical of even sincere portrayals of legitimate corporate environmental successes. Thus well-meaning companies – companies committed to responsible behavior with regard to the environment – have every reason to be critical of companies that greenwash.

Lack of internationally agreed standards in social accounting makes possible for corporations to expose false claims even when it is all too obvious that they care neither for their social or environmental impact on the society.

Avoiding greenwashing

As corporations are trying to give some sense of reliability of their corporate citizenship practices and avoid green washing, some standards of qualities in providing information such as Inclusivity, Comparability, Completeness, Evaluation, Management policies and systems, Disclosure, External verification and Continuous improvement have been suggested for corporations (Zadek,1997). ISO International Standard has been working on some other standards on communication for companies in its "Guidance Social Responsibility" (2008). A draft has been developed on the basis of a consideration of comments submitted by stakeholders and experts. But many of these standards have not been integrated into most companies' social accounting procedures of course, but the efforts on conceptualization and definition of quality standards could be considered as important attempts towards sufficient principles in providing information. Since voluntary, local reporting is no substitute for binding international agreements on social reporting some initiatives in the global level like AA1000 Assurance standard, The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), ISO try to regulate specific dimensions of social accounting and provide global standards in reporting.

Conclusions

Democracy can be defined as giving control to people over their lives and the possibility to choose policies that are regarded as important. When such policies are taken by governments, individual citizens control them based on relevant information. Since corporations have become political actors and shape and influence our public and private life consumer citizenship should be added in the current paradigm in the modern societies, processing information in consumer citizenship might reallocate the balance of power away from business and towards the consumer. As Isin and Wood (1999) predict, consumer citizenship may help and accelerate to reach the epoch of consumer sovereignty.

Methodology

Relevant information from various sources such as from the literature, internet, surveys, web sites of institutions, legal texts, reports, journals, news papers, working papers and handbooks have been processed in order to try to conceptualize assessing information in consumer citizenship.

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Information, values and decision-making that influence the world

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Introduction: Why Consumer Citizenship Education (CCE)?

Basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter are essential for human life and activities that encompass the production and consumption of life sustaining needs are like the two sides of a coin, different yet integrated. Human beings cannot survive without consuming goods and services as long as they live, which means that every person is a consumer from birth to death. Since we no longer live in self-sufficient communities, Consumer Education teaches life-long survival skills, knowledge, and attitudes to people who have to live in a market/commodity society. Since the consumption of goods and services has a close relationship to the environment around us, the contents of Consumer Education is ever changing as it relates to the changes in the real world. One of the reasons for the changes in consumer education is that the influence of both producing and consuming commodities is expanding globally. Without symbiotic relationships in the world, it is not possible for us to survive. CCE is defined as "learning which aims to contribute to the individual's ability to manage his/her own life as well as participating in the stewardship of the global society's collective life" (Thoresen 2005).

Consumer educators and researchers have pointed out that consumer education is influenced by using a financial vote not only for improving personal life but also for creating a society. Imai stated that consumer education has the "power to create a society" (1994) while Bannister expounded that "there is a need to strengthen consumer-citizen participation in the social, political, and economic environments which affect consumer decisions" (1985). Up until recent times, consumer education primarily dealt with the field of private/personal consumption, that is, how to make purchasing decisions. However, for maintaining human life, in addition to the consumption of food, shelter and clothing, two more fields of consumption are needed; one is the consumption of free goods provided by nature, and the other is the consumption of public/common goods and services. To create better living conditions, CCE should focus on these two fields of consumption and consider them as main targets in the consumer education process. An effective education system essentially

has the power to go beyond personal responsibility and create a society for the greater good. In today's society, an "informed consumer" is no longer one "who has enough knowledge about commodities and therefore can purchase the best and cheapest one" but has the ability to create a better world for all global citizens. If CCE's mission is to nurture and educate consumers for the betterment of the world, then CCE must educate students who can consider other people, other countries, public benefit, future generations, and natural environment before their own personal or short-term benefit in their decision-making process. The objectives of this paper are threefold: first, to clarify the influence of consumer's decision-making, second, to identify the kind of information that is effective in building a better world, and third, to emphasize the important aspects in learning the decision-making process.

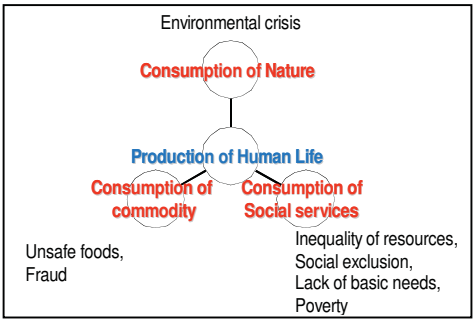

Fig. 1 *Three levels of consumption*

2. Influence of consumer's decision-making

(1) Global expansion of consumption

The safety and stability of a consumer's private/personal consumption life is becoming insecure with geographical expansion. It is becoming increasingly difficult for consumers to check the safety of their consumer goods. Although there are political and geographical boundaries, economic borders are disappearing and the world is becoming more interdependent. The food-sufficiency rate of Japan is less than forty percent. If Japan is not able to import food then many Japanese will not be able to survive. Although China's political system is different than Japan, it has contributed to lowering Japanese consumer prices. Without oil from Middle Eastern countries, countries around the world will not be able to meet its production needs. The rising oil prices not only affect energy prices such as gasoline, electricity or heating but also impacts grain prices when plants switch from using wheat or soybeans to corn that has the possibility to offer bio-ethanol-alcohol as a new energy substitute for oil. Insufficient supply of forage crops continues to raise the price of meat. Since we are economically interdependent, financial problems such as the sub-prime loans in the U.S. have ripple effects all around the world.

In order to sustain human life, consumers should expand his/her horizons from focusing on their country or region to being global citizens who extend beyond their country's borders. As environmental concerns in consumer education are becoming common place, "peace and international cooperation" are also becoming important because no country can survive on its own. Understanding sustainable consumption and production, environmental issues, South-North problems and fair trade practices and policies are essential topics in CCE.

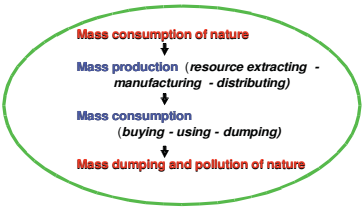

Fig. 2 *Nature and consumer lifestyle*

(2) Public service, as a field of consumption

CCE can educate consumers, who can influence through their decision-making, the state of businesses, government and the natural environment. CCE must not only focus on consumer's private/personal consumption but on public good. Because of mass production, there exists mass consumption and wastage. Generally, consumer education, so far, unconsciously focused on commodities which businesses produced and overlooked public services that government produces. However people utilize education, medical care, child care services and social welfare during their lifetime. Social security such as pensions and elderly care services are taxing the social insurance system. In Japan, the numbers utilizing public services are increasing placing a growing demand on personal finances of Japanese households while the consumers pay more for taxes and social security expenses.

Marshall categorized citizenship into three parts: civil, political and social and pointed out that social citizenship ranges from the right to economic welfare and security to the right to share in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society (1993). Social citizenship is a crucial and essential base to life for all human beings. Meanwhile, CI pointed out that the significance of learning consumer rights and responsibilities is to meet basic human needs and eradicate poverty. The existence of poverty or social exclusion in a nation means that the citizenship between its people and country is insufficient. Having adequate standards of living is the foundation for the well-being of a citizen and the lack of social/common consumption implies an insecure life. Even a personal problem when experienced by many can be addressed by sharing and helping one another. Solidarity and cooperation are prerequisite conditions for humanity and perpetuation of human life.

(3) Natural environment; as a field of consumption

Nature is a source of production and consumption. When the scale of production and consumption is smaller than the scale of environmental pollution, consumers do not need to pay special attention to environmental concerns. However, to maintain their comfortable and overindulgent lifestyle, the environment has been stripped of its raw materials and resources. Since it took over 45 hundred million years to produce fossil fuel as energy, it is impossible to produce fossil fuel now. However our extravagant lifestyle uses resources faster than we have ever experienced in our human history. Resources which took 45 hundred million years to produce may be depleted within the next one or two hundred years. If resources are exhausted, there will be no raw materials and subsequently there will be no production, and consumption will cease making it impossible for human life. Because the process of consumption involves three steps: buying, using, and dumping, there is no consumption activity without dumping. Therefore, mass consumption is linked to mass dumping in nature. Consumers are victims and perpetrators of environmental problems. The entrance to and the exit of consumption activities depends on nature and the state of nature, in turn, depends on consumer's lifestyle. Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" denounced the environmental pollution which occurred due to agricultural chemicals or pesticides; called carcinogens in 1962. Pollution also known as the environmental hormone is referred in "Our Stolen Future" by Colborn in 1996. Pollution does not directly cause death like carcinogens do, however, if people cannot procreate due to environmental hormone, humankind's future will be in jeopardy. The progress of science and technology is fraught with unexpected risk. Chemicals are used in many products and its contamination of the environment poses a threat to the natural world. Scientific advances such as cloning and gene manipulation raises many questions as to its safety or threats. CCE should be in the forefront to promote consumer values and responsibilities and maintain sustainable consumption and production, and the environment.

(4) Internet as an emerging tool that affects consumption

Although internet is not a field of consumption needed for human life, it has a powerful influence to change the state of consumption. Internet as a tool of receiving and sending information affect money, shopping, and consumer decision-making. Consumers not only use products but also services. In recent years, expenses for purchase of information services such as cellular phones, internet connection, and wireless services have increased. Consumers may engage in purchase of illegal drugs, adult services, and imitation brand goods using the internet and when credit cards are used for these transactions, money is transferred as electronic information. Shopping is done on-line with the click of a mouse, and, as a result, consumer problems are changing and consumer fraud concerning information is increasing in Japan. Nevertheless, global legal agreement on electronic commerce is neither stringent nor uniform.

Internet is also being used to access public services offered by the government. For example, the Blair Administration stated that every tax-paying citizen is a consumer of public service. Citizens/consumers can go to the website, http://www.direct.gov.uk/Homepage/fs/en offered by the UK government and avail of the public service information. The home page lists public services available for every life stage including young people, parents, disabled persons, and people over age 50. Public services, as national minimums, are exhibited on the homepage and are available to all citizens. As a tool for transferring money, digital software and information, internet has the ability to change our daily lives. How to use the internet effectively will be an important topic for CCE and it can train consumers to use it safely to access, receive, and send information, a resource needed for the decision-making process.

2. Information as a resource for consumer's responsible decision-making process

If a commodity that a consumer needs or wants is not sold in the market, then a solution is to produce one's own commodity. Consumers can be producers when they collaborate with each other and produce their own commodities like co-op products. Co-op is a case of consumer's solidarity and direct operation of their influence on business. Another influence is indirect, the one through personal shopping. Since money, a means of profit for a business, is paid by consumers, businesses cannot ignore consumer's needs and wants. Shopping is a result of consumer decision-making and it is also a financial vote cast by the consumer for the business. If that is the case, why do consumers not express their needs and wants more strongly?

The concept of social responsibility is expanding. Producing and selling high quality products that are reasonably priced, making a profit, distributing profits to stockholders, paying living wages to employees and paying taxes to government are bottom line for businesses (Makower 1994). Makower encourages consumers to choose commodities of businesses that contribute to creating a better world. If consumers choose commodities that are produced by businesses that do not pollute the environment, contribute to local society, are not involved with munitions industry, and create a welcoming work environment for women, minorities, and the disabled, a better world could be created. However, this is not an easy task and several questions arise. Who and how to evaluate businesses' contribution to society? And how do consumers find out that the commodities they choose are from socially responsible businesses. Consumers need information about businesses not only for their commodities but also to evaluate their social contributions. This service is offered by NPO which evaluates social contributions of global businesses such as the Council on Economic Priority.

The Council on Economic Priority publishes a shopping guide, "Shopping for a Better World", which offers information on the degree of CSR, Corporate Social Responsibility. CSR is evaluated by points allocated towards environment, workplace issues, donations or social contributions, family benefits, women's advancement, minority advancement, and disclosure of information. Because of the increase of

influence of production in many aspects of maintaining human life, information about CSR is vital for consumers. However, one has to ask a more pertinent question, how is this evaluated information distributed to consumers?

One possibility of distributing CSR information that can be accessed by consumers is via the cellular phone. After the mad cow disease was identified in Japan, a barcode was placed on every beef package sold in supermarkets. Inputted barcode numbers in cellular phones at the supermarket allowed consumers to get information regarding where, when, and who packaged the beef. This traceability system showed only the production information but did not guarantee the safety of the product. However, face-to-face relationships between consumers and producers make producers more conscious of their responsibility. Cellular phone is one way to link to the internet and access information remotely. This example suggests that widespread access of CSR information of general products may be invaluable to consumers. Consumers can easily ensure if products they want to buy at supermarkets has met the CSR index or violated any labor laws such as child or slave labor. When CSR information is not available on labels of products, then having the ability to access the latest information is vital to making rational consumer decisions and creating a socially responsible world.

3. Decision-making skill as a human resource to be a responsible consumer

(1) Decision-making skill as a cognitive domain of learning

Even if there is information which contributes to creating a better world, if consumer's cognitive skill to think and analyze information is not developed, responsible action will not be taken. The cognitive domain of learning is developed by analyzing, modifying, and reintegrating information critically. Advertisements, sales talk, label and media news are information items that promote products and services. Skills are defined as the ability to develop through training, and hence the ability to make a decision is a skill to problem solve. When there is a gap between the current state and a desired state, this gap becomes a problem. There are two types of problem-solving, a well-defined problem is one in which the goal is clearly identified, as is the path or solution to that goal. An ill-defined problem is one in which the goal is not clearly defined and there are likely to be many paths or solutions to the goal. In a well-defined problem such as problem solving in mathematics or science, there is only one answer and the way to reach the goal is explicit. Contrarily, in many everyday problems, consumers have more than one possible solution or answer, and they are faced with selection of the best choice given the circumstances and that selection involves the decision-making process (Zechmister 1992). Because each person's value system and resources are different, day-to-day problems are solved using different choices and the path to reach the goal is dependent on individual persons. The process of private decision-making is to:

- identify the goal and define the problem

- gather information regarding the problem
- evaluate alternatives critically in relation to resources such as money, time, energy, community and human relations
- compare and consider consequences of alternatives
- take responsible action based on values and practical reasoning

Although daily life is a series of unconscious activities, even the purchase of a necessity is related to the social and natural environments globally. CCE can educate consumers who can make conscious decision that consider the impact on businesses, government, and the natural environment and thus ensuring the future of the world. The process of public decision-making which is discussed in group learning is to:

- identify common problem and goal
- gather information regarding the problem; newspapers, books, magazines, internet and interviewing community members
- evaluate and consider alternatives critically in relation to social advantages and disadvantages, private advantages and disadvantages, and core values through compromise and negotiation
- discuss solutions for self and social development, possible consequences of each alternative
- group presentation

In both decision-making process, consumers must query the truth and falsehood in the information provided, consider alternatives and consequences, and evaluate the significance or meaning of their choices. These processes do not always follow a linear path but moves back and forth among the goal, information, alternatives, resources, consequences and values, until one reaches a satisfactory conclusion.

(2) Internalized value system as an affective domain of learning

Another guide that determines the direction of the decision-making process are values. It is evident that consumers differ in their decision-making process and choose different alternatives. So, it can be affirmed that no specific value system must be imposed on consumers. However, there are levels of hierarchy in the value system of humans concerning their lives. Values that are concerned with human life that should be secured for everybody are safety, life and health, standard of living and environmental. Values that are concerned with creating a more cooperative and sustainable world are moral/ethical, economic/financial and fairness. Values that depend on each person are religious/cultural/political and aesthetic.

Safety of life and health, standard of living and environmental must be secured for everybody as a right to life and no person should be deprived of these values. Others values depend on a person's intrinsic taste or feeling, beauty, or desires. Even values for

faith or morality differ among countries, cultures, and eras. Financial values differ among the rich and the poor based on the resources they have, rich can afford to buy while the poor cannot. However, one must not be deprived of values that respect life, property, and the freedom of choice.

A universal value and tenet for any religion is the safeguarding of human life. The value of safety can be extended to include protection of animal life and the natural environment. If air, water, and the natural environment are not safe then we endanger human life. When people are defrauded of property and money, then they are robbed of their standard of living and in a capitalistic society, one cannot live without money. Values, both for safety of life and the standard of living are core values which must be taught in CCE. Additionally, the curriculum could include topics on public good, ethics, fairness, and sustainability in order to create a more cooperative and sustainable world. These values will help in guiding the priorities set by a global community in sharing human and non human resources. Efforts must be made to develop consumers' decision-making skills for public good by learning to effectively communicate with one another, listening to others' opinions and ideas with an open mind, interacting, negotiating, compromising, and adapting to new circumstances. What values should be used for consumer citizen actions? Questions are addressed through dialogue and critical reflection.

(3) Critical thinking skill for activating the decision-making process

Critical thinking skill, a cognitive skill, is needed to determine the meaning of a description or information. It is useful in that critical thinking skills help in examining things clearly, objectively, and logically and not be guided by preconceived notions or stereotypes. One can develop critical information literacy through training by asking the following questions:

- What is the real problem?
- Are there other alternatives to solve this problem?
- Which alternative is the best solution to this problem?
- Why is this information right/wrong?
- What is the proof that this information is right/wrong?
- Is the information valid and factual?
- Is there proof that the information is true and logical?
- Is the source of information trustworthy?
- Is the information based on supposition and bias?
- Is the information consistent?

Critical thinking skills are crucial to find out if advertisements, sales pitch, labels of products are false and misleading. These are some of the critical questions to ask in order to evaluate information from different viewpoints.

(4) Practical reasoning approach in the decision-making process

In addition to values, another guide when taking action is practical reasoning. A practical question is asked to find out what action needs to be taken when confronted with a problem. Practical reasoning approach in the decision-making process assists consumers to imagine an appropriate action for creating a socially and naturally responsible environment. Practical reasoning is defined as "intended as a guide to action, practical reasoning involves reflective judgment to provide an answer to a practical question" (Staaland, 1996). When an action is selected, the following questions will help in deciding the direction of action:

- If everybody does the same thing, what will happen to the natural environment?
- If everybody does the same thing, how will our society change?
- If everybody does the same thing, what will happen to the economy and financial stability?
- How does my intended consumer behavior influence the future generations?
- How does my intended consumer behavior influence other countries?

Consumers who consider the impact of their behaviour on the natural and social environment, other countries, and future generations are consumers who are in control of their needs and wants and are guided by their reasoning ability.

4. Summary of conclusion

CCE contributes to an enhanced symbiotic relationship between different human beings or organizations that depend on each other for their survival. This study's objectives are to identify and clarify what kinds of information, values and decision-making skills are effective in influencing this symbiotic relationship and in turn, the world. The results indicate that:

(1) CCE provides a platform for different entities to think and act efficiently thus enhancing a symbiotic society

(2) financial decisions by consumers impact three areas: businesses, government and the environment

(3) different alternatives are selected when making individual and household decisions because of the diversity in consumers' value system and resources. However, the most satisfaction derived in addressing conflicting values and interests is by cooperative problem-solving, which is promoted by CCE

(4) the values which become a norm or criterion to process information and to guide decision making in CCE are societal values, that have a priority over individual values

(5) in order to influence the world consumers must consider not only the product information but business information including business contributions towards public good, local welfare, natural environment, market fairness, gender and minority equality,

participation of developing countries, and sharing resources with future generations

(6) as citizens, consumers are also taxpayers. Information about how to access public services as a citizen/consumer and the public service cost is needed when consumers cast their political vote which indirectly affects the consumption of basic needs like pension, education, social welfare and medical service

(7) cognitive skills such as critical thinking and practical reasoning influence cooperative decision making process in CCE.

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Consumer citizenship under construction: Is media the culprit or the mediator?

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Nowadays with the so-called communications revolution, our societies are media-centered; yet most of the information is processed and distorted. There is a need to decode and decipher missing, hidden messages both as citizens and consumers. Following Scherer & Palazzo (2007) who attempted to reconstruct corporate social responsibility from a political perspective based on Habermas' point of view, I will try to address the role of media in the reproduction of dominant discourses and whether it is possible to promote a counter discourse. I will use some visual displays as examples and I will continue my conceptual paper by probing as to what consumer citizens want from the media.

While one can analyze media language as discourse, and analyze an advertisement or news of television and radio as a text by the help of semiology – that is concerned with the meanings in texts, we also need to be aware of what the dominant discursive strategies are in media. Otherwise, just like learning crisis management with no concern of ethics might lead to even more acute crises, consumers particularly in developing countries will become even more gullible to manipulations.

I will look into the relations of media elites to other stakeholders particularly in Turkey from a pluralist and post-modernist standpoint and argue that for assessing and managing information, we need an "ideal speech condition" among individual stakeholders. Hence, for critical assessment of information along with media literacy skills, people should be trained in deliberative inquiry and consensus building to become consumer citizens and the existing democratic institutions need a much stronger link to civil society.

I. Introduction: From corporate social performance as strategy to active citizenship via communicative discourse

"Today a country belongs to the person who controls communications. Culture jamming is a form of semiological warfare and stands against the society of the spectacle"

Umberto Eco, 1967

With globalization a fundamental shift on the aspirational side of citizenship involves a movement from an emphasis on space to an emphasis on time, interactivity and connectedness. Such a shift corresponds to the decline of territoriality as the foundation for political identity, and the failure of government as a source of creative problem-solving with respect to fundamental social and environmental concerns. It also reflects the impact of global marketing and the current absence of countervailing political possibilities. Yet, the need for alternatives with normative content, both to moderate the negative effects of the global market and to give impetus to reformist perspectives requires time to transform discourses through new media frames. That is, it is necessary to look primarily to the future with a vision rather than to the existing capacities of existing institutional setting, in the search for a more concerned politics. The challenge is to construct such a future through the engagement and impact of social movements, eventuating in the emergence of a new political discourse with an interactive global civil society (Falk 1995).

Jürgen Habermas has disapproved of the positivist approaches of corporate social responsibility since they are instrumental and focus on corporate social performance metrics; therefore responsibility is framed and reduced to business success or social returns, e.g., cost-benefit analyses, benchmarks or best models or practices in the short run or viability and reputation of firms in the long term. Community volunteering, cause-related marketing through donations and grants or corporate social marketing to support behavior change campaigns are all different types of corporate social responsibility that emphasize corporate philanthropy; yet they are all encouraged due to the synergy between social and business benefits, which can be calculated.

Habermas' early post-positivist approach concentrates mostly on the ethical discourse. Yet, his pessimism about hegemonic nature of capitalism and its control of communication leading to distortions and illusions paved the way to radical reactions or social movements against both uncritical populist culture and manipulative advertising (McGuigan, 1998: 91-108). While the critical interpretivist and discursive constructionist approaches suggest rich resources for the conceptualization, text analysis of marketing communication rhetoric, the positivist tradition has often provided functional tools for establishing its prevalence and effects. Both are necessary

in understanding of substantive phenomena such as advertising rhetoric and its manipulatory usage.

Consumer capitalism is neither politically nor did culturally democratic since it represents dominant interests according to critical school of think, particularly Habermas. The mainstream assumption of consumer capitalism and its marketing communication is the reverse and it is often unquestioned. That is why he is concerned with both the medium and the message of the information, communication and the dominant discourse. His search for "ideal speech conditions" is found rather utopian or relativist since communication is embedded in market economy discourse.

As Ulrich Beck states, social knowledge or ecological issues are always constructed as discourses in "risk society" with a limited duration and limited action space; that is why reinventing politics and policy and deepening of democracy by going beyond tacit neoliberal consensus and searching for progressive alternative futures (1997). Likewise, Habermas also opts for space for dissent through increasing political choices through alliances among stakeholders or institutionalization of caring and daring actions rather than limiting options only to awareness of consumers, that is, "green consumerism" of citizens or promoting diversity and multicultural pluralism solely via communication technologies.

In his later theories on "deliberative democracy", however, Habermas has attempted to reconcile democracy and private enterprise through critical intervention in cultural public sphere. He is suggesting that citizens are emerging as engaged producers, rather than just consumers, of policy through interactive dialogues and participation laterally between and among citizens. Habermas proposes a multi-track model of policy- making incorporating formal and informal domains of public opinion so that legitimacy of the system is grounded on both a "normative and communicative rationality" rather than technological or instrumental rationality.

Spectacular entertainment on TVs often keeps the masses occupied and politically isolated. The fate of public debate by talking heads, spin doctors and political spokespeople on cable news, it has become "a staged and manipulative publicity staged and displayed by organizations over the heads of mediatized public leading to radical closure of discourse" (Andrejevic, 2007: 2009). Consequently, with the decline of the countervailing force of publicity that stems from authentic public opinion, accountability of the governing bodies is lost. Spectatorship media-managed shows impaired the formation of public opinion, replaced engaged public debate and monitored expression of public by predetermined viewpoints and reduced them to asymmetric consumer or citizen feedback with shared control.

Cass Sunstein defines this as “citizen sovereignty” just like the individualized preferences of the shopper of consumer sovereignty he highlights the infusion of marketing and public relations strategies into the political process. Mark Andrejevic calls it “digital enclosure” for surveillance whereby every action and transaction generates its own information for target marketing and customization by database consultants meaning that citizens like customers may receive different levels of information - some may even be excluded eventually. Neither is surveillance through database management a substitute for deliberation, nor the market is a substitute for democratic participation; however, we have to be aware of these powerful tools of marketing and marketing communications (2007: 2, 262).

In sum, Habermas has warned us about the above threats and attempted to re-politicize institutions and combined communicative aspects of mid-range conflict transformation perspectives with stakeholder theories to be able to reformulate dialogues in a meaningful way. He has revised his earlier pessimistic conclusions and he gave primacy to social movements at grass-roots and campaigning organizations in forcing issues onto the public agenda that might not otherwise be there at all. Either big business or government would not of their own consent have addressed sustainability issues to anything like the current position forced by public protest.

He is moving beyond mere agreement or consent of the status quo towards rational consensus through exchange of arguments in numerous public spheres of associational networks of civil society (Scherer & Palazzo, 2007:1096-1120). He has also differentiated the affective and cognitive dimensions of the public sphere. For instance, infotainment and tabloid journalism also leads to selective distortion. Habermas is concerned that the instrumental and strategic rationalities of capital and the state were colonizing the life world or human interest issues, which is the site of communicative rationality, mutual respect, care and understanding. Hence, it is understandable for people to turn inwards, to cocoon themselves, out of a sense of powerlessness and isolation.

Preoccupation with the dilemmas of everyday life and personal satisfaction is undoubtedly more pronounced than active citizen engagement with the systemic processes of business and government. Yet, Habermas also implies using cultural political sphere as the articulation of politics, public and personal as a terrain through affective modes of communication as well. Through critical intervention in public debate and from which there is much to learn and resensitize, he combines the best of uncritical populism - an appreciation of the actually existing cultural field - with the best of radical social movements, producing a genuinely critical and potentially popular stance.

I will try to propose a preliminary model of responsible citizenship based primarily on Habermas' premise of deliberative democracy whereby goals are collectively defined and participation applies both to means and ends. In other words, it is different from a manipulative process whereby one group is induced to embrace the goals of another as its own, without deliberation, revision, compromise or any other kind of communicative conflict resolution.

II. Corporate Social Responsibility within the framework of Risk & Crisis Management

"And therefore we must seek dialogue in this networked world. We must ask which voice was actually attempting to make itself heard and saw no other possibility of gaining a hearing. To that extent, for a while this also represented a forced opening of a cosmopolitan view."

Ulrich Beck, 2001

Corporate social responsibility (hereafter will be referred as CSR), is closely linked with the principles of "sustainable development" which argue that enterprises should be obliged to make decisions based not only on financial/economic factors revolving around profit, but also on wider issues like the immediate and the long-term social, environmental and other consequences of their activities. Today, the role of business in society has been promoted by increased sensitivity to and awareness of environmental and ethical issues concerning stakeholders. Issues like environmental damage, improper treatment of workers, and faulty production that inconveniences or endangers customers are highlighted in the media.

In many developing countries government regulation regarding environmental and social issues has gained weight. Also, norms and legal standards are often set at a supranational/regional level like by the European Union. For instance, finance sector is not only controlled by numerous legal reporting regulations, but also with a number of codes of conduct and ethical concerns. Consequently, some investors and investment fund managers have begun to take account of a corporation's CSR policy in making investment decisions. Some consumers have become increasingly sensitive to the CSR performance of the companies from which they buy their goods and services. These trends have contributed to the pressure on companies to operate in an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable way.

Understanding multinationals corporations as major actors of globalization involves insights into the way in which these corporations are viewed as a social phenomenon. The models of companies that have been adopted in various jurisdictions are shaped by the theories concerning the place of companies within society. Different theories concerning the origin and purpose of corporations influence the model of company adopted and thus shape the relationship that companies have with all the participants in their economic activity their regulators. Formulating a regulatory structure without such

an enquiry invites incoherence (Dine, 2000: 1). The term corporate governance structure refers to the legal structure that governed the configuration of rights and responsibilities between shareholders and managers in public corporations (Aoki, 2000: 60)

Corporate Governance, however, refers to the manner in which the power of a corporation is exercised in the stewardship of the corporation's total portfolio of assets and resources with the objective of maintaining and increasing shareholder value and satisfaction of other stakeholders in the context of its corporate mission. It is concerned with creating a balance between economic and social goals and between individual and communal goals, while encouraging efficient use of resources, accountability in the use of power. In sum, corporate governance has gained importance in countries where free competition became institutionalized.

In the past two decades, with the driving forces of the OECD, the World Bank, institutional investors, stock exchanges, national and international capital markets, it has started to determine how the corporations are managed in many countries.(Corporate Governance Code of Best Practice, 2002: 9) The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), a grouping of 29 industrialized and newly industrializing countries, recently published a set of corporate governance standards and guidelines covering five major areas. The OECD document highlights the increased profile that governance issues have attained around the world (Cohen and Boyd, 2000: 60).

For instance, "fair trade" is a global issue that instigated the first large scale social movement for the networking process represents "a new model of development" dating back to 1970s. Realizing that current international trade rules favor the narrow commercial interests of industrialized countries and large multinational or transnational corporations, the movement has sought to offer producers in developing countries fair prices for their goods. Currently, many trade-union groups, indigenous people's organizations, co-operative movements, women's groups and environmental associations have shown strong support to the movement, and some of them are also linked to a number of specific fair-trade projects in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Typically, fair trade groups are small structures linked to solidarity organizations and consumer outlets, although larger production units and multinational organizations have also begun to take advantage of a growing consumer interest in fair trade goods. Authority and democracy in consumption are not about consumer sovereignty and rights to own, or buy or to complain to be appropriately represented. In order for the stakeholder democracy or citizenship may be regarded as a deliberative democracy, it is necessary to establish who or what group has legitimate claims to sovereignty and authority as citizens and attain "public accountability" in all three sector- public, private and non-profit by engaging in both formal and informal networks of governance according to Habermas.

Fair trade initiatives support the establishment of business co-operatives by farmers, workers and crafts people seeking to eliminate the "middlemen" and provide a minimum price for goods. They attempt to build a trade partnership that is economically more just, as well as taking environmental issues into account. However, as fair trade schemes are usually meant for the organization of production or purchase of consumer products essentially for Northern consumers by Northern fair trade groups using a commercial logic, workers and local communities from the South have little say in what they would want to produce or under what conditions. These initiatives did not help in building new skills, incomes and power blocks favoring the marginalized groups. As usual, these various initiatives have also tended to encourage privileged consumers in rich countries to take responsibility for the role they play when buying products from the Third World, thereby raising wider awareness in the process.

It is clear that the propositions emerging from civil society movements on Third World debt, trade barriers, financial instabilities etc. have important implications for development thinking and practice. But this has significance only when these issues are considered seriously by political and bureaucratic circles allowing ideas for solving the policy problems and working with social groups and movements to emerge. Even if there is no guarantee that approving the substance of the problem would automatically mean that there would be agreement on the means or methods to be employed. A certain degree of institutionalization or critical intervention in policy-making would also help to maintain enhanced communication links between leadership and grassroots within the interest group movements as well as making more efficient contacts and mounting joint actions with other social movements.

In a nutshell, corporate governance or good governance is also an evolving concept, shaped by governments, capital markets and the professions and by the disappointments and expectations of shareholders and other stakeholders along with rising civil society movements that protest malfunctioning public and private enterprises. It is likely that there will be increasing attempts to formulate international principles and possibly standards of corporate governance (The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, 1999: 51). Meanwhile, failure in corporate governance is a real threat to the future of every corporation. Corporate governance as a business ethics issue is more powerful than the internet or globalization and can destroy a business through word-of-mouth communication. Yet, it has to be taken into account along with issues of reputation and citizenship, if corporate responsibility is indeed equally significant as corporate performance.

III. Reputation Management: Alignment of corporate performance and responsibility

Reputation is an intangible asset which enables the enactment of relationships among an enterprise and its public. It is a more significant, powerful and holistic predictor of corporate performance in the marketplace than either corporate image or identity. Reputation is of major significance particularly in markets where consumers cannot determine product quality through their own experience or comparative investigation; then they will make their choices by reputation which influences such consumers` buying behavior (Dhir and Vinen 2005, 5-23).

Reputation is comprised of the attitudes and feelings to the specific qualities of the organization. It is an assessment of the performance of an organization's products; services, activities as well as the performance of its employees. It may vary from country to country, when an MNC operates in multiple markets. A corporate reputation is the total sum of the perception of an organization's ability to meet the expectations of its stakeholders. It describes the rational and emotional attachments that they form with the organization through this fulfilment with various interpretations and meaning attached to credibility and trust (Hannington T., 2004). Investment decisions of potential investors are, for instance, influenced by the previous credibility history of the firm they are interested in. In marketing, communications and consumer behavior both deal with the factors that affect the purchase and use of goods such as availability, consumer characteristics and corporate reputation. In situations where consumers have a preference, their behavior is determined by many factors. The relationship between the consumer and consumer's interpretation of firm's reputation is the key to choosing that particular product or service. In addition, reputation is the most important mechanism for conveying information to consumers, which is of special interest in emerging markets that is rapidly growing like Turkey.

With growing literature on corporate reputation, different perspectives are being employed on the concept of corporate reputation. The interest in economic effects of reputation on MNCs has been growing rapidly over the past decade. The consumer may judge the quality of a product not only by its cost but also in terms of reputation of the manufacturing or servicing company. There is a reciprocal relationship. Reputation enhances the attributes of product and service quality. The quality of product and service delivered is the predominant determinant of both brand reputation and corporate reputation.

Although the modern consumer is increasingly demanding to buy a package which includes the company standing and image, their primary focus remains on the output of managing system-the products which are promised. Hence, reputation is only one of several factors in the environment in which a corporation operates; the others are social,

political, and economic in nature. (Nakra P., 2000) Still, reputation as a primary distinctive capability has differential value and can be a powerful source of competitive advantage in emerging markets.

We may state that reputation is the most important commercial mechanism for marketing communication that is conveying information to consumers in the conventional sense and to stakeholders in the collective and broader sense. The management of the design, production, communication and delivery of value to the customer is often more significant to the consumers. In some circumstances reputation has only marginal effect on an enterprise's success; in other circumstances reputation has a critical effect. It depends on the particular context of the countries, sectors and the target consumers.

Bradley (1995) defines reputation as a "reiterated high-quality strategy in a market for long –term experience goods". The quality of a good or service is often judged not only on its cost but also with reference to the standing of the manufacturer or the service provider. Firms with a good reputation can charge a higher price for what is objectively an equivalent or inferior product. Reputation conveys public esteem and distinctiveness in competition for scarce resources. Reputation provides the legitimizing basis for business- the "license to operate". Thus, the concept of reputation covers the concerns of public relations, marketing, finance, and human resource management. The corporate reputation is the perceptual representation of a particular company's past actions and future prospects that describes the firm's overall appeal to all of its key constituents in a longer term perspective and standing when compared with their leading rivals (Varey R. 2001, 198-199).

The literature has got different perspectives on the concept of reputation. These perspectives stem from different sets of assumptions and issues to be managed, and the variations of disciplinary competencies. I will only focus on communicative and reflective perspectives. According to communication perspective, corporate reputation management in terms of building and maintaining a positive name of an organization and generating positive feedback from stakeholders who can influence the organization's strategic and financial issues (Nakra, 2000). On the other hand, this perspective is the domain of corporate communications or public relations experts, who have long managed corporate reputation.

Reflective perspective suggests that the concept of corporate reputation and its relationship to the success and credibility of an organization could be studies from two complementary perspectives: the pragmatic and the reflective. As mentioned earlier, the pragmatic perspective is based on economic rationality. According to Pruzan (2001) this perspective is focused on traditional concepts of corporate performance, concerned

primarily with the qualities demanded by its stakeholders in the narrower sense. Its goal is to enhance and protect corporate image from outside in.

In contrast to the communicative perspective that is more pragmatic, the reflective perspective is existential or philosophical in nature. It uses a broader repertoire of measures of corporate success and focuses on the organizational identity that links organizational culture and values form inside out rather than focusing solely on the image. It is more involved with inherent quality of the organization rather than its outward appearance, and it is respect, it is more reflective rather than communicative. It emphasized being good instead of looking good, and what is more, it is completely against looking as if good by just giving the impression, which might be the side effects of highlighting only the external image. By and large, the make-up of reputation has six facets in this reflective mode:

- Financial bottom-line performance
- Quality of products/ services including treatment of customers and clients
- Leadership and quality of management
- Treatment of employees
- Social Responsibility
- Environmental Responsibility

Nonetheless, the last two are special factors and even treatment of employees is usually neglected. The companies that are genuinely committed to fulfill these responsibilities might fail to communicate actively to convey it. Thus, a holistic reflective approach is either not implemented or not highlighted in the mainstream business discourse (Yüksel, 2008).

IV. From Corporate Social Responsibility to Corporate Citizenship: Globalization of triple bottom line reporting

"One of the most ambitious attempts to measure the size of charity…[it] will form the basis for new United Nations guidelines on national accounts allowing countries for the first time to compare philanthropy and volunteering."

The Economist, July 29, 2004

Corporate social responsibility is closely linked with the principles of "sustainable development" which argue that enterprises should be obliged to make decisions based not only on financial/economic factors revolving around profit, but also on wider issues like the immediate and the long-term social, environmental and other consequences of their activities. Today, the role of business in society has been promoted by increased sensitivity to and awareness of environmental and ethical issues concerning stakeholders. Issues like environmental damage, improper treatment of workers, and

faulty production that inconveniences or endangers customers are highlighted in the media.

In many developing countries government regulation regarding environmental and social issues has gained weight. Also, norms and legal standards are often set at a supranational/regional level like by the European Union. For instance, finance sector is not only controlled by numerous legal reporting regulations, but also with a number of codes of conduct and ethical concerns. Consequently, some investors and investment fund managers have begun to take account of a corporation's CSR policy in making investment decisions. Some consumers have become increasingly sensitive to the CSR performance of the companies from which they buy their goods and services. These trends have contributed to the pressure on companies to operate with a "triple bottom line" reporting, which also means, in an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable way.

Understanding multinationals corporations as major actors of globalization involves insights into the way in which these corporations are viewed as a social phenomenon. The models of companies that have been adopted in various jurisdictions are shaped by the theories concerning the place of companies within society. Different theories concerning the origin and purpose of corporations influence the model of company adopted and thus shape the relationship that companies have with all the participants in their economic activity their regulators. Formulating a regulatory structure without such an enquiry invites incoherence (Dine, 2000: 1). The concept of corporate governance has become the focus of more and more attention. The term corporate governance structure refers to the legal structure that governed the configuration of rights and responsibilities between shareholders and managers in public corporations (Aoki, 2000: 60)

Nowadays, corporate citizenship behavior such as alignment of their goals with those of the organization, complying with procedures becomes increasingly important as a source of competitive advantage. Organizations emphasize human resources and knowledge management and emphasize both internal corporate communication and external marketing communication. They encourage their employees to act in line with the organizational goals both in terms of result and competencies so that integration for innovative solutions to business problems may be possible in globalizing economy. Meanwhile, compliance with the norms of stakeholders concerning issues such as consumer and employee rights and environmental safety in developing countries are often the top issues of corporate citizenship (Yüksel & Kalkan, 2007).

Following Matten & Crane (2005), I have regarded corporate citizenship (CC) in a broad sense which emphasizes the role of a corporation in administering individual

citizenship rights that distinguished it from Corporate Social Responsibility as well as organizational citizenship. Such a definition reframes the citizenship by acknowledging that the corporation administers certain aspects of citizenship for other constituencies. These include traditional stakeholders, such as employees, customers, or shareholders, along with wider constituencies with no direct transactional relationship to the selected company. Thus, CC combines CSR, CG along with reputation management.

According to Maignan and Ferrell (2001) there are two dimensions of Corporate Citizenship communications: intensity and creditworthiness 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 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) helps to increase trust in the company. Today, the impact of Corporate Citizenship (CC) 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 emphasizing Corporate Citizenship.

Although there is research on corporate citizenship programs as strategic investment incorporating the interactive relationships between corporate governance, reputation, however, their theoretical models are at micro levels of analysis- either taking companies or decision makers as units (Gardberg and Fombrun, 2006: 329-346). CC is an interactive relationship between corporate and consumer citizenship that eventually enhances connectivity among stakeholders (Kalkan, 2005).

In the preliminary model, which is on the next page (Fig. 1), I am trying to formulate a process model of citizenship at macro level of analysis with four quadrants with due regards to the high or low level of involvement of the state versus market dimension. My assumption is that the shift from conventional citizenship rights and duties from

state level to market level is an interactive transformation process that leads to a double bind.[11]

Reconciling a marketing paradigm which declares that the consumer is sovereign and has become more of a "prosumer" that is actively involved on the one hand, and advertising and marketing communication practices that still perceive the consumer as malleable and passive on the other hand is both difficult and ambiguous. The assumption in the model the sake of brevity is that the quadrants 2 and 3, i.e., corporate and consumer citizenship is embedded in marketing communications, while quadrant 1 is embedded in political discourse. In the 4th quadrant, for all practical purposes of deliberative democracy, public discourse may or may not be embedded in the hegemonic political discourse depending on the conjuncture or critical intervention of civil society.

In the stakeholder citizenship model below, the underlying hypothesis is that in the transformation process from CSR to corporate, consumer and finally to stakeholder citizenship, CG and RM in conjunction with CSR activities pave the way towards both increased participation and more institutionalized and then internalized sense of citizenship. Thus, the fourth quadrant represents almost a temporary ideal situation where all stakeholders' welfare is optimized through delivering the sustainable development policies and actions as strategic values. Most of the organizations within developing countries are still at the first or second stage at present; however, the desired to be stage is moving to third and fourth phases.[12] However, since the 4th stage is neither a fixed ideal stage nor a radical enclosure of thorough surveillance since deliberative democracy of Habermas is like an issue based communicative conflict resolution perspective. Public deliberation is an antidote to instrumental rationality in which all private interests are considered fixed and immutable, while it brings out new information and perspectives which may be essential to the formation of sound public policy.

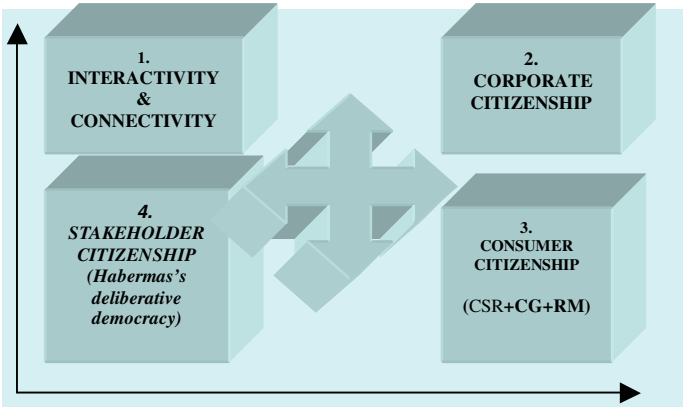
Stakeholder citizenship on normative grounds requires that companies and individuals engage in strong ethical values and practices. Virtue ethics focuses on the individual having virtues (e.g., honesty, integrity, fairness, truthfulness, benevolence). The belief is that the virtuous citizen, whether private, public or corporate, will also be virtuous in his or her actions, decisions, and practices. A concern with virtue raises the issue of

[11] I will not probe the "public sphere theory" of Habermas here. I will state that it is the interface between civil society and the state as d iscursive space. However, later on he also includes the interface between the corportions and the civil society actors. While internet today has potential as a platform for public sphere of networks to exchange information, Andrejevic argues that interactive media carries hidden risks of possible centralized control, ie. "digital enclosure" simultaneously with collaborative participation.

[12] As in most stage models, it is not necessarily a linear development always.

character, a private citizen's character, a manager's character, a corporation's character. Since character is a key component of citizenship, then we might build it on check and balances around not only constitutional grounds, but also around stakeholders from a pluralist deliberative perspective.

State
High



High
Market

Fig. 1 *Stakeholder Citizenship Model*

V. Corporate governance and social responsibility in Turkey

The past five years have taken corporate governance and reputation management in Turkey out of management textbooks and into the agenda of businessmen. The Turkish Corporate Governance Association has played a particularly big role in the development of corporate governance in Turkey, where the interests of most businessmen focus on the duties and liabilities of board members. The reputation management is mostly taken into account from the framework of the collective stakeholder perspective in a limited way, whereas the marketing communication framework of public relations standpoint is employed more extensively.

In Turkey, boards of directors are unitary in structure, comprised of at least three members appointed for a maximum period of three years in joint stock corporations. The Commercial Code provides that only individuals can be become members of a board, and directors must be elected from among the company's shareholders or be representatives of legal entity shareholders. The Commercial Code also allows foreign citizens to be elected as directors. Under the laws, board members are appointed and dismissed by the shareholders at the general assembly. The only exception to this are state commercial enterprises where the state, province or municipality may be granted

the right to delegate a representative to serve on the boards of directors of companies in which they hold shares in which case such board members may be removed only by the government agency that has appointed them the law also permits outside directors. Large companies often appoint one or two directors from academic, business, legal or former military personnel to their boards (Yüksel, 2008).
By and large, corporate social responsibility activities of the companies are accepted as an important area in both public relations and business policies. Organizations give importance to social responsibility activities to create and maintain a desirable public image. Organizations use various techniques to publicize their social responsibility activities. However, CSR is either seen as a subset of corporate strategy and success factor or solely as charity. Since civil society is the ultimate arbiter of norms in business, one can say that the notion of citizenship and consumer rights and responsibilities issues have not been internalized and institutionalized yet.[13] 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 (Thoresen, 2003).

The Bergama case has opened up a new venue for dissent in Turkey. It has been the first long lasting environmentalist critique of developmentalist goals and public policies. The protestors demands accountability of all stakeholders including scientists, businessmen, politicians to be open to public scrutinity and publicity. Further, they question the rules of the game and the movement reperesent an effort to see the deliberate opinions translated into actual policies (Öncü & Korcan, 2001: 29-57).

Two developments has enabled the Bergama movement to effectively capitalize the public discourse of environmental risk. The first is the implementation of economic liberalization program of the eighties that gave priority to foreign direct investment and global business interests. The second is the Chernobyl Diasater and radioactive fallout in the Black Sea region. Greenpeace reported public health risks involved in consuming products such as tea from the region, while politicians concealed that truth from the public. Following the two financial crises in the nineties and then the earthquake in 1999, environmetal activists standpoint against Eurogold's econonomic development discourse was weakened. The company, after changing its management for four times, was given a trial-period for a year in 2000, which has been extended. Yet, the dispute still continues (Arsel, 2003: 30-47).

[13] Consumer citizenship is when the individual, in his/her role as a consumer, actively participates in developing and improving society by considering ethical issues, diversity of perspectives, global processes and future conditions. It involves taking responsibility on a global scale when securing

However, understanding or constrcting the discourses in two different cases from Turkey would be more illustrative. The first example is a democratic citizenship movement of Bergama villagers against Eurogold Corporation, which is a subsidiary of Mining Limited, exploring gold in the region since 1993 up until now. It is a typical environmental policy case where both informal activist network study as well as analysis of formal documentation of experts, legal advisors, public relations managers reveal the fact that it had started as an environmental resistance to cyanide leaching , but turned into a broader social movement over time due to lack of trust and communication. [14] Peasants from surrounding villages have protested Eurogold based on risks to public health, the agriculture and ecology of the region. While the scientific reports of experts found zero risk, despite the fact the legal system has supported the villagers (Arsel, 2003: 29-46).

According Öncü and Korcan, this social movement took place at a conjuncture that logic of market is dominant. The decline of the safety nets of the state created a gap, which the activists filled for their own safety. The risk discourse flourished due to lack of effective bureaucratic systems unlike the Western European cases. That is why, activists in Bergama argue for better risk regulation and continuation of the modernity project. They have retained their faith in economic development, but they have lost their faith in working of political system and its discourse. They have demanded a transformation in the way politics is conducted and regulatory policies are made (2001: 29-57).

The second case is based on rising protests against "coca-colonization" that have often taken the form of consumer boycotts against all goods perceived as American. However, a new form of protest has proliferated in the last few years: anti-Coca-Colas. Cola Turka suggest the construction of a civic identity in the cultural public sphere through consumption practices. A new cola-flavored soft drink, Cola Turka is launched with a thought-provoking advertising in Turkey in the middle of 2003 just after the US-led invasion of Iraq. Its marketing strategy, described as "light and positive nationalism" started a public debate over the politics of consumption and transformation of citizens as consumers in contemporary Turkey. The advertisements reflected somewhat a shift away from a state developmentalist frame towards market-driven economic growth. In other words, "positive nationalism" of the ad agency is an idealized representation of how nations ought to conduct themselves vis-à-vis other nations in a world order predicated on the ideology of neoliberalism.

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one's own personal needs and well-being. (Thoresen, V. (2003). *The Consumer Citizenship Network*. Hedmark University College,Norway).

Cola Turka was a new brand of soft drink made by Ülker, Group is widely known for its ties to Islamist capital and politics, and specifically, to Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party. Ülker itself, however, never projected an Islamist public image; by looking at its advertising, one cannot distinguish Ülker's corporate identity from that of any other company perceived to be secular sensitivity of the public. The initial Cola Turka commercials, shot in New York City and recorded in a mixture of Turkish and English, featured the popular American comedian Chevy Chase. In the first ad, a perplexed Chase encounters signs of Turkish national culture as he goes about his day. A car full of Turkish men, wrapped in their national flag, drives through Times Square celebrating a soccer victory; then a cowboy at a coffee shop counter speaks to Chase in Turkish slang after drinking Cola Turka.

In the second ad, Chase arrives at his suburban home to discover his wife preparing a Turkish meal; the guests at the table stop singing "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" and start singing a popular song associated with Turkish national independence. Chase, his wife and their children kiss the hands of the grandparents when the grandparents leave the house, and the wife hurls a bucket of water into the street behind their car "to make sure their trip is safe and easy like the flow of water" – both well known Turkish traditions.

The first two Cola Turka television commercials clearly received strong responses from Turkish people, revealing different ways in which Turkish citizens imagine their national identity and define Turkish national culture. How and why did the marketing communication of a new soft drink achieve this effect? Özkan & Foster (2005) have used consumer citizenship to signal the reconstruction of national identity by way of shared consumption practices. Consumer citizenship, in Turkey and elsewhere, is facilitated by the dissemination of images and artefacts that objectify the nation as an imagined community of consumption. Advertising has proven to be a powerful means of circulating ideals of consumer citizenship in public discourse.

Erener as the copy writer of the ad claimed that the rhetoric of the Cola Turka advertising launch significantly differs from that of other anti-Coca-Cola marketing, particularly because it does not take a defensive or reactionary position. “Ours was just a project of teasing and making fun of both ourselves and the US. When you make fun of it that means you at once take it seriously and you don't.” However, the ad had revived a well-known early Republican motto lasting until late seventies, "Local goods are the goods of the Turks; every Turk should use them", was one of the first signs of

[14] Foreign expatriates were not able to communicate withd villagers since they had no command of Turkish., Further, these foreign managers were perceived as untrustworthy since failed to understand local culture.

the emergence of consumer citizenship in Turkey. During the prime years of state planned developmentalism through import-substitution, consuming national goods and being a patriotic citizen were unquestionably one and the same.

With roots in the opening-up of Turkish economy in post-1980s, *world class* consumerism differs significantly from the standardized mass consumerism of the 1950s to 70s. The consumer citizen in this era of globalization reclaims a civic identity through unique tastes and consumer choices. The incorporation of official national cultural symbols and imagery into popular culture and cultural public sphere took new forms in both commercials and personal consumption choices. Shallow consumerism has promoted a global civic identity that gives one a pseudo-freedom within one's personal consumption habits and it has hollowed out and reflected the ambivalent politics of urbanized modern Turks (Özkan & Foster, 2005). Advertising campaign of Cola Turka and temporary debates it has created, has culminated in an artificial awareness or consumer citizenship in popular cultural realm ; whereas, the Bergama Social movement has led to long-term impact on both political and public discourse.

VI. Concluding remarks

"And does not … the same hold for today's progressive computerization of our everyday lives in the course of which the subject is also more "mediatised" imperceptibly stripped of his power, under the false guise of its increase?"

Slavoj Zizek, 2005

On the whole, we can say that the dominant neoliberal paradigm promotes ever expanding economic disparity and consumption at the expense of the earth and future generations. Collaboration between government, business and civil society actors is an urgent imperative for moving forward with sustainability and solidarity. Yet, a fundamental issue is how any accompanied changes in official attitude or formal policy decisions impose on the general capacity of the large-scale social movements themselves. In other words, how do these transformations help (or hinder) social movements to mounting more forceful and sustainable actions, and producing intended results. In any event, whether it is at the local municipal, national, regional or international level, a growing support accorded to some of these transnational social movements by the public is an issue that governments and corporations cannot totally disregard. But what path the established political or development establishment may usually take in a specific context is a complex question. As far as I can understand, Habermas' deliberative democracy might shed light to this fundamental predicament.

Finally, we may touch upon regionalization of governance for public accountability, if not globalizing through the democratization of the European polity via the European Economic and Social Committee (ESC). Construction of legitimacy through joint communicative efforts of various stakeholders (corporate, government or civil society

actors) in order to pacify conflicting positions according to Habermas calls for an analysis of procedural design and process orientation of mainly political institutions and their interface with other agents. Whether the ESC has lost its importance as a representative body because of the development of alternative access channels for interest groups (like the social dialogue, lobbyism etc.) or the ESC is still a main actor in the decision-making process of the EU is the question to be posed. Has the Committee become outdated and less than influential body in the decision-making process? Even though ESC is not a main actor in the decision-making process, because of its representative structure, it still has a legitimate role to play.[15]

Despite its increased power, the European Parliament seems to lack legitimacy in policy-making as compared to national parliaments. This is due to the lack of a European public sphere (as in terms of Habermas) which leads back to the democracy problem in Europe. Jürgen Habermas' "deliberative democracy" is the term about the importance of deliberation and participation in democracy**.** This is a discourse-based model democracy. His theoretical model is based on "decision making by means of arguments offered by and to participants who are committed to the value of rationality" and "legitimacy is guaranteed only insofar as the legal order is constituted as a process that feeds back into the arena of citizenly debate". Communicative action is not limited solely to decision makers in this model and civil society is integrated in the policy making process.

By means of its deliberative character and its strengthened links with civil society, we can say that the ESC corresponds to these two models of 'deliberative democracy' as an institution. But the Economic and Social Committee, departs from this model in that it realizes deliberative democracy via a functional appointed body instead of representation. Although the model of ESC is not a representative body, still it provides a model, which is deliberation-based rather than of interest-based. Further, ESC's traditional approach to seek a consensus or compromise between the different views of its three constituent groups via deliberation as Habermas has implied. As a consultative body at European Union level that gives the Commission, the Council and the Parliament the informal points of view of the lay people, the ESC enhances two-track policy-making. As 'the forum of civil society' that emphasizes 'the role as the representative of civil society organizations and strengthens its relation with the European citizens, it will complement legitimacy and add to the democratization of the European polity towards the idea of "The Citizens' Europe" according to Habermas (Finlayson, 2005).

[15] We need to consider the Article 257 of the EU Constitution dealing with the composition of the ESC. The ESC is composed of 'representatives of the various categories of economic and social activity, in particular, representatives of producers, farmers, carriers, workers, dealers, craftsmen, professional occupations and representatives of the general public'. According to Article 'the composition of the Committee takes into account the need to ensure adequate representation of the various categories of economic and social activity'.

On the whole, I have endeavored to sketch the groundwork of a model with various examples rather on the surface to be able to address the question of the title. The media may be both the culprit of manipulation and may act as the third party as in conflict resolution. The examples of consumer citizenship vary from business-driven ethical ones to Habermas' long term collaboration among stakeholders at macro level. As Scherer & Palazzo (2007) argue, deliberative democracy is not simply a variant of stakeholder theory since it the narrow focus from case-wise analysis of concrete stakeholders' conflicts and their management to a broader analysis of a corporation's connectedness to various public discourses and its vibrant cooperation with national, regional and transnational institutions. Contrary to deliberation that is based on transparency and accountability in negotiation, today's lobbyism as a strategic public relations campaigning is based on manipulative conspiracy of backdoor bargaining.

Future studies may be done on a specific regional project like the audio-visual policy of the European Union and its policy implications with due respect to assessing information as consumer citizens by employing marketing and communication tools for public discourse. Another area of research might be ownership and/ or the control of media, since it enables promotion of its own agenda and discourse. For instance, *the Green Paper* on telecommunications and *Television Without Frontiers Directive* might be the initial documents to be analysed to be able to comprehend the converging liberal nature of transformation in the audio-visual sector in the epoch of information. More research has to be done, however, to clarify the implications of Habermas' political conceptualization of stakeholder citizenship and its implementation in policy-making.

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Civil society and consumer associations' role in interpreting citizens' needs for information on products and services

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The paper focuses on the question posed by the CCN: "to what extension does consumers' trust in prices and labels as valid indicators of quality encourage or undermine the consumers' interest and ability to acquire information?"

The qualities of a product are as endless as the questions that one can set in its respects, every answer corresponding to one quality it may be attributed to possess. Differently from an object's properties and characteristics, its qualities depend from the relation between the person and the object. A quality is in fact the answer that is given to a question that is posed about an object. Any kind of questioning is admitted and will therefore originate a relevant quality.

At the individual level, questions that are posed about products are often very peculiar. At a different level, namely when the general public is addressed, a selection amongst one object's possible qualities is necessary - in order product information's complexity is reduced. Some types of questions appear to be more widely useful than others, according to the interlocutors and their contexts of reference. In this writing's limits, we will discuss some of the questions that are of interest to the general people in their daily life.

Since the industrial revolution's beginnings we use to address such persons by the term "consumers", in accordance with a classification that distinguishes people in a way that is functional to the economical discourse. One same person shall e.g. be called either a "worker" or a "consumer" depending whether in the given circumstance that is under scrutiny s/he is carrying on an activity for own purpose or not and depending on that activity's place and time. It is obviously useful people may be referred to by a set of different names, so that the meaning of sentences is clearer. At the condition, though, linguistic contrivances do not throw the real referent and the discourse's premises into the shade.

In Adam Smith's words "Consumption is the sole end and purpose of all production; and the interest of the producer ought to be attended to, only so far as it may be necessary for promoting that of the consumer". The consumer is then the primary and original subject that needs to be questioned and to question him/herself: the value and

the utility of a product in fact first depend from consistency it offers with the purposes consumers intends to reach through possession use or consumption.

In this type of relationship both the characteristics of the person count[16] and the imaginary that directs his/her desires ACU Association of Users and Consumers Non-Profit NGO, Italy[17]. The context in which one lives and acts counts as much. One's context can vary more or less frequently, still from time to time it will keep ACU Association of Users and Consumers Non-Profit NGO, Italy imposing rules and relevant restrictions[18].

On one side the utility and on the other the appropriateness: this kind of information - as much more rich and detailed as the context of reference is complex and unstable - is broadly delivered both in personal relations[19] and by all kind of means of information, mass media and the producers.

Product labelling, in particular, is synthetic means for information is delivered.

While advertising in general tends to represent the socio-relational value of products - inducing by this way consumers to confidently rely upon the brand for the attainment of their purposes - labelling is mainly assigned the task either to promote the product because of the superior level of an assessed kind of quality/ the possession of an additional quality or to point out what is relevant in order the product is used consciously and in the appropriate way, in order damages that may derive as a consequence of improper use are limited.

The presupposition of labelling is that the consumer approaches the market having already sifted all general information corresponding to his/her purposes, that he is aware both of his own abilities and of the characteristics of his context, that he is decided to purchase a given kind of good, that his intention is to choose on the market appraising the offer in terms of quality and price, looking for the best available such relationship.

Within this framework, the consumer will either adopt trust as an all-embracing criterion and choose one brand on the base of its image, or s/he will adopt an analytical-

[16] A hearing impaired may wish to communicate, but he won't succeed to fulfil his purpose using a traditional telephone, a book will hardly be a profitable object to an illiterate, etc.
[17] For an illiterate also, possessing a rare volume can be gratifying as index of social status
[18] Be it that mobile phones are worthless in locations where there is no "field" or that sporting suits are disapproved at a gala dinners, etc.
[19] Mary Douglas: "our social interaction consists to a large extent in us to communicate each other which is the kind of correct thought and to deplore that which is wrong"

rational attitude and compare, before choosing, the qualities of the products that are labelled. The latter are a selection among possible qualities, synthetically transcribed through measurable indicators in order products are comparable.

Once a quality has been agreed upon (under whichever election criterion) by promoters, many steps are necessary to determine the information content in labels. Such steps entail the intervention of a numerous team of actors[20] entangled to negotiate what levels, what indicators, what tests and measures, what assurance will be offered.

On the front of product labelling, consumers associations may have different approaches and degree of activity. Risen on the wave of protests against frauds in the first mass consumption period, during their legitimisation and institutional promotion in the Eighties, consumers associations have been given the ample task to garrison the market functioning and defend consumers' interests on the base of a set of recognized rights.

Inside and amongst the wide range of tasks this assignment involves, especially associations that were created in the Sixties[21] devoted themselves to balance informative asymmetries (a failure of the market) by independently testing the quality of the variations of a same typology of products and by publishing results on magazines they owned. This literature reached a great diffusion, particularly in the middle class.

To confirm and reinforce their position on the market, the interpretation of "quality" these associations adopt is in analogy to industrial and commercial definition, which bases on the product's properties and characteristics that may be put in relationship to fitness for (the foreseen) use and price.

Other associations' main mission is different, in general[22], but most consumer associations educate consumers on the meaning of the labels, encourage purchasers to pay attention to them, monitor mandatory labelling is respected and denounce unfair labelling practices. Implicitly, they therefore concur to legitimate the premise the "consumer" is the final recipient of the products enterprises decide to produce and put on the market.

The European Commission DG SANCO authoritatively promotes market survey by

[20] Experts from the entrepreneurial and scientific world and from the laboratories, officials from the government apparatuses of regulation, certifiers, consumers.
[21] At time the buyers' situation – faced with a great variety of unusual products offered by the market - was very problematic,
[22] e.g. consumer associations having links with the workers' organisations dedicate to defend consumers' right to access the market looking after people's capacity as purchasers

consumers, and that same activity often represents a source of financial support from governments to the consumer associations. Consumers greatly appreciate such a service: be it only for the respect that so many experts' opinion arouses or for the strong informative apparatus of support that develops around labelling, this type of information has great prominence by the public, to the point that increases of price the entrepreneurs impose as consequence, look legitimated.

Such kind of information's prominence, though, entails sound risks that information actually needed in present time is not delivered. The risk – especially that the latter kind of information, when delivered – is not in direct association with products and consumption patterns.

Labelling is neither a neutral nor a minor solution to the information delivery problem: it is the response that better than others corresponds to the market institution. Typically because of its capacity to overcome political borders, but also because as soon as the forerunner enterprise introduces successfully a label in the market all similar products align with the forerunner's standards. Basic uniformity of a type of product is therefore sustained, helping the production system is more stable; consistent variants will mostly be created for competition purpose.

Once upon a time, when human societies were comparatively distant and isolated, naming products by their origin was sufficient to let people know about products' properties and characteristics. Local products' kind, work rules, production processes were submitted to strict regulation depending on (hierarchical) social rules; community's members could easily get a lot of information on practically all aspects of those limited products they were let have access to, in accordance with consumption appropriateness codes.

Since the industrial revolution and even more in recent times things go on otherwise. Consumers as purchasers have access to any product they are in the economic condition to buy; at the same time, full responsibility for their choice is put on their shoulders. No complaint is admitted, when appropriate labelling was put on the product: man informed, means saved…

The modern system provides obvious benefits. Nevertheless, the more globalisation and communication revolution stride forward the more the industrial revolution's dark side is highlighted, and the more people ask questions on a set of questions they increasingly consider to be relevant to them: environmental impacts, risks from new technologies, quality of work in production processes, financial aspects of business, …

New additional information initially required by just a handful of environmental activist

and intellectuals is at present a rising demand from the civil society in its whole.

The link between consumption patterns and the global economic system's consequences being highlighted and under scrutiny, present consumers question their own and the economic operators' doing. Upsetting the industrial community's classification scheme, they go beyond their supposed "field of interest" and consider anew their own and the community's scopes in consumption. By their questioning, they originate new qualities, which need to be identified and assessed.

Until recently, the industry's "black box" opposed such questions as not relevant to the consumer: he/she was considered just one of its customers and in fact a rare and distant one, the market being in charge to intermediate. Such questions, in case, were supposed be relevant to local authorities or worker's organisations in the country where plants are located. Market operators in turn opposed such information was not their business to look for, what was on their shelves having obviously been authorised by local – the purchaser's country – regulations.

So, the "citizen" is supposed to call on public authorities for an answer: on those same authorities that are leaving food and cosmetic manufactured products spread in his market though admitting that risks for health and safety may be there…. and in fact on what local authority, when products in one's market have been manufactured in many different countries and travelled all around the world… on the WTO, then, where EU citizens' ban of hormone-beef imports is challenged, (not to say about GMOs)???

The ongoing change in people's attitude was not initially driven by "consumers". On the contrary, movements in the society that are external to the orthodox economic system – notably the environmentalists - have often been conflicting with "consumerism". Orthodoxy is connatural to institutions: amongst more predictable others the EC DG SANCO itself actively discouraged those few consumer associations that in early times tried to make the link between consumption and socio-environmental issues, convinced that "normal" market selection amongst qualities was not sufficient.

Let then people be called just citizens, but world citizens: it is less confusing a name.
At the very end of the century, consumers' right & duty for sustainability was finally included in the UN "Consumer Charter". Said differently, consumers have been recognised in their role of demand of the production-distribution system: they are the recognised subject that should - prior production-distribution decisions are taken - establish what qualities are required, in order the world is preserved for future generations.

Soon after, the Millennium Development Goals were announced[23]. Said differently, world citizens, at the top institutional level, already established the questions to be primarily answered by the economical system.

Are people prepared to appreciate, wish and give value to those qualities?
Yes, they are.

Not to mention well-known opinions concerning the environment, one 2003 survey in the UK reported that three out of four respondents said their purchase decisions would be influenced by information about companies' social, environmental and ethical behaviour; in 2004 another survey highlighted an even larger aim for global economical justice: in contrast with the "best quality/price" consumer theory, 84% said they were willing to pay more for products that help people in developing countries to improve their standard of living. Fair Trade certified sales see a 41% year-to-year increase.

Is business ready to respond?

So far, serious attempts are made for the environment only; a few enterprises engage in social responsibility but most just try to refine their image…

A lot of hard new work still needs to be done by all actors, consumer associations included…

[23] Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; Achieve universal primary education; Promote gender equality and empower women; Reduce child mortality; Improve Maternal Health; Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; Ensure environmental sustainability; Develop a global partnership for development

Information360
Assessing information for consumer governance

Peter Daub
Free Consumers Association, the Netherlands

Introduction

Lifelong Learning is the most interesting challenge if you see it as an expedition in the great unknown world around you! A discovery journey in all directions, one after another, which helps you to develop a growing insight in the great harmony of all things! Gathering information is the beginning of every journey. Finding all the arguments to choose for one thing or another is the next step before making decisions.

Of course we can't always expect our information to be one hundred percent complete, fully transparent and perfectly fitting all our questions. But we can try to look into all directions, the full *360 degrees* of our complete horizon! Then and only then can we have the feeling that we tried our ultimate best. And when we do that "trick" again next time with our next decision, the circle becomes an ongoing upward spiral, a learning process in which we grow more and more experienced and our knowledge gets better and better!

In every search for information, in every discussion about arguments we can become aware of the infinite number of possibilities, even getting the feeling of getting lost in a jungle of facts and facts and more facts. But there is a fundamental harmony in the world around, and the consumer should become aware of that. Based on the twelve daily needs of the consumer (2) we can find our ways in gathering information. These insights can be used as reference for all the searching activities.

Consumer needs

In every single case in the search for information we can bear in mind the bigger picture as well. Improving the *quality of life* is the fundamental question. “What do we really want, need, wish?” This question is the philosophical basis, is in fact the beginning of our search for information. Looking for the quality of products and services which we need for our personal situation is the next step. Comparing prices and other issues in buying or not buying the final step.

Knowing that there are more than eight billion websites to be found on Google can make us very uncertain about the validity of any information. But there are some "doubles" which can guide our choices. In fact we have to do with only *twelve daily*

needs i.e. twelve consumer organizations for groups of products and/or services: *Religion-art-science-education-medicare-food-housing-means-transport-communication-laws-associations.*

In the final analysis a cash flow manager with 12 columns can provide us with the right mirror for all our expenses.

Information gathering

The basic level of communication or information gathering is *direct observation*. Open days on farms, factories, theatres, railway companies and even the Army, Navy and Air Force give you the most direct information ever possible. Or observing plants and bees to understand the world of nature, food and medicine. Discovering at random by shopping and reading and talking keeps us on the move to be creative. We can be reading about mainstream ideas and sidelines in every direction, but we should always try to connect the details with the total picture. Then gradually we can discover the harmony between all details.

The overall picture

If we start with exploring the *overall picture* it will be a lot easier to search and find all the information about details that we want. And especially: how to interpret, to judge the quality of the information itself! Because the world is also full of misinformation (accidently false) and even des-information (intentionally false to influence you)!

For instance we receive a steady flow of words directives and explanations with respect to choosing our daily food. Are we able to recognize what is main stream and what is just detail? Far into the 19th century we talked about agriculture in general. But then it split up into three different directions. Industrial agriculture only looks at the earth to get the highest productivity out of it in the most efficient way. Biological (organic) agriculture is also taking the environment into consideration, nature, the whole atmosphere. And biodynamic agriculture also recognizes the influence not only of sun and moon above us but of all planets involved! We see tendencies now in these three working methods to more and more communicate with each other (exchanging information) so that in due time we can speak of efficient-organic-dynamic agriculture, or about AGRICULTURE again. Now not based on old knowledge of the past but on the newest insights of modern research, also of the “inner” quality! In the same way we can look at the headlines in the other eleven sectors.

In our search for the information to help us choose a shop or choose a product we have to know to which of the three directions mentioned above they belong, not only for the health of our environment but for our own health in the first place! Furthermore our questions and choices are in reverse of those for the information gathering of the

producers. This is necessary in an economy of question and answer to get the products we want in the end!

Jumping into details

Within the sectors it is possible to distinguish again twelve subsectors. But that's more interesting for consumer organizations. For the individual consumer/citizen the next step is to find out about the seven aspects of trade: *Quality-quantity*-price-*guarantee-payment-delivery-user guide.*

In line with the basic demand for quality of life the quality of products or services is the first step to consider. Although not-buying can sometimes give more quality of life!
If we want to work towards a sustainable future, sustainable questions have to be asked. In fact we can talk about RE-storing sustainability because until the industrial revolution life was already sustainable, otherwise we wouldn't have been here now. So all the questions for information have to be holistic in themselves!

And how can we ask the right questions to get the right answers? Not by puzzling about every single product in the first place, but by doing our homework especially well when we take *long-term decisions*. For instance when choosing a car, thinking about the kind of education for our children, or choosing the store with the kind of food products we really want, as we already suggested above. For our trust in the whole product range it is necessary to have a basic trust in the producer we choose, otherwise we need to check every detail over and over again. So only after those big decisions we can look for the details about quality reached (guarantee), a fair price, good service, delivery just-in-time or just-in-place, etcetera. But we will be more and more taking recourse to random testing. The big check every year can be the open day at the farm, the annual report or the annual meeting of the consumer association (our most important representative), or an in-depth seminar about an actual issue.

More details

Of course the world is full of information about details we can't handle in this article and not even in many books. But as we said above our basic insights into the information structure can help us to better look for and find the answers to our questions! But some *interesting items* in every sector can be mentioned to help the gathering of information get under way.

Religion: Religions are easier to understand when looking at them as different views in different times on the same issue. When furthermore in the human being himself we see it as a lifelong learning process, religion as a whole becomes more and more coherent and all the misunderstandings drop out by themselves.

Art: Art does not need a warning or an advice...creativeness has no borders!

Science: Natural science as it developed since the renaissance is mainly fascinated by the physical aspects of reality, hardly oriented at all towards higher forms of cognition necessary for the regions of living processes of plants and animals which can be understood by projective geometry, or biographical study as a spiritual research method into the human self. Or even the insights of imagination, inspiration and intuition that give a clearer understanding of our creative processes (leading up to Archimedes shouting Eureka! and all other innovations in science and knowledge).

Education: If one accepts a child as an individual human being education will be on the right track. Because the quality of education depends on attentively observing the child in the first place. The learning books come only second place as a tool. Education is not there to fill a vat, but to light a fire!

Medicare: The basis for looking to healthcare problems is the human being who has to manage the healing process him/herself in the first place… Physicians, specialists, therapists and all the medicines of the world are only helpers. As with education it is important to look at the patient first to gather information from closely observing that patient and then and only then dive into books and internet sites instead of vice versa.

Food: With respect to food we already mentioned the coherence of the three mainstreams in the 20th century now coming together in a integrated vision on agriculture. We went through a metamorphosis, from the old knowledge of thousands of years into a new knowledge of research and understanding. It is a good example of the human being becoming mature in the 21st century and wanting to know everything him/herself (3),(5). For better or for worse! It also pictures the age of information with its overwhelming demand for information. Other items we can recognize beside food in the agricultural world, in working with nature are clothing, nature conservation and 'restyling', landscaping, but also commodities and energy. Those gifts of nature are also "feeding" us in different layers around our body: earth water, air and fire in all metamorphosed ways our industry or handcrafting can supply! An important concept here is sustainability (Cradle2Cradle).

Housing: In housing there is now experimentation in all directions, a main stream coming up is organic architecture based on projective geometry (tangents). Issues about materials and energy are important for sustainability, all other information has to do with personal preferences.

Means: Expedients in general have to do with all other eleven sectors. And just as warmth permeates the other elements, money is a general sort of expedient that

permeates all other sectors. We're talking now about banking, insurances, taxes and international finance markets. In this sector it is of special importance to intensively search for information, because one product or another can differ immensely in complexity, effectiveness and…cost or risk!

Transport: All transport and travelling has of course to do with energy first, but the future of green energy is opening up wider perspectives of hope that things go better!

Communication: Communications of all kinds, means and techniques have their pro's and contra's, but the *best way of communication and information gathering* is and will of course always be the "meet&greet"! We can choose for as little or as much meetings as we are interested in. Every annual meeting, open visitors day, excursion, consumer panel, stage or workshop can give the opportunity we're looking for. For the remaining sectors we can read the annual report and choose for the meeting in another year. During the visits and discussions on open visitor days we have the possibility of getting the holistic view on processes, problems and possibilities. And it gives the consumer the opportunity to feel part of the real world! The combination of visiting, reading, internet, radio and TV plus some workshops can give us a 360-overview of a sector. In which every detail we're looking for in the future can get its place!

Laws: Government issues are in fact all about the "social contract" we made/make together. So the only road towards change and development is by joining the discussions locally and globally down from the own governmental structure up till the United Nations, in which civil society was incorporated too since 2005! In politics we see the widest range of information and arguing about facts and opinions, goals and roadmaps (1), (4). Which we can follow best in Live programming or Breaking News to get the most direct information about what's going on worldwide.

Association: Association is the end-purpose of all human development, the quality of our individual life has everything to do with the quality of living together. We know all kinds of associations, from culture and sport, scouting and tea-probing, being part of a group and even marriage has to do with association. But one kind of organization is the most important for all our "consumer governance": the consumer associations. *Being member of all twelve associations is in fact THE basis for all communication, gathering and assessing information in the future!* I think!

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book Consumer Freedom and Responsibility (Consument Vrijheid en Verantwoordelijkheid, 1998, 60 pages, ISBN 90 76206 01 5). A second edition is in preparation, a concept English summary is available on the website www.consumer360.org

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How the development of participative democracies can affect the assessment of consumer information

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"In Hyldespjældet, an estate of 400 flats in Albertslund, west of Copenhagen, residents sort their own waste in a common recycling yard. Not into two, three or four fractions, but about 30. The 800 residents of Hyldespjældet have adopted their own Local Agenda 21, which says that they will sort their rubbish into as many fractions as they can find anyone willing to take. This is just one of many goals set out in the plan. They also intend to reduce their consumption of electricity by 10 % and of district heat by half over the 1995-2010 period, and are well on the way to achieving the latter aim. The Agenda 21 document bans chemical fertilisers and pesticides from the whole estate, and encourages residents to keep their own hens. (…) Today there are not only some 8-10 henhouses and a recycling yard in Hydespjældet, but also sheep, two hectares of organic vegetable gardens, composting facilities, urine separating toilets, green roofs, a forest playground, a swap shop and a largely organic café."

The text above is taken from the case "Danish neighbourhood creates its own Agenda 21" in the database of The Ideas Bank Foundation, a database with examples of local sustainable projects, mostly from the Scandinavian countries. It is copied into this article because it helps me discuss the question: *What is necessary for information on sustainable consumption to be effectively transmitted and analyzed?*

Answers to this question has already been sought and, in my view, to a large degree found through major international and local processes. This article will therefore emphasize international and local histories, arguing that participative democracy leads to more sustainable consumption.

Participative democracy

I need to clarify the term "participative democracy". For the information in this section I refer to the excellent article written by Einar Braathen in 2005 "Participative democracy – Why, How?"[24] According to Carol Pateman's modern classic about participative democracy, the purpose is to make people capable of controlling their own lives and environment (Pateman, 1970). Hilary Wainwright (2003) goes deeper into this matter and states that participative democracy must be discussed with relation to a more

[24] "Deltakerdemokrati – Hvorfor? Hvordan?"

precise view on humans and knowledge. Wainwright claims that an important source of inspiration for neoliberalism can be found in the philosopher Friedrich von Hayek's criticism of the «all-knowing state» which thinks it can regulate everything to the best for everyone. The criticism is aimed not only at the Soviet communism, but also at the social democrats and their faith in governmental regulations. In his essay from 1948, «The Use of Knowledge in Society», von Hayek argues that most of the activities in a society are built on hidden and silent knowledge – knowledge which cannot exist in a collective manner at the top of the governmental hierarchy. Wainwright (2003) writes that hidden knowledge is based on a community of people with complementary knowledge. In Wainwright's point of view, these collective bases of knowledge, these people, regular people, workers with different kinds of formal competencies, should get more power in society, so that «everyday knowledge» is democratised and made available for most people.

According to Wainwright the main strategy for participative democracy is to open up the local political decision-making processes (in municipalities and other public entities) for direct participation from the population.

One form of participative democracy is participative budgeting, where the local population decides what the council's money will be spent on. In an interesting article from 2003, Lorenz Khazaleh tells us about the case Porto Alegre, a large city in Brazil, where they, through participative democracy and participative budgeting, managed to improve the standard of living for the poor segment of the population in spite of a worsened national economy. Through participative democracy they have managed to solve many of the city's problems. The poor neighbourhoods got public transport, paved roads and schools. They also managed to end corruption. In Khazaleh's and Braathens's point of view, more democracy means less poverty.

Agenda 21

I feel like I have heard similar attributes given to participatory democracy before, but in the context of sustainability. My immediate association goes to Agenda 21. This is a document which outlines "an agenda for the 21st century" for political leaders, for businesses and for all human beings. The agreements in this document were negotiated under UN's Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio, Brazil in 1992. This was the largest meeting between the world's political leaders that has ever been held. State leaders from 179 countries met in Rio, and in addition hundreds of representatives for the UN, local representatives, private organisations, business and indigenous groups.

The basis for the Rio-conference was made in 1972 when 113 countries met to the first global environment conference in Stockholm. At this point the environmental

challenges were discussed isolated from poverty and other development problems. In 1983, however, this had changed and the UN established the World Commission for environment *and* development, under the leadership of Gro Harlem Brundtland. Four years later, the Brundtland Commission published its end-report, "Our Common Future". The report clearly stated that our lifestyles, our production- and consumption patterns had to change, if not the results would be human suffering and environmental disaster.

With the Brundtland Commission, the people of the world could for the first time see the connection between environmental problems and poverty. The connection between own actions and consequences on other people in other places of the world or on future generations was also stressed in a new way. The commission called for sustainable development, a new expression which they defined as:

"…a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

In 1989 the UN started to plan the Rio-conference on environment and development. The purpose was to make a plan for how one could create a sustainable development. During two years different experts worked out the different agreements. The international system for negotiations, thousands of persons and organisations gave their contributions to the process. The result of this process was Agenda 21.

Local Agenda 21 - a call for participative democracy

In Hyldespjældet, the Danish neighbourhood described initially, they follow their own *Local Agenda 21.* This is a plan and a document inspired by chapter 28 in Agenda 21. The different chapters of the third pact of Agenda 21 are addressed to different groups and institutions in society and specify their roles in achieving a sustainable development. Chapter 28.3 is addressed to local authorities:

"L*ocal authority should enter into a dialogue with its citizens, local organizations and private enterprises and adopt "a local Agenda 21". Through consultation and consensus-building, local authorities would learn from citizens and from local, civic, community, business and industrial organizations and acquire the information needed for formulating the best strategies. The process of consultation would increase household awareness of sustainable development issues."*

Local authorities were asked by the UN to make their Local Agenda 21. As the municipality is the authority closest to people, it was given the responsibility to educate and mobilize the people with respect to sustainable development. It is not an exaggeration to say that this chapter has given birth to one of the largest experiments of

democracy in the history of human beings. The method recommended, and broadly adopted was: To involve the people and stakeholders in the municipality in a long-term dialogue about the global and local problems, possible solutions and not the least, visionary work about their common future. Hundreds and thousands of people around the world were invited by their local authorities. Hyldespjældet, and the changes in consumption patterns described initially, started out as a part of this global wave.

Green accounts in Albertslund

Hyldespjældet is located in Albertslund, a municipality close to Copenhagen with a population of about 30.000. Albertslund has been a frontrunner for Local Agenda 21 in Denmark and received the European Sustainable City Award based on its «green accounts» in 1996. The green accounts were first used in 1995 and is divided into three parts: first the annual Local Agenda 21 status, then a report about the use of resources in the running of the municipality and finally a part about the use of resources, waste production and emissions from businesses and estates. The data are presented with coloured graphics and sent to every household in the municipality. The great thing about Albertslund's accounts is that it is very specific, making it possible for the people living in each estate to not only compare their use of energy with earlier years, but also with other estates in Albertslund. This is consistent with the goal that each estate should formulate and follow up their own Local Agenda 21 plan, i.e. even *more* local Local Agendas! Now, neighbourhoods representing 40 % of the 30.000 inhabitants have already done so.

By studying cases like Hyldespjældet we can learn something about the prerequisites for sustainable consumption. For the people living in Hyldespjældet their changes to a more sustainable consumption have come together with democratic projects, where they are invited to take part in a project in the estate, which is a part of a project in the municipality, which again is part of an international project. Each person can see that how he/she consumes matters for the end result. This is participative democracy. It is giving people control of their lives and their environment. This motivates and gives meaning. This feeling of togetherness and this sense of connectedness between part and whole is, in my opinion one necessary prerequisite for information on sustainable consumption to be effectively transmitted and analyzed.

The nth power

In social economy there is a concept called “the nth power”, expressing the opposite of “this feeling of togetherness and this sense of connectedness between part and whole”. The “n”refers to the huge mass of people that live in the same world as us but that we mostly do not know. We have no control of how the enormous “n” consumes and for many people, this is demotivating. What does it matter how I consume if everyone else do the opposite?

For councils, organisations, anyone who work to change consumption patterns, it is essential to attack the nth power; to make people feel that the goal of a more sustainable consumption is *common* and that they are working *together* with other central and *visible* stakeholders in their community to reach these goals. In his article «Democratic decay - or renewal»[25], John Hille (2006:72) states that «Democracy presupposes a belief in that people can form their own future – and that everyone is competent to take part in such a process». This is the same for sustainable consumption, it presupposes that the consumer believes that what and how one consumes makes a difference, and that one is competent enough to consume sustainably. Involvement in local democratic processes can produce such belief and confidence.

Albertslund municipality attacks the nth power when they do three things at the same time: 1) invite all business and estates in the municipality to make their own Local Agenda 21 to form *common* goals and work *together* to reach these, 2) do their part by sweeping before its own door, and 3) make tools like the green accounts available to motivate the work of the people in the area. And Albertslund is just one example. There are many other ways the local authorities can have the similar effect on people. Other places have used other strategies with good results. One such place is Grästorp in Central Sweden with a population of 6.000 people. Grästorp has a clear strategy: the message must be easy to grasp and fun to be part of, but still deal with serious issues. Once again, I quote from our database:

"Once a year, the council arranges a combined environmental and cultural week with lots of exciting activities. Every year from 1994 to 1998, the inhabitants set new world records, which were duly recorded in the Guinness book. They include the record number of used light bulbs, crown corks, plastic bottles and the record amount of toxic waste collected in one day, as well as the world's biggest building made of old milk cartons... Children's theatre performances, an "eco-relay" in which people compete at green shopping and sorting their waste into the right categories, and "environmental fairytale walks" are just some of the many creative ways used to communicate about Local Agenda 21."

The efforts have also yielded important results in other parts of the municipality. In eight years the amount of unsorted waste in Grästorp has been halved, CO2 emissions have been reduced by replacing district heat for heating oil, train traffic has increased by 50 % just in the last three years, and an effective market for locally produced food has been established. What happened in Grästorp? Was it the lectures that were given that made the difference? Or the informative brochures handed out to inform the population about the benefits of district heat, train traffic or locally produced food? Or

[25] "Demokratisk forvitring – eller fornyelse?"

maybe the authors of Agenda 21 was right when they assumed that the participatory processes itself would increase household awareness of sustainable development issues.

The Local Agenda 21 recipe

The Environmental Homeguard[26] in Norway made a booklet in 1999 with the stunning title "I want you"[27]. The content was a simple description of Local Agenda 21 and suggestions to what different stakeholders like individuals, businesses, etc. can do. In the mid-pages, the four characteristics of Local Agenda 21-work are listed and formulated in an easy-to-remember manner: "Think Long", "Think Broad", "Think Round", "Think Big". "Think Long" refers to the long term planning that is required in the Local Agenda 21 work, often working towards goals 20 years ahead in time. When thinking far ahead it is easier to focus on visions and values than short-term goals as economic gains and effectivity. "Think Broad" points to the emphasis on participation of all relevant stakeholders. In Local Agenda 21 forums around the world, we often find representatives for the local population, schools, businesses, the council, NGOs, etc. As the circle has long been the metaphor for the natural processes of life and death in nature, "think Round" refers to the environmental perspective. "Think Big" deals with the social aspect of this work which is global in perspective. The catchword of Local Agenda 21, "Think Globally, Act Locally", has reminded people that what we do, or not do, can affect people living in other parts of the world. As a consequence, councils, businesses and schools have discovered that "we" have a lot to learn from "them", and developed contact with friendship groups in developing countries to enhance their own Local Agenda 21 work.

There is much less focus on Local Agenda 21 today than in the 90s. Nationally it seems to be almost forgotten about, but also locally many councils and other stakeholders have moved on to new concepts and trends. Maybe this is not so important. What is important, however, is that nations, local authorities, organisations and people of the world have learned something from the UNCED process and from their own Local Agenda 21 efforts. In the mapping of good examples of sustainable practice in local communities in Scandinavia, the Ideas Bank Foundation find that the most sustainable, exiting, creative, ambitious, fun, and long-lasting examples are either born from Local Agenda 21 processes or they contain all or most of the four ingredients from the Local Agenda 21 recipe of the Environmental Homeguard outlined above.

Why is democracy so important?

In Samsø, a Danish island with a population of 4300, they have been thinking both "long, broad, round and big" since 1997, when they pronounced their goal, to become

[26] Miljøheimevernet
[27] "Jeg vil ha deg"

100% self-sufficient in energy – based wholly on renewables – by 2007. In 1998, only 8 % of the island's electricity and some 15 % of its heating energy was obtained from renewable sources. Today, Samsø has mostly managed to reach their goal. The success is due both thanks to technology, but also to the participation of the whole community. The local population in Samsø has participated in the project by reducing their energy needs by around 25%, bought shares in the windmills, joined citizen groups who have worked to mobilise support for district heating, etc.

Sauda, a Norwegian community with a population of 5.000, has had a friendship link with San Juan del Sur in Nicaragua since 1988. In 2006, Sauda acquired status as Norway's first Fairtrade town. The last title implies that the council, businesses and organisations cooperate about promoting the consumption of Fairtrade-labelled goods – so that farmers in poor countries will get a fair price for their commodities. Six months after acquiring the status as Fairtrade town, Sauda could report a tenfold increase in sales of Fairtrade coffee (Pålshaugen: 2007). The sale stills stays high; the four stores in the small community now sell over a ton of Fairtrade coffee in a 6 months period, and also a lot of new Fairtrade products like bananas, orange juice, honey and chocolate.
What do Sauda, Samsø, Grästorp and Albertslund have in common? Although just two of these have worked explicitly with LA21-projects, they have all followed the recipe outlined above. What is it with this recipe? I think that many councils and organisations and schools, etc. who wants to change consumption patterns to become more sustainable think mostly «round» and «big», that is, focus only on generalising information about environmental or development issues, informing people about the challenges and the possible solutions, many are also good at focusing on what individuals can do. However, attempts often fail and consumption patterns stay the same and worsen. What was special about the UNCED process and the Local Agenda 21 work, and what I want to emphasise in this article through these four cases is the importance of the «Think Broad» category.

In Albertslund, Grästorp, Sauda and Samsø they have local authorities with a good understanding of the importance of an extended concept of democracy. Through participatory approaches they have managed to give their population ownership to the processes and in this way motivate people. In all these four cases described there are forums made up of many different stakeholders that are central for the task that they set out to do. In three of the four cases they have friendship links with people in another part of the world to remind them of the global aspect of their own actions. In addition, the councils give an important signal that they play on the same team as the population by producing «carrots». In Albertslund they have the «green accounts» described earlier, in Grästorp they have the Guinness Book of World Wecords, in Sauda they give paid permission for employees who want to contribute in the friendship-project with

San Juan del Sur, a friendship relation that has been a great inspiration in the Fairtrade town campaign.

More democracy, more sustainability

Do people in Sauda know more about Fairtrade products than most other Scandinavians? Does the Samsø population know more about how to save energy at home, or does the Grästorp population have more knowledge about the benefits of recycling or public transport? I doubt it. These are simple-to-grasp consumer issues that most Scandinavians know about. After these democratic processes, however, the information that has been given to them from here and there through the years, at school, in their mail-boxes, through the media, finally succeeds in being transmitted. And these people succeeded in analyzing it and applying it. My conclusion is that this effect, that information on sustainable consumption succeeds in being transmitted, analyzed and applied, has less to do with getting more detailed information about how and what to consume, and more to do with ownership and motivation.

Today, we find ourselves in the middle of the UN's Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD10, 2005-2014). My wish for the decade is that educators of sustainable consumption, in councils, organisations, schools, and in the media, think both "long, round, broad and big", and that they never underestimate the effect of participatory democracy. It might well be that as well as being a remedy against poverty, more democracy can mean more sustainability.

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Cultural differences in gathering and using market information

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"If we seek to understand a people, we have to try to put ourselves, as far as we can, in that particular historical and cultural background… It is not easy for a person of one country to enter into a background of another country. So there is great irritation, because one fact that seems obvious to us is not immediately accepted by the other party or does not seem obvious to him at all.… But that extreme irritation will go when we think … that he is just differently conditioned and simply can't get out of that condition. One has to recognize that whatever the future may hold, countries and people differ … in their approach to life and their ways of living and thinking. In order to understand them, we have to understand their way of life and approach. If we wish to convince them to, we have to use their language as far as we can, not language in the narrow sense of the word, but the language of the mind. That is one necessity. Something that goes even much further than that, is not the appeal to logic and reason, but some kind of emotional awareness of other people."

Jawaharlal Nehru, *Visit to America*

1. Introduction

There is no best method of cultural analysis. One practical approach is to break down the broad area of the sociocultural environment into its various elements (ex. material culture, social institutions, mankind and the Universe, aesthetics, language and communication) and to study each element in details. Culture, however, is not simply a group of unrelated elements and the different facets of culture are intricately intertwined and should be viewed as an integrated complex whole. A customer's reaction cannot be fully explained by a simple reference to certain aspects of the cultural environment influencing their attitude such as language, religion, and social structure.[28] A systems approach to the analysis of the cultural environment is one where culture is understood as a system composed of parts that are related to other parts which mutually influence and adjust to each other, through a process of cooperation, competition, conflict and accommodation. As a result there is multiplitude of cultures but in some cases they can be classified in a dichotomic way.

People in contrasting cultures think differently. They focus on differing information and put it together in different ways. They tend towards abstractive or associative thinking.

[28] S. el Kahal, *Introduction to International Business*, London 1994, p. 32-33.

In abstractive – inclined cultures, thinking is more analytic, more based on logical principles applied to any situation, more scientistical, more general. Links are seen between uncertain events, which lead logically to what should be done. In associative-inclined cultures, communication is more often face to face and people readily associate what they are saying with what is around them, and with shared memories and images, in an accustomed pattern of mental associations. They seem illogical to an abstractive thinker, who seems to them limited and given overmuch to fine distinctions. Generally speaking, economically more developed nations tend to be more abstractive, the less developed more associative.[29]

2. Culture influences perception

G. Hofstede says that our thinking is an effect of early life experiences in the family and later educational experiences in schools and organizations, which are not the same across national borders. He writes:

"*In a classroom I can easily show the process of conditioning by experience. For this purpose I use the ambiguous picture: one that can be interpreted in two different ways. One such picture represents either an attractive young girl or an ugly old woman, depending on the way you look at it. In order to demonstrate the process of conditioning I ask one half of the class to close their eyes. To the other half, I show for five seconds a slightly changed version of the picture, in which only the young girl can be seen. Then I ask the other half to close their eyes, and to the first half I show, also for the five seconds, a version in which only the old woman can be seen. After this preparation, I show the ambiguous picture to everyone at the same time. The results are amazing: the vast majority of those "conditioned" by seeing the young girl first, now see only the young girl in the ambiguous picture; and those "conditioned" by seeing the old woman first can see only the old woman afterwards.*"[30]

This very simple experiment shows that teacher can in five minutes condition a half of the class to see something else in the picture than would the other half. How much stronger should the differences in perceptions of the same reality be between people who have been "conditioned" by different educational and life experiences not for a mere five second but for twenty, thirty, or forty years. Through our experiences we become *mentally programmed* to interpret new experiences in a certain way.
Culture is that part of our conditioning that we share with other members of our nation, religion, or group but not with members of other nations, religions or groups.

[29] Hickson D.J., Pugh S. D., *Management Wordwide, The Impact of Societal Culture on Organizations around the Globe,* Penguin Books 1995, s38

3. Culture influences brain function

Massachusetts Institute of Technology researchers in the first brain imaging study have receantly proved that people from different cultures use their brains differently to solve the same visual perceptual tasks[31]. Psychological research has established that American culture, which values the individual, emphasizes the independence of objects from their contexts, while East Asian societies emphasize the collective and the contextual interdependence of objects. Behavioral studies have shown that these cultural differences can influence memory and even perception. But are they reflected in brain activity patterns? To find out, a team led by John Gabrieli, a professor at the McGovern Institute for Brain Research at MIT, asked 10 East Asians recently arrived in the United States and 10 Americans to make quick perceptual judgments while in a functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scanner – a technology that maps blood flow changes in the brain that correspond to mental operations. Subjects were shown a sequence of stimuli consisting of lines within squares and were asked to compare each stimulus with the previous one. In some trials, they judged whether the lines were the same length regardless of the surrounding squares (an absolute judgment of individual objects independent of context). In other trials, they decided whether the lines were in the same proportion to the squares, regardless of absolute size (a relative judgment of interdependent objects). In previous behavioral studies of similar tasks, Americans were more accurate on absolute judgments and East Asians on relative judgments. In the current study, the tasks were easy enough that there were no differences in performance between the two groups.

However, the two groups showed different patterns of brain activation when performing these tasks. Americans, when making relative judgments that are typically harder for them, activated brain regions involved in attention-demanding mental tasks. They showed much less activation of these regions when making the more culturally familiar absolute judgments. East Asians showed the opposite tendency, engaging the brain's attention system more for absolute judgments than for relative judgments.

The researchers were surprised at the magnitude of the difference between the two cultural groups, and also at how widespread the engagement of the brain's attention system became when making judgments outside the cultural comfort zone. They went on to show that the effect was greater in those individuals who identified more closely with their culture. They used questionnaires of preferences and values in social relations, such as whether an individual is responsible for the failure of a family member, to gauge cultural identification. Within both groups, stronger identification

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[30] G. Hofstede, The cultural relativity of organizational practices and theories, (in) The Effective Manager. Perspectives and Illustrations ed. by Jon Billsberry, Sage Publications, The Open University 1996, pp. 243-262.

[31] Cathryn M. Delude, McGovern Institute January 11, 2008
http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/techtalk-info.html

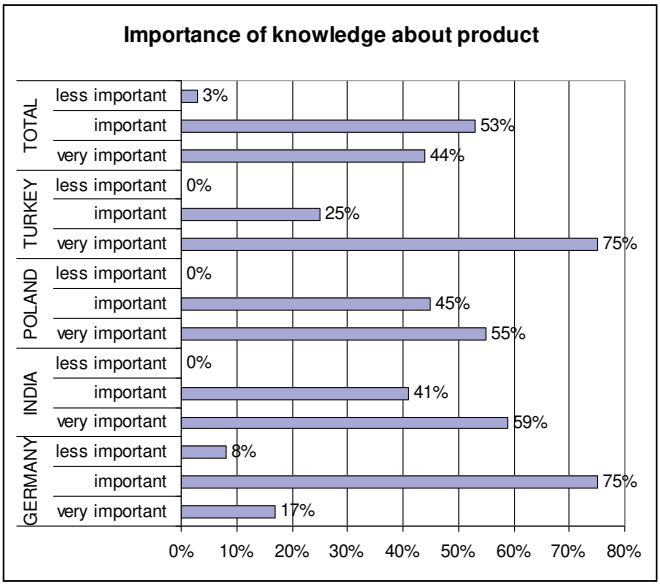
with their respective cultures was associated with a stronger culture-specific pattern of brain-activation.
How do these differences come about? The answer for this question is that everyone uses the same attention machinery for more difficult cognitive tasks, but they are trained to use it in different ways, and it's the culture that does the training. The way in which the brain responds to these simple drawings reflects, in a predictable way, how the individual thinks about independent or interdependent social relationships.

4. Culture influences consumption patterns

A survey on consumer behaviour patterns has been conducted on the group of Polish and Indian students of the University of Finance and Management in Bialystok, German students of the Fachhochschule Osnabrück and Turkish students of the Balikesir University and Uludag University. Number of students participated in the study was in total 116 and consisted of: 22 Polish students, 22 Indian students, 48 German students, 24 Turkish students. The group of respondents included 64 male and 52 female students. They were all full time students in the age of 19-29 years, Polish and Turkish students were relatively younger than the others. The survey was conducted in the period of December 2007 – January 2008.
The main goal of the study was to learn consumer preferences of young people of different nationalities as well as to determine cultural differences in relation to consumer patterns between representatives of India, Turkey, Poland and Germany. All respondents were asked to answer 9 questions.

1. *How important for you is knowledge about products you buy?*

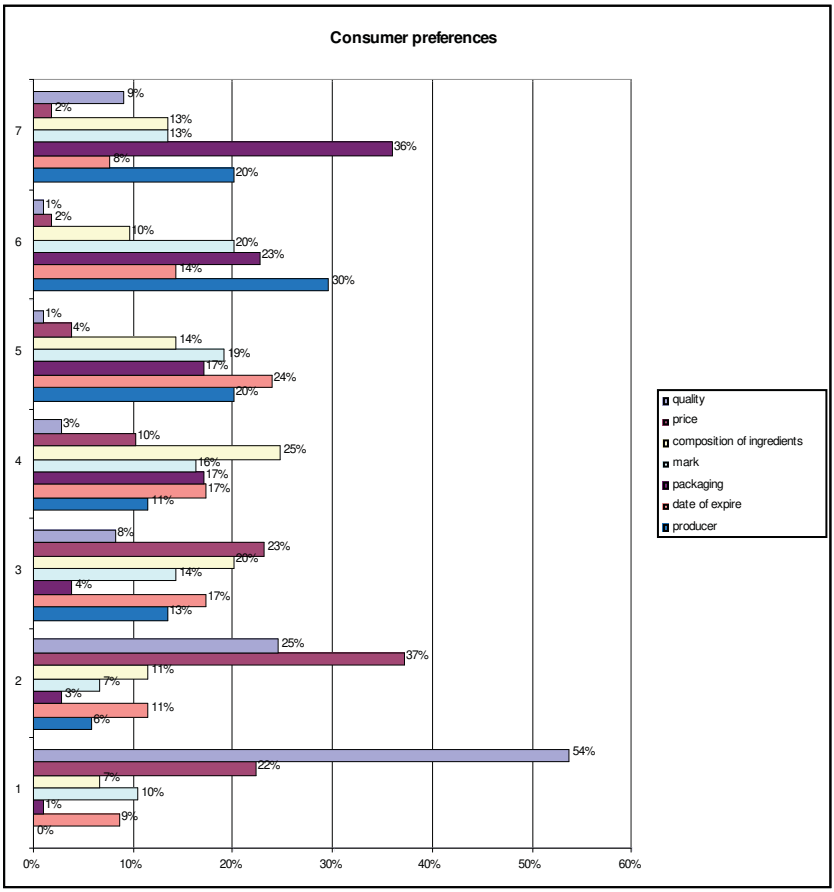
For almost every young consumer taking part in the survey knowledge about product which he or she buys is either very important (44%) or important (53%). Only 3% of consumers declared that this knowledge is less important and nobody said that it is not important. This means that consumers belonging to the group are aware of their choices. They want to know what they buy and they are interested in collecting data about this product.
Students of three nationalities gave similar answers to the question: for 55% of Polish students knowledge about products is very important and for 45% important; for 59% of Indian students – knowledge is very important and for 41% important, for 75% of Turkish students knowledge is very important and for 25% important. Only German students gave slightly different answer that is for 17% of them knowledge about products which they buy is very important, for 75% - important and for 8% - less important. The detailed percentage of answers is shown below.



2. *What are your consumer preferences when you buy products?*

For more than 50% of all respondents quality was the most important feature of the product they buy. Then respondents have chosen price, composition of ingredients, mark, date of expire, producer and packaging – as the less important for them.

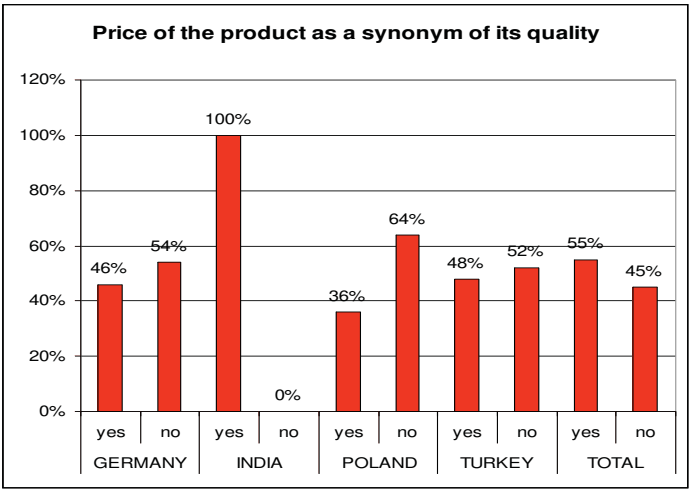
In particular the answers to this question were as follows: Polish students indicated quality, price, mark and producer at the end; German students – quality, price, composition of ingredients and packaging at the very end; Turkish students – quality, price and at the end packaging and producer; Indian students – mark, composition of ingredients, price and the least important – quality. Indian students gave extremely different answer (in comparison to students from European countries) – selecting quality as the least important feature which influence them while shopping. The detailed percentage of the answers is shown below.



3. Is the price of any product a synonym of its quality in your opinion?

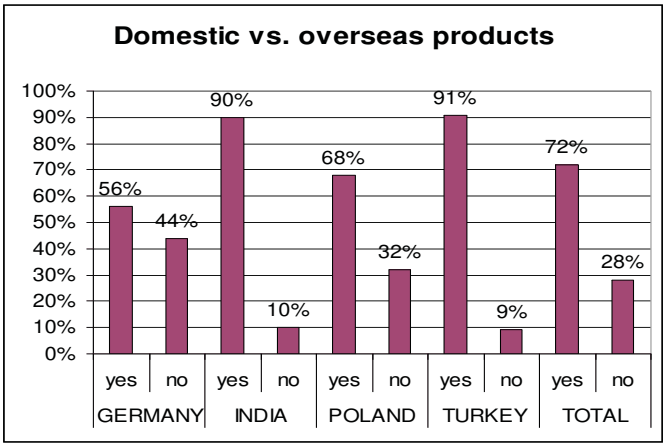
For 55% of the whole group of respondents price of the product is a synonym of its quality; for 45% it is not. 64% of Polish students answered that price is not a synonym of product quality, 54% of German students and 52% of Turkish students shared the same opinion. It proves that young consumers are aware of "tricks" done by marketing specialists and they know that high price doesn't always mean the highest quality. Also in the era of globalization big international companies easily can change a place of production in order to decrease costs. Nowadays consumers can buy jeans – originally coming from America – but today made in China. At the same time they can find on the market similar products – but less expensive. However 100% of Indian students agreed

that the price is a synonym of product's quality. The detailed percentage of answers is shown below.



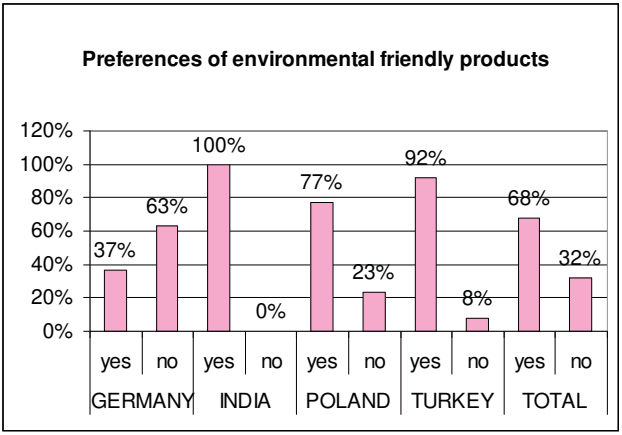
4. Do you prefer domestic products to overseas production?

Around 72% of all respondents prefer domestic products to overseas production; 28% do not. 68% of the Polish students, 56% of the German students, 90% of the Indian students and 91% of the Turkish students prefer domestic products to overseas ones. The detailed percentage of answers is shown below.



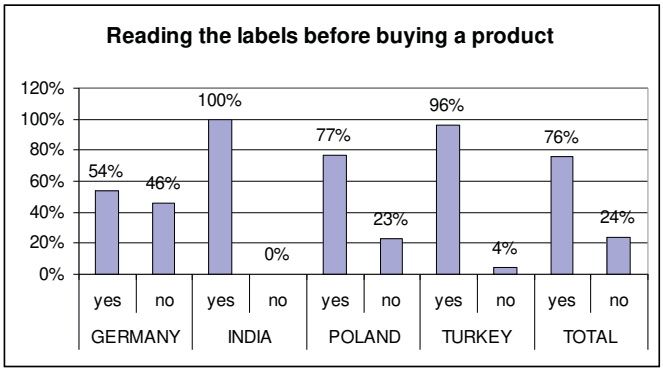
5. Do you choose environmentally friendly products?

About 68% of all respondents choose environmentally friendly products. Such answer was given by 77% of Polish students, 92% of Turkish students and 100% of Indian students. Surprisingly, 63% of German students claimed that they do not choose environmentally friendly products. The detailed percentage of answers is shown below.



6. Do you read labels before buying a product?

As the research shows 76% of all questioned students read labels before buying a product, while 24% do not. 54% of German, 77% of the Polish, 96% of the Turkish and 100% of the Indian students declared reading labels. The detailed percentage of answers is presented below.



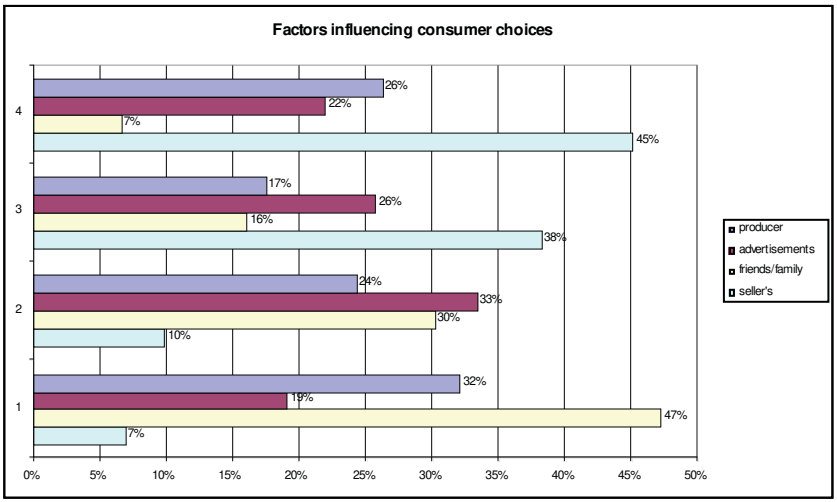
7. What influences your consumer decisions?

The most important incentive that influences consumer decisions is friends/family opinion – 47% of respondents gave such an answer. The next were producer, advertisements and seller's opinion – in the order of importance.

It looks slightly different in particular groups of students:

- German students indicated in the order of importance: Friends/family opinionadvertisements, seller's opinion;
- Indian students - producer, friends/family opinion, seller's opinion, advertisements;
- Polish students - friends/family opinion, advertisements, seller's opinion;
- Turkish students - friends/family opinion, advertisements, seller's opinion.

The detailed percentage of answers is presented below.



8. How do you perceive the information you get?

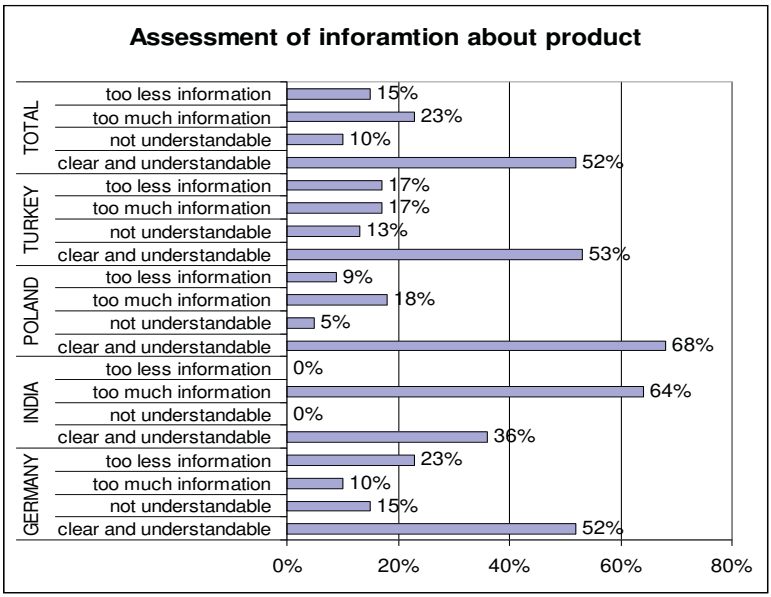
For 52% of all respondents information which they get is clear and understandable, while for 10% - not understandable. 23% of respondents claimed that there is too much information and 15% - that there is too little information.

The answers in particular groups of students were as follows:

- for 52% of German students information is clear and understandable, for 15% is not understandable, for 10% there is too much information, for 23% there is too little information;

- for 36% of the Indian students information is clear and understandable, for 0% not understandable, for 64% there is too much information, for 0% too little;
- for 68% of the Polish students information is clear and understandable, for 5% is not understandable, for 18% there is too much information, and for 9% too little;
- for 53% of the Turkish students information is clear and understandable, for 13% - not understandable, for 17% there is too much information, for 17% too little.

The detailed percentage of answers is presented below.

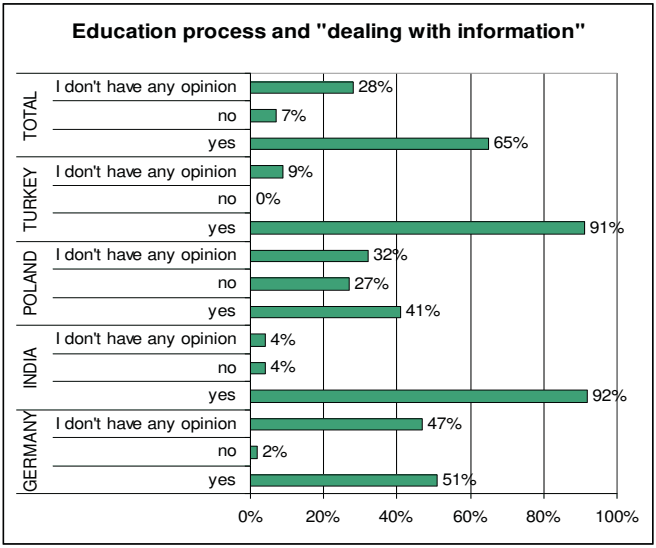


9. Do you consider that introduction to education issues connected with "dealing with information" could improve your consumer decisions?
Almost 65% of all respondents claimed that inclusion of information issues at school curricula could improve their consumer decisions; 28% - don't have any opinion and 7% - disagree with the statement.

The answers in particular groups of students were as follows:

- 51% of German students replied yes, 2% - no, 47% have no opinion;
- 92% of Indian students replied yes, 4% - no, 4% have no opinion;
- 41% of Polish students replied yes, 27% - no, 32% have no opinion;
- 91% of Turkish students replied yes, 0% - no, 9% have no opinion.

The detailed percentage of answers is presented below.



On the basis of a survey results it is possible to create four types of young consumers, representing different nationalities.

5. Consumer profiles

For the German student-consumer knowledge about the product which he buys is important but not very important. When he buys product his most important consumer preferences are quality, price and composition of ingredients. Price of a product is not a synonym of its quality. He prefers domestic products to overseas production but he does not choose environmentally friendly products. He reads labels and he perceive information which he gets as clear and understandable, but sometimes there is too little information. Friends and/or family opinion are the most important factor influencing his consumer decisions. He is not sure if inclusion to education issues connected with "dealing with information" improves his consumer decisions.

For more than half of the Indian students the knowledge about product which they buy is very important, for the rest is important. The brand name, composition of ingredients and price are considered when buying product. Quality is not as appreciated by them as by the other groups. Unlike German, Polish and Turkish students they treat price synonymously to quality. Advertisement is not a big persuader but producer, friend/family opinion and seller's opinion are crucial for them. For some reason they

prefer domestic products to overseas ones. They also choose environmentally friendly production, but probably only for religious causes. All of them declared reading labels, although only to one-third of the group the information is clear and understandable. A big part of them think that in general there is too much information, what can lead to conclusion that some information are not necessary. They are open to education in consumer area and they think that it will support good consumer choices.

For the Polish student-consumers knowledge about the product which he buys is in general very important, but it is even more important to female than to male. Quality, price and brand mark are the most important features determining his consumer choices. For majority of Poles price of a product is not a synonym of its quality. An average respondent prefers domestic products to overseas production, he chooses environmentally friendly production and he reads labels before buying (all issues are even more important to female respondents than male ones). The greatest influence on his consumer decisions have friends and/or family, advertisements and seller's opinion. Polish consumers are not convinced that introduction to education issues connected with "dealing with information" could improve their consumer decisions, in fact 57% of male respondents stated that is would not improve the decision-making, while 53% of female respondents – that it would.

For the Turkish student-consumers knowledge about products they buy is very important, therefore they seem to be very conscious consumers. When they buy the product they take into consideration mainly quality of the product and its price. In their opinion the price does not equal with quality. Domestic products are favourable for them. They are sensible for natural environment and they prefer to buy environmental friendly products; especially women. Vast majority of them reads labels and men are more active in it. When they buy product they let their friends to influence their choice, but they also follow the advertisements. Although they read the labels, the information put on them is not understandable for one of four male respondents. It is clear and understandable for all female respondents. In general the whole group feel the need of wider consumer education.

6. Conclusions

As the research shows, information that consumers really expect and actually use in their buying decisions includes quality, price and composition of ingredients of particular product. This is the most important information for young consumers. From their declaration that they read labels before buying and that the price of the product is a synonym of its quality, we can assume, that those consumers trust in prices and labels as usable indicators of quality. Due to differences in answers of students from different countries, we can assume that nationality, tradition and culture influence consumer decisions. The research was too general to examine this issue thoroughly, it only

signalized differences in attitudes and opinions of young consumers without finding out the reasons. To fulfil this objective, the further research is needed.

The main research finding is that Polish and German consumers are closer to each other than to consumers from Turkey and India, similarly Turkish and Indian students, in some cases demonstrate comparable resemblance. There were also observed some differences in a way that women and men perceive and assess the market – 50% of women declared that price of the product is not a synonym of its quality, when almost 60% of men – that it is. But if it is about answers to other questions respondents were quite agreeable. It is worth noticing that a majority of the respondents admitted that adding to education issues connected with "dealing with information" could improve their consumer decisions. It may mean that the young generation needs to be educated for making responsible shopping decisions. Efficient and successful education needs both kinds of information – about the differences and similarities among cultures, nations and traditions.

Information environment as a key factor of contemporary education in Latvia

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ABSTRACT
One of the greatest challenges of an up-to-date society in Latvia in the information age is to prepare the youth to participate successfully in social and economic lives both in the native country and EC. In this context information environment is a key concept of the information society and is closely related to the technological changes. It enables young people to be effective information consumers and, moreover, enables individuals not only use information technically effectively and adapt to their constant changes but also think critically about the entire information enterprise and information society. This concept, information environment, involves knowledge consumers or participants, the communications (information) infrastructure and the content of communication.
The present paper discusses the concept of the information environment in describing and exemplifying these three components of social phenomenon in Latvia from the educator's point of view**.** For this reason the next questions deserves close attention:

Who owns information?
How to recognize the phenomena which mark out new and significant changes in a society development?
What types of information literacy compose "an effective information consumer "for educational needs? and at last
How can consumer citizenship education deals with the cognitive and social influences on the consumers' capacity to process information, i.e. the consumer-as-tutor and consumer-as-student?

Key words: information, environment, consumer, communications, technology, computer, acquiring, applying information, technology, media, education. Internet, infrastructure.

Introduction

The positioning of information is something like a living form and "*information itself then constitutes the world itself and is no longer simply representation*" (Krug, 2005:192).
The information environment represents a set of factors, resources and processes, which demonstrate the knowledge that has been accumulated and used by a specific society,

community or individual, looking also at ideas and assumptions. There is also the issue of how this knowledge can be obtained, created, expanded, evaluated and applied. This means that the information environment is a requirement for the survival and progress in the development of individuals and societies.

Analysis of an information environment is one way of recording and assessing changes in society, because various forms of communications do not replace each other or exclude former ones. Instead they tend to co-exist and supplement one another (Rantanten, 2005:26). For instance, in the 1960s many people predicted that television would mean the death of magazines and the cinema, but this has not happened – those industries continue to be very strong. Some thought that the Internet would threaten television, but television continues to attract a vast audience.

In Latvia, one of the greatest challenges of an up-to-date society is to prepare the youth to participate successfully in social and economic lives both in the native country and EC. In this context an information environment and its influence upon the *young people* have essential importance. Information literacy of an individual is determined by the influence of the information environment. The more the influence of the information environment on the society the more skilful and literate the young people are.

For these reasons, the information environment of up-to-date society and education consumers is becoming a new and important social phenomenon which involves participants or consumers, the communications (information) infrastructure and the content of communications, as defined by the information and communications needs of society. All this means that the analysis of an information environment can be one of the ways to:

a) identify the participants of information environment:
b) recognize the phenomena which mark out new and significant changes in a society development;
c) identify what is necessary for information to be effectively and reliably transmitted and analysed;
d) find out how can consumer citizenship education deal with the different influences on consumer's capacity to process information.

Some facts and comments based on the historical development

When the historical development of an information environment is analysed, it is important to look at the way in which processes of information distribution and exchange have developed. Marshall McLuhan has defined the mechanical age and the electric age in terms of communication development, arguing that as the world has been narrowed by electronics, it is nothing more than a village in which the electric speed brings together all social and political functions in a sudden explosion (McLuhan, 1964:5-12).

During the analysis the development of the information society, Sandra Braman defines three periods (Braman, 1993):

- electrification of communications in the mid-19th century;
- convergence of technologies and the understanding of the central role that information plays in society during the mid-20th century, and
- harmonization of information systems in the 1990s, which evened out or eliminated technological differences among various systems.

In the 1990s, the Japanese futurologist Yoneji Masuda defined four levels of development in the process of computerisation, thus predicting when the information society might become a reality."(Masuda, 1990:11-14):

1. major, science-based computerisation (1945-1970), when the processes related to major projects of a national scope i.e. outer space, defence;
2. management-based computerisation (1955-1980), which involves computerisation of business and governance, focusing on increases in GDP;
3. society-based computerisation (1970-1990) – introduction of information technologies for a wide range of social needs, the aim being an enhancement in national welfare;
4. individually based computerisation (1975-2000), when, according to Masuda, *"…each person will be able to use computer information obtained from man-machine systems…to resolve problems and pursue the new possibilities of the future"*.

It is also interesting to note that in the 1990s Manuel Castells proposed the assumption that the information and communication technologies have created a new kind of society – the *network society* (Castells, 2000). In this society networks of electronic mediation promote the development and spread of knowledge and information.
Researchers of these processes explain the aforementioned changes not just as a new form of production, but also as a new lifestyle. Masuda, for example, has proposed not only that the industrial society will be transformed into the information society, but the species *Homo sapiens* will be transformed into *Homo intelligens* (Masuda, 1990:142). Changes are described as an "*information element*", a "*new era*", and as a set of dramatised and mystified phenomena. This idea is based on the assumption that technologies are the decisive factor in changes in society and that the description of these changes will spread to all other areas.
One may say that the information environment is a set of important factors, resources and processes which create change both in education of society and in the industrial society itself. Increased knowledge is a qualitative phenomenon, not just a quantitative one, because the old media transmitted standardised messages to a unified mass

audience, while new communications media allow not just broadcasting but also narrowcasting. Information can be prepared, selected and obtained in line with the most specialised and individualised needs. That is why knowledge is not just based on an unprecedented level of technological innovations and economic development, but also becomes a cornerstone for a national economy and a key prerequisite for changes in employment structures (Kumar, 1995:10-11).

Participants in the educational information environment

In Latvia, people in the educational information environment can be divided into several groups on the basis of their interests and activities. First, there are individuals or consumers of knowledge for whom new technologies provide unprecedented opportunity to become directly involved in the public communications. Second, there are the media, which use traditional and new channels for educational needs as mass communications. Third, there are government institutions and private organisations which collect and maintain information, offering or selling access to it or underpinning the communications environment. Fourth, there are businesses, which use communications channels for marketing, to maintain links with clients. Fifth, there are various interest groups including political parties, public organizations and associations, which promote their level of recognition, communicate with their participants and supporters, and provide information resources.

The traditional strength of the individual in relation with the press, radio, television, books, the cinema etc., has to do with the ability of the individual to be selective about the media and media content which he or she chooses. This selectivity is influenced by social categories – the structuring of societies into specific groups on the basis of the assumption that individuals recognise their belonging to a group, as well as that people in one group are different from people in others. Without any doubt people belonging to educational sphere compose one group of professional interests. There are social relations – the social contacts and interpersonal relationships of the individual, as well as individual differences – descriptions which are unique for the individual despite his or her belonging to a concrete social group.

Individualisation means "*disintegration of previously existing social forms – for example, the increasing fragility of such categories as class and social status, gender roles, family, neighbourhood, etc*" (Beck 2003: 2). For that reason, the priority factor in individual media choice is individual difference, not an orientation toward the relevant social category.

Individual differences are also the cornerstone for determining and developing one's identity. According to Manuel Castells, identity is "*the process by which a social actor recognises himself and constructs meanings primarily on the basis of given cultural attributes, to exclude a broader reference to other social structures*" (Castells, 2000:22). The composition of the population in Latvia is shown at Fig. 1.

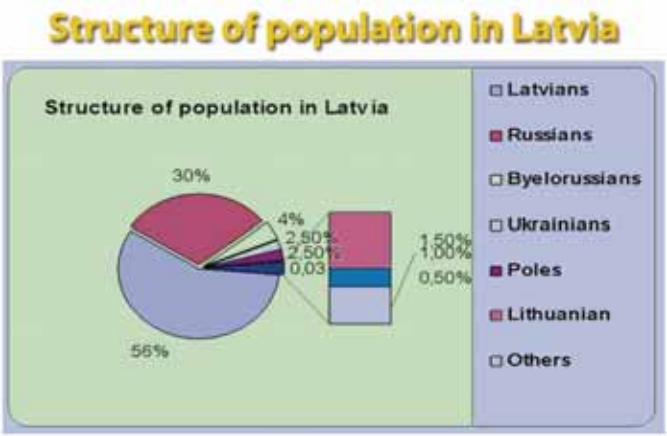

Fig. 1 *Population in Latvia (http://www.policy.lv/index.php?id=102631&lang=en Last visited 2007.05.12*

The media are defined as "*social institutions that play an essential part in social, economic and cultural life and in consequence are variously respected, feared, controlled valued and criticised* "(McQuail, 2003:37) They play the primary role in establishing the content of the information environment and in the dissemination of that information, even though the role of individuals, groups and communities has expanded thanks to individualisation in public communications. This is because the media are professionally organised communicators, ones with their own communication policies aimed at ensuring sustainability. The media, furthermore, have always been focused on the audience as a means for establishing networks.
In Latvia this can be seen in a fairly broad spectrum, with three major directions:

First, the media are as *public enlighteners*. In this content the function of the media is to direct the public, to provide information about correct/incorrect behaviours, to explain, to convince and to instruct. This means that the media must be "smarter" than their consumers; they must undertake the role of foster parents by demonstrating the correct choices.

Second, the media are as *messengers*. The main function of the media is to offer information – facts and opinions – and the quality of this process is characterised by the diversity of information. The task for the media is to offer a neutral reflection of society in its diverse, albeit contradictory manifestations, allowing users themselves to make critical judgements as to what is important and what position one might take. This is how the news media usually position themselves.

Third, the media are as *an arena* for public debate and for the provision of opportunities in the public sector. Here, the functions relate to the provision of a diversity of information, to analysis and critique of that information, and to the creation of frameworks for public debate. This direction includes elements from the two previous ones and is the most rational option for our contemporary society in Latvia.

The media, for their part, argue that their role is to manage information i.e. collecting, selecting, arranging, transmitting or ensuring availability to information in accordance with the needs and interests of potential users. The public, for its part, and people in education particularly, sees that the media pursue this role in different ways, depending on their goals - what kind of potential users to seek out and preserve, which expectations to satisfy and promote.

The Internet has caused fundamental changes in the existence and development of the media, but experience shows that this, all in all, has not destroyed traditional media industries, regular use of the Internet has not replaced the consumption of other media forms. One may say the Internet has led to radical changes in the perception of the media. If a newspaper was traditionally seen by the reader as a map then now it represents indexes and systems therein. The media in Latvia are losing their ability to express place, for instance, by placing the most important information on the front page, as in a shop window. Instead they are obtaining new and unlimited opportunities for expression in terms of time i.e. uninterrupted news flows, updating of information and space (virtually unlimited opportunities for the publication of information in terms of volume, depth and diversity, along with the ability for media texts to be packaged simultaneously for various audiences.

These innovations remain all but unused by Latvian publishers, radio and television outlets. They have mostly made use of the opportunities which the Internet affords in terms of interactivity and uninterrupted content, and it has only been recently that newspapers have, for instance, started to offer blogs. That is why Internet portals and information agencies which, thanks to the Internet, have become public channels for transmission are beginning to become risky competitors for the traditional media in Latvia – newspapers in particular.

The media have been affected significantly by the extended opportunities of individual freedom in the information environment, and this has to do with aforementioned manifestation of individualisation and interaction. Media owners and editors usually identify these phenomena at the level of results – there is a fragmentation and/or segmentation of the audience. In Latvia where the potential national market audience is comparatively small and is also divided up by language use, this process must be seen as risky for the mass media business. It is also true that the people of Latvia access media from Russia and other countries, mostly through satellite and cable television.

If, from the perspective of media business, we can speak of the fairly successful work of the media industry, which is evidenced by stable increases in advertising income,

then from the perspective of individual interests, the role of the media in the shaping of the information environment must be viewed more critically, because:

a) Latvia has a small number of media outlets which are oriented on the provision of high-quality information that refers to the usefulness of content in analysing economic, political, cultural and social phenomena and in predicting their development as well as the depth of information, the security of sources, the objectivity of content and
b) as media try to draw as close as possible to the consumerist expectations of the audience, their content has become far more commercialised.

In this context, the functions and roles of the new and public media, which are also international media, are quite important. The usage of the Internet resources, for instance, in comparison with European countries is shown at the Fig. 1. The countries were classified according to per cent of population that has access to the Internet.

Thus, as the information environment changes, one of the key existential issues with respect to the purpose of the media is still the extent to which the modern media meet the consumer and how the accountability and answerability of the media vis-à-vis consumers can be strengthened.

Opportunities afforded to individuals as the technological capacities are expanded more and more by other government institutions and private organisations, which collect, process, maintain and offer public access to information and data and/or ensure the communications environment.

Libraries are important institutions in shaping and influencing the information environment. In the spectrum of their roles in the Latvian information environment, there are two roles which are of key importance, even if they are fairly contradictory.

One of these roles is *to promote the equal ability of all residents* to use information resources. More than 2,000 libraries in Latvia are visited by 39% of the population to read books and periodicals, to access the Internet and to take part in events organised by the library (Zobena, 2005:70-71). Libraries also offer access to global full-text databases. Since 2004, the national agency which is called Cultural Information Systems has been working with the international eIFL.net Fund to conclude agreements on the use of the EBSCO, Cambridge Journals Online, Emerald, RUBRICON, Integrum Techno, OVID CAB Abstracts, ProQuest, and other databases of academic, scientific and public libraries. Local databases are also available through Latvia's libraries, as well as the databases of the LETA news agency.

The second function – *digitalisation of information resources* so as to establish the so-called digital libraries – is a key step in ensuring that the users in the information environment are independent of the factors of space and time. The focus in Latvia when it comes to digital libraries has been on the preservation of the country's cultural heritage, but not on the preservation in digital form of new texts. Digital libraries

represent a significant investment in overcoming the localised nature of the Latvian information environment. The Latvian National Digital library "Lettonica", which had some 450,000 digitalised pages of information at the beginning of 2006 (newspapers, maps, posters, postcards, notes, drawings, etc.) also had an archive of digital publications. The diagram below shows statistics Internet users, per cent of population that has access to the Internet and dynamics of growth between 2000 and 2007.

	EUROPE	**Population** ***2007***	**Internet users, latest data**	**% Population** ***Penetration***	**% Users Europe**	**Usage Growth** ***2000-07***
1	Norway	4,627,926	4,074,100	88.0 %	1.2 %	85.2 %
2	Netherlands	16,570,613	14,544,400	87.8 %	4.2 %	272.9 %
3	Iceland	301,931	258,000	85.4 %	0.1 %	53.6 %
4	Sweden	9,031,088	6,981,200	77.3 %	2.0 %	72.5 %
5	Portugal	10,642,836	7,782,760	73.1 %	2.2 %	211.3 %
6	Faroe Islands	47,511	34,000	71.6 %	0.0 %	1,033.3 %
7	Luxembourg	480,222	339,000	70.6 %	0.1 %	239.0 %
8	Switzerland	7,554,661	5,230,351	69.2 %	1.5 %	145.1 %
9	Denmark	5,468,120	3,762,500	68.8 %	1.1 %	92.9 %
10	United Kingdom	60,776,238	40,362,842	66.4 %	11.6 %	162.1 %
11	Germany	82,400,996	53,240,128	64.6 %	15.3 %	121.8 %
12	Liechtenstein	34,247	22,000	64.2 %	0.0 %	144.4 %
13	Finland	5,238,460	3,286,000	62.7 %	0.9 %	70.5 %
14	Slovenia	2,009,245	1,250,600	62.2 %	0.4 %	316.9 %
15	Monaco	32,671	20,000	61.2 %	0.0 %	185.7 %
16	Estonia	1,315,912	760,000	57.8 %	0.2 %	107.3 %
17	Italy	58,147,733	33,143,152	57.0 %	9.5 %	151.1 %
18	Austria	8,199,783	4,650,000	56.7 %	1.3 %	121.4 %
19	Spain	40,448,191	22,843,915	56.5 %	6.6 %	324.0 %
20	Belarus	9,724,723	5,477,500	56.3 %	1.6 %	2,943.1 %
21	Guernsey&Alderney	65,573	36,000	54.9 %	0.0 %	80.0 %
22	France	63,718,187	34,851,835	54.7 %	10.0 %	310.0 %
23	Belgium	10,392,226	5,490,000	52.8 %	1.6 %	174.5 %
24	San Marino	29,615	15,400	52.0 %	0.0 %	516.0 %
25	Ireland	4,109,086	2,060,000	50.1 %	0.6 %	162.8 %
26	Czech Republic	10,228,744	5,100,000	49.9 %	1.5 %	410.0 %
27	**Latvia**	**2,259,810**	**1,070,800**	**47.4 %**	**0.3 %**	**613.9 %**
28	Cyprus	788,457	356,600	45.2 %	0.1 %	197.2 %
29	Slovakia	5,447,502	2,255,600	41.4 %	0.6 %	247.0 %
30	Montenegro	684,736	266,000	38.8 %	0.1 %	n/a

31	Croatia	4,493,312	1,684,600	37.5 %	0.5 %	742.3 %
32	Poland	38,518,241	14,084,600	36.6 %	4.0 %	403.0 %
33	Greece	10,706,290	3,800,000	35.5 %	1.1 %	280.0 %
34	Hungary	9,956,108	3,500,000	35.2 %	1.0 %	389.5 %
35	Lithuania	3,575,439	1,221,700	34.2 %	0.4 %	443.0 %
36	Andorra	71,822	23,200	32.3 %	0.0 %	364.0 %
37	Malta	401,880	127,200	31.7 %	0.0 %	218.0 %
38	Romania	22,276,056	7,000,000	31.4 %	2.0 %	775.0 %
39	Bulgaria	7,322,858	2,200,000	30.0 %	0.6 %	411.6 %
40	Jersey	91,321	27,000	29.6 %	0.0 %	237.5 %
41	Turkey	71,158,647	16,000,000	22.5 %	4.6 %	700.0 %
42	Bosnia-Herzegovina	4,552,198	950,000	20.9 %	0.3 %	13,471.4 %
43	Russia	141,377,752	29,400,000	20.8 %	8.4 %	848.4 %
44	Macedonia	2,055,915	392,671	19.1 %	0.1 %	1,208.9 %
45	Moldova	4,328,816	727,700	16.8 %	0.2 %	2,810.8 %
46	Serbia	10,150,265	1,400,000	13.8 %	0.4 %	250.0 %
47	Albania	3,600,523	471,200	13.1 %	0.1 %	18,748.0 %
48	Vatican City State	767	93	12.1 %	0.0 %	0.0 %
49	Ukraine	46,299,862	5,545,000	12.0 %	1.6 %	2,672.5 %
50	Man, Isle of	75,831	--	**--**	**--**	0.0 %
51	Svalbard &Jan Mayen	2,274	--	**--**	**--**	0.0 %
	TOTAL Europe	**801,821,187**	**348,125,847**	**43.4 %**	**100.0 %**	**231.2 %**

Fig. 2 *Internet usage in Europe (www.internetworldstats.com)*

Rapidly developing digital resources are still hard to find in Latvia's information environment, because they are not conveniently and easily accessible from well-known and highly recognised portals. Users must rely on their own experience, or on Google, which promises to make global – including Latvian – information available to everyone.

As the Internet develops, new and far broader importance in the information environment is being gained by news agencies for which, unlike other media outlets, the Internet offered far more of an opportunity as a threat (Boyd-Barrett, 2000, 1:91). That is because "*established players are best positioned to take advantage of the Internet. They already have the news-gathering infrastructure of networks with primary sources, the know-how of writing, editing, illustrating and packaging, and the hard-*

earned credibility that can attract the customers who want to read what is provided" (ibid.)

Information from news agencies is the basic element of the news segments of Internet portals. Editors largely select news and prepare a news agenda that is related to the relevant portal's thinking. This phenomenon has proven to be a factor of influence in terms of the importance of newspapers, as well as radio and television as the sources educators and students in the emergence of individuals' information environment.

Thus, the news agencies, together with the Internet portals, have created a powerful and all-encompassing network for the dissemination of news. On the one hand, it reduces the phenomenon of fragmentation in the information environment, but on the other hand, it makes that environment more homogeneous and simple, because this stratum of information is largely related to the stating of phenomena and noticing of charges therein, without much of analysis.

Over the last few years, there has been a particularly rapid development of portals which could be defined as spaces for virtual communications. For instance, www.draugiem.lv, which was established in 2004, defined itself as a portal for various activities and mutual communications, one that is meant for a wide segment of society and received an average of 226,000 hits each day in the spring of 2006 – an increase of 2.3 times over since the spring of 2005. Other similar portals include www.inbox.lv (253,000 daily hits) and www.one.lv (163,000) (see http://www.tns.lv).

These portals offer vivid manifestation of the processes of individualisation and interaction, and there has been insufficient research and evaluation of their importance in terms of changes in Latvia's information environment. The point is that they have had a significant effect in changing the communications capacities of individuals and groups. They are also becoming an important source of information. Specialists of the speciality public relations, for example, often use www.draugiem.lv to find subjects and heroes for their materials. These portals establish intensive and extensive personal communications network, which means that of greater importance in the individual's information environment is private information sources.

Among businesses, those which are most active in influencing the information environment directly or indirectly and those which use the Internet – information services, Internet banks, Internet shops, information and communication technologies companies and Internet service providers. This is also true of those which publish public relations or corporate magazines that are used to improve subject of knowledge. These marketing channels are also used offer clients information about the latest events in various sectors. In this sense, businesses have a similar function in the information environment as media companies do.

Interest groups play an insignificant role in the Latvian information environment at this time, and their information resources and communications channels are mostly used to enhance the level of recognition of the groups. Several of Latvia's political parties also have internet sites which seek to become virtual communities, but because most parties

have few members, this can be seen as more of simulation of communications networks.

The content of the information environment

The main role in shaping the content of Latvia's information environment is still performed by television, radio, newspaper and magazine producers. The traditional media cause a confluence in the content of the information environment by quoting one another, by maintaining and continuing events, and narratives, jointly and by being separated in terms of orientation toward the language readers – Latvian and Russian. The content of the information environment in Latvia has a clear lack of narrative and originality.

A critical approach to the media is also enhanced by their nature as "gatekeepers" and setters of agenda. On the one hand, the audience expects the media to produce a" social map", but on the other hand, it criticises the media to obviously failing to reflect the full spectrum of views and facts. Sometimes audiences perceive the media even as representing the interests only of specific groups.

The infrastructure of the information environment

Jan van Dijk (2006: 25-27), describes the infrastructure of the network society as a set of social, technical and media networks. Social networks emerge with the support of technical and media networks and they can be divided up among four levels:

1. individual relationships, which cover the private relationships of individuals with friends, neighbours, relatives and colleagues;
2. group and organisation relations, which are manifested through virtual teams and projects, for instance;
3. social relations, which shape the political, economic, civic, and institutional networks of societies; and
4. global relations, which bring together countries and international organisations at the global level

Changes in communications, as linked primarily to the new opportunities which technologies provide to communications participants can be reviewed from various perspectives, but there are four approaches which are most visible: (1) the technocratic approach; (2) the social structure approach; (3) the information structure and exclusion approach, ans (4) the modernisation and capitalism approach (Sassi, 2005, 7(5):686-689).

The technocratic approach focuses on the Internet, which changes everyday life, ensures greater work opportunities, facilitates education and strengthens communities. The most important factors in ensuring these opportunities include accessibility, content and the competence of users. In Latvia, this approach is often most visible, and it is

strongly supported if there are economic interests in facilitating the market for information and communication technology market, in ensuring and dividing up government procurement for information and communication technologies.

Despite the fairly visible superiority of this approach, however, there are indicators to suggest that a digital divine has emerged – computers and the Internet are used more extensively in urban than in rural areas. In other words computers and Internet use are affected by income, age, etc. It means that the availability of the digital information environment is very different for various residents of Latvia – i.e. there are no equal opportunities. In overcoming these problems, of key importance in recent years have been achievement in the computerisation of Latvia's regional libraries – 86% of them are computerised and 77% have an Internet connection (Brikse, 2006: 389).

In the social structure approach, the focus is on the Internet dialogue and search functions which enhance opportunities for civic participation and for influencing decisions. This approach has not attracted much attention in Latvia, and in those cases where there has been attention, it has pretty much been a formality. Governance in Latvia is not oriented toward an active exchange of information with local residents.

In the information structure and exclusion approach, the key problems are seen in the unequal opportunities and relations between the centre and the periphery. In any description of Latvia's information environment, one can see very visible differences between capital city Riga and other cities, to say nothing of rural regions. The traditional sources of information are concentrated in Riga, and that means that the capital city and life therein are reflected far more than anywhere else. Riga is also the place where library resources, cultural and education institutions are concentrated, and this has the automatic side-effect of meaning that the school children and students there have better the Internet access.

The modernisation and capitalism approach seeks out causes for the increasing influence of information technologies. Castells has described this as "*information capitalism*" wherein education and the ability of individuals to enhance their education are of key importance (Castells, (2000). In this respect, desires are more in place in Latvia than realities in terms of issues such as the number of university study slots in which tuition is covered by the state.

Various studies have shown that youth have better computer and the Internet usage skills. One reason for this was the Latvian Educational System Informatisation (LISS) project, which took the complex approach of providing computers and software to educational institutions, training teachers, ensuring internet connections, and designing and using electronic educational materials and was launched in 1997.

The level of modernisation and information skills remains middle in Latvia as it was seen at the Fig.1 above, and this problem is starting to resemble a closed cycle. In some territories of Latvia, 70% of employees have non-existent or insufficient computer skills, 60% of employers, meanwhile, think that this is something which employees themselves must organise http://www.likta.lv/documents /aktivitates/petijums, 2007).

Conclusions

The development of the information environment is a successive process starting when someone begins a systematic collection and storage of knowledge, which can then be transferred to others. These processes are implemented by participants i.e. individuals, groups, institutions, who use the technologies of their age. The basic elements in the information environment include individuals, content and the relevant infrastructure. These elements have been used in all times and in all societies and differences relate to the conditions created by societies or individuals.

The content of Latvia's information environment reflects a general phenomenon which is seen in other societies as well – "*traditional media emerged within the ethos of mid-modernity and its focus on the nation-state and national identity. … Alternatively, new media emerged in late modernity with an emphasis on individualisation and choice within a culture of freedom which resists strong institutional structures in order to encourage communication initiatives at the local, national and supranational levels."* (Castells, 2001:23-27)

Latvia's information and communications infrastructure, taken as a whole, still does not ensure individuals with a convenient and stable accessibility of the information environment at a socially accessible price in any populated area in Latvia. This reduces both motivation abilities to learn the necessary skills. The lack of skills, in turn, keeps people from using the Internet and its resources.

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Who is the young generation?

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Our society got through major changes in the last couple of years. Lifestyle, nature of work, the way of spending free time or human relations - everything has changed. We live in an electronic and information age and the development in these fields is so fast, that the older and even part of the middle generation cannot intercept all the trends. Kids are better at using communication and information technologies than their parents. Who is the young generation? I tried to find the answer among students of two universities, one of them is private and the other one public. In 2007/2208, I questioned first year students in their marketing classes. They were asked to write an essay and answer the following questions:

A) Who am I?
What kind of values do I accept?
What I consider to be important?
What would I wish to achieve in my life (private, professional)?
How would I characterize my life style?
What is limiting me?
To whom/what am I responsible?

B) Me as a consumer
What does it mean "responsible buying decision"? Do I wish to make responsible buying decisions? Why? Responsible to whom/to what?
What kind of information I need to make responsible buying decisions?
Have I enough information to make responsible buying decisions?
To what extent I trust information – from producers or advertisements? Why?
Is price an indicator of quality? Why?

I analyzed 76 essays and I can say there was no difference between answers from students of public and private universities. That is the reason why I do not provide information about university reference. Italic represents authentic quotes of the students.

A) Who am I

What kind of values do I accept?

The most often named values were family, love, health and friendship. Part of the young people realized today's way of life leads to vagueness.

Most of the people follow certain norms, rules or trends but just a few know the real values.
Consuming society, high consumption, daily purchases and going to shopping malls is our everyday routine.

I try not to appreciate things that are easy to change.

None and all. Values as good, love, justice are creating certain boundaries to my actions. It´s not my main goal to reach these values but they represent the main frame of my behavior.

My parents taught me values like love, family, health, friendship and I think that they are the core values to build on to. When I grew up and I started to feel responsible for my choices I started to accept other values like humility and justice. The values that I appreciate in people are honesty, free-heartedness *and fair play.*

I accept more values. The basic value for me is the family, followed by health. The third value for me is the money. It is hard to do things without money. One saying says: Money rules the world.

What I consider to be important?
Important things in students lives come from values they accept. Some of them are connected to their families or friends, others are focused on themselves.

I prefer to live now and not to think much about future because future may never come.

I try to live on the edge of a coin. On one side there is the material world, desire for money which provides freedom, give the chance to have unique experiences or possibility to travel and to meet other cultures. On the other side of the coin there are things with bigger value like faith, love, family or hope that this world can be better.

The most important value for me is the family. Then comes the health. Money is another value that I appreciate. Life without money would be boring and not pleasant. In a certain point of view money is a basic need because money can help us to fulfill our dreams.

Principles showing me the right way and rules following the safe path.

It depends on individual needs, desires and values.
In my life I would not like to take happiness for granted but I would like to see happiness as something that I have to be thankful for.

Self-socialization, to have the needed education and financial independence.

Happiness, love and family are a cliché but they represent most of the things important for every one of us.

Quite important for me are the details of an everyday life. Our life is built of these details.

Everything that makes one happy. At first, health and family and then come friends, education and money. Good friends are like a family and family is the most important of all. Education is required by our society that is the reason why it´s important but I think it´s the talent and skills that count. And unfortunately it is impossible to live without money.

The most important in my life is my personal development.

What would I wish to achieve in my life (private, professional)?
Career and happy family are what young people dream of. In their answers there are ambitions of having own business or achieving managerial position.

Loving family, husband, healthy children. Living in nature in a little village, in a cozy house. I am not sure in what kind of managerial position I would like to work.

A lot. I would like to have my business but right now I do not think about my future.

A work that would satisfy me. I do not want to work in an office for eight hours a day. I need work where I can do something for the others or where I can use my fantasy and feel free.

Regarding my private life I do not think about such issues. It seems to be so far away. I would like to work on my career before I would make the decision to have kids. I am not trying to say it is not important to me at all but right now this issue is so distant.

I would like to do something that I would be really good at. I would like to do something that I would be remembered for. I do not want my name to be forgotten after a few generations.

I do not plan my life. I think I would be disappointed if my plans didn`t come true.

I can picture myself as a CEO of an important media agency, which means good salary and comfortable life.

To find a partner, to have a family and I also would like to be exceptional.

How would I characterize my life style?
Students are not devoted just to school. Many of them work or run own businesses. They spend their free time with friends or just go shopping (especially girls). Many of them have hobbies – dancing, painting, horses etc. Travelling is among their hobbies and it is a good way for them to meet other people and other cultures.

As a child I grew up in a golden cage surrounded by expensive things which was normal for me. I do what I want and what I like. But 80% of my leisure time I spend with things and activities that push me toward my goals. I try to act in my own interest but always think about my near ones.

My life is quite simple, related to university. I like to party or just go out.

My big passion is theatre and dancing.

I live stressful and busy life. Most of my time I spend working, in university or with my girlfriend.

I love traveling because I think it forms my personality. Experiences with other cultures influenced my opinion on world and my life.

I do a lot of sports and I try to live healthy. I am quite lazy but I like challenges. My leisure time I use to spend intuitively.

What is limiting me?
Some of them feel free and do not feel to be limited. Part of them sees limitations in themselves, time, money or negative characteristics of other people.

I don´t feel being limited. Maybe just by stupidity and foxiness. But I feel responsible for people with these attributes because many times they do not know the consequences of their actions. And I could be the one to show them the right way.

I don´t think I am limited by anything. I would never allow anyone or anything to limit me. I can say that school may be a small limitation because I can`t work as much as I would like to.

Envy limits people because they cannot grow in a spiritual way. There are many people who think to be more just because of their possession.

People should not limit themselves.

Time and stupidity. Other things could seem to be limitations but they´re not. You should not create hurdles and limitations in your own mind. You always need to hesitate about your own truth and be ready to learn new things.

Nothing.

Time and money because I study and I do no t have a time to work.

Myself, my conscience, law, moral, time, work, school. But I don`t think these are the real limitations.

Family and finances for my projects.

To whom/what am I responsible?

Young people feel to be responsible to themselves or their family. Just a few answers were dealing with environment or society.

I feel responsible for my family and I cannot leave Slovakia.

I am responsible to myself and to my health.

To my family especially my parents. I don´t want to disappoint them.

To society, family and friends. And myself too.

I am responsible just for myself. But also for other people, this state or the environment. This is not the responsibility that I feel every day.

B) Me as a consumer

What does it mean "responsible buying decision"?

For most of the students is responsible purchase decision a satisfactory purchase they do not regret. It means they buy what they need or something with favorable

price/quality ratio. A purchase should fulfil their expectations. Just a few young people said it is important to weigh the environmental consequences.

Consumers should think about their purchases. They should think if they really need what they want to buy or if it is just their actual desire. To buy a fur coat is like paying for killing animals.

Buying a product that represents our needs and expectations for the price that we are willing to pay.

Warranty, price for the quality and satisfying the needs.

We are responsible for the environment and we should make the choices that do not molest the environment.

When we do not buy things that we do not need.

Quality for a good price.

To make choices based on information about chosen products and comparing these products.

Responsible to myself.

That means I am fully aware of what I bought and I take all the consequences resulting from my decision.

The best choice for me.

Thinking about purchases buying what I need and products on sale.

Do I wish to make responsible buying decisions? Why? Responsible to whom/what?

There was a clear primacy of making a responsible purchase decision in answers of the students. Their reasoning depended on what they understand under this concept. Mostly it was meeting their own expectations.

Yes. Everybody who has limited finances has to think what and for how much to buy. This decision is responsible for one`s finances.

I prefer quality to image and quantity. These decisions are responsible to my parents and myself.

People wonder how many sick and obese people there are. But it is the consequence of their life style. We do not realize this because we do not care about ourselves.

It depends on finances. When I have a lot of money I can buy things that I do not really need and that is not responsible.

Investing my money in clever purchases that satisfy my expectations and needs. I am a consumer who knows about his rights to choose.

My purchase decisions should be responsible to myself.

What kind of information I need to make responsible buying decisions?
Young people need to know nature of product for their responsible purchase decision. Part of them also needs to know some information about producers.

Scientists give us contrary information. It`s hard to know where the truth is. I trust my own experiences.

I prefer healthy life style. That`s the reason why following qualities are important to me: ingredients, country of origin, content of artificial and chemical elements.

Common sense.

I don`t feel being always informed about products.

I gain information from commercials, internet or mass media. If my purchase is not so important (e. g. food) I can find information on the package or commercial posters.

Beside the basic information about products I should know something about the producer and also the product impact on environment (waste, using resources).

The most important information for me is the brand.

Have I enough information to make responsible buying decisions?
From the answers we can assume that students do not think to have problems finding needed information about products. But part of them thinks there is never enough information, or the available information may not always be true.

Information can give me just certain direction. But when I like the product not even million people can talk me out of buying it.

We do not enough information about certain products to make responsible decision.

In these days it is not the matter of not having enough information. Many times we are just lazy. Most of the information comes from the producers. Commercials can be misleading and because of that we should use the third source of information – discussions forum on the internet, reviews and comments.

I think consumers do not always have enough information but many times they are uncertain, supple and they do not care about themselves.

I have never thought about this issue. I think it is almost impossible to be uninformed.

I try to gather enough information to make responsible decision.

Sometimes the amount of information is not relevant. More important can be e.g. time available for a certain buying decision.

To what extent I trust information – from producers or advertisements? Why?
Young people trust information from producers more than information coming from commercials. They do not trust commercials or commercials are for the students a source of information about products.

I don`t pay attention to commercials.

I trust commercials and producers who I know.

Commercial is just a form of product presentation but not presentation of product attributes.

I trust information from the producer more than from commercial.

I think a good commercial leads us to an irresponsible purchase decision.

I try to rely on my own intuition and I think retailer always wants only my money.
Commercials are not bad or useless. You just need to choose which information to believe. If the commercial doesn`t contain too many positive information I am satisfied.

I am careful with commercials.

Is price an indicator of quality? Why?
Students are aware that quality products cannot be cheap. But on the other hand, they have the experience higher price does not always mean high quality.

It is impossible to say the higher price the higher quality.

Brands with good reputation could be the guarantee of quality.

Sometimes. Other times, image is the indicator.

Price is the indicator of quality. More expensive products should be more than just a standard – better materials, better work, more tested. Unfortunately it is not always like this.

High price doesn`t always mean high quality. Expensive things evoke quality and luxury.

Products made of superior elements will cost more. Many times the real product value is overpaid because of exclusivity.

Price should reflect quality but it doesn`t work this way.

Products made in China or India are cheaper than the ones made in Slovakia. A quality indicator should not be the price but the producer.

If we do not talk about super luxurious products price can partly reflect the quality.

Conclusion
Students are young people who already work or at least think about their future career. They appreciate values like family, love, friendship, money. When they do not study or work, they like to spend their free time in circle of friends. They feel responsible for themselves, their family or friends. Just a few of the students think about consequences of their actions in terms of environment or society. They live in information age and they do not think it is hard to find needed information. Young people trust information from producers more than information from commercials. Sometimes they get product information from several tests, reviews or discussion forums on the internet.
They know quality products cannot be cheap. But on the other hand, they have the experience higher price does not always mean high quality.
In conclusion, thought of one of the students:

We should buy things remembering we live once just once.

Some aspects of consumer citizenship education in home economics students' knowledge practice and experience

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Introduction

Structural changes in the national economy, moving to free market economy, makes drastic changes in the whole society. People have to be ready to make the right responsible choice considering their time, money resources and environmental aspects. When shopping it is necessary to be competent in the enormous information flow, references and to be able to distinguish the valuable information from the advertising tricks. These aspects of Consumer Citizenship Education have been integrated in such study subjects as Home Economics, Social Science, Mathematics, foreign languages in Latvia (http://isec.gov.lv/normdok/mk061027.htm), but our research work is promoted to Home Economics study subject in school (Lice 2000) as well as in Latvia University of Agriculture. Throughout the centuries home economics has proved its significance in increasing the quality of human life. It includes the following lifelong resources: physical, economical, biological, organizational, social and cultural that relates to the sustainable development.

Experience is defined as interconnection of the pupils or student's knowledge, skills and attitudes that are acquired as a result of practical activities (Pedagogijas terminu skaidrojosa vardnica 2000: 130). Scientist D. Pratt characterizes the experience and emphasises that it is necessary to pay the main attention to the present not the past or the future. "We can't prepare students suitably denying the present time." (Prets 2000: 80). We are living in the time when we are living and not in another one. Only if we enjoy and understand all existing experience of the present moment, we will be ready to do the same in the future. It is the only way to prepare for the meaningful future.

It is not possible to do a purposeful action without knowledge. Knowledge is the basic element of the content of education. The general experience of human beings is expressed through the knowledge acquired by previous generations. (Sorokins 1977). I.Podlasii characterizing the basic categories of pedagogy points out that knowledge is a reflection of objective reality in facts, ideas, perception and laws of science (Podlasii 2000). It is true that knowledge is the strength, but lack of knowledge is weakness in this epoch of information, emphasises D. Pratt (Prets 2000). Knowledge is deeply connected with a student, because a personality and the world outlook are developed in the study process. Knowledge is dynamic and it is necessary to develop it in the life-long learning process. I.Zogla indicates the quality of knowledge that can be wide,

narrow, expanding or complicated, sustainable or superficial, useful or passive. Knowledge includes three types of information: conceptual (about work, society and thinking process); meta-cognitive (about knowledge and its acquiring); socio-cultural (intellectual value: morality, ethical standard, traditions). (Zogla 2001)
By the opinion of scientists in didactic specialists (I.Lerner, M.Skatkin, N.Sorokin, T.Iljina, J. Babanski u.c.), skills are defined as a complex of action, that has been done on the basis of knowledge acquired according to tasks and rules put forward. Skills depend on carrying out settled actions in the appointed sequence. A skill is an ability to realize some action not only in a definite situation but also in case when the initial conditions have changed. I. Podlasii thinks that skills as readiness to carry out practical and theoretical actions conscientiously and independently on the basis of life experience and acquired knowledge. (Podlasii 2000)
Attitudes are very specific and multi-shaped. Humans' attitude towards the environment and their expression of feelings are not equal to their knowledge and acquired skills. Pupils and students could have the same knowledge but they could have different opinions about things and happenings that determine their action. Humans' opinions and beliefs develop into the interaction of knowledge and activities, positive attitude towards life, neighbours and themselves. (Spona 2001)

The growth of personality, consumer citizenship consciousness focuses on cognitive knowledge. Practical activities have been emphasized on the basis of intellectual action in consumer citizenship education. Consumer Citizenship education include the development of communication skills, decision making skills, problem solving skills, creative and change adoption skills (Guidelines for consumer education in the Baltic 2002) The content of Consumer citizen education is acquired gradually. Thus acquisition takes place in different levels. The level is characterized by knowledge acquisition, skills acquisition as well as the development of positive emotional experience. I. Lerner emphasizes three levels of education content acquisition (Vidusskolas didaktika 1984):

- The perception and remembering of the learned that is shown by preciseness or close reproduction
- The use of knowledge or creative activities according to the sample or in similar situation
- The use of knowledge or creative activities in unknown, unfamiliar situations

The acquisition is successful if there have been all the three levels in the process of learning. The third level is only possible after the first two levels. A pupil's precise reproduction testifies about the first level of acquisition. A practical usage following a teacher's sample shows the second level. In the third level pupils use creatively the previously acquired knowledge and skills.

The research was based on the acknowledgement of this level.

Investigation methodology

The number of products has grown considerably in the market lately. It has become more complicated to obtain information about all the products in the market, consider it and make the right choice. Consumers are overloaded by information especially through advertisements and a TV commercial which tends to sell goods and services rather than inform and educate consumers. It is a big burden to consumers as they have to consider information about goods and services which is not an easy task without special knowledge. Information plays a great role in reality. One of the preconditions of effective and economical shopping is the skill of reading labels and information on the product packaging. During the teaching learning process pupils show that they have excellent knowledge in the sphere of information and advertising and they understand its role when buying different goods. Although there can be different problems in a real life. (Dislere 2004)

The purpose of this article is to investigate interconnection between consumers' knowledge and practice concerning consumer citizenship information. The scientific research has been carried out in Latvia University of Agriculture and Jelgava Elementary School No 4 during 2007. There were 112 respondents invited in this research. In the beginning of the research work all the respondents were divided in two groups: Group A – 50 school pupils, who learn home economics and second respondent group B – 62 students of the University, from different specialities and different Latvia regions. Different research methods such as: discussions, questionnaires, observations and self-estimation in the current investigation were used. To investigate precisely the interconnection between the respondents' knowledge and practice the research was divided into 2 parts:

1. Part: Respondents' self-estimation of their theoretical knowledge
2. Part: Respondents' questionnaire about their practical action

In the first part the respondents gave self evaluation of their knowledge answering the questions of experts. The questions checked the knowledge gained in consumer citizenship education. There were the following themes: Information on the product label and packaging; problems with purchase of non-qualitative goods and the solution; economy of electricity, water; influence of advertisements. There were 4 possible answers on the questions: 'I know'; 'I know almost'; 'I know partly; 'I know little'.

Second part was a respondents' questionnaire about their practical action. In order to do the research work the questions were divided in three aspects. This division enabled the authors to make a more detailed analysis of the link between information, product purchasing and the respondents' attitude to it. The three aspects are the following: 1.

Direct information; 2. Opinion; 3. Purchase background. All the three aspects of questionnaire are closely connected. They complement each other.

First aspect deals mainly with the direct information, attention is paid to reading the information on the label during the purchasing of the goods. Evaluation is done by 4 points: 'read all the information'; 'read partially'; 'read some'; 'read none'. Respondents reveal the real position of information to which people pay attention in the shop when buying some goods. Evaluation is done of some aspects of labelling.

Second aspect deals with the respondents' opinion of purchase and information. The respondents analyze the situation when there is no information or label on the product. Evaluation is done by 5 points: 'buy the product'; 'buy with worry'; 'ask a shop assistant'; 'don't buy'; 'other'. Knowledge about consumer rights is very important. We have often bought some goods which do not satisfy our needs. It could be found out by asking a direct question: Have you ever bought a non-qualitative product? It is important to find out if the respondents use their consumer rights. Evaluation is done by 4 possible answers: 'yes'; 'rarely'; 'very rarely'; 'never'. Situations are offered afterwards. One of the main aspects in consumer education is the understanding of economical saving and use. For instance, do you do anything at home to save? Evaluation is done by 4 points: 'yes'; 'partly'; 'little'; 'nothing'.

Third aspect reveals a purchase background – advertising, information, other guidance. Different questions are included in this part. One situation is described. Different yoghurts have similar advertising information – healthy, stimulates stomach activity... What will determine your choice? Evaluation is done towards some aspects: 'interesting packing'; 'producer'; 'new product'; 'price'; 'quantity'; 'by offer'.

The results have been summarized and the relevant ones are presented graphically using calculations of percentage. The materiality level is determined using Yates' p-value (Preacher 2001).

Results and discussion

Figures 1-5 illustrate the analysis made in the research work. From the obtained results it is possible to see that the self evaluation of the pupils and students about their theoretical knowledge of consumer education is rather high. 40% of the pupils and 64.5% of students have confirmed that they know what information should be on the packaging of household cleaning devices and foodstuffs. Only 12% (10%+2%) of pupils and 9.7% (6.5%+3.2%) of students point out their partial and little knowledge of this question.

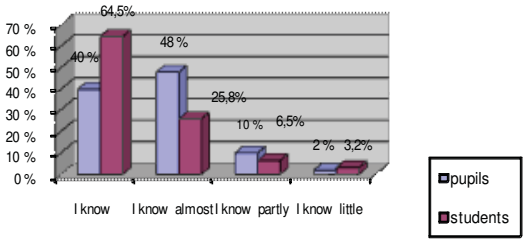

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Fig. 1 *Knowledge about necessary information on labels*

Comparison of these data with the questionnaire data reveals that 52% (28%+24%) of pupils and 67.8% (33.9%+33.9%) of students when buying a product read all the information or read it partly (questionnaire data about practice). Only 28% of pupils and 33.9% of students read all the information! See Figure 2.

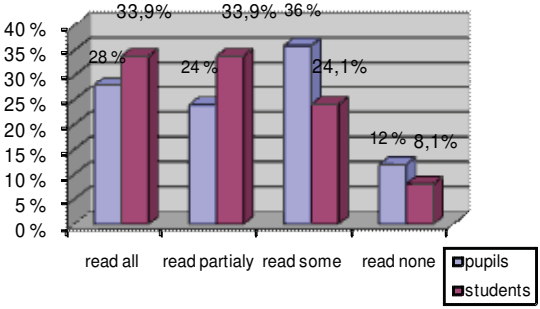

Fig. 2 *Information read during shopping*

Some information is read by 36% of pupils and 24.1% of students but none is read by 12% of pupils and 8.1% of students. Comparing results in Figure 1 and Figure 2 one can conclude that both the pupils and the students assure their theoretical knowledge about the necessity of information but practically many people read it only partially. Checking χ^2 criterion with Yates correction *very essential differences* were found between the pupils' knowledge and practical action (accordingly Yates' p-value = 0.005) and students' knowledge and practical action (accordingly Yates' p-value=0.008). The main indicators what the respondents read on the food labels is – expiry date (56% of pupils; 66.1% of students) but on the household cleaning devices – its purpose (42% of pupils and 48.4% of students).

The respondents give interesting answers about the purchase of goods without labels. See Figure 3.

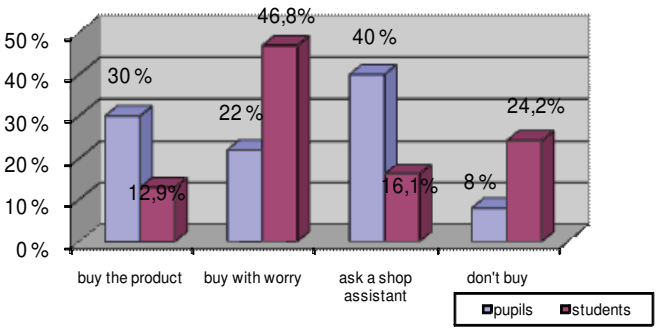

Fig. 3 *Buying goods and products without label*

The respondents understand the necessity of information although in case of its absence they buy the goods anyway ('buy the product' and 'buy with worry') 52% (30%+22%) of pupils and 59.7% (12.9%+46.8%) of students. 40% of pupils and 16.1% of students would ask a shop assistant. Only 8% of pupils and 24.2% of students would not buy the goods without labels!

50% of pupils and 32.3% of students have often bought non-qualitative goods. Here we can see a drastic difference in the answers. It could be explained by the pupils' critical attitude because of being teenagers. 24% of pupils and 12.9% of students have chosen the answers – very rarely or never. Both the pupils and students know their consumer rights in case of purchase of non-qualitative goods. 78% ('I know' and 'I know almost') of pupils and 75.8% of students prove it by self evaluation. But practically it is solved only by 16% of pupils and 24.2% of students, but 'very rarely' or 'never' solved by 52% of pupils and 50% of students. The respondents give the following reasons: no time, disbelief in solution, discomfort, shame. Checking χ^2 criterion with Yates correction *essential differences* were found between the pupils' knowledge and practical action (accordingly Yates' p-value=0.012) and students' knowledge and practical action (accordingly Yates' p-value = 0.020)

Analyzing other economic aspects the respondents (60% of pupils and 64.5% of students) point out that they know how to economize electricity and water in life. Only 10% of pupils and 6.5% of students know a little about the rational use of resources. But in real life 32% of pupils and 43.5% of students pay attention to the economy of resources. Partially is concerned – 38% of pupils and 35.5% of students. Nothing is

done by 6% of pupils, but no students (0%). See Figure 4.

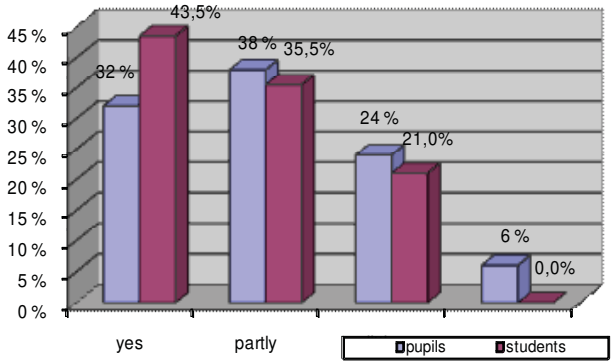

Fig. 4 *Economy of electricity and water*

Comparing results one can see the differences between the pupils and students' knowledge and practical action. In average 62.5% of respondents know about the economy of resources but practically only 38.4% do it. Checking with χ^2 criterion with Yates correction there are *differences* between the pupils' knowledge and practical action. Yates' p-value = 0.06. There are *essential differences* between the students' knowledge and practice. Yates' p-value = 0.046.

Interesting data was acquired about the choice of goods using the same advertisement. They reveal a rather big difference among the answers of the pupils and students. See Figure 5.

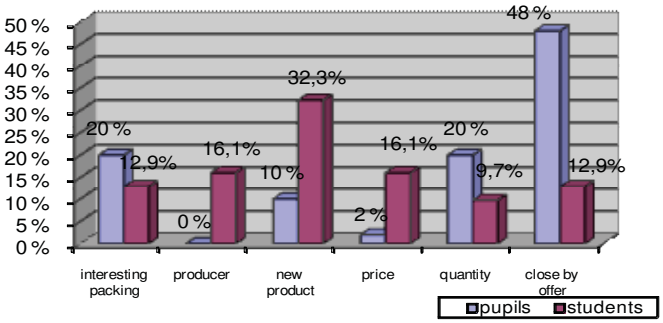

Fig. 5 *Choice of equal content of advertisement information*

The pupils' choice is mainly determined by close by offer - 48%, quantity - 20% and interesting packing - 20%. The students' pay attention: to a new product - 32.3%, to a producer - 16.1% and to the price - 16.1%. There are even controversial views. The pupils' mainly prefer close by offer - 48%, but only12.9% choose the same. But students prefer the indicator a new product - 32.3%, but only 10% of pupils think the same. The indicator –producer is significant to 16.1% of students, but it is - 0% for pupils. Thus the pupils and students pay attention to different aspects. Their choice is affected by the psychological features of their age group.

The results show that there are large differences between students' theoretical knowledge and real practical action during shopping. It is proved by the percentage of data and results between the theoretical knowledge and its practical use. 88% (44%+48%) pupils and 90.3% (64.5%+25.8%) students know the demands for labels which inform the consumers about important aspects. But when shopping only by 28% of pupils and 33.9% of students read the labels. The respondents have knowledge about consumer rights and their protection (pupils – 78%; students - 75.8%). But in real life it is only used by 48% (16%+32%) of pupils and 50% (24.2%+25.8%) of students. Economy action is known by 90% of pupils and 93.5% of students, but it is practically done by 70% (32%+38%) of pupils and 79% (43.5%+35.5%) of students.

Conclusions

There are large differences between consumers' (pupils and students) theoretical knowledge and real practical action during shopping. There is little interconnection between consumers' (pupils and students) knowledge and practice within consumer citizenship information.

Very essential differences in both groups of the respondents were found checking the indicator of reading information with χ^2 criterion with Yates correction (Yates' p-value = 0.005 /pupils/ and 0.008 /students/). In the indicator of consumer protection *essential differences* in both groups of the respondents were found (Yates' p-value = 0.012 /pupils/ and 0.020 /students/). In the indicator of resource economy there are *differences* in the pupils' group (Yates' p-value:=0.06) and *essential differences* in the students' group (Yates' p-value = 0.046).

The research shows that consumers' (pupils and students) knowledge in consumer information is satisfactory but practice is not adequate enough. Overload of information influences consumers (pupils and students) and they have difficulties to select the necessary details for responsible shopping decisions.

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The assessment of GMO products by chosen groups of Polish consumers

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Summary
How are GMO products perceived in Poland and how is the demand for information about products consisting of GMO? This problem was investigated in December 2007 using a survey. The questions were directed to groups of 70 people (students of agriculture, economy and biotechnology of Rzeszow University, Poland).

Key words: GMO, survey, the assessment of information sources

Introduction

The general principle of producing a genetically modified organism (GMO) is to intentionally change genetic material of an organism to generate new traits by increased production efficiency of protein occurring in the organism or stimulate production of new proteins. This term does not always imply insertions of genes from one into another species, but may include it. This feature can be finally effective to increase food nutritive value or agricultural production efficiency, cheaper production of medicines or vaccines. Thus financing research into GMOs is sometimes considered to be economically justified. The history of GMO's commercial use is relatively long in that the structure of DNA was revealed in 1953 and the development of genetic engineering (GE) started in the 1970s. In 1978 the Genetech Company revealed the creation of a modified strain of *Escherichia coli* - bacteria capable to produce human insulin [7]. Soon after this, the technique was put into effect [3] and became the main source of this important medicine on drugs market until today.

Currently, examples of GMOs are numerous and highly diverse, and include genetically modified animals (as laboratory strains of mice, quick growing fish or cattle producing blood clotting factor), transgenic plants (maize resistant to diseases, rice containing larger amount of vitamin A), or also various types of microbes (as mentioned above; *E.coli* and many others). The generation and use of GMOs is for many reasons. We should mention among them: research in biology or medicine, the production of pharmaceuticals or industrial enzymes, applications aimed at improving human health (gene therapy) or agriculture [for example: 11].

Genetically modified food (GM) is a food produced from GMOs that have had their genetic material altered through GE techniques. GM food was first put on the market in the early nineties. The most common modified foods are derived from plants such as

soybean, corn or cotton. However, very often consumers don't eat GM directly because one of the most important applications of it is in fodder production.
The main producers of GM food over the world are such countries as USA, Argentina and Canada. In European countries Bulgaria, France, Germany, Romania and Spain are mentioned as GM food producers [2].
Because we know numerous examples of human actions turning against humans themselves, such as the nuclear bomb at Hiroshima, effects of cotton growing in the Aral Sea area, the effects of microorganisms penetration into ecosystems from laboratories, in all the countries mentioned, ecologists protest against excessive and rapid, GMO-related interference in nature. Wise consumers often support them deciding not to buy GMO products. Poland as a member of EU, is also in the centre of a broad, wide and ambiguous GMO problem.
The aim of this paper was to evaluate GMO products' perception by chosen groups of Polish people (students of agriculture, economy and biotechnology of Rzeszow University, Poland).

Methodology
The survey was carried out in December 2007 on three groups (70 randomly chosen people in each one) consisting of students of agriculture, economy and biotechnology (Rzeszow University, Poland).
The questionnaire included 25 questions, 6 were the most important to attain the aim of this publication:

Have you ever met with a term GMO? (possible answers: yes, no, I do not know/I do not remember)
Where did you get this information from? (high school, studies, books, media, others)
Would you buy GMO products knowingly? (5 degree Linkert scale: definitely yes, rather yes, indifference, rather no, definitely no)
Do you think that your attitude to GMO results from...? (religion, your outlook on life, knowledge or lack of knowledge, others)
Would you buy expensive GMO-free product instead of cheaper product based on GMO? (5 degree scale as mentioned above)
Should the GMO products be labeled? (5 degree scale as mentioned above)

Results
Most of polled students have met the term GMO (fig. A). A significant part of respondents (about 50%) said that they obtained some information on GMO from studies or school (fig B). The puzzling point is that a considerable group declared thier knowledge had come from books while quite a small (10-20%) group of respondents declare that the knowledge came from the media (tv, radio or newspapers). The internet could be considered as a information medium too, but few people pointed at this source

of information in “the others” category. Only a few persons declared that their knowledge came from active discussion.

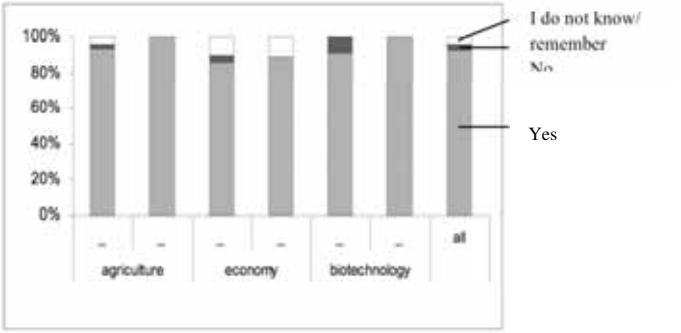

Fig. A *The answers to the question: Have you ever met with a term GMO?*

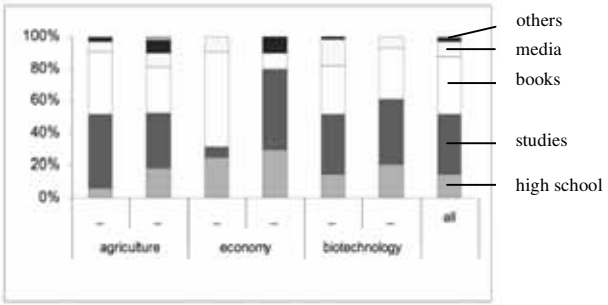

Fig. B *Where did you get this information from?*

The question touching on concsious purchasing of GM food (fig. C) revealed some indecision of investigated groups – only about 10% to less than 40% of people said that they decidely would not buy products containing GMOs. A relatively huge group (even 50% students of economy) did not completely decide to refuse. Among biotechnology students half have a positive attitude to that kind of product, but over 30% of males have an indifferent attitude.

Religion has no influence on the opinions re. GMOs (fig. D) a slightly larger but also insignificant impact is outlook on life. The most important meaning for respondents was knowledge (biotechnology and agriculture) or lack of knowledge (economy).

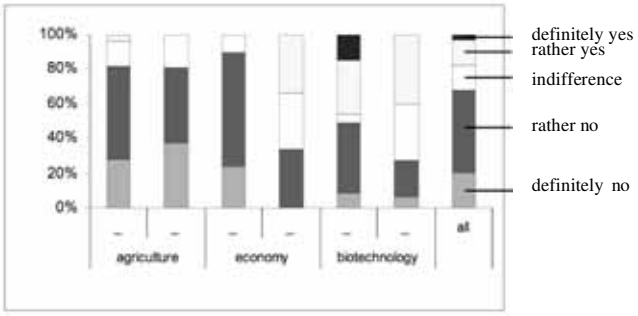

Fig. C *Would you buy GMO products knowingly?*

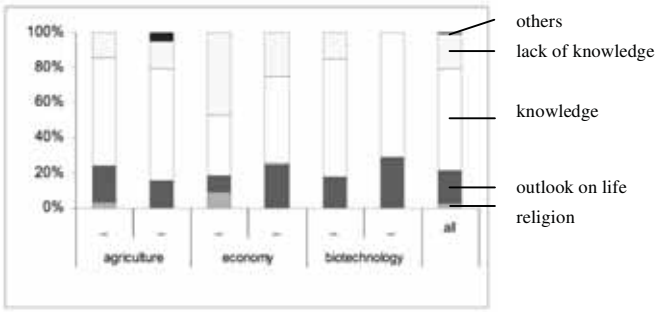

Fig. D *Do you think that your attitude to GMO results from...?*

Economy aspect of the problem is touched upon by the question "would you buy expensive GMO-free products instead of cheaper products based on GMO?" Most of respondents decided to spend even larger amount of money to feel safe using GMO-free products (fig. E).

The answers were unequivocal in the case of question "should the GMO products be labeled?" Positive answers (definitely yes and rather yes) were given in most groups by 100% of respondents (fig. F).

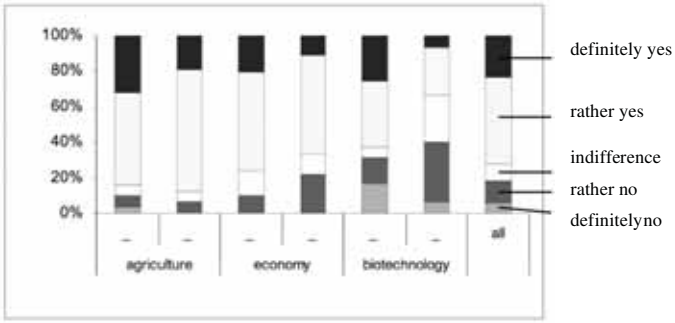

Fig. E *Would you buy expensive GMO-free product instead of cheaper product based on GMO?*

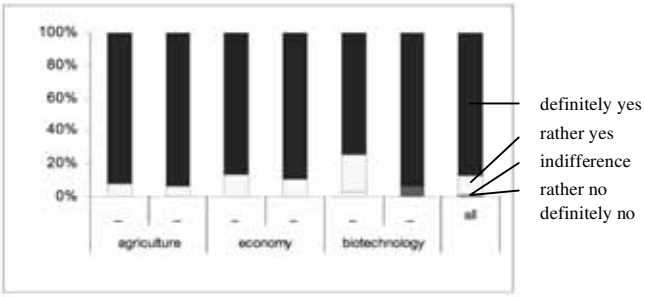

Fig. F *Should the GMO products be labeled?*

Discussion

Beside some positive economical effects the use of GMOs brings a lot of controversies in many areas [1, 10]. Although GM food is widely promoted as an agricultural product profitable for individual farmers, the stage of research and development is very expensive, therefore only few big companies supported by fully developed experimental infrastructure can realize it [6]. That could be considered as a threat of global monopolization of the food market. Some groups recognize the production and use of GMOs as intolerable interference with natural processes of evolution. The possibility of uncontrolled proliferation of GMOs which could have unforeseen effects on nature is also raised [9]. Therefore, others are concerned about the limitations of science to fully comprehend all of the potential negative implications of genetic engineering. Radical groups recommend the complete prohibition of GMOs, while more moderates only call for labeling of GM food [5]. The controversies also include legal affairs as definitions of patent and property pertaining to GM products [4, 8].

It is important that for the concept of sustainable development, social and business orientation towards ecology is growing. It is now common in highly developed countries, and is connected with ecological awareness of producers and consumers. The meaning of social responsible consumption, predicting possible consequences of making decisions, is well known. The essence of marketing is to adjust products to customers needs. Producers make efforts to create pro-ecological conditions of production and services.

How strongly and securely it is connected to GMO products, is under research by many scientists and consumers organizations, because green marketing is spreading more widely especially in large international corporations which have adequate means of information policy. Giving true information about implementing new, environmentally friendly technologies, to public opinion is an important element of green marketing.

Among others, Polish consumers are also waiting for good information, labeling and the possibility to decide for themselves what and why to buy.

Conclusion

1. Most of the respondents had met the term of GMO
2. Their knowledge about GMO products came from high school and studies, not from media and books
3. Students recognize the environmental and sanitary aspect as one of the most important problems concerning GMOs
4. Most respondents decided to spend even larger amount of money to feel safe using GMO-free products
5. Most respondents have never found GMO labels on products, they do not look for them (or rarely so), but also they want to be well informed about GMO admixtures

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Some peculiarities of assessing information in higher economic education in the focus of consumer citizenship

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Introduction

A new millennium has witnessed a dramatic change in the production of information and the organization of digital environment. ICT stimulate not only the flow of commerce but the means by which information, knowledge and culture are created and shaped between individuals, groups and societies. Not only our life is saturated with information organized and transmitted via ICT but also public issues and social life are affected by it.

The impact of ICT, the changes brought about by globalization and the need to find the best ways to bring innovation to the marketplace require new dynamics of interaction between universities, business and government. Accordingly, higher education institutions worldwide are looking for the most efficient ways to organize and manage these relations.

The basic questions posed are:

- What knowledge and skills do consumers and citizens need to become competent and literate members of information society so as to be able to make responsible decisions and choices?
- How can consumers and citizens obtain, assess and use information to become socially responsible members of society?
- How can consumers as well as citizens be taught to assess information critically and effectively?
- How can critical assessment of information be taught in the light of higher economic education?

These questions are also challenges confronting the society.

Aims of the present study are:

1. to examine the relationship between consumer behavior and citizen behavior;
2. to give an insight into the issue of assessing information within a broader concept of 'information literacy';

3. to analyze the current economic situation in Latvia and its negative impact on consumer purchasing behavior;
4. to give suggestions for teaching critical assessment of information based on web pages analysis in the context of higher economic education.

1. The interface between consumer behavior and citizen behavior

Consumer behavior is a vast field which comprises elements of multiple sciences (e.g. psychology, sociology, socio-psychology, anthropology and economics). It attempts to consider the buyer decision making process both from an individual and group perspectives. Consumer behavior explores such features of individual consumers as demographics, psychographics and behavioral variables so as to understand consumers' needs. In addition, it tries to evaluate the impact of the family, friends, and society on the consumer in general. According to Belch and Belch (2007:105), *consumer behavior* is defined as "the process and activities people engage in when searching for, selecting, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services so as to satisfy their needs and desires".

In our view, it is important to consider the concept of "*consumer behavior*" in relation to the *citizen behavior*. According to McGregor (1999: 209), *consumer behavior* affects the nature of the marketplace both locally and globally whereas *citizen behavior* has an impact on the public life of a nation. From the citizenship standpoint, a good consumer will think thoroughly before making a consumption decision that could exert a negative influence on the life of citizens. Conversely, from a consumer point of view, a good citizen would act in such a way as not to lose or compromise his/her voice in the democratic process. Since the political, economic and social spheres are closely linked consumers-citizens should balance this relationship in a synergetic way. In other words, they should understand the links between the values and principles of the market economy and the values and principles of a democracy and be prepared to act as citizens first and consumers second, i.e., consumer-citizens (Ibid). According to Consumer Citizenship Network (CCN), consumption choices of a consumer-citizen are based "on ethical, social, economic and ecological considerations" (Thoresen 2005:7). We assume that consumers should behave in a more socially responsible way safeguarding social development and environmental quality.

2. Information source: Word of mouth

The basic model of decision making process involves: (1) problem recognition; (2) information search; (3) alternative evaluation; (4) purchase decision; (5) post-purchase evaluation (Belch and Belch 2007). Initially, consumers and citizens perceive a need and become motivated so as to solve a problem. When the problem is outlined they search for information on products and services, assess and use it. There are various sources of information (e.g. personal, commercial, public sources, personal experience, etc.) which can motivate consumer behavior. They differ in terms of reliability.

Modern consumers and citizens are currently becoming more skeptical of marketing information. They are more inclined to seek out the information from the sources they trust. In this connection we would like to focus on the "*Word of Mouth*" ("*WOM "*) as one of the most trustworthy information source. According to Hampton (2006), it is obvious that "Word of Mouth" (WOM) is one of the most powerful tools to create demand and inform consumers. Research indicates that *WOM communication* has a significant effect on consumer purchasing behavior (Mangold et al 1999) and the reduction of the risk of uncertainty associated with consumer buying decisions (Murray 1991). *WOM information* can be assessed both through verbal communication and the Internet (e.g., blogs, opinion articles, online forums, etc.). We believe that from the standpoint of reliability *WOM* is definitely the source and tool both consumers and citizens trust to a great extent.

3. Current economic situation in Latvia

In recent years economy of Latvia has been the most rapidly expanding in the EU though the economic growth has been at the expense of macroeconomic imbalances such as high inflation, the overpriced real estate market and wage growth. Latvian economy develops mainly due to the commercial sector but not due to the industrial sector which is a major driving force. High inflation rate, unemployment and health care are currently the most significant problems in the country. There is a big stratification of population by income into the rich and the poor.

In Latvia, *inflation rate* is now the highest in the 27-nation EU. Statistical data show that it rose to *15.8%* (January 2008) from *14.1%* (December 2007). Correspondingly, *consumer prices* went up to *2.8%* per month (January 2008) as compared with a gain of *0.7%* in December 2007 (Latvijas statistikas ikmēneša biļetens 1/ 2008). Inflation is currently still galloping.

The main reasons of inflation are the increase in global energy prices (i.e., oil, gas, electricity, and coal), high rate of consumption loans, the exchange rates fluctuations, etc. A high inflation rate is a potential force of a destabilization of emerging, but still fragile economy of the country. It testifies to the fact that the economy may overheat.

According to statistical data (Ibid.), due to inflation and the increase in prices the subsistence minimum rose to *151.63* LVL (January 2008). The average monthly gross wages and salaries are approximately 400. LVL. *41.2%* of people receive average monthly net wages and salaries from *200 to 500 LVL* and *36%* of the working population – less than *200* LVL. It should be noted and not in passing that the pensioners' standard of living is extremely low. Most of Latvian pensioners receive average monthly pension of less than 100 LVL. At present the minimum pension is 49.50 LVL whereas as it was mentioned above, the subsistence level is 151.63 LVL. Moreover, it is important to keep in view the fact that a great part of pensioners' budget is spent on medical treatment and expensive medicines. It is obvious that pensioners are on the verge of poverty.

It is obvious that economic situation in Latvia has *a negative impact* on the *consumers' purchasing behavior*. Low standard of living has made the consumers change their buying habits and resulted in the decrease of the consumers' purchasing power. The present economic situation resulted in the outflow of working age population. More than 50.000 Latvian inhabitants have emigrated from the country. This situation poses a threat to stability of the country and has given the government the incentive to implement the economy stabilization measures.

4. The concept of information literacy: Definitions and discussion

Learning how to assess information effectively and critically is an important skill consumers and citizens need in their life. In our view, it is both an art and work.

In this study we will endeavor to analyze the concept of "*information literacy*". The term "*information literacy*" is treated differently by different scholars. Lenox and Walker (1993) define *information literacy* with relation to the information literate person who possesses analytical and critical skills to formulate research questions and evaluate results, to search for and assess information types to meet his/her information needs. According to Shapiro and Hughes (1996:33), *information literacy* is seen as "a new liberal art that extends from knowing how to use computers and access information to critical reflection on the nature of information itself, its technical infrastructure, and its social, cultural and even philosophical context and impact". The Prague Declaration (2003) defines *information literacy* within lifelong learning. It encompasses knowledge of one's information needs and the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, organize and effectively use information to address issues or problems at hand. It is a prerequisite for participating effectively in the information society, and is part of the basic human right of life long learning. In our view, there is a need to make a synergy between these definitions, position them in relation to consumer citizenship and adapt them to consumers' and citizens' information needs. In our study, *information literacy* may be viewed as consumers' and citizens' ability to obtain, evaluate, use and share needed information motivating consumption behavior. This can stimulate the development of critical thinking and analytical skills and encourage lifelong learners.

According to Shapiro and Hughes (1996), *information literacy* can be divided into a variety of types (i.e., tool literacy, resource literacy, social /structural literacy, research literacy, publishing literacy, emerging technology literacy, critical literacy).

Information can be assessed in terms of (1) *producer*; (2) *content*.

Assessing the *producer* implies taking into account the following *key criteria*:

- The author or producer
- Type of organization
- Reputation/credentials

- The purpose of the site (i.e., to present facts and figures, to explain, persuade, sell, entice, share/disclose, etc.)
- The target audience
- Apparent bias
- Copyright statement/disclaimer

Assessing the *content* means analyzing information so as to find out whether it is:

- Relevant
- Accurate and up-to date
- Comprehensive and detailed
- Clearly presented
- Verifiable through other sources(e.g., links to other documents)
- Comparative

Worthy of note is that the system is open.

5. Critical assessment of information based on web pages analysis in higher economic education: Suggestions

In order to become a socially responsible consumer and life-long independent learner a person should know how to work with information. It is noteworthy to point out that students should develop the tools to be more discerning in their assessment of information pertaining to CCN issues.

Let us consider *information literacy* in the context of higher economic education within the framework of the discipline of *marketing*. We share the view that in *marketing* the concept of information literacy can be identified as (Webber et al 2005):

- Accessing information quickly and easily to be aware of what's going on
- Using ICT to work with information
- Possessing a set of information skills and applying them to the task in hand
- Using information literacy to solve real-world problems
- Becoming a critical thinker
- Becoming a confident, independent practitioner

Since students belong to the millennium generation who actively explore and try out ICT, we propose to teach critical assessment of information on the basis of web pages analysis addressing consumer citizenship issues. In practical terms, this approach may be applied within the *subject of marketing* at the Faculty of Engineering Economics, Riga Technical University in Latvia. Assignments may be integrated into thematic curricula modules (See Liokumoviča 2007:119-120). It is important to note that the modules are viewed from inter- and transdisciplinary perspectives. In this way we can

challenge and trigger learners' interest and "breathe life" into studies. In addition, these activities can promote students' autonomy and encourage life-long learners.
In our view, evaluating web pages requires two main actions: (1) be suspicious; (2) think critically about every web page you analyze and evaluate. As it was mentioned above, evaluation can be focused on such key criteria as the *producer* and *content* (See section 4). Moreover, students may scan the perimeters of web pages paying attention to the main indicators of quality (e.g., URL/web address, documentation of sources, links to other resources, dates of creation, publishing, revision, update of web page, and validity of data, etc.). Additionally, we assume that the process of critical assessment of web pages may combine the elements of *case studies* of CCN related issues and *textual analysis* involving the evaluation of textual structure, sentence style/register, lexico-grammatical patterns, etc. with the focus on the analysis of language problems.

We presume that critical assessment of information may be based on both high-quality and low quality web pages analysis. In our view, the emphasis may be placed on the analysis and assessment of *low-quality web pages.* We suggest applying key evaluation criteria to a web page so as to analyze its issues/problems. For example:

Key Evaluation Criteria	Web page	Issues/Problems

Sample analysis patterns may be published on the teaching/learning website of the course. Further, students may get an assignment to improve the content, style/register, organization and layout of information, design, etc. with a view of making it more useful for consumer citizens. In terms of instructional methods lectures, seminars and workshops can be used. As regards forms of teaching we suggest to combine traditional classroom and e-learning practices (e.g., blogs, online forums, interactive computer based training, etc.). Students may be engaged in team work to brainstorm ideas and discuss the issues. Our teaching experience shows that learners prefer working in groups. They enjoy *collaborative learning style.* The outcome may be a *team creation* of *high quality web pages* that may be used as curriculum tools. We assume that the learning activity can catalyze students' innovative thinking, imaginative problem solving and encourage active, engaging learning.

Conclusions

In this paper, we have made an attempt to share some ideas and make suggestions on integrating critical assessment of information from the perspective of a consumer citizen into the curriculum module of the subject of marketing at the Faculty of Engineering Economics, Riga Technical University in Latvia. We have outlined some directions and ways in which students may be actively engaged in critical assessment of information based on the analysis and evaluation of the web pages addressing CCN issues. In addition, some results of the present theoretical study may contribute to the efforts to improve the quality of consumer citizen information in general.

We assume that millennium generation will become active consumers and citizens dedicated to creating positive changes in their communities and in the world. Overall, we believe in the power of future generation of consumers and citizens and in the importance of personal responsibility-to transform ideas and information into knowledge and to use that knowledge to form a just and sustainable world.

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Children's involvement in family business and attitude towards consumers

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Abstract
The objective of the present study was to explore the views of the family business owners and family members occupied in the business in regard to the involvement of their children in the family business and to determine the factors affecting their views. The results of the study showed that in general, the owners of successful family businesses are more inclined to encourage their children to get involved in the family business and consequently get prepared for the succession and the continuation of the family businesses in the future. Also, family businesses attract consumers because there is a personal good relationship among owners and clients; therefore, one important lesson that owners teach their children is the respectful and honest attitude towards consumers.

Key words: Family business; business succession; business continuation; consumers

Introduction

Family businesses constitute a particular category of enterprises since their main characteristic is that they belong and are managed by the members of a family. Due to the involvement of the family members in the operation and ownership of capital, family businesses are generally successful; they do not aim only at profits, but also respect human dignity (Alvarez, 2002; Astrachan et al., 2002; Smyrnios and Walker, 2003; Leenders and Waarts, 2003). Every family business is characterized by introversion and the desire of the family to keep the ownership of the business or the largest part of it (Astrachan et al., 2002; Smyrnios and Walker, 2003; Sharma and Rao, 2000). Due to introversion and the desire to enable succession, factors such as the involvement of the family children in the business at a young age, the selection of successors among the members of the family for the management of the business, and the interest of the children for the market and the products of the family business and their respect towards clients, are considered of paramount importance (Birley et al., 1999; Lussier and Sonfield, 2003a; Lussier and Sonfield, 2003b). In previous studies, it has been found that on average three family members were occupied in the family business, usually two males and one female. Also, it was common that one of the employees was one young member of the family who was trained to be the successor of this family business (Astrachan et al., 2002; Smyrnios and Walker, 2003). Furthermore,

it is believed that the involvement of the family members and the family children at a young age strengthens the business (Birley et al., 1999; Leenders and Waarts, 2003; Lussier and Sonfield, 2003b). Moreover, business owners believe that their children's involvement could be important, even though this is not a commitment for the future and their children can follow another occupation. For that reason the owners do not give business' shares to their children at an early age. In addition, many owners agree that their children who join the business should start as simple untrained workers and learn all the stages of work. Furthermore, the owners agree that family members who join the business must be paid based on the job they do, but they disagree that all the members of the family should be entitled to a job in the business (Birley et al., 1999). Finally, it is preferable that the administrative successor should be a family member and that the founder of the business should make decisions for the business even after his retirement (Leenders and Waarts, 2003; Lussier and Sonfield, 2003a).

Additional studies showed the advantages of the family members' involvement in the family business operation. These advantages are the considerable trust among the employees, the high sensitivity and responsibility for work, as well as the extra willingness to improve working conditions and to recommend prompt solutions for any emerging problem at work. It is also believed that social values such as honest behaviour towards clients are more important than profits (Leenders and Waarts, 2003; Lussier and Sonfield, 2003a; Lussier and Sonfield, 2003b). On the other hand, some other studies have presented the disadvantages of the family members' involvement in the family business operation. Family businesses' owners neglect their personal life and their family because of the long hours of work and they become one with their business. In addition, the more members of the family that they are involved in the family business the more arguments take place for business decisions. Generally, conflicts in the family business are decreasing when there is a harmonious relationship between the family members at home (Davis and Harveston, 2001; Smyrnios et al., 2003; Poza et al., 2004). When conflicts decrease at work, then the profits are increasing (Olson et al., 2003).

The present study explores the views of the family business owners and family members occupied in the business in regard to the involvement of their children in the family business and determine the factors affecting their views in the prefecture of Attica, Greece.

Methodology

Primary data were collected through a questionnaire survey of 69 family businesses in the prefecture of Attica, Greece (September 2005 to April 2006). The questionnaire gathered information about business characteristics, major demographic characteristics of the respondents and their perceptions of the children's involvement in the family business.

In the context of the present study family businesses were considered these businesses whose ownership by majority belonged to a family and at least two family members were occupied in the business sharing financial interest in the business or there had been a succession in the past. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics and regression models.

The factors affecting the views of the respondents on the occupation of the children in the family business at a young age were analysed using logistic regression.

The dependent variable was measured based on the sample's responses to a 2-point scale: yes or no to the following statement: "Children should be occupied in the family business at a young age". The independent variables included the respondents' sex and family status, and the business characteristics, such as the legal form of the business, the turnover, and the number of employees, the sex of the children who are occupied in the family business, the years of operation and the generation of ownership. Table 1 describes the dependent and independent variables used in the logistic regression.

Furthermore, the study estimated the factors affecting the views of the respondents on the contact of the children with the business at a young age using multiple linear regression. The children's contact with the family business included the presence of the children in the family business and their participation to the discussions related to the business affairs. More specifically, the dependent variable was a continuous variable, which described the involvement of the children in the family business. Table 2 describes the dependent and independent variables used in the multiple linear regressions.

Results

Children's occupation in family business

The results of the study showed that on average three family members were occupied in the family business. Almost 38% of the family members employed in the business were the children of the owner. The position of the children in the family business was mainly in sales, production and management. The children were occupied in the family business at an average of 40 hours/week.

Respondents' views on children's involvement in family business

The majority of the sample (71%) believed that a business could be stronger if family members are involved and a family business must involve more than one family member (52.2%).

Although, the majority of the respondents argued that children should get in contact with the personnel (60.9%) and the business environment (72.5%) at a young age, they believed that children should not get in contact with the customers of the business at a young age (44.9%). On the other hand, the 55.1% of the sample believed that children should be occupied in the family business and get involved in the discussions related to the business affairs (56.5%).

The respondents disagreed with the opinion that children's education should be geared towards the business needs (52.2%), but they agreed that management successors should be chosen among the family members (72.5%). The majority of the sample (69.6%) suggested that in a family business there is only one management successor. In addition, they disagreed with the opinion that all the members of the family should be entitled to a job in the business (58%) but on the other hand they agreed that there should be criteria to decide how family members could join (71%) or leave the business (65.2%).

According to 71% of the sample, children should be prepared appropriately before joining the business, as long as it was the children's personal decision to join the business (84.1%) and on the condition that they start from low rank positions (75.4%).

Respondents did not argue that children should be given some shares at an early age (73.6%) but they agreed marginally (55.1%) with the opinion that children from the family business have a responsibility for the business affairs and that children who do not join the business shouldn't receive shares (50.7%). Moreover, the respondents disagreed with the opinion that children should receive shares when the previous generation dies (50.7%) or on the death of a parent (59.4%).

Besides, the respondents believed that the shares of the business should be transferred to the children in equal parts (65.2%) and shares should be only transferred to the members of the family (53.6%). Family members are entitled to differential pay arrangements (63.8%). Finally, the respondents believed that the family business should provide pension benefits for all the members of the family (65.2%), since the role of the business is to provide an income for the family (69.6%). Respondents' views on children's involvement in family business are presented in Table 3.

Factors affecting children's occupation in family business at a young age

The results from the logistic regression for the views of the respondents on the children's occupation in the family business at a young age are presented in Table 4.

More specifically, the male respondents, compared with the female respondents, were more likely to agree with the statement that children should be occupied in the family business at a young age. In most of the family businesses managers are males, while females have an auxiliary role, with the result that men are more interested on the business continuation and their children's employment in the business (Cole, 1997). On the contrary, having children appeared to decrease the likelihood that the respondents would prefer their children to be occupied in the family business at a young age. The respondents employed in a personal business have a greater likelihood of suggesting that children should be occupied in the family business at a young age. The personal businesses are not heavily employed and depend on the employment of the family members, which can be occasional (Schultze et al. 2003). On the other hand, the respondents employed in retail were less probable to argue that children should be occupied in the family business at a young age. The businesses that are in retail do not

require labour force and the owners do not often seek their continuation in the future if they are not satisfied by the development of the businesses.

The results also showed that the likelihood of children's employment in the family business at a young age increases with the turnover of the family business. The respondents, who are the owners or are occupied in successful businesses, prefer their children to be occupied in them due to the job stability and business continuation. On the other hand, the more the number of employees increased, the less the respondents believed that children should be occupied in the family business at a young age. According to Lussier and Sonfield (2003a), a sufficient number of employees do not lead the business managers to use family members as a labour force.

The respondents, whose sons were occupied daily in the family business, were more likely to argue that children should be occupied in the business at a young age, compared to the others. On the other hand, the respondents whose daughters were occupied daily in the family business, were less likely to argue that children should be occupied in the business at a young age, since the respondents has aspirations of taking their sons the family business management, while daughters can join the family business after their personal decision (Leeders and Waarts, 2003). Furthermore, as the years of operation of the business increases, the likelihood that children should be occupied in the family business at a young age increases too. Businesses with many years of operation are considered as successful and due to this successful development, the owners prefer their children to be occupied in their family business in order to be continued.

Factors affecting children's contact with family business at a young age

The results from the multiple linear regression analysis for the views of the respondents on the contact of the children with the family business at a young age are presented in Table 5.

More specifically, age did not seem to significantly influence the views of the respondents on the contact of the children with the business. However, the older respondents, compared with the younger respondents, believed that the involvement of the children in the business affairs can cause problems and they did not therefore argue that children should get involved in the family business at a young age. Then, it was found that the number of employees and the views of the respondents on the contact of the children with the family business are negatively correlated. The more the number of employees increased, the less the respondents believed that children should get in contact with the family business at a young age, since they do not need labour force and children can be occupied in the business after their personal decision. On the other hand, the paid family members occupied in the business were more positive toward the contact of the children with the family business due to the payments.

The years of the business operation were also positively correlated with the views of the respondents on the children's contact with the business at a young age. According to

Smyrnios and Walker (2003), family businesses with many years of operation are considered as much successful and it is more desirable to be continued. Children have therefore to be occupied in these businesses and manage them when their parents retire from the family business. Similarly, the respondents who were occupied in a family business of second generation of ownership believed that their children should get in contact with the family business at a young age. These businesses have higher probabilities to be successful compared to the others and expect their continuation through their children's occupation in them. On the other hand, the respondents who were the children of the business founder were more negative toward the involvement of the children in the family business, since they believed that children are not given a choice to decide for themselves whether they want to be occupied in the family business or not (Davis and Harveston, 2001).

Conclusions

Family businesses constitute a particular category of enterprises since their main characteristic is that they belong and are managed by the members of a family. Based on a sample of 69 family businesses in the Greek prefecture of Attica, the present study explored the views of the family business owners and the family members employed in the business in regard to the involvement of their children in the family business and determined the factors affecting their views. The results of the study showed that on average three family members were occupied in the family business. Almost 38% of the family members employed in the business were the children of the owner. According to the results of logistic regression, male respondents, with no children, who manage a personal business in which their sons are mainly occupied, with a large turnover, many years of operation and small number of employees, are more likely to believe that children should be occupied in the family business starting from a young age. The findings also suggested that there is a strong relationship between the respondents' characteristics and their views on the children's involvement in the family business. In particular, the respondent who is a child of the business founder, occupied in a family business of second generation of ownership, with small number of employees, paid employed family members and many years of operation believe that children should get in contact with the business at a young age. Children should therefore get in contact with the personnel and business environment, meet the customers of the family business, get involved in the discussions related to the business affairs and be occupied in the family business at a young age. In conclusion, the results of the present study show that the owners of such successful family businesses are more inclined to encourage their children to get involved in the family business, to get involved with the clients, to understand the importance of respectful and honest attitude towards consumers and consequently get prepared for the succession and the continuation of the family businesses in the future. Family businesses with many years of operation and second-generation ownership can be considered, based on their longevity, as successful.

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Appendix Table 1-4

Table 1 List of variables used in the logistic regression

Variable	Type	Description
Ch.employ	Binary	1 if respondent argues that children should be occupied in family business at a young age; 0 otherwise
Sex	Binary	1 if respondent is male; 0 otherwise
Child	Binary	1 if respondent has children; 0 otherwise
Personal	Binary	1 if family business is personal; 0 otherwise
Retail	Binary	1 if family business specializes in retail; 0 otherwise
Lsales	Continuous	Log of business turnover for 2004 (€)
N.employ	Continuous	Total number of employees
Sons.oc	Binary	1 if son(s) of respondent is occupied daily in family business; 0 otherwise
Daugh.oc	Binary	1 if daughter(s) of respondent is occupied daily in family business; 0 otherwise
Operation	Continuous	Years of business operation
Third	Binary	1 if family business is of third generation of ownership; 0 otherwise

Table 2 List of variables used in multiple linear regressions

Variable	Type	Description
Involvement	Continuous	Children's involvement in family business. It was constructed by the sum of the following six binary variables: Personnel: 1 if respondent argues that children should get in contact with personnel of business at a young age; 0 otherwise Environment: 1 if respondent argues that children should get in contact with business environment at a young age; 0 otherwise Customers: 1 if respondent argues that children should meet customers of business at a young age; 0 otherwise Occupation: 1 if respondent argues that children should be occupied in family business at a young age; 0 otherwise Involvement: 1 if respondent argues that children should get involved in discussions related to business affairs; 0 otherwise Relation: 1 if respondent argues that children's education should be related to the needs of business; 0 otherwise
Age	Continuous	Years of age
Manufacture	Binary	1 if family business is a manufacturing business; 0 otherwise
Employees	Continuous	Total number of employees
Payment	Binary	1 if family members employed in family business are paid; 0 otherwise
Operation	Continuous	Years of business operation

Second	Binary	1 if family business is of second generation of ownership; 0 otherwise
Founder	Binary	1 if respondent is a child of family business founder; 0 otherwise

Table 3 Respondents' views on children's involvement in family business (N=69)

Variables		Freq.	Percent (%)
Children should get in contact with the personnel at a young age	Agree	42	60,9
Children should get in contact with the business environment at a young age	Agree	50	72,5
Children should get in contact with the customers of the business at a young age	Disagree	31	44,9
Children should be occupied in the family business	Agree	38	55,1
Children get involved in the discussions related to the business affairs	Agree	39	56,5
Children's education should be geared towards the business needs	Disagree	36	52,2
Management successors should be chosen among the family members	Agree	50	72,5
All the members of the family should be entitled to a job in the business	Disagree	40	58,0
There should be criteria to decide how family members could join	Agree	49	71,0
There should be criteria to decide how family members could leave the business	Agree	45	65,2
Children should be prepared appropriately before joining the business	Agree	49	71,0
Children should be given some shares at an early age	Disagree	51	73,9
Children from the family business have a responsibility for the business affairs	Agree	38	55,1
Children who do not join the business shouldn't receive shares	Agree	35	50,7
Children should receive shares when the previous generation dies	Disagree	35	50,7
Children should receive shares on the death of a parent	Disagree	41	59,4
A business could be stronger if family members are involved	Agree	49	71,0
A family business must involve more than one family member	Agree	36	52,2
If children decide to join the business should they start from low rank positions	Agree	52	75,4
It was the children's personal decision to join the business	Agree	58	84,1
The shares of the business should be transferred to the children in equal parts	Agree	45	65,2
Shares should be only transferred to the members of the family	Agree	37	53,6

Family members are entitled to differential pay arrangements	Agree	44	63,8
The family business should provide pension benefits for all the members of the family	Agree	45	65,2
The role of the business is to provide an income for the family	Agree	48	69,6

Table 4 Estimates of factors influencing the views of the respondents on the occupation of their children in the family business at a young age

Variables	Coefficient	Statistic wald
Constant	- 13.320*	2.714
Sex	2.305*	3.193
Child	- 2.372*	3.204
Personal	3.859*	3.730
Retail	- 3.035**	5.028
Lsales	2.536*	2.787
N.employ	- 0.243***	8.835
Sons.oc	6.719**	6.177
Daugh.oc	3.935**	4.533
Operation	0.071*	2.745
Third	- 3.559	1.965
R2 (Nagelkerke)	0.604	
2Log likelihood	38.220	
Hosmer and Lemeshow	7.068	

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 5 Estimates of factors influencing the views of the respondents on the contact of the children with the family business

Variables	Coefficient	t-ratio
Constant	4.196***	3.430
Age	- 4.04E-02	- 1.440
Manufact	1.118	1.577
N.employ	- 5.34E-02**	- 2.484
Payment	1.654**	2.419
Operation	3.799E-02*	1.803
Second	1.525*	1.711
Child.fn	- 1.699*	- 1.859
Adjusted R-squared statistic	0.225	
F-statistic	3.120***	

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

How can consumer citizenship education deal with cognitive, emotional, social and economic influences on consumers' capacity?

A glance on health information and decision-making in schools

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Introduction

This paper will focus on consumer citizenship education in general and young teens' choice of lifestyle with a glance on marketing, consumption and health education in particular. What kind of coaching do teenagers need, and how do they learn to avoid the unhealthy pressure of a trendy look with a focus on a thin and skeleton body image?

There are a lot of indications that demonstrate how children and teenagers especially are increasingly exposed in a society when we talk about commercialization and economic growth in rich countries like Norway (Eriksen 2007). I base my assertion on the fact that children and teenagers are a flexible group in continuous mental and physical growth (Imsen 2001). Both cognitive and social learning theories (Imsen 2001, Brøderup, Hauge & Thomsen 1994) say that youngsters learn from their surroundings and society in both good and bad ways, and teens' adaptation of a modern, popular and trendy lifestyle is significant. T. M. Devinney et al. (2007) is talking about the ethical aspect with consumerism, and relating ethical aspects to the teens' age, their period of development and their vulnerable point of view, I believe, the moral and ethical aspects should be obvious. Teens want to be popular among their peers. They want to be cool, and clothing with the right kind of badge can be the entrance for a youth society. Consumer citizenship education has to deal with a multi dimensional approach (Steffens 2000, Haukenes 2007, Eriksen 2007) of citizens everyday choices. The critical aspect of ethical consumerism is not only concerned of where products are made, of what material and by whom, but also about the purchasing preferences, and their social setting. In many ways this is a problem for many western countries and is contradictory to the situations in developing countries.

Over the past decades there has been a growing debate in Norway about commercialisation and consumption, and in particular The Norwegian Department of Family and Equal Affairs and The Norwegian Consumer Civic Official (Forbrukerombudet) are engaged in consumerism. Some projects concerning consumer citizenship affairs have been settled, but we need more projects and especially educational projects. The Citizenship Consumer Education Network (CCN) is a welcomed "gift" for educators. This network gives, I believe, information, support and strength for different groups of educators.

Daily we read about consumers assessments and handling of risk concerning food (ibid.), weight problems (Eriksen 2006, Drevon 1999), exaggerated shopping, commercial elements in children sport activities, drugs and smoking problems, lipoprotein or heart problems among inactive people in newspapers or on the web. This is a lifestyle result mainly based on the time we like to call *the post modern time* (Hargreaves 2002). Concerning a popular and a very slim lifestyle, we also know that anorexia- and bulimia nervosa are not unusual health problems among young people. Especially young girls are occupied by their body look. Quite a lot of them want to be slim and pretty or look like models. Commercialisation and marketing in particular gives both guidance but also misleading. The Norwegian Consumer Civic Official has the last year stopped two mobile marketing campaigns from the telephone company Telenor (NRK 1: 1.4.2008).

There is no doubt among psychologists that marketing affects young peoples' interests and appearance and in this way also their intellectual personality and growth. A great educational challenge should therefore continually be; how can Consumer Citizenship Education deal with cognitive, emotional, social and economic influence on consumers' capacity with a glance on health information, purchase intentions and decision-making in school?

Hargreaves (2002) says that the modern society has "a two-edged sword" (p.48), and he describes it in this way: *The modern society has lead to better economy and better living conditions for many people, but also to situations he describes as more vulnerable and especially on the individual level.* Hargreaves statement is a good description of western societies' consumer citizenship problems. The major goal of my paper presentation is to focus following three questions:

How do consumption influence on boys and girls decision making and lifestyle?
How can commercialization lead to health problems among teenagers?
How is it possible to influence teenagers' decision-making in general and in school in particular?

In my paper I focus both relevant theory and some selected results from my ongoing research project about *"Lifestyle, Physical activity and Health management*" (2008). My paper ends in a discussion.

A theoretical approach

From a behaviour psychological point of view, both parents and teachers have great responsibility for the growth and education of each child in a society. Hallen (1993, 2000) says that behaviour is connected to education, but psychology is the theoretical point of view or the explanation of each child's behaviour. It is then appropriate to look at education as *a process of guiding and a process of growth*.

In education, I presume, teachers organise didactical lessons from a pluralistic approach

of pedagogy and psychology with a focus on the physical, cognitive, emotional, social and individual pupil capacity. The following figure illustrates the dialogue between the very important persons in each child's life and education:

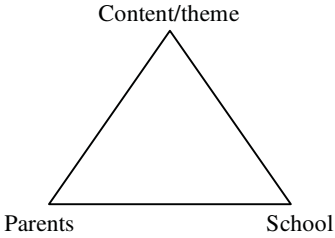

Fig. 1 *The pedagogical triangle*

There will always be three authorities in a pedagogical triangle, and the last one is called content or theme. The three authorities and especially the theme have to be seen within social, cultural and religious frames. In practical education consumption themes can be taught in subjects like mathematic, language, music, sport, science or sociology. In Norway "*The Curriculum for The 10-year Compulsory School (LK06)"* gives directions and methodical advice for teaching in every subject. The theme consumerism, health and lifestyle are in our Curriculum a cross cutting issue, and is primarily taught in science, sociology, sport and in home economics. In what ways each theme is scaled and taught, depends on each schools priority and the teachers qualifications in the subjects.

The mental and physical development among children, have clearest psychological implications during the age we normally call the teens. At this age the young boys and girls physical image represent a very important part of their individual consciousness and personality. Traditionally, many girls have heard they are "pretty" or very "sweet" during the childhood. Boys have normally their attention on his high, sport qualifications, physical strength or partly on his own weight. The physical changes, lead to that mostly all boys and girls will be more sensitive to their own body appearance and body image, while the nature and hormones passes into the blood and encourage physical, sexual and mental changes and development. These changes are important implications of the teens' "new" consciousness, a changed personality or self and the feeling of new challenges through opposed periods and social learning. *Development is then a concept that unifies all the anatomic, physiological, and behavioural aspects of the human organism into a single, complex entity. It serves to make inseparable such terms as heredity and environment, mind and body, behaviour and personality* (Dale 1992:34)

The *body image* plays an important role in this period, and especially among friends and the one's popularity in the group. Belonging to the group, or to be a group leader

can be high priced.
The Internet and advertisements affects attitudes in general with regards to own body shape, sexuality, outlook and clothing. It affects young peoples' personality and growth, but how do we meet these challenges in the school?
One of the most important intentions with The Norwegian Law for Marketing from 1972 (Marketsføringsloven) is to counteract negative aspects of commercialisation and to constantly keep an eye on marketing and marketing methods. The Law's intentions have also ethical aspects.

The reception of media

According to psychological literature (Brørup, Hauge & Thomsen 1994) it is common to talk about *the reception* or adventure of a special movie or a concert. The reception is connected to the fascination on one hand; the contrast between fiction and reality, and on the other hand, fiction and fantasy. To have the feeling of being in a "new world" with western heroes, models, film- or music stars, is one way of a psychological explanation of how TV and the film industry have a magic power connected to people's emotions and identification.
Since the 50'ies the commercialisation and the use of photos and film have exploded. Connected to the big market and marketing, we charge the perception of reality according to what we can hear and see through and arranged by the media. What kind of information is true, what kind of information do we need in life, and what kind of programs do we follow? Science, fiction or reality programs? What about the teens' self-regulation and identification through a complex computer society for all (St.melding no.17, 2006-2007)? What do each one of us need for a good life?
In earlier societies a person's position depended very often of education and wealth. Knowledge and education was priced as a positive human qualification. My parents' generation had Edvard Grieg, Fritjof Nansen, Roald Amundsen and Tove Mohr as ideals in their life. The teens' ideals today is not generally people with great knowledge based on education, experiences, expeditions, management on "the seven seas" or a medical woman fighting for the women's rights. Today, we have challenges in promoting idols from the "*knowledge society*" or from social issues for youth. It is easier to commercialize the variables of the economic production processes or the media's ongoing high lighting of models, film- and music stars, or the aspects of *moneymaking, the right badge of clothes, happiness* and *outlook*. These concepts should be of great interest for educators when you teach teens in school.
The Norwegian socio-anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2008) says that Norwegians in general are occupied by "buying happiness". He explains this that he means that people are dreaming of a moment of happiness or the motivated pleasure feeling you will have when you buy a new dress, use money on the make-up, on travelling, cars or on expensive experiences. Eriksen also means that we are occupied of the material and our own ego. We are talking about the good life and very often we

explain it like the “American dream”. Eriksen’s explanation confirms what Brørup, Hauge & Thomsen (1994) describes as a motivated and very often pleasure reception based on fiction produced of mass media and commercialisation.

I believe this kind of life vision infects the next generation easily, when national and international mass media daily publish photos and articles about how to succeed if you only buy this or that, or what journalists often call ”the new and trendy way of living”. Moneymaking and shopping are focused as a ”must in your life”, and you really “need appetite for life trough happiness, outlook, body shape, sexuality, playful, an optimistic view and to cool down” (NO Trender 2008:99). The perfect body shape can be ”helped” by high-priced cosmetic operations, and you can collect all information on the web. Based on these facts, we know that advertisement affects attitudes in general, and advertisement based on body shape, sexuality and outlook, affects young peoples’ personality and their self in particular. This socially motivated interest for the outlook and trend setting is also one of many reasons concerning why many teens’ end up with eating disorders (Hundskår 1997), using drugs, develop psychological- or other health problems.

Among the latest Italian health researchers (VG, 4/4-08) published in Journal of New Science, researches describe the possible negative effects of cosmetic operations by using the chemical product Botox (botulinumtoksin). There is a possibility that Botox can spread from the visage to the brain and damage The Central Nerve System. In western countries today, quite a lot of women and even men between the age of 30 to 40 use Botox to prevent the aging process and to look young. Even younger girls wish they had bigger breasts and lips or were smaller. Some of them are helped by their parents for cosmetic operations at an age of 18. They are still not many, and I hope The Norwegian Consumer Civic Official will keep an eye on this trendy modelling of the body-shape.

Teenagers learn and adjust for new conditions and a new way of living. In this way, the press, the mass media, the inter-net or marketing have a great power on teenagers’ growth, lifestyle and interests. It even affects their individual and personal development. Teenagers today are more exposed and vulnerable for shopping pressure than in earlier ages confirmed through *”The Norwegian action plan to reduce commercial pressure on children and young people”* (The Ministry of Children and Equality Affairs 2008). From an educational, moral and ethical point of view, advertisements concerning young people’s lifestyle and body images should idealistically be based on a set of assessments or regulations.

In Norway it is forbidden by “The Norwegian Law of Consumption” (1972) to write in advertisements that:”This dress makes you look slimmer.” But what about the unwritten message in every photo of nearly naked dressed and very slim models? What kind of ethical message is this for the teens? Are those kinds of photos a positive or a negative signal to young boys and girls, and what about the ethical health message and the psychological effect? With a glance on young people, what kind of advertisements

should be forbidden in an international and national context, and what kind of advertisements do we allow? What kind of protection do we want for young people concerning lifestyle, advertisements and mass media? It is easy today to teach pupils about qualitative climes for cars, standards for house building, food risks, travelling costs, electricity prices, pollution, the rainforests, climate problems or re-circulation of food, paper and plastics, than how to conduct and educate decision making and bridge gapping of young consumers in school.

In sport psychology we talk about *empowering and empowerment (Sørensen & Graff-Iversen 2001). Empowering* means to coach persons through a process for more self-confidence, to learn to relate on own decision-making, to evaluate own choices based on questions like; how do I make qualitative good choices, and what is good for me? What is important just for me and my age?

I believe young people need *motivation* for empowering their own life and learn to keep a critical eye on commercialisation. They need good idols and personal courage for life. They need to do qualitative good choices for life, but what kind of coaching do we want do give them concerning commercialisation and a healthy lifestyle? How is it possible to co-operate on learning prosesses together with the parents? In the domain of education (LK06), different forms of knowledge are produced and selected to serve special educational or multiple goals; through a new type of assessments and decision-making in school, methods of individual empowering will surely rice. This is what I call "*Stepping stones*" as an illustration for important personal guidance and qualitative lifelong learning for education in school society.

The Research Project

The research project *"Lifestyle, physical activity and Health management"* is a real world enquiry based on both quantitative and qualitative research methods. During the winter 2008, I asked 93 teenagers (16-18 of age) about their social life, physical activities and lifestyle. My definition of the concept '*lifestyle' is the way of life a person or a group has chosen for a special period in life*. I have in this way looked for characteristic features for this age group.

All teenagers studied at the Upper Secondary school in the neighbourhood of Oslo. The study objective was to:

1. to increase insights into what occupies teens social life from a phenomenological approach of view on lifestyle, physical activity and health,
2. to contribute to professional acknowledge of consumer citizenship education, and to explore, discuss and illuminate the different values and the outcome of this inquiry,
3. to listen to the teenagers' own voices, and to learn from their own conclusions and answers,
4. to evaluate the findings.

A central question will at last be how can this knowledge be used in consumer education in school?

Research instruments

Research instruments included questionnaires composed of 11 closed items and 2 open questions. The items were classed questions, and ranked as *very important*, *important and less important*. Questions were concerned about after school activities, physical training, health-concern, personal idols, clothes, appearance, shopping, smoking, drinking, use of drugs and self concern. In the following section I will present some of the most important findings.

Research findings based on teenagers' contribution

Research findings point to the teenagers' (N=93) contribution on the following items:

About socialisation:

- 92.5 % ranked that it was very important for them to have good friends and to be together with them both in and after school time.
- 7.5 % ranked that it was less important for them to have friends. This group was especially active in sport, and I suggest, they met friends in the sports organisations but were more engaged in training than in friends. Some also answered that they were occupied with computers and games in the afternoon.

About idols:

- 64 % of the teens where occupied of what their idols did in daily life and how the idols lived. They read about the idols clothing, musical interests or make-up. They searched information from mass media, weekly magazines or from Internet.
- 23 % wanted to have the same clothes as the idols.
- 31 % of the teens where occupied of the idols appearance. Idols came from film industry, music industry and sport, but also friends and parents could be role models and idols among youth in this group.

About physical training and body awareness:

- The boys were more interested in the idols' fitness, while the girls were more interested in hair styling, clothes and out-look.
- 27 % where occupied by their own body shape, muscles, face and hair.
- More girls than boys mentioned that they wanted to look slim and to have a pretty look.

About purchasing behaviour:

- 72 % were very interested in shopping, and 92 % of the girls went every week for *impulsive shopping*. These girls looked at shopping as a pleasure and were fascinated of the shopping process.
- 46 % of the boys went for shopping only when they really needed clothes. They normally went shopping together with their mother.
- 28% ranged badge clothes as very important for their daily lifestyle, and 44% answered badges were important for every shopping process. 19% answered that they were not occupied of badge clothes at all.

Discussion

The power of socialisation in puberty is described of Raaheim (1985), Imsen (2001) and more, and the findings in this project state that belonging to a group, is still a priority of 92,5 % of the respondents. This result is a confirmation of what psychologists call normal development. Talking about popularity in school, it looks like popularity do not depends on school results nor performance in school, but of the individual social behaviour, what kind of badge you have on clothes and what you dare to try out. Some mentioned it was also a matter of money and very often focused of what you can buy. To be trendy and to be pretty was a priority for many girls.

Findings indicate that teens', and especially girls, were fascinated by shopping. There are indications that new clothes and styling strengthened their self-confidence. This is not a surprise, but it is a statement from earlier documentations. Many girls told that they wanted to be slim and to look slim and pretty. This is one explanation for why they smoked and that they very often skipped breakfast in the morning. This was special for a big group of girls. Most of them used to buy clothes as a result of impulsive shopping and not after what they really needed. Shopping had been an after school activity, and was for many a compensation of participation in sport - or music activities, but also *a way of positioning*. Shopping will in this way also be: 1) an indication of having enough money, and 2) a typical indication on a western society.

The study shows that boys and girls conceptions of lifestyle are related to both the mass media presentation and weekly magazines of what is popular and what is a trendy look. Questioning the individuals of interest for literature reading at home, about 40% answered, yes, they read literature, but it was more like reading magazines and not very often books.

To afford shopping, using the cell phone, to buy cigarettes, a snuffbox and clothes, 16.2 % worked in evenings and on holidays. It was very important to buy things and to own things. Some also used money for driving lessons.

Findings (N=93) had a clear indication on that *it was normal* to drink alcohol mostly every weekend. Totally 22.6 % of the group smoked cigarettes, this means 28.4 % of the girls and 8 % of the boys. This results correlate with Norwegian health studies (www.ssb.no), which tells that smoking among youth has diminished the last years, but

still smoke 22 % of the Norwegian population between 16 - 74 years of age. Smoking in Norway today is linked to a low social rank and is clearly seen as a lifestyle problem. It is also a behavioural aspect that 16.2 % of the respondents had tried drugs.
Findings tell that 72% of this group ranked health concern as very important, and 21.5% ranked health concern as less important. There is however low equivalence between health concern, physical training, smoking and use of alcohol.
41 % told that they had only one lesson physical education weekly. This means they joined the obligatory physical education in school. If we look at the local traditions of skiing in this part of Norway, it was only 3-4 decades ago normal that everyone had skis and went skiing in the neighbourhood on weekends. The findings indicate, however, that modern times have changed the Norwegian sport and skiing traditions. 45 % of this group answered that they did not have any kind of skis, snowboard etc. This result is really surprising when we talk about Norway as a nation of skiers. Their overall low score in sports can also be a signal on future lifestyle- and health problems. Health problems are precisely described of The World Health Organisation (Eriksen 2006, 2007) as over-weight, diabetes II, high blood pressure, heart attack or Low Density Lipoprotein. About 40 % of the Norwegian population are at risk concerning health problems today mostly based on less daily physical activity and too much of junk food.
The anorexia problems among youth may be also a result of too much focus on food and the abnormal wish of being slim. To be like models in magazines or on the cat-walk, are for many young girls dangerous idols. But also the knowledge that smoking kills today more people than aids, malaria and tuberculosis together (WHO 2008), is a documentation on modern times lifestyle problems.
The respondents were occupied by health, but their health knowledge was insufficient. They did not have the right knowledge about *consequence learning*, and they are still young and vulnerable. To learn about "How do I make good choices?" should be *a thematic priority in schools* in addition to studies in mathematics, language and science. The findings in this project indicate in many different ways, that many teenagers have a big knowledge gap and a lack of practical competence in their own life. Some have good guidance of parents and teachers, but it looks like education should concentrate more on bridging the gap.

Education

In order to face the rapid changes that characterize the social, economic and cultural context (Rinaldi 2006) we live in, it is important to give teens' knowledge, information and skills as critical consumers. The findings in my project indicate that consumer education has a big challenge in teaching the next generation about consumption awareness and health.
Reality teaching is also important to place life, socialisation, education and health management in focus. Questioning through a problem based teaching method is one

methodical way to go about consequence learning, and questions as: what is good for me, what is happiness, what is important for me in my life, and what is useful for me and my interests? How do I manage life and make good choices? The use of *individual key questions* is one useful way to go, and is implemented in the empowering methods described by Sørensen & Graff-Iversen in 2001.

The empowerment method is also described in national documentations. The method is defined *to give someone strength in life*, and is a well known methodical and didactical theory used both in organisation management, psychology and in sport. Teaching individuals for more knowledge and a better self behavioural understanding with the intention to strengthen the individual self confidence, is a multilateral educational task. The following figure (2) illustrates the most important themes in this teaching.



Fig. 2 *A teaching model for consumer education with a focus on each pupil in the class*

Based on individual key questions rooted in theoretical and practical knowledge, each theme in this illustration is like a "*stepping stone*" of security in each individual human life. Teachers have to teach about decision-making related to Consumer Citizenship education and health related subjects in school. Teens have to learn to break hidden codes in commercial information, and teaching has to be close to the pupils' daily life and individual. The story-line method is another way to go in this training.

In The Curriculum for the Norwegian Primary and Secondary School system (LK06) it is emphasized that teaching pupils have to lead to a better life competency and lifelong learning. The study "*Lifestyle, Physical activity and Health management*" has discovered that among the respondents, there is a visible lack of knowledge about life concern. May be education in classrooms should be more personal and individual adapted concerning Consumer Citizenship Education and each consumers' capacity?

There are many indicators among the findings that point to the respondents' (N=93) need for more consumer awareness and behavioural aspects concerning body, mind, emotions, personality and health. We need a radical "button-up" strategy for this thematic Consumer teaching, and these programs have to be more visible in the education in school.

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The juridical and practical basis of consumer rights protection in Bulgaria

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This presentation deals with the current situation of consumer rights protection in Bulgaria as a new member of the EU. It starts with a brief outline of the legal framework for consumer rights protection in Bulgaria, including the main domestic laws based on the EU laws and regulations in the field. The special law for consumer protection provides an important legal basis for the establishment of clearer regulations in the market. At the same time an attempt is made to explain also how the protection of consumer rights is treated as a type of civil right in Bulgaria.
Thus the role and mission of state agencies such as the National Council for Consumer Protection and the Consumer Protection Commission, which are responsible for guaranteeing consumer rights through legal channels is described in some length. The paper focuses briefly on new cooperative initiatives involving state institutions, local authorities, and non-governmental organizations which are aimed at promoting greater societal awareness of consumer rights and the existing means of protecting them in Bulgaria. The presentation has also an accent on the dissemination of information about consumer rights which is regarded as a prerequisite for ensuring a better quality of life for all Bulgarian citizens as they become aware of being EU citizens as well.

I. Legal framework of consumer protection in Bulgaria

The legal framework of consumer protection in Bulgaria is based on Article 19, par.2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, which affirms that "the state shall establish and guarantee equal legal conditions for economic activity to all citizens and legal entities by preventing any abuse of a monopoly status and unfair competition, and by protecting the consumer." (Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria 1991). Consumer protection is thus enshrined as a fundamental constitutional principle and has been further elaborated and codified through legislation (laws and normative acts). Acknowledging the importance of consumer protection as a constitutional principle, the state managed to draft within a very short period of time (six years) two special laws: the Law for Consumer Protection and Trade Rules (1999) and the Law on Consumer Protection (2005). The former recognizes European practices in the field of consumer protection policy and the changes that occurred in the socioeconomic environment of the country in connection with the EU membership pre-accession terms for Bulgaria. The latter act built on the positive elements in the first law and accepted the provisions

existing in all EU directives on consumer protection in accordance with the new social and economic realities in the country and the higher consumer expectations and requirements.

Article 1 of the Law on Consumer Protection explicitly regulates "consumer protection, the prerogatives of state bodies, and the activities of consumer associations in the field." (Law on Consumer Protection, Art. 1, par. 2) The Act is supposed to guarantee "the protection of the following basic consumer rights: the right to information on goods and services; the right to protection from risks associated with acquiring goods and services that can threaten life, health, or property; the right to protection of their economic interests in acquiring goods and services in response to misleading and erroneous advertising, unfair trading practices and methods of sale, unfair terms of contracting and warranty for the delivery of goods; the right to compensations for harm caused by defective goods; the right of access to court and out-of-court procedures for settlement of consumer disputes; the right to education on consumer protection-related issues; the right of association to protect consumer interests; and the right of access to state agencies entrusted with decision-making on all related issues (Law on Consumer Protection, Art.1, par.2). Alongside some earlier types of basic consumer rights, the Act includes three new types of rights – the right to education on consumer protection issues (Art. 1, par. 2, line 6), the right to compensation for harm caused by defective goods (Art. 1, par. 2, line 4), and the right of association for protection of interests (Art. 1, par. 2, line 8). It is important to emphasize that consumer rights under the law cannot be abridged, that is, any denial or abridgment of consumer rights under the law is inadmissible and caries no legal weight. The same applies to the rejection of consumer rights protected by the law. (Art. 3, par. 1.2)

In addition to the main laws analyzed in this paper, the legal framework in the field of consumer protection is structured around several other important pieces of legislation that constitute the basic legal sources of information for Bulgarian citizens and their organizations on the wider spectrum of consumer issues.

The existing legal regulations oblige all merchants to supply the consumer in advance of the purchase of any goods or services applicable information about all the specifics of the goods or services, the dangers linked to their normal use, the conditions of use of goods and services, and the terms of warranty and dates of expiration in order an adequate choice to be made. (Law on Consumer Protection, Art. 4).

II. Institutions and organizations for consumer protection in Bulgaria

1. Administrative bodies for consumer protection

1.1. The Minister of Economy and Energy

The Minister of Economy and Energy is the most important administrative body that exercises the state policy in the field of consumer protection (Law on Consumer Protection, Art. 162). The Minister is supposed to integrate all consumer protection policies into the other sectorial and horizontal policies (Art. 163). The Minister of

Economy and Energy proposes amendments in current legislation as well as the drafting of new ones, issues normative acts and decrees, gives opinions on drafts of normative acts, chairs the National Consumer Protection Council (NCPC), coordinates the activities of other administrative bodies, oversees collaboration with consumer protection administrative bodies of other countries, represents Bulgaria in international consumer protection organizations, elaborates a list of all certified organizations, issues guidelines in which all certification criteria are specified, and makes available to the EU Commission the list of certified organizations in Bulgaria with their fields of activities and their legal and organizational framework.

1.2. The National Consumer Protection Council

The National Consumer Protection Council (NCPC) was established in accordance with the Law on Consumer Protection (Art. 164). Strictly speaking, this body is not new in Bulgarian legislation. A National Consumer Protection Council existed under the previous Law on Consumer Protection and Retail Trade Rules (Law on Consumer Protection and Retail Trade Rules, 1999). The new NCPC is a consultative body affiliated with the Minister of Economy and Energy. It consists of twelve members, five of whom are representatives of the different ministries, one from the Commission for Consumer Protection to the Minister, and six from consumer associations. The representatives of the certified consumer protection associations are appointed by the Minister of the Economy and Energy on his order after being nominated by the representatives of the cited ministries and the certified consumer associations (Law on Consumer Protection, Art. 173; also Regulation Guidelines of the NCPC, Art. 3). The Minister of Economy and Energy chairs the NCPC. The Secretary of the NCPC is appointed by the Minister of Economy and Energy and is not a member of the Council. The representatives are from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of agriculture and Forest, Ministry of Economy and Energy, Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Finance. Special Regulation Guidelines issued by the Minister of Economy and Energy set up the framework of the NCPC activities.

The NCPC's main task is to coordinate the positions and opinions of the different views of representatives of collective interests of consumers and consumer-protection administrations. The Minister of Economy and Energy enforced special Guidelines for the organization of the NCPC (Guidelines for the Work Organization of the NCPC, 2006).

In carrying out its goals, the CNPC consults the Minister on effective consumer policy and elaborates programs for effective consumer policy. Acting through the Minister of Economy and Energy, the CNPC makes proposals for changes and amendments to the legal framework of consumer protection. It also drafts proposals for the effective implementation of consumer protection legislation and gives opinions about other draft laws. Finally, it assists the drafting of contracts between consumers association and

trader's associations. The NCPC holds at least one meeting every 4 months but can be convened more frequently by its chairman in case of need.

The NCPC can be convened either by its chairman or upon request from more than half of its members. Representatives of other ministries and institutions working in the field of consumer protection can also participate in NCPC work. At the invitation of the NCPC chairperson or the majority of the Council's members, other persons can participate in its meetings – independent experts, leading specialists in the field of consumer protection, and representatives of associations of traders, manufacturers, and other organizations interested in the agenda of a specific meeting (Guidelines on work of the NCPC, Art.7-8 and 10). The NCPC can form working groups and expert commissions related to the settlement of particular consumer protection issues. All members of the Council participate in its meetings personally, and any form of delegated representation is inadmissible.

1.3. The Commission for Consumer Protection

The Commission for Consumer Protection (CCP) is a successor to the Commission of Trade and Consumer Protection that has been established in compliance with the Law on Consumer Protection and Trade Rules. The organization of CCP, its activities and its structure, functions, and number of members are regulated by the Regulations Guidelines on the Commission structure, in force from 10 July 2006.

The CCP is a state commission at the Ministry of Economy and Energy. It consists of five members including a chairman with a five-year term, all of whom are appointed by the Prime Minister. The CCP has regional units at six district centers. Moreover, within the local municipalities the mayor of the particular municipality is responsible for establishing a special consumer protection unit. Such units enforce consumer protection under Chapter Two ("Information supplied to the Consumer"), Chapter Four ("Trade practices and methods of Trade", Section III on Methods of Sale) and Chapter Five ("Safety and Quality of Goods and Services, Section II on "Warranty to Consumer Goods" and Section III on "Claims") of the Law on Consumer Protection (Art. 191, par. 3).

The CCP's jurisdiction in consumer protection is governed by the Law on Consumer Protection (Art. 191, par. 1). According to the Regulation Guidelines of the Commission Structure the Commission has exclusive competence for guaranteeing consumer rights. More specifically the CCP enforces the safety of goods and services in accordance with existing normative acts; oversees procedures for suspending or banning acts or trade practices that violate consumer rights; coordinates the activities of enforcement bodies in ensuring the safety of non-foodstuff goods and services; participates with its appointed representative in the Council for Coordination and Information Exchange among the Bodies Exercising Control over the Markets of Goods and in the NCPC; and issues guidelines and recommendations dealing with

unfair clauses in contracts. The CCP also conducts negotiations with representatives of associations of traders to devise standard contracts.

The CPC is supposed to protect consumers from risks deriving from goods and services endangering their health and lives; to help consumers in acquiring goods and services; and to implement measures for protecting the right to information and increasing the culture of consumerism. The commission engages in collaborative work with consumers associations, tourist companies, and other sectorial organizations. (Regulations Guidelines...)

The CCP has wide jurisdiction in consumer protection by implementing compulsory administrative measures such as a "temporary ban on the sale of dangerous merchandise," a "recall of certain merchandise" a "ban on the production, import, export, sale, or non-paid/promotional distribution of certain merchandise on the market," the closure (in full or in part) of trade outlets in which dangerous merchandise has been sold," and the suspensions of the manufacture, distribution, or delivery of certain services" (Regulations Guidelines…2006, Art. 5).

All of these measures are specified in the Law on Consumer Protection or in related orders for published in the State Gazette. Moreover, the CCP under the Law on Tourism is responsible for ordering "temporary closures" of tourist facilities. The CCP has a well developed structure throughout the country, including units in major district centers – Sofia, Varna, Plovdiv, Montana, Rousse, and Bourgas, along with the central staff of 188 people (for further information about the staff and structure see: Decree of the Council of Ministers, 2007).

The CCP has achieved important progress in the consumer protection field and has played a major role in supplying and disseminating information about consumer protection and consumer interest. That role is made explicit in the functions performed by the CCP in line with the Regulation Guidelines of the Commission. In particular, it gathers and analyzes information on dangerous merchandise and services and supplies it to other enforcement bodies and the public. It also informs the European Commission about every measure taken to limit and prevent distribution of certain merchandise and to implement recommendations from enforcement authorities. The CCP is the contact point for consumers, manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and enforcement authorities in gathering and transferring information about goods and services that have failed to live up to safety regulations. The commission maintains registers of goods and services that pose health or safety risks and lists of incidents with dangerous goods and services (Regulations Guidelines…, Art. 16)

2. Consumers' associations and their role for informing the consumers

Citizens can join associations to protect their rights as consumers. Consumer associations are non-governmental organizations (NGOs). They work exclusively in the interest of consumers and are not linked to any political party. They are economically

independent of manufacturers, importers, merchants, and distributors and are registered at the Ministry of Justice as public-interest NGOs.

The Ministry of Economy and Energy publishes an annual list of certified consumer associations based on verifiable data about the associations' activities over the previous year. For a consumer association to be certified as such, it should meet several criteria, the most important of which is the effectiveness of its public activities in consumer protection in the preceding year. Effectiveness can be judged by certain indicators such as: the number of investigations dealing with consumer protection, the number of media publications on consumer issues; the nature and results of information campaigns to raise public awareness about consumer rights; and the number of class-action suits filed to protect consumer rights. On the basis of these criteria, the Minister of Economy and Energy decides whether a certain association should be included on the list of certified consumer associations for the next year.

All associations on the list have the power to receive information about the drafting of legislation dealing with consumer rights and to give input about it. They are supposed to inform the appropriate authorities about any violations of consumer rights.

The associations also receive information from state and municipal authorities regarding the structuring of public utilities and the provision of heating, electricity, water, sewage, transport, mail, communications and electronic communications. They work with enforcement agencies to carry out checks, analyses, and tests of goods and services, and it facilitates the settlement of disputes between consumers and traders. The associations also inform the court about any violations of consumer rights enumerated in the Law on Consumer Protection These rights are given only to consumer associations on the list of certified organizations (See Art. 169, par.1, l.6 in connection with Art.186, par.1, in connection with art.164, par.1, l.7).

Conclusion

The most important purpose of the legal acts analyzed in this paper is to regulate and guarantee the rights of consumers of goods and services, to eliminate the distribution and use of harmful goods and services, and to uphold health and safety regulations. The legislation and regulations guarantee legal opportunities for consumer protection by administrative or judicial mechanisms.

The establishment of various bodies such as the NCPC and CCP is a demonstration of the public-private approach in the organization of consumer rights protection policy in Bulgaria. Those bodies are responsible for ensuring protection of basic consumer rights and monitoring the overall safety of goods and services on the market. They also contribute for protecting the economic interests of consumers.

The local units consult consumers on issues related to the Law on Consumer Protection; supply information to the CCP about dangerous goods; and inform the competent bodies when violations of consumer protection rights occur. Bulgaria has established a broad structure of consumer protection consisting of the CCP and the local

administration consumer protection units. All consumer associations enjoy ex lege the cooperation of all state, district, and local administrative bodies.

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Radical Deep Ecology
A background to the Jokela School shooting in Finland
A global dimension of consuming and citizenship education

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This paper discusses the school shooting at the Jokela School in Finland. An 18-year-old boy shot the school's headmistress, himself and 7 others on 7 November 2007. The boy had radical ecological ideas referred to as deep ecology. His identity was also shaped by communism, Nazism and Nietzsche's philosophy. School teachers and administrative staff need to be familiar with the new media and the pupils' ways of using it. It is important to find ways for consumer citizenship education to deal with the cognitive, emotional and social influences on consumers' capacity to process information in the global use of the Internet. We can even talk about a global mismanagement of responsibility in some cases, for example in the Jokela incident.
We happened to be visiting a school in Helsinki with a student teacher group the next day of the shooting and we got a good example of how the Finnish schools should handle the situation. The students interviewed schools about their procedures relating to the incident.
This paper is a short description of 1) deep ecology; 2) the guidelines of the Finnish Board of Education on the Jokela incident; 3) the results of the students' interviews; and 4) the conclusions.

Deep Ecology in Finland
Deep ecology in Finland has been made famous by Pentti Linkola, a fisherman and an active writer with an extremely ecological lifestyle. Linkola is a radical environmentalist who has often been characterized as an eco-fascist. He was born in 1932. He has written a great deal about his ideas and is very well-known in Finland. Materially, he follows a very simple lifestyle with no running water and no car in his use. He is retired, but works as a professional fisherman during the wintertime. Linkola grew up in Helsinki. His father was a rector at University of Helsinki and his mother's father had worked as the Chancellor of the same university. Pentti Linkola did not continue his university studies in zoology and botany after the first year. He became a free naturalist. As a philosopher, Linkola has been described as a biocentric empiricist. He studies human population growth and has encountered a lot of opposition for his criticism of the affluent Western society. Among some individuals, however, he has gained a guru status for practicing what he preaches.

Deep fascism has got new supporters and in the Jokela case we were forced to understand that even in Finland some will do radical things against other people and themselves –which is something Linkola as an intellectual has never done.

The guidelines of the Finnish Board of Education to the schools for the Jokela situation

We can be sure that Linkola never wanted the Jokela incident to happen in Finland. In the Jokela high-school, an 18-year-old boy shot the school's headmistress, himself and 7 others on 7 November 2007. The boy had radical ecological ideas referred to as deep ecology. His identity was also shaped by Communism, Nazism and Nietzsche's philosophy. He was a modern consumer with friends on various online networks. His parents and he were very fond of Linkola's ideas. The boy posted his plans of the shooting on YouTube before the incident.

We happened to be visiting a school in Helsinki with a student teacher group the next day of the shooting and we got a good example of how the Finnish schools should handle the situation. We also got an opportunity to discuss the Internet's role as both being globally mismanaged and as a provider of fine possibilities at the same time. As student teachers, the student group was afraid of their future and highlighted the global responsibility as well.

The Finnish Board of Education sent emails to the school headmasters on how the schools should react to the situation. The guidelines were also posted on the home page of the Finnish Board of Education.

The situation was a breach of democracy that is discussed in the agenda for global responsibility and citizenship. The Finnish Board of Education has given an order that every school in Finland should set up a crisis group to be led by the headmaster. The media coverage was enormously vast in the Jokela incident: all pupils had seen the news on TV and many had also visited YouTube. The role of the crisis group is to organize the situation and define the roles of the school psychologist, the special education teachers, other teachers etc. The questions to be answered include how to discuss the incident with students; what kind of ceremonies need to be organized; how the teachers can support their colleagues; and how to inform the parents about the school's procedures now and in future. The Finnish Board of Education considers that some of the pupils and teachers should have support even years after the Jokela incident.

The case of Jokela was the first time Finland ever saw anything like this. The killer got fan clubs online very quickly after the incident. We could expect the incident to cause other schools to be threatened by a similar massacre, which they were. The pupils of the school of Jokela asked the media to be quiet. It was a better way to forget all the fuss. It also reduced the mismanagement of responsibility.

The results of the student interviews

The students on the school visit did a short interview on 10 schools about how they had reacted to the Jokela incident. Most of the schools had arranged a common ceremony and the teachers were given advice on how to continue with the children. They all appreciated the support of their colleagues. Those teachers who did get any advice or information on how to look at the situation felt afraid and alone. The guidelines of the Finnish Board of Education were considered to be good and important even among the students.

Conclusions

We are not used to the global dimension of citizenship education. Education for global responsibility covers not only the educational system but the whole society. In Finland we have all aspects of Education for Global Responsibility as a general part of the curriculum for schools: development education, human rights education, education for sustainable development, education for peace and conflict prevention and intercultural education. The Internet gives us new subcultures. People can live in the network society, as did the boy in Jokela. We have to have guidelines like those of the Finnish Board of Education for schools and society, and work together with the society to understand the new consumption and global citizens.

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Implementation of the "Consumer Citizenship Education Guidelines" in the online-studies of English for engineering students

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Introduction

The Consumer Citizenship Network (CCN) brings together international expertise in the fields of citizenship-, environmental- and consumer education to develop valuable and innovative practices for teaching and assessing consumer citizenship education (CCE). '*Consumer Citizenship Education Guidelines Higher Education*' (Thoresen, ed., 2005) emphasize the value of developing quality modules/courses in higher education which support the European Bologna process by enhancing the relevance of European higher education to society's present needs as well as being compatible with the Lisbon strategy by contributing to the adaptability and responsiveness of higher education. By bringing together the various elements which constitute CCE, *the Guidelines* highlight the universal need for common reflection on the implications of "improved quality of life" and of the consequences of present consumption patterns" (ibid., 8). There is no universal way of exercising consumer citizenship, but all of them would require "in-depth, up-to-date understanding and awareness of the constantly changing conditions which create the landscape in which the consumer citizen must function" (ibid. 8). Though it is impossible to find answers to many questions related to consumer citizenship, it is possible to provide students with the basic tools which enable them to make choices, manage resources, solve problems and contribute to the future. It directly refers to providing access and further development of distance education and e-learning, and a wider introduction of the ICT facilities at the tertiary level.

Aims of the study

The present research is aimed at promoting a wider access to the e-studies, specifically – English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for engineering students, by developing a meaningful e-learning content and relevant activities, taking into account some of the principal suggestions of the *'Consumer Citizenship Education Guidelines'* as a strategic document of the CCN project.

The research was done within the thematic *CCN Task Group 1 on 'Inclusion of Consumer Citizenship Education Themes in Existing Courses and Modules'*. The research was carried out at Riga Technical University, Latvia. Within the CCN Task

Group 1 another study in teaching foreign languages was undertaken (Karsli, 2008), which was aimed mainly at developing separate modules on note-taking, reading comprehension, writing, etc., in English on the basis of the suggestions made in the *'The Consumer Citizenship Education Guidelines'*. At the same time a topical issue is how *to integrate the CCE as core elements flexibly and coherently into the existing courses,* as the envisaged number of the courses or the contact hours for one or another course are limited. Such integration cannot and should not be fragmentary, by just adding or eliminating some topics. By integrating CCE into the existing courses, we mean changing the philosophy behind the course, its message and goals. The author of the article has chosen the approach when the CCE basic principles and strategies are interwoven in the e-course – 'Creative Learning of English for Specific Purposes (ESP)', for engineering students, tertiary level.

Aims of the study

1. To analyze the methodological concepts and approaches to consumer citizenship education (CCE) for their implementation in the e-studies of English for Specific Purposes (ESP)
2. To explore the integration of the ICT facilities with creative learning methodology of ESP
3. To develop the methodological approach to designing and delivery of the online ESP course (texts, creative thinking tools and techniques, problem solving situations, tasks and activities, achievement tests)
4. To launch the online course in ESP and analyze the results

Methodology

One of the major goals of e-learning has been to make all education (academic, professional, organisational, commercial training, etc.) more accessible. It provides generally recognized benefits as content individualisation, increased autonomy, multi-sensory delivery of information, flexibility in time, place and tempo of learning. *Creative e-learning is defined as the integration of creative learning methodology with e-learning facilities to promote the creative abilities of the target audience* (Rumpite, Zuga, Ritins, 2007). The present online course delivery project was realized with the support of the Distance Education Centre of Riga Technical University (RTU) - an experienced partner of many international projects. The Blackboard (Blackboard Inc.) software environment served as a medium and tool in the delivery of the learning material, basic performance assessment, user support, task information, and task feedback (Fig. 1), while advanced team learning systems - *ThinkTank™ (Groupsystems company*) and *Zing (Zing Technologies Pty. Ltd)* software, were used primarily for collaborative problem solving tasks which required creative interaction. In 2006-2007 a total of 43 students but in 2007-2008 – 30 first year students from the Faculty of Electrical and Power Engineering, RTU, took part in the e-course.



Fig. 1 *Template of the e-course in ESP*

The research also included the study of the theoretical and empirical theories and approaches to defining and developing creativity in pedagogy, psychology and language teaching practice (Cropley, 2001; de Bono, 1996; Lantolf, 2006; Runco & Pritzker, 1999; Sternberg & Lubart, 1999; Torrance, 1983; Vygotsky, 1978, etc.). Edward de Bono, the originator of lateral thinking and a widely acknowledged international authority in the field of creative thinking, writes that "creativity need no longer be a mystery or a special gift – it is a skill that can be learned and applied" (de Bono, 1996). Torrance (1974) also argued that creativity is not a special, but a common ability, which is based on the constellation of the general intellect, personal features and abilities to think productively. He pointed out *the following steps that any creative process* consists of:

- perceiving the problem
- looking for a solution
- generating and formulating hypotheses
- verification of the hypotheses
- their modification and finding a solution or a result (Torrance, 1983).

The author of the article follows the definition of creativity suggested by Seltzer and Bentley (1999) '*Creativity is the application of knowledge and skills in new ways to achieve a valued goal'*.

There is a definite interrelation of the conventional intelligence and creativity. According to Cropley: "conventional intelligence is heavily dependent on recognizing, recalling and reapplying, and requires among other things substantial knowledge of facts, effective acquisition of new information, rapid access to the contents of memory, accuracy in finding the best answer to factual questions, and logical application of the already known. *Creativity, on the other hand, involves departing from the facts, finding new ways, making unusual associations, or seeing unexpected solutions"* (Cropley, 2001: 23).

Cropley also mentioned that engineers rated as creative, display *a combination of such characteristics as:* plentiful knowledge, swift recall, accurate application (intelligence) on the one hand; generating possibilities, seeing unexpected connections, introducing novelty (creativity) – on the other (ibid.). He also points out Eysenk's study (Eysenk, 1997 in Cropley: 60) who concluded that to characterize creative people researchers typically emphasize: *autonomy, non-conformity, openness to stimulation, flexibility, tolerance of ambiguity, inner directedness and ego strength.*

The author of the present article would add here also reflective skills as an important stimulus in finding new directions and solutions.

According to Vygotsky, the founder of the cultural-historical activity theory, creativity is considered more in terms of *collaboration and interaction*. He stressed the social processes in creative endeavors. His approach was further developed by Leont'ev (1978), Davydov, (1999), Galperin (2000), Engestrom (1999), Lompscher (1999), etc. In such an approach the unit of analysis is the activity as a system. To understand why separate actions are meaningful one needs to understand the motive behind the whole activity; activity is guided by the motive. The transforming process depends upon cooperative labour, social interactions, and external and internal tools within the 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky, 1978:86).According to this approach any kind of activity has its own definite content, structure, needs, motives, tasks and actions (operations). The activity to be developed is structurally analyzed according to the hierarchy of the underlying actions of which the activity consists in order to estimate the gradual controlled process of skill development.

The online course in ESP was methodologically based on the cultural-historical activity theory, briefly described above. Thus, in selecting the online study content, the existing trends and dynamic changes in the field of power engineering were analyzed. One of

the most essential trends is the steadily increasing role of renewable energy sources in the world. The selected online material 'Global Energy Guide', 'Guide to Nuclear Power', 'Solar Power – a Leader in the Making', 'Wind Power Today', 'Clean Coal Technology' (Fig. 2), 'Glendoe Hydro Scheme', 'Compressed Air Vehicles', etc. highlight such topical issues, suggested in the 'Consumer Citizenship Guidelines' as '*consumption and environment'* (ecology, life cycles, ecological balance; energy production and consumption), as well as '*future perspectives'* (sustainable development and sustainable consumption, alternative sources of energy, ecologically friendly transport', etc.).

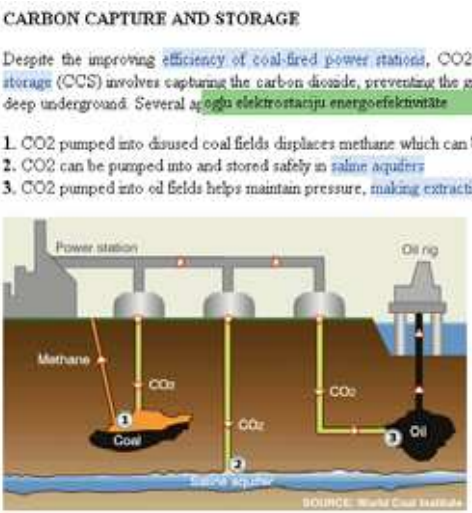

Fig. 2 *Template of the Unit 'Clean Coal Technology', online course in ESP*

The e-course developers paid particular attention to the selection and adequate, professional explanation of the terminology by using the *Word Assistant tool* (seen in Fig. 3). The goal was to select such a terminology which would constitute the 'core' terms in power engineering, thus enabling students to move further independently in their academic studies, research and future professional area. Thus, one of the central ideas in selecting the online course material and projecting the learning skills was to make them transferable to the future professional or research area of the students.

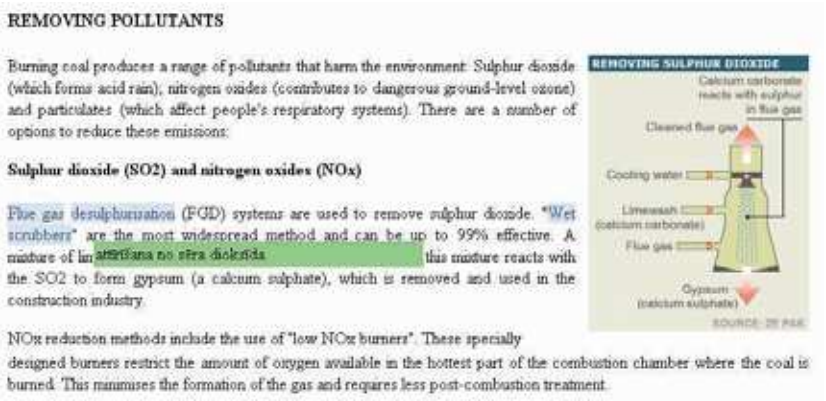

Fig. 3 *The use of the Word Assistant tool in mastering terminology online*

The criteria developed for the design and delivery of a creative online course in a foreign language are presented in Table 1 in the Appendix and include such components as: 1) the course content (learning material and visuals); 2) creative process support (creative thinking tools, techniques and software); 3) course administration (selection of the learning content, user support, software environment and assessment techniques).

A significant part of the online course - *Creativity Unit,* comprises 'classical' creative tools and techniques (brainstorming; synectics - metaphors, analogies; attribute listing, etc.); lateral thinking techniques developed by de Bono ('Six Thinking Hats' technique; 'Consider All Factors', 'First Important Priorities', 'Stepping Stone', 'Concept Challenge', etc.); as well as description of the stages in creative problem solving; examples and tasks (Fig. 4).

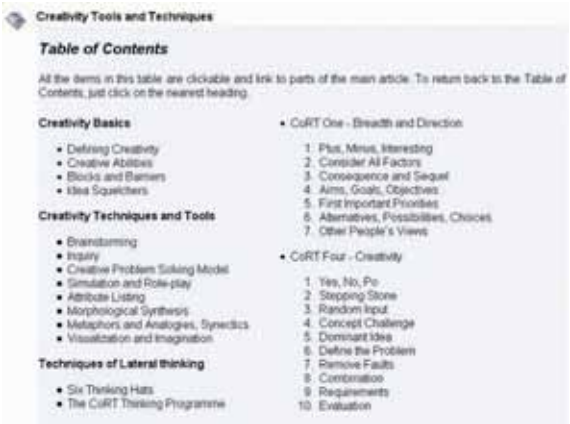

Fig. 4 *Creativity development tools and techniques in the e-course*

Assessment techniques in the e-course comprise individual and collaborative problem solving tasks and achievement tests to assess both the student language proficiency and creativity. The online tests parallel to assessing the reading comprehension skill and its subskills (comprehension of the linguistic components, the content of the text and its the semantic meaning), also envisaged both assessing and development of the thinking skills. The tests comprise true/false, multiple choice as well as open-ended tasks, where the answers were evaluated in accordance with the criteria developed before. Practically all the items in the online tests involve creative thinking; most of the items contain some contradiction which has no easy and direct answer. For example, a problem question from the online test on *'Global Energy Guide'*:
While being more expensive to set up, solar power is showing stronger growth than wind power in the UK. What are the reasons behind it? Is this trend likely to continue? Use facts to prove your point of view'.

Or, another example from the test on '*Clean Coal Technology*':
'*In the near future Latvia is going to build two new power plants. If one of them is a coal fired plant, would you want to use carbon capture and storage technologies? Explain your choice. Limit your answer to about 90 words'.*

Some answers of the students are given below:
Student A.: 'Actually I doubt if Latvia needs fossil fuel fired plant such as coal and natural gas. However, if coal fired plant is built instead of CCS technologies, it would be reasonable to use integrated Gasification Combined Cycle (IGCC) systems, because they have zero emissions at all. Of course these systems would require much more investments as they are not so widely distributed, but it would cause less usage costs and emissions than CCS technologies. If it is not possible to build IGCC, it should use CCS technologies for sure'.

Student E.: 'If we were building a coal fired plant, then I would say that we should use carbon capture and storage technologies although it is more expensive and it is harder and longer to build that. But it is a big investment in the future – reducing CO2 emissions. But before making that kind of step in future we need to discuss weather this power plant is suitable for nature functions in Latvia'. .

Student V.: 'If that would be government's final decision to build one – then yes. But my preference is not to build coal fired plants (the technique is very harmful for the environment and the carbon capture and storage technologies are not yet proven to work. I find them inefficient in comparison to other techniques used in practice. I prefer Combined Heat and Power solution – while producing electricity emitted heat is captured and is used to heat the adjacent homes. Because of the high density of housing in Latvia the solution is far more efficient than coal fired plants'.

Student J.: 'Yes, because I want to live in clean country and breathe clean air. Our health depends on environment where we live'.

Or, another task from the same Unit:
'It is known that the technologies for completely eliminating CO2 emissions from coal fired power plants are already available. So why are modern coal plants built without CO2 capture equipment? Limit your answer to about 60 words'.

Most of the responses of the 1st year students who had just started learning ESP – technical English, showed their understanding and care for the environmental protection in their decisions. We may assume that these would-be power engineers and environmental specialists will make responsible choices in their professional career as well.

Further, four open-ended problem solving tasks were developed for use, specifically, with the advanced collaborative ThinkTank™ software. The tasks focused on different social and economic challenges, taking into account the 'CCE Guidelines':

- purely entrepreneurial – "*New Business Challenge*"
- purely public opinion – "*Public Opinion Challenge*"
- entrepreneur dependant on public opinion – "*Market Sentiment Challenge*"
- social behaviour – "*Lifestyle Challenge*"

The problem solving process was anonymous and consisted of four stages for every task:

- *brainstorming* – producing ideas
- *categorizing* – isolating a particular group of ideas
- *voting on various criteria* – finding where the consensus or disagreement lies (Fig. 5)
- *evaluating the results* – this was done at the end of each session and the results were published in the Blackboard™ environment as part of the student portfolio.

Thus, the 'Lifestyle Challenge' focused on social responsibility and encouraged students to explore the dilemma of conspicuous consumption. The arguments speaking against it such as consequential environmental pollution and wasting of precious resources were presented, while, at the same time, recognizing that it has always been human nature to display one's wealth and social status by acquiring expensive commodities. The task was to think of activities motivating people to display their

wealth and status by more socially conscious activities such as environmental protection, devotion to social issues etc. (Fig. 5)

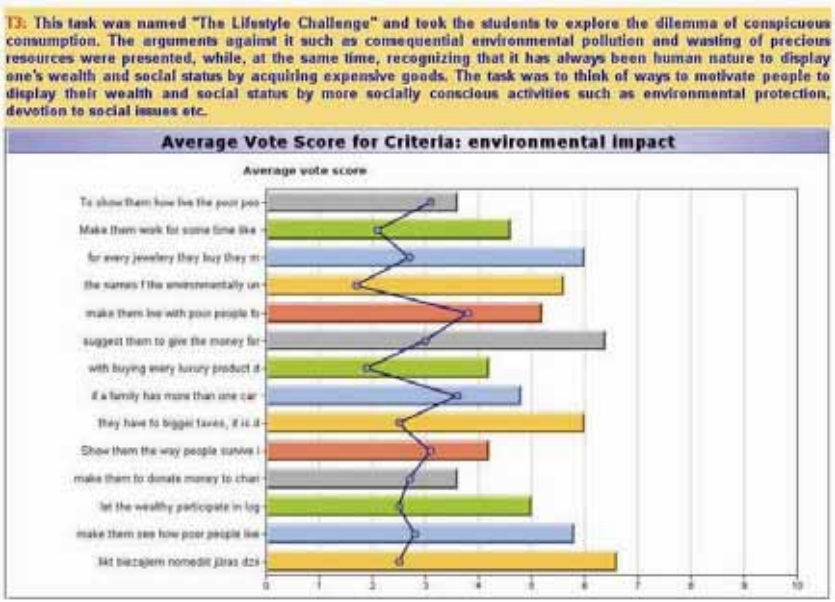

Fig. 5 *The criteria totals and the average divergence in solving the task 'Lifestyle Challenge' in the ThinkTank collaborative session*

Creativity of the solutions was later analysed considering the criteria of fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration (Torrance, 1974).

The sessions in the 2nd semester with the other sophisticated collaborative problem solving Zing software proceeded in a similar way. During the session everyone was able to contribute ideas to a shared workspace on a computer. The students learned to ask the kinds of questions that experts in the field might ask. They debated, discussed and discovered ideas together. Parallel thinking was implemented on the issues below – similarly as it is in the 'Six Thinking Hats' methodology by de Bono (1997):

- *Facts*: What do we know or need to know?
- *Feelings*: How do we feel about it?
- *Failings*: What could be improved? What are the negatives?
- *Fantasy*: What could we do that is different, new, creative, amazing?
- *Future*: What should we do next?

The procedure of the Zing interactive session, devoted to 'the issue of global warming – what each of us can do about it', shows also specifics of the interactive 'dialogic inquiry' (Wells, 2002). To start the discussion on 'Facts: What do we know or need to know?' a student – facilitator, submitted the following questions, developed by Zing:

Facts: ***What do we know or need to know?***
Facilitator (student): *What are the main causes of global warming?*
Facilitator: *How does it affect the environment?*
Facilitator: *What will be the consequences of continuing to use more fossil fuels as we seem to be doing now?*
Facilitator: *Is it possible to avoid the worst consequences*?

When considering the issue '*What are the main causes of global warming'* the interactive inquiry proceeded in the following way:

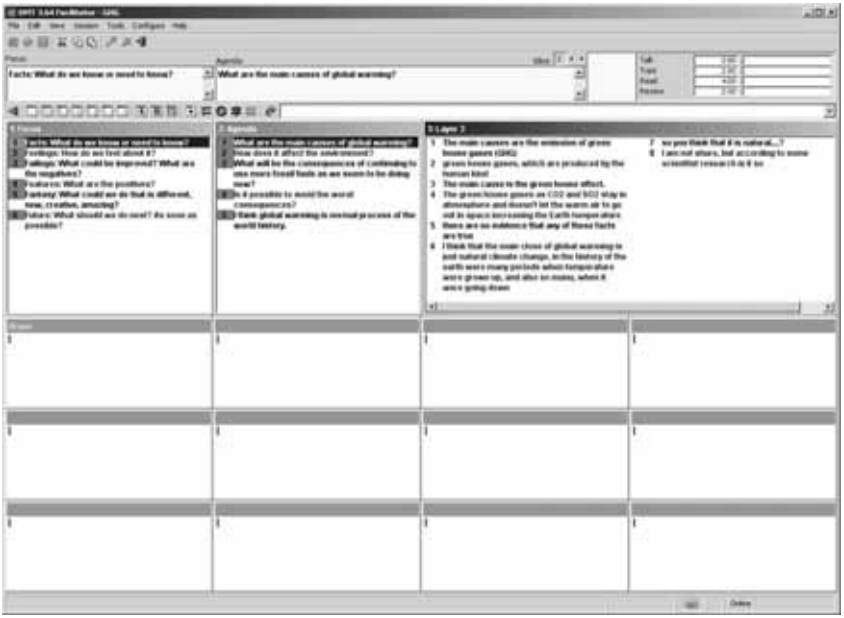

Fig. 6 *Screenshot of the Zing collaborative session on the causes of global warming*

What are the main causes of global warming?
Facilitator: *the main causes are the emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG)*
K.: Greenhouse gases which are produced by the humankind
P.: The main cause is the greenhouse effect

Facilitator: The greenhouse gasses as CO2 and SO2 stay in atmosphere and do not let the warm air to go out in space, increasing the earth atmosphere
K.: There is no evidence that any of these facts are true
D.: I think that the main cause of global warming is just natural climate change, in the history of the earth were many periods when temperature were grown up, and also so many when it was going down
Facilitator: So you think it is natural
D.: I am not sure, but according to some scientist research it is so

Thus, the students share and create new knowledge online by building on what they already know, and the emerging ideas are integrated to seek a solution to the problem.

Results and discussion

The '*Consumer Citizenship Education Guidelines'* (Thoresen, ed., 2005) provided valuable ideas and methodology for integrating into the ESP e-course a new, meaningful study material and interpretation of the issues of consumerism, consumption and environment, environmental protection, ecology, energy consumption and production, alternative sources of energy, and, finally – raising the awareness that we are citizens of one world in which the local and global are linked.

A flexible approach to combining face-to-face learning of ESP with its e-studies (or, blended learning) at a technical university is suggested. A poll was conducted which showed that such an e-course in ESP is considerably time-saving and permits the students to assess the study content and perform the assignments from any place and at any time. It is essential not only for developing students' self-organizational and managerial skills, but also for practical reasons – as part of them are combining their studies with work, live in remote areas, etc.

The online tests parallel to assessing the reading comprehension skill and its sub skills also envisaged both assessing and development of the thinking skills. Most of the tasks done by the students in ESP, comprising also open-ended questions, demonstrated more thoughtful, original and novel answers and solutions in comparison to the students' achievement at the beginning of the course. The results of the research showed that by applying the methodological principles of the cultural historical activity theory in the selection and structuring of the course content (texts, tasks and activities), providing lateral thinking techniques and tools in an encouraging pedagogical environment, it is possible to promote student creative thinking, as well as their English language proficiency. The specific creative and collaborative activities illustrated above and based on real-life situations, can be integrated into other e-learning efforts to improve learners' self organization, foster creativity and decrease course dropout rates.

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Appendix

Diana Rumpite, Gunars Ritins, Bruno Zuga (2007)

Criteria	Practical implementation and delivery
1. Course content	
1.1 Learning material and visuals	• Modelling authentic communicative situations in the students' professional area, e.g. Power Engineering • Challenging content developed with student motivation and interests in mind • Learning material containing a problem or a contradiction • Sufficient material for thought, transformations and combinations (4-6 page illustrated texts) • Adequate language for linguistic analysis, discussion, elaboration, dialogic inquiry, role plays, etc. • Multifunctional material to develop various Communicative kills – reading, writing, speaking, listening • Multimodal way of presenting the material (texts, colourful pictures, diagrams and other visuals) • Linguistic difficulty corresponding to the upper-intermediate level
2. Creative process support	
2.1 Creative thinking tools, techniques and software	• Learning by teamwork – sharing knowledge and collaborating • Brainstorming • Synectics (metaphors, analogies) • De Bono lateral thinking techniques (de Bono, 1996) • ThinkTank™ and Zing software for generation of ideas and further elaboration to find creative solutions
3. Course administration	
3.1 Selection of the learning content	• Consulting experts to choose the basic concepts and core knowledge to be acquired with significant value in further studies, e.g. 'Energy Sources', 'Fossil Fuels' , 'Renewable Energy'
3.2 User support	• 'Word assistant' tool to show translations, explanations, illustrations, and provide links for further reading – discretely and on demand • Guides, instructions and manuals • Face-to-face consulting during classes
3.3 Software environment	• Blackboard™ software to organize the course materials produced in HTML and to provide basic assessment
3.4 Assessment techniques	• Individual and collaborative problem solving tasks and achievement tests to assess student creativity and acquaintance with the course material

Inclusion of Consumer Citizenship Education themes into existing courses and modules of English language teaching

Assessing information as consumer citizens

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is twofold. The first is to present model modules which are based upon reading and listening (through note-taking) comprehension, and partly writing activities and-as a content-based instructional instrument-to cover the themes of Consumer Citizenship Education Guidelines. Within this target-definitely the salient one- the aim is to give a brief overview of some of the content that deals with the clarification of the conceptual domains of Consumer Citizenship identity, objectives, social identity-congruent definitions of Consumer Citizenship image and related corpus. As being bottom-up'er, who is expected individually to integrate new ideas, knowledge and skills into his/her teaching on the level of the classroom, I have included Consumer Citizenship Education Guidelines into existing courses of English Language Teaching Department.

The second target is, as a lecturer of English language teaching, to show theoretical justification for content-based instruction in which prior knowledge and familiarity with the subject matter attains importance to initialize reading comprehension process elaborately. As indicated by Weigle, S.C. & Jensen, L. (1997) "language is best learned through active involvement with content". In this study, reading comprehension activities are organized to activate the prior knowledge of the students and initiate the comprehension process. Idiosyncrasy cannot be ignored as Al-Issa (2006) states however content of the text plays an important role on students' comprehension.
Similarly, Aebersold & Field (1997, cited in Al-Issa, 2006) assert "If the topic …is outside [students'] experience or base of knowledge, they are adrift to an unknown sea". Application of content-based interactive teaching techniques facilitate and embellish the way of developing students' reading skills integrated with writing, listening and speaking. The concepts of "Consumption" and "citizenship" are well known by the students because they consume intensively, and every day they may encounter some problems as consumers and citizens. Hence, they can construct a meaningful representation of the text thinking over it for discussion. It is the central purpose of this study to provide a pathway to ultimately enhance and extend the reading comprehension activity to integrate and turn some vital knowledge-based skills into attitude-based ones to produce a total competence in life as Consumer Citizens.

Content-based instruction

Snow (in Celce-Murcia, 1991) defines 'content' as the use of subject matter for second language teaching purposes. Most of the theorists share the view that language is learned in context. Brinton, Snow & Wesche (1989) are the writers who support this view saying that "regardless of the specific methodology used, language teachers have generally found it desirable to present new items through meaningful content; in fact, *contextualizing* lesson presentations has become a widely accepted rule of good language teaching". Brinton, et al. (1989) continue as saying that: "... both in its overall purpose and its implementation, content-based instruction aims at eliminating the artificial separation between language instruction and subject matter classes which exist in most educational settings".

Therefore, it can be said that when *authentic texts,* which are created for a purpose other than language teaching, are used for language teaching purposes the topic becomes familiar and interesting to the learner.

Snow (1991) also maintains that "content-based instruction offers a viable approach to meeting the academic needs of second language learners…and a content-based approach fulfils a number of conditions which are found in the literature on language teaching and second language acquisition". This is due to content-based language curriculum's taking the interests and needs of the learners into account.

According to Brinton, et al. (1989, cited in Karsli, 1999) there are five different rationales for integrating teaching language and the content. The most important and the preceding one is proponents of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). We should note that for successful language learning to occur, the language syllabus must take into account the eventual uses the learner will make of the target language. Based on systematic description, focus is to be on the language skills and the content which best serve the learner.

Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) is the most known and documented of the content-based language models (Brinton et al., 1989). The most prominent function of this kind of instruction is that it involves *pragmatic, experience-based* courses aiming at preparing learners for *real-world demands*. It is common at the university level and occupational settings because these courses are particularly suitable for adult learners who identify clearly their objectives in language learning and what they need.

Originated from the theoretical basis of content-based instruction, covering English for Specific Purposes, two excerpts from the Consumer Citizenship Education Guidelines (see Appendix A, B) have been designed for reading and listening comprehension. In this study, listening comprehension, as intensive listening, is supported by guided note-taking, and also writing and speaking have been done as pre- and post- reading activities in an integrated approach.

Reading comprehension

The National Reading Panel of the National Institute for Literacy, a federal agency in US, defines reading as: *A complex system of deriving meaning from print that requires all of the following:*

- the skills and knowledge to understand how phonemes, or speech sounds, are connected to print;
- the ability to decode unfamiliar words;
- the ability to read fluently;
- sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension;
- the development of appropriate active strategies to construct meaning from print;
- the development and maintenance of a motivation to read.

More elaborately Rivers (1981) explains that: "Clearly, reading is a most important activity in any language class, not only as a source of information and a pleasurable activity, but also as a means of consolidating and extending one's knowledge of the language" and Kitao (1990) says that reading is a means of language acquisition, of communication, and of sharing information and ideas, and is an interaction between the reader's own knowledge and the text, which results in comprehension. Since reading comprehension is multileveled and interactive process, students can relate the new information to the existing information they have stored in their minds.
Bowen, Madsen & Hilferty (1985) sum this up by saying:

"Reading with full understanding requires extensive knowledge of the culture and familiarity with the society's values and thought patterns as well as its ways of categorizing reality and patterns of conjecturing about those categories, and it requires practice in reading, pondering, and discussing (….) Analyzing the text, the reader should be able to evaluate it, making judgements about its relative merits, and support those arguments. He should be able to engage in discussion about the content of the text at the same level at which it was written".

Hence, there may be a correlation between the objectives of CCE and language learning. As Shuell (1986) puts it, learning can be attributed to a change in the ability to do something that results from practice or experience and be enduring. Thus, the scaffold for the students should be the level of perception of what Consumer Citizenship is and what responsibilities and duties, as citizens, they should carry out by a change in the ability to comprehend the text's content by developing language skills.
Katims (1997) defines learning strategies as techniques, or routines that enable students to learn to solve problems and complete tasks independently. Similarly, to solve

problems, complete tasks independently and critical thinking abilities are some of the skills that consumer citizens should develop in parallel with CCE guidelines.

In this module, reading comprehension activities are discussions, clarification of the guidelines with the help of questions, word recognition and vocabulary building, information-gap filling, assessing information, making inferences, and conclusions. With the aid of this model, while integration of language skills were supported, students monitor themselves and were monitored by the instructor to absorb Consumer Citizenship Education (CCE) Guidelines and adjust their linguistic behaviour to new situations where they can exploit these competencies in learning English.

Gunning (1996) identifies comprehension strategies as preparational, organizational, elaboration and monitoring. Again, these strategies take place in CC Education. Gunning (1996) describes preparational strategies as those that activate prior knowledge about a particular topic. It is much easier to retrieve and retain knowledge about a subject when the students are familiar with the subject area and by this method it is aimed to get students thinking about CCE themes.

As for Organizational strategies, Gunning (1996) describes them as the process of selecting important details and building relationships from them. These strategies include: identifying the main idea and topic sentences, classifying information, deciding which information is relevant, sequencing and summarizing. Elaboration strategies are identified by Gunning (1996) as an additional processing of the text, which may give rise to comprehension. Making inferences and asking questions are all types of elaboration strategies. Monitoring is defined by Gunning (1996) as being aware of one's own mental process when reading. Independent thinking takes place in monitoring technique. The act of monitoring is knowing how to go back and find a way to gain understanding of the topic.

Implementation

Method: Communicative, Learner-centered Instruction

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is one of the most accepted paradigms in the language teaching world. Savignon (1991), who supports the application of this approach in the classroom using interpretations and manifestation, maintains that the concept is derived from theories in a wide range of areas: philosophy, psychology, sociology, linguistics and educational research taking language learning as an educational and a political issue.

Language learning is a process of discovery, however, input is the core of teaching/learning that gives the students the material they need to develop their ability to use the language on their own. With a dual approach the students were exposed to a reading comprehension activity with which they were informed about Consumer Citizenship Education, and with Integrated Approach they were able to combine reading, listening, speaking, writing and study skills.

The course/module in this study was implemented with a communicative, learner-centered, and integrated approach. *Mode Integration* (to combine language skills-listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and study-skills) and *Content Integration* (to bring CCE content) were applied as the forms of Integrated Approach. Languages are cognitive systems, but they also express ideas and transmit cultural values. Therefore, including CCE themes into an advanced reading and listening comprehension activity is crucial to show the students how the social, cultural, educational context carries certain language forms for native speakers. This normally brings the awareness of cultural aspects of language use into classroom environment, and, generating interesting discussions about the relationships between language and culture can expand students' perspectives.

The basic goal of applying this kind of approach is to engage and influence the students' encoding process. Thus, the ultimate goal of this strategy is to affect the way in which the students integrate consolidated knowledge related to CCE guidelines through development of linguistic skills.

Reading comprehension activity in advanced reading and writing course

Implementation of the model was conducted with English Language Teaching (ELT) freshmen. Throughout the academic calendar they were and have been informed intensively about reading comprehension strategies, techniques, and sub-skills of reading, namely; reading methods, such as, Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review (SQ3R), Critical Reading; and reading strategies, such as, Activating Prior Knowledge, Clarifying, Context Clues, Drawing Conclusions, Evaluating, Fix-up, Inferring, Key Words, Predicting, Question Answer Relationship (QAR), Summarizing, Skimming-Scanning, Restating, Thinking Aloud and Visualising. In thought processes for comprehension students call up what they already know, inference, connect, predict, then organize these as a newly established knowledge; image, monitor, review what they have learned, evaluate, and ultimately apply it to their daily life. When they started to do pre-reading activities, and discussion they were asked to do the reading comprehension activities and answer the questions referring back to the excerpt (see Appendix A).

Listening comprehension activity through guided note-taking

Ronald and Roskelly (1985) define listening as an active process requiring the same skills of prediction, hypothesizing, checking, revising, and generalizing that writing and reading demand. Krashen (1985), on the other hand, argues that people acquire language by understanding the linguistic information they hear. Thus language acquisition is achieved mainly through receiving understandable input. Hence, listening ability is the critical component in achieving understandable language input.

To increase students' ability to understand both formal and informal varieties of English and to retain and utilize what they have understood from a lecture based on the

CCE themes in an academic environment a module based on guided note taking strategies was produced. The focus was on the content.

Effective listening involves both *extensive* and *intensive* listening comprehension skills, in addition to requiring a wide range of vocabulary. Rixon (1986) states that *extensive listening* is listening for pleasure and interest without having to pay a lot of attention to content and language. It refers to one's ability to grasp the gist of what is being said, or the main message of the discourse, in contrast, *intensive listening* is much more controlled, with one or two specific points (Broughton et al. 1978)

Rixon (1986) also claims that intensive listening is the more widely used form in the classroom. In intensive listening, students have to collect or organize information. In this study, the students have collected CCE themes and organized this information by taking notes on the mind-maps, charts, headlines, etc.

Thus, guided note taking activity helped the students understand and analyse the exact words for the sake of listening comprehension, on the other hand helped them to extract and exploit the particular piece of information related to CCE Guidelines.

In application phase of this study, first, some supplementary information related to note-taking strategies and methods, such as Cornell Note-taking method, Nuclear Notes ('Mind Map' Technique), Sequential Note-taking, note-taking symbols, shortcuts, outlining methods, charting and headlines were given with the aid of power point presentation, and then the activity was applied (see Appendix B).

Conclusion

In the framework of "Inclusion of Consumer Citizenship Education Themes into Existing Courses/Modules", which is the work of Task Group 1, firstly, the activities were applied and the feedback of the students' was received (see Appendix C). Secondly, the theoretical basis and the justification have been written in this paper. As for awareness of the content, It cannot be claimed that all of the students, all of a sudden, have become expert *Consumer Citizens*, however, they have gained a different scope towards consumption and citizenship, responsibilities and rights.

As for the language learning/teaching aspect it can be inferred that content-based, communicative, learner-centered instruction plays an important role in language classes. If reading and listening comprehension activities are prepared elaborately – to improve these skills and their sub-skills – learner autonomy activates itself by vigour involvement and not passive inattention, grasping and acquiring knowledge out from the aural and written texts, and in return giving feedback. This means that teachers may easily nourish and foster students' flourish by mentally, responsibly, consciously equally as Consumer Citizenship Education aims at.

Improving these skills, closely linked to the development of the strategies and sub-skills embodied in all of the language skills, they may create what Consumer Citizenship Education maintains in its definition: "it encompasses attitudes, knowledge and skills connected to functioning in today's society. It is responsibility learning which aims to

contribute to the individual's ability to manage his own life as well as participating in the stewardship of the global society's collective life".

It cannot be claimed that this study is based on research and its findings, however, it is a very small classroom application with a desktop research within the teacher-student rapport. Integration of new ideas, knowledge and skills into the teaching on the level of the classroom, as being a bottom-up'er, has been striven individually.

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APPENDIX A
Reading comprehension

The following text is taken from Consumer Citizenship Education Guidelines, pages 11-13. Since it is an excerpt, the originality has not been modified. Footnotes are following the ones taken place on the previous pages.

What is Consumer Citizenship Education?

Consumer citizenship education encompasses attitudes, knowledge and skills connected to functioning in today's society. It is responsibility learning which aims to contribute to the individual's ability to manage his own life as well as participating in the stewardship of the global society's collective life. Consumer citizenship education is interdisciplinary and cross curricular.

Training in the art of value-based behaviour

Consumer Citizenship is an essential element of liberal education and is part of the on-going values debate, which institutions of higher education also participate in, to define the "quality of life." How principles of equity, equality and social justice are best expressed in the machinations of society has been the crux of national constitutions, declarations of human rights and religious and cultural traditions throughout the ages. Applying values to contemporary conditions has become continually more arduous due to the increased interrelatedness and interdependency of societies today. The rapid transformations in technology add to the complexities of this process. Consumer citizenship education is about stimulating the individual's ability to make choices, manage resources, solve problems and contribute to the future on the basis of conscientious, principled reflection and scientific knowledge.

Exercising critical thinking and scientific investigation

Consumer citizenship education encompasses knowledge and skills needed to become independent, critical and aware consumer citizens. This involves gaining insight into social and economic development in one's own and other's society and the processes and systems affecting such development. Consumer citizenship education requires competence in acquiring and analyzing available data about products and services, considering possible consequences and identifying alternative solutions.

Optimizing opportunities

Lack of financial literacy[3], media literacy, and awareness of what contributes to personal health and safety, limits the individual's possibilities for experiencing "good life quality". Consumer citizenship education attempts to optimize the opportunities each person has by developing the student's financial literacy, media literacy and understanding of what leads to a safe and healthy life. It serves as a preventive measure against the growing problems of indebtedness, fraud, commercial exploitation and lifestyle related illnesses.

3Financial literacy is a process of mutual learning by both purchasers and providers of financial services about the merits but also the pitfalls of money-related social functions in the marketplace. By Udo Reifner adapted by Karen Beyer; IFF – institute for financial services, Germany

Practicing participatory democracy

Consumer citizenship education contributes to the individual's integrating of democratic ideals with personal aspirations thereby assisting in the evolution of a civilized international market. It involves knowing about and being able to exercise the basic rights and responsibilities of a citizen as well as the specific rights of a consumer which are:

- *The right to health and safety protection*
- *The right to protection of economic interests*

- *The right to reparation and damages*
- *The right to information and education*
- *The right to representation*

Consumer citizenship education is a means of stimulating constructive social activism. The consumer citizen is trained to use for example: policy instruments, public consultation, market responses, etc. as instruments with which to initiate change. It is through his/her personal lifestyle choices and social involvement that the consumer citizen contributes to greater transparency, better policies, and increased advocacy. Informed consumer citizens can be instrumental in the globalization of civil society concerns. Ultimately such involvement can potentially contribute to the correcting of the imbalance of voices and influences and the changing of power constellations.

Relearning

Consumer citizenship awareness, as well as the corporate social awareness in a region, often reflects the outcomes of past patterns of development. Traditional ways of viewing and managing social and economic relationships can hinder the implementation of new approaches.

Consumer citizenship education is an opportunity for relearning—for reorganizing information and how this information is understood in larger contexts. It provides a chance to reconsider such central questions as the meaning of life, the value of material and non-material prosperity, and the significance of service to one's fellow human. It also opens for reflection about the positive and negative aspects of accepted economic and social systems. It analyzes the scope and speed of technical and commercial innovations. In other words, consumer citizenship education encourages the re-examination of the means which individuals, business and organizations use to achieve their goals.

Moving towards global solidarity

There are definite connections between our lifestyles and other's survival. The relation between poverty and the just distribution of the world's resources are central themes in consumer citizenship education. Cooperation for the community's sake, making an effort to attain consensus about where the global society is headed and how humanity will get there, is an unavoidable part of consumer citizenship education. Consumer citizenship education is intended to help students gain insight into the processes and systems of human development on a global scale. Which systems and processes must be maintained and which are defective and in need of alteration? What is the individual's role in relation to the larger mechanisms of governments and the private sector? How can the citizen-consumer influence production, distribution, marketing and sales? Which rights and responsibilities exist and which are lacking for oneself and for others? How can changes be made, by whom and when?

Contributing to sustainable development

Consumer citizenship is an essential part of future studies and peace education. Future education can be described as democratic, experimental or functional, humanistic and holistic. It gives learners a sense of their responsibility to one another, to the whole society and to our planet. It incorporates meaningful activity into the learning experience and relates academics to the real world. With regard to humanistic ideals it heightens self-esteem and allows the whole personality of the learner to develop in an affective way. The holistic perspective provides for an integration of subject matter, giving the learner a sense of humanity's relationship to the whole, and incorporating the knowledge of how everything on earth and the universe is interdependent and interrelated4.

A New Framework for Education

Principle Goal Summary

Democratic: To give learners a sense of their responsibility to one another and to the planet.

Experimental: To incorporate meaningful activity into the learning experience and to relate academics to the real world.

Humanistic: To heighten self-esteem and to allow the whole personality of the learner to develop in an affective way.

Holistic: To provide for an integration of subject matter and to give the learner a sense of humanity's relationship to the whole, incorporating the knowledge of how everything on earth and within the universe is interdependent and interrelated.

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"Consumer citizenship education is by no means merely a matter of happy cows, clean pigs and uncaged hens!"

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4 Consumer Citizenship Education in Finland --Comparisons between comprehensive school curricula in 1994 and 2004 ; by Kaija Turkki, Professor, Faculty of Behavioural Sciences, Department of Home Economics and Craft Science, University of Helsinki, Finland

Do the following activities:

Pre-Reading

Work in small groups. Discuss the following questions.

1. What words do you associate with the word *citizenship*?
2. What words do you associate with the word *consumer*?
3. Do you know any department, or faculty of University having *Consumer Citizenship Education, CCE* in their curriculum in your country?
4. In your opinion, should CCE be included in all faculties' curriculum compulsorily?

While-Reading

Read the following excerpt from Consumer Citizenship Education Guidelines, pp 12-13.

1. Work with a partner. List all the things that CCE might encompass.
2. Read the text. Does it mention any of the things you listed in 1?
3. Read the following excerpt again and answer the questions. Compare your answers with a partner.

Vocabulary

Check the box next to the word which best fits the meaning it conveys in the text.

1 Encompass a) To struggle; b) To object; c) To comprise, cover; d)To show direction

2 Contribute a) To assist; b) To give; c) To write; d) To evaluate

3 Machination a) Production of machines; b) Shifting from works manually done to mechanization; c) Mechanical ; d) An artful design or plot

4 Crux a) Essence, bottom line, the decisive point; b) happiness; c) blessing; d) consolation

5 Literacy a) Literature; b) Inarticulateness ; c) The ability to read and write; d) Illegibility

6 Optimize a) To make as imperfect or ineffective as possible; b) To make as perfect or effective as possible; c) To have an optimistic view; d) To integrate;

7 Mutual a) Bilateral ; b)Unilateral; c) Maturity ; d) Common

8 Reparation a) The act of preparation; b) The act of renewing, or restoring; c) The act of reconstructing; d) The act of reconciliation

9 Constellation a) System; b) Any brilliant, outstanding group or assemblage ; c) Any of various groups of stars; d) Assembly

10 Implementation a) Developing; b) Failure; c) Carrying into effect; d) Requirement

11 Defective a) Marked by normal structure; b) Lacking a part, incomplete; faulty, imperfect; c) Perfect; d) Complete

12 Holistic a) Concerned with parts rather than analysis of the whole; b) Emphasizing the organic or functional relation between parts and the whole; c) Fragmentation ;d) Disintegration

Word Selection

Check the box next to the phrases which best fill the gap according to the text

Consumer Citizenship Education…attitudes, knowledge and skills connected to functioning in today's society

a) Teaches; b) Contains; c) Excludes; d) Omits

Consumer Citizenship Education aims to contribute to the individual's ability to manage his own life as well as participating in the … of the global society's collective life

a) Management; b) Conduction; c) Maintenance; d) Classification

Applying values to contemporary conditions has become continually more … due to the increased interrelatedness and interdependency of societies today

a) Painless; b) Simple; c) Easy; d) Strenuous

Consumer citizenship education requires … about products and services, considering possible consequences and identifying alternative solutions. (1∗)

a) inadequacy in acquiring and analyzing available data; b) adequacy in acquiring and analyzing available data; c) efficiency in acquiring and analyzing available data; d) inefficiency in acquiring and analyzing available data

(1∗) competence is a measure of the ability to perform a task; efficiency is a measure of the success achieved in the performance of a task

Cooperation for the community's sake, making an effort to … and how humanity will get there, is an unavoidable part of consumer citizenship education.

a) obtain opportunity for innovations; b) achieve a goal for global well-being; c) gain advantage; d) attain consensus about where the global society is headed

Multiple choice – select the best option for the blanks

1.Consumer citizenship education is an opportunity for relearning – for … and how this information understood in larger contexts.

a) revising information; b) obtaining information; c) teaching skills; d) developing skills

2. Media literacy uses an inquiry-based instructional model that encourages people to ask questions about what they watch, see and read. It is the process of

a) innovating, evaluating, and instructing methods that people need; b) provoking, analyzing, and creating speculations in a wide variety of forms; c) accessing, analyzing, evaluating and creating messages in a wide variety of forms; d) Speculating, libelling, and slandering about people in a wide variety of forms

3. National constitutions' crux is how principles of equity, equality and social justice are best expressed in the machinations of society, and declarations of human rights and religious and cultural traditions throughout the ages have been debated to improve

a) the rapid transformations in technology; b) interrelatedness and interdependency of societies; c) quality of life; d) the individual's ability to make choices, manage resources, solve problems

4. Financial literacy is ... but also the pitfalls of money-related social functions in the marketplace.

a) a process of reciprocal learning by both buyers and providers of financial services about the merits; b) a process of unilateral learning by both buyers and providers of financial services about the merits; c) a process of bilateral training by both buyers and providers of financial services about the merits; d) a process of mutual teaching by both buyers and providers of financial services about the merits

5.Consumer Citizenship Education involves both knowing about and being able to exercise the basic rights and responsibilities of a citizen as well as the specific rights of a consumer one of which is

a) The right to contributing to sustainable development; b) The right to relearning; c) The right to moving towards global solidarity; d) The right to reparation and damages

Pre-Post-Reading Conclusions

1 What does CCE aim to?

It aims to provide individual's participation in the stewardship of the global society's collective life by contributing to his ability to manage his own life. b) It aims to contribute to the individual's ability to manage to survive in this global community. c) It aims to teach liberal education and debate values d) It aims to define the "quality of life".

2 What is the reason it is becoming more arduous to apply values to contemporary conditions?

a) The rapid transformations in technology; b) Changing principles of equity, equality and social justice; c) Increased interrelatedness and interdependency of societies today; d) Exercising critical thinking and scientific investigation

3 What is needed to become independent, critical and aware consumer citizens?

a) Skills to gain power into social and economic development in one's own and other society.

b) Insight into social and economic deterioration; c) Consideration of possible consequences of malpractices in services and production; d) Competence in acquiring and analyzing available data about products and services, and identifying alternative solutions.

4What kind of means is CCE?

a)It is a means of correcting the imbalance of voices, influences and changing the power constellations; b) It is a means of stimulating constructive social activism by using policy instruments, public consultation, market responses, etc.; c) It is a means of changing lifestyles, social involvement, and globalization; d) It is a means of transparency, better policies, and increased advocacy.

5 Under the main headings what are the objectives of CCE?

a)To give learners a sense of responsibility to optimize opportunities, practice participatory democracy; b) To give learners a sense of responsibility to relearn, move towards global, solidarity, contribute to sustainable development; c) To give learners a sense of responsibility to have value-based behaviour, to exercise critical thinking and scientific investigation; d) To give learners a sense of democracy, experiment, humanism, and holism.

Make inferences to find answers to these questions in the text.

a) What is the idea behind this project?; b) How are the project owners trying to stimulate interest among people of global community?; c) What will enable people to resist by this education?; d) How will this education contribute to the higher education students?; e) On a global scale what does CCE intend to help students?

Post-Reading

Lexis

1 The verb + noun collocations: Use the nouns or noun phrases in the box to make collocations.

insight	life-quality	opportunity	consensus	change
goals	attitudes	resources	activity	self-esteem
a sense	values	knowledge	interests	advocacy

A Encompass ……
B Optimize ……
C Apply ……
D Gain ……
E Protect ……
F Initiate ……
G Increase ……
H Achieve ……
I Attain ……
J Incorporate……
K Heighten ……
L Give ……

M Experience ……

2 Using given verbs make more collocations.
3 Choose five collocations and use them to write sentences to summarize one of the paragraphs of the text.

Writing
Answer this question.
Does this text (taken from Consumer Citizenship Education Guidelines) focus more on the need for social awareness, and the growing problems of indebtedness,
fraud, commercial exploitation and lifestyle related illnesses? If Yes/No – Why?

Starting from your reply write a well-organized Cause-and-Effect essay based on the questions:
1 What do you think of some of the issues that conscious citizens raise?
2 Do you support the idea?
3What are the causes to embark on such an education?
4What are the effects that people complain about?

Game Four in a Row:
Play the game in groups of three: Student A, B, and C. Student A and Student B play against each other. Student C is the referee.
1 Student A chooses a square and makes a sentence using the word in the square plus the preposition which normally goes with it, if there are any.
If the word is used with the correct preposition, or in a meaningful sentence Student C marks the square with an A. if the word is used with an incorrect
preposition, Student C marks the square with a B.
2 It continues with Student B.
3 The game continues until either Student A or Student B has won four squares in a row, horizontally, vertically or diagonally.

1 safety	2 contribute	3 be aware	4 Implementation	5 gain insight	6 participate	7 relate
8 stimulate	9 literacy	10 purchaser	11 indebtedness	12 reparation	13 optimize	14 mutual
15 fraud	16 defective	17 holistic	18 constellations	19 integration	20 apply	21 critical
22 crux	23 machination	24 encompass	25 involve	26 transformation	27 contemporary	28 safety
29 pitfalls	30 distribution	31 interdepen-dent	32 connect	33 interrelated	34 self-esteem	35 advocacy

APPENDIX B
Listening comprehension through guided note-taking

Note-taking skills

Here is the outlining list of note-taking.

List out the most common linking expressions, including words which indicate contrast or change; additional material or repetition; emphasis; number, list and order; summary; concession; amplification; and cause and effect. Some examples follow:

contrast words: conversely, however, but, despite, on the other hand
repetition words also, too, in addition, even more, to repeat, in other words
emphasis words: specifically, most importantly, especially
number, list and order words: then, secondly, finally, ultimately
summary words: in brief, in conclusion, to wrap up, for these reasons
concession words: given that, in light of, of course, even though
amplification words: for example, in other words, that is, i.e.,
cause and effect words: accordingly, because, consequently, therefore, if...then

Rephrasing of ideas

There are several methods you can use to take notes.

Cornell note taking method

This method is used in upper elementary, middle school, high school, and even college!

Another effective way to take notes is "concept mapping", also called mind mapping, clustering, or word webs.

As with all your papers, notes should be organized and kept in your binder for quick access.

Symbols for note taking

= equals/is equal to/is the same as
≠ is not equal to/is not the same as
≡ is equivalent to
+ and, more, plus
> More than, greater than
< less than
_ less, minus

The Two Main Forms of Note Taking

The two approaches to note taking we will consider are the Sequential (or Linear) and Nuclear methods (or 'Mind map' technique).

Each method has its relative merits and disadvantages. You ought to experiment with both techniques and use them in circumstances appropriate to your particular needs.

What are sequential notes?

This is the form of note-taking with which the majority of students will be familiar. These are continuous notes which follow an orderly or logical sequence. The structure of the notes which are taken will reflect the structure of the lecture during which the notes were made or the structure of a journal article or the chapter of a book from which the notes were taken.

Techniques to use when taking sequential notes

When taking these notes remember to:
use headings, subheadings and key words
number these to differentiate between points
emphasise material by, for example:

Underlining, using different colours of highlight pen; using capital letters, use abbreviations, but be careful that you are consistent and can remember what the abbreviations mean. Do not write the notes in a cramped or congested way. Leave adequate blank space so that you can fill out some of the detail later when you discuss the lecture with colleagues. Use one side of the paper so that additional sheets of related material can be inserted at a later date

Hints To Help You Improve Your Sequential Note-Taking

If the lecture has been well-planned, the structure of your notes should fall into place quite readily.

By being attentive, you will be able to make a useful set of notes. Most lecturers use overhead transparencies which indicate the key points, themes or concepts. Use these as a framework for your note-taking. Don't lose the plot! Lecturers will emphasise the important points which they feel you need to understand and will usually recap periodically during the lecture before finally concluding with a summary of the main elements.

You might try dividing your page down the middle into two columns in approximately two thirds to one third split. During the lecture, take notes in the wider left hand column, using all the techniques set out above. After the lecture, use the right hand column for making additional notes of your own thoughts and reflections and for adding details of relevant references and supporting literature.

Note down particular questions you have about the topic of the lecture which need to be directed to the lecturer at the end of the session.

Nuclear notes ('Mind Map' Technique)

This method was first described by Buzan (2003) in his book 'Use Your Head'. He calls the technique 'Mind Mapping'.

With this method:

- you write the main topic in the centre of the page
- you then write related ideas around it and link them up to show their relationship to the main idea
- you can also add links around the edges to show relationships.

Buzan argues that the 'Mind Map' technique has many advantages over sequential note-taking. These are:

- it is quicker to write and read
- the technique encourages brevity and thus aids learning and recall
- the main idea is immediately apparent to the reader
- the links between the parts are obvious and their relative importance is clear to see
- by starting at the centre of the page and branching out, the addition of extra information at a later date is easier
- every mind map is unique and so is easier to visualise and recall
- It takes quite a lot of practice before you can use this technique in lectures. Even when you are proficient, you will probably need to make a revised copy of the mind map soon after the lecture in order to tidy things up a little.
- Mind maps can be useful when planning assignments such as essays or project reports.
- Another instance where mind mapping can be a helpful technique to use is during the process of 'brainstorming'. Here, the idea is to generate as many ideas as possible about a particular issue or theme.
- The uses of 'Mind Map' technique
- Mind mapping is more useful than sequential notes in such circumstances for two main reasons:

1) As the ideas and points come to mind, they can be written in on the mind map in the appropriate places. This means that the connections and interrelationships between the ideas can be made more quickly and effectively, e.g.: Here is the mind map produced when a group of students were asked to brainstorm the topic, 'Baked Beans'.

2) The flow of ideas generated during a brainstorming session is most unlikely to occur in logical sequence and so listing the ideas sequentially might impose a false sense of structure on the ideas and material produced.

Sequential notes taken during lectures or from a book can be converted into a visually more memorable mind map format to aid learning and revision.
Finally, another occasion where mind mapping can be used to great effect is in an examination. You should always plan your answers to examinations questions but, when under the rather stressful conditions of a formal examination, you might miss a few key points if you try to plan your examination answer in the form of sequential notes. If you use the mind map method, then you should be able to let the ideas flow readily, slotting them under the relevant key headings on your mind map.

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Buzan, Tony. *Use Your Head* BBC (BBC Active); 6Rev Ed edition. 8 May 2003
Deese, James and Ellin K. Deese. *How To Study (3rd ed)*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1979.
Johnson, Sue. *The 4 T's: Teacher/You, Text, Talk, Test - A Systematic Approach To Learning Success*. California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.
Pauk, Walter. *How To Study In College (2nd Ed)*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974.
Raygor, Alton L. and David Wark. *Systems For Study*. New York: McGraw- Hill, Inc, 1970.

Note-taking via listening

You will hear a lecture called "*Why is there a need for consumer citizenship education?"* Taken from "Consumer Citizenship Education Guidelines, Pages 15-16" twice. This is a guided note-taking activity. While you're listening to the lecture, you will take notes using the charts delivered to you beforehand. After the second listening you will be given the questions. Use your notes to answer them in 10 minutes. You can take notes in the space provided next to the guiding words/phrases/fragments, charts.

Why is there a need for consumer citizenship education?

Historical Developments
The need for more systematic and thorough consumer citizenship education in higher education can be ascribed to the following developments and the conditions which have arisen as a result of them in the world today.
Globalisation
Mutual interdependence
Technological innovations
Availability of information
Improved communication
New modes of governance in the global world
New power constellations in trade and commerce
Transition from planned economies to free market economies
Speed of changes in employment, services and legislation
Increasing complexity of society
Greater access and control of market changes
Environmental degradation

The impact of globalisation is the most commonly given response to the question of why the need for consumer citizenship education has arisen. The term "globalisation" is used to describe a number of phenomena such as the world becoming a physically smaller place due to increased mobility and communication; the emergence of a single global market; the proliferation of multinational corporations, and the growing commitment to the family of humankind and the emerging world civilization.

Social conditions and disparities
These general developments of the last centuries have lead to more specific conditions and disparities which have direct bearing on the establishment and growth of consumer citizenship education. Some of the most significant of these are:

- *gross imbalances of wealth between both peoples and countries*
- *unjust use and distribution of natural resources*
- *economic and political insecurity*
- *unsustainable consumption*
- *marginalization of individuals and groups*
- *extensive and aggressive commercial persuasion*
- *financial overextension and dependency*
- *increasing physical and mental health problems related to lifestyle choices*
- *growing dominance of greed, fraud, excess, crime and violence*
- *difficulties acquiring and interpreting information about products and services*
- *lack of awareness about the consequences of one's actions*
- *declining involvement in traditional civic activities*

International and regional concerns
As early as 1985 the United Nations, emphasized the importance of consumer education, civic training and environmental awareness.
(…)The U.N. recently emphasized the need for renewed commitment on the issue of sustainable development and focused specifically upon the vital importance of changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption. Research, higher education and civil society all have important roles in this process.

The international community initiated the Millennium Goals in order to eradicate extreme poverty, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality, to reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, ensure environmental sustainability, and develop a global partnership for development. As a part of this the International Marrakech Process (A 10-year framework of programmes for sustainable consumption and production) (2003-20013) was begun and has identified the need for raising awareness on the benefits of sustainable consumption and the importance of education as a tool for spreading information.
In 1973 the Council of Europe developed a charter for consumer protection and information which included consumer education. Similarly, citizenship training has been given high priority.

The EU Agenda (…)focuses on the goal of "sustainable growth and greater social cohesion"—two central issues in consumer citizenship education. This has been followed up by the Lisbon Strategy initiated in 2000 emphasizing the importance of a knowledge based, cohesive European society. More specifically, the European Community in Article 143 of the Amsterdam Treaty emphasized the need for consumer education.

The U.N. Decade for Education for Sustainable Development began in 2005. The decade is a means of drawing the attention of educational institutions to the importance of sustainable human development. Universities and colleges in many countries have increased their focus on topics such as sustainable consumption, environmental protection and global economic development. Consumer citizenship education is a way of supporting and contributing to the UN Decade and to the process of transforming "sustainable development" from a concept into concrete behaviour.

Who is responsible for consumer citizenship education?
There is a constant debate in the realm of education as to who is responsible for changes in education and in society. ***"Top-downers"*** *Claim the original and most vital steps must come from regional and national governments, who place curriculum modifications on the agenda and provide legislation and resources for carrying them through.* ***"Bottom-up'ers"*** *View the task as belonging to teachers themselves on the level of the classroom where they are expected individually to integrate new ideas, knowledge and skills into their teaching.* ***"Outsiders"*** *Consider the job as belonging to civil society (media, interest organizations, parents, business, etc) and express the conviction that representatives of these groups should be invited into the classroom to provide the missing training.*

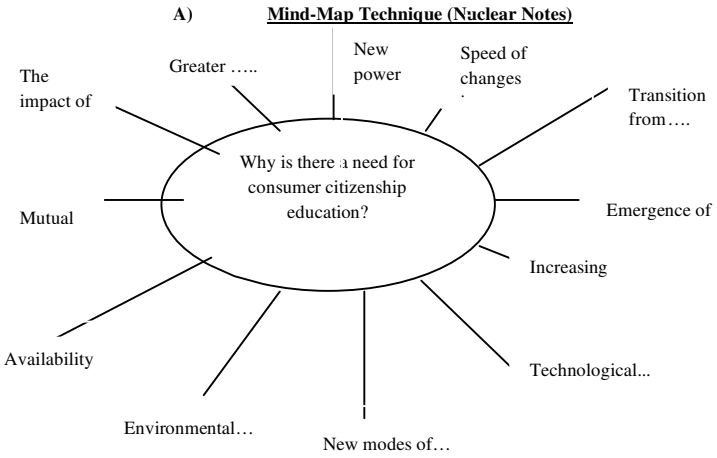
Desired Learning Outcomes

To foster civic responsibility, Active Citizenship Today (developed by Close Up Foundation and Constitutional Rights Foundation) recognizes desired learning outcomes in three broad areas:
KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, and ATTITUDES
Each outcome is supported by a series of specific abilities.
Knowledge students will:

Recognize characteristics and actions of effective citizens. Describe the community where they live.
Describe local problems and their connection to state and national issues. Explain factors and institutions that influence public policy. Know how individuals can address community problems.
Skills students will: Develop and use effective questions. Acquire information from primary and secondary sources. Evaluate information for objectivity, accuracy, and point of view. Use information to help solve social problems. Assess personal action. Develop critical-thinking skills to make informed and responsible decisions. Develop communication and persuasion skills. Work cooperatively with others.

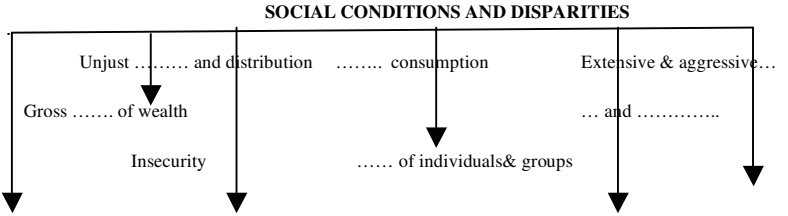
Attitudes students will: Recognize and respect human diversity. Develop a sense of effectiveness in the role of community advocate. Consider the balance between rights and responsibilities. Foster the value of service and continued involvement in the community. 8 GEHSP (Global Higher Education for Sustainablity Partnership.)

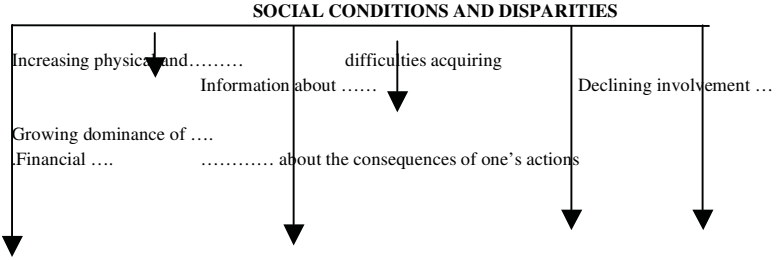
While they were listening to the lecture they took notes on the following charts.



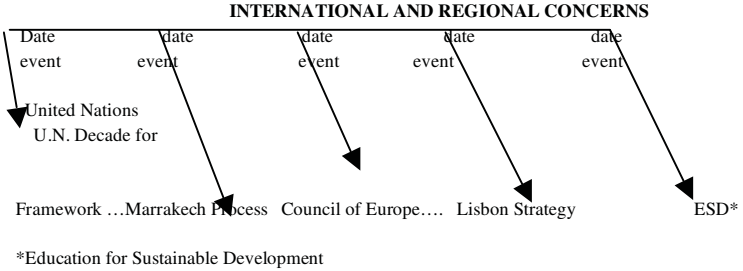
For your Extra Notes

B) Charting Technique





C)Time Lining Technique (Sequential)



*Education for Sustainable Development

D) CHARTING
Key points

International and Regional sustainable ……
Concerns are sustainable ……
The EU Agenda focuses on the goal of sustainable ……and …….
(two central issues in consumer citizenship education) …… ……

	Verbs	**Goals to**
The international community	…….	extreme poverty,
initiated	……	universal primary education,
the Millennium Goals as to:	……	gender equality,
	……	child mortality,
	……	maternal health,
	……..	HIV/AIDS,
	……	environmental sustainability, and
	……	a global partnership for development.

E) HEADLINES
Who Is Responsible For Consumer Citizenship Education?

I) Debaters
……
……
……

II) Learning Outcomes in the areas of
……..
……..
…….

Now you will answer the questions in the following practice work based on what you have listened to and took notes.

QUESTIONS

PART A: Please use your notes to give short answers to the following questions. (5x3=15pts)
1 How many developments and conditions which have given the rise to systematic and thorough Consumer Citizenship Education are mentioned in the lecture?
2 Which one of them is the most crucial one? Why?
3 Mention one of the "Social Conditions and Disparities.
4 Which international organizations/institutions have most concerned with the issues considered in Consumer Citizenship Education?
5 In your opinion, who should be responsible for Consumer Citizenship Education?

PART B: Fill in the blanks with <u>one word</u> only. (5x1=5pts)
Some of the social conditions and disparities are:
1 Gross ……..… of wealth between both peoples and countries.
2 Extensive and aggressive commercial …….. .
3…….... of individuals and groups.

4 Growing dominance of greed, ……., excess crime and violence.
5 Declining involvement in traditional ……..…… Activities.

PART C: Decide if the following statements are TRUE or FALSE. (5x1.5=7.5pts)

	T	F
As early as 1973 the United Nations emphasized the importance of consumer education, civic training and environmental awareness.		
Research, primary education, higher education and civil society all have important roles in this process.		
The EU Agenda focuses on the goal of "sustainable growth and greater social cohesion" two central issues in consumer citizenship education.		
The U.N. Decade for Education for Sustainable Development began in 2000		
Consumer citizenship education is a way of supporting and contributing to the UN Decade and to the process of transforming "sustainable development" from a concept into concrete behaviour.		

PART D: Fill in the blanks with <u>one word</u> only. (15x1.5=22.5pts)

1 The international community initiated the Millennium goals in order to ……. extreme poverty, …… universal primary education, …….. gender equality, to …….. child mortality, …… maternal health, ……. HIV/AIDS, ……..…… environmental sustainability, and ……a global partnership for development.

2 The need for raising awareness on the benefits of sustainable …….. and the importance of education as a tool for spreading information.

3 There is a constant debate in the realm of education and in society. The proponents of ……., ……., and …… say different things about who should be responsible for Consumer Citizenship Education.

4 To foster civic responsibility, Active Citizenship today recognizes desired learning outcomes in three broad areas: …….. , …….. ,
…… .

APPENDIX C

Student's comments

Writer's note: Students' comments have not been grammatically corrected. The original messages have been included in here.

Citizenship education Standard Header Full Message View Emre Yücesoy eyucesoy@hotmail.com
AddMonday, January 14, 2008 1:23:03 AM
To:ifakatkarsli@yahoo.com

I think the awareness and feeling of responsibility that CE aims to inspire is exactly what the majority of the world's population needs. While some of the problems we face today as mankind are endurable, they in time can easily become terminal if proper action isn't swiftly taken. It's a noble effort and much needed wake up call for the masses. I'd love to see it succeed but I could hardly call myself an idealist and have great doubts that it actually will because people are greedy, ignorant and self destructive. We create problems to sell the solutions for them and ignore the damage we cause to the environment till the last moment when it's no longer possible to do so. New viruses, thinning of the ozone layer etc. are all results of mankind messing with the natural order of the earth. CE does have the potential to "fix" people, but I think mankind will be long extinct (and possibly destroy the earth too along with each other thanks to the kind of atom technology we possess) in the time it would take to accomplish that.

Murat Emre Yucesoy

CONSUMER CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION
Why Consumer Citizenship Education should be a must for one's life? How many people have an idea about it? Or how many people do something for the development of the society and try to find a solution for global problems?
Consumer Citizenship Education leads people to learn how important one's attitudes, knowledge and skills are, for the society. Consumer Citizenship Education aims to make people connect the activities and responsibilities, which they perform in the daily life, to the social and global field.
From my point of view, people can develop end change lots of things not only in their society but also all over the world by considering CCE. However, a great amount of people do not understand its importance.
By learning the functions of the Consumer Citizenship Education, as follows;

- to make it known by people the basic rights, responsibilities and carry them out as a citizen,
- to investigate information about being a human. People who are narrow- minded can not improve themselves. Therefore the society can not develop,
- to do something for the sake of society. That means, living a life individually, can not help other people,

I decided to do something to inform more people about CCE. After I obtained information, I asked questions myself. For instance; am I really take notice of society? Or, what have I done for the sake of global development? Do I know my rights?
In my opinion, relearning is one of the most important functions. Because of strict rules, lots of people believe that they must not change the orders. However this idea is wrong. We should ask questions and find new answers. Our necessities and understandings are changing day by day.
In conclusion, all over the world, people especially new generations should be trained by Consumer Citizenship Education, for being more useful and sensitive to today's society.
Gulın Cal

CCE Standard HeaderFull Message View buket tasli <bukettasli@yahoo.com>
AddTuesday, January 8, 2008 10:59:53 PM
To:ifakatkarsli

Dear Mrs. Karsli,
Being one of our esteemed teachers, I would like to thank you for your information regarding consumer citizenship education. In our century one of the most important issues is sustaining mutually beneficial relationships between the countries and also the individuals. In this case, all of the individuals have a very important mission that acquiring and considering all the rights and liberties, they have. Thanks for the papers that you given us, which have an important role about increasing social awareness. We all should become much more conscious and well-informed to deserve in the high qualified social life. It was my pleasure to join your courses and to benefit from all the subjects that you mentioned. Looking forward to seeing your new studies as soon as possible. **Best Regards, Buket Tasli**

In my opinion, this education is beneficial for having a democratic lifestyle, well-educated people, mutual interdependence and relearning the world again. Also, it is useful for globalisation. Consumer Citizenship Education aims to change lifestyles, make the life more democratic and more experimental. CCE tries to give directions of society's attitudes and knowledge to make a better lifestyle and society. I think, CCE will be useful for both society and globalisation*, since this project tries to make the world more democratic and peaceful.*
CAĞLA YILDIZ

CONSUMER CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION In my opinion, 'citizenship' should be included as an independent course in all the level of education programs (primary- mid- high school- university). Lessons, must be adjusted according to students' proficiency level and knowledge. For primary school students, citizenship education should be simplified, but for higher level students, it should be more extensional. This program should not only include the consumer citizenship themes but also should include something global. I mean, people, who take this

lessons should know about the world citizenship. First, we have to learn for our country, then we must know world citizenship, such as Global warming, earthquakes, land sliding, wars that are the things which people have to be aware of. We are also thankful to Mrs Karsli who has opened a new window for us as prospective teachers.
Andac Tay ELT I

From: **lunkaya7@hotmail.com** To: ifakatkarsli@yahoo.com
Subject: consumer citizenship education Date: Thu, 27 Dec 2007 21:41:41 +0000
Consumer Citizenship Education is extremely important for individuals in a society. I'm convinced that it helps all the citizens in our country, Turkiye with its features which are mostly about learning to gain social and economic independence. Everyone should learn what CCE aims to teach and stand on their feet by themselves. This was the first side of CCE, in addition to this it teaches how to make choices, manage sources and gain critical thinking so that everyone in a society is able to create his\her way to solve a problem. Since all of us are consumers, we need to know our responsibilities and that's the reason why CCE trains consumer citizens about health, economic, educational problems. Thus, an informed, educated and well-equipped citizen can be beneficial for not only a society but also our planet. Furthermore, Consumer Citizenship Education encourages them about achieving their goals. Reaching what is difficult to have from life is crucial for a person, I believe. Besides these, I have already started my career as a trainee English Language Teacher with primary school students and I already taught how to consider a problem deeply. They started to know their responsibilities (they have not so much responsibilities, though) and the best thing about it these are realized just in 4 lessons =)

FW: CONSUMER CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION/**ASLI ÇOLAKOĞLU**
Standard HeaderFull Message View aslı çolakoğlu <powwowa_@hotmail.com>
AddSunday, January 13, 2008 5:26:23 PM
To:ifakatkarsli@yahoo.com
As far as I understand consumer citizenship education (cce) is something which not only helps individual deal with his/her life but also tries to make individual be aware of the world issues. What I mean is that cce aims to make people informed about everything from science to human rights and after they learned them they must change or renew them if it is necessary. For example, people shouldn't accept the things which come from the past without questioning. We should investigate them first and then find the mistakes. In this way we can fix some problems and contribute to the future world.
According to this theory, we must know our own cultural values as well as other society's values. Thus there will be something that we can say, contribute or change.
All in all, all the people research for everything and are informed. Also we must know our rights too so that we can see the mistakes and we can contribute to our world and develop ourselves. We shouldn't just sit down and do nothing about what is happening.
I really like this idea and I think this way of education must be done in every part of world because if we are a member of a country that means we have some responsibilities to our society and we should do something good and beneficial for our country to develop it and it can't be possible without any education and information. In other words cce shouldn't remain just on the paper we must put it into practice.

WINNING ESSAY OF THE FIRST CCN STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

Good and bad information – Who can you believe? Assessing information as a consumer citizen

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Consumer citizens have the power to influence the market by the choices they make. Companies become more powerful because we let them, because we buy their products. So, if we make social, economical, ecological an ethical well-considered decisions, we contribute to a just (business) environment.

Our (purchasing) choices are based on the information we receive: Good and bad information that is. Information based on true and false or misleading information. Information from companies, from the media, from the government, from friends, family and so on. So the main question is: who can we, as consumer citizens, believe?

Assessing the information we receive, is necessary to distinguish the good and the bad information and to be able to make sound choices. Making sound choices contributes to the quality of life. That is why as a consumer citizen it is important to be very critical. We should be well aware of *what* we buy and *why*.

Unfortunately being well aware of what we buy and why is not easy. There a several issues that cloud our view and our judgement. One of the problems is that consumer citizens are easily influenced. We are all susceptible to advertising for example.

Through numerous marketing techniques, marketeers try to influence our purchasing practises. An example of a powerful marketing tool is the use of music. Since we all have a 'musical memory,' we tend to remember the (slogan) songs we hear in commercials. Music, among other things, easily influences our thoughts and our behaviour.

So, advertisements are designed to influence consumers, even unconsciously. And no matter how clever the advertisements are, they always have the same aim: selling products or services. That is why we need to be aware of the fact that a lot of messages are misleading. Sad to say that still a lot of people are easily persuaded by commercials. They can still even make obese people buy unhealthy food for example.

Other problems are, for example, the fact that references about a product or a service are often manipulated or even made up. So, we cannot simply trust references found on

the internet. And famous people, who use or wear the product in a commercial, cannot be seen as a reliable source. These people are paid enormous amounts of money to promote the products. They most likely never use or maybe have never even used them. We should also beware of certain internet communities where consumers can share their ideas about products or services. These communities can be manipulated by (sales) people of the company, who try to persuade consumers to buy their products. We should adopt a critical attitude towards information from the government as well, since multinational companies tend to influence governments.
In order to make money, some companies would do anything. We need to realize that sometimes, when buying a certain product we are giving money to dubious companies. A well-known example is Nike: This company was guilty of child labour. This definitely gives food for thought. Unfortunately a lot of people kept on buying Nike's products without thinking twice. But luckily there were others who *did* take up their role of responsible consumers. And only because of their boycott actions, Nike got a thorough shake-up and is now changing its business conduct. There are a lot of other companies who are guilty of human rights violations as well.
The last issue focuses on the price of products or services: If something is very cheap, it does not make it responsible. 'Green' products may sometimes be more expensive than other products, but they are made in a responsible way and have less impact on the environment. So, in the long haul they contribute to a better quality of life for everyone. Consumers should also be conscious that there are alternatives.
There always are other options that *are* manufactured in a responsible way. The technology progress and especially the globalization have lead to an even bigger wealth imbalance between people and countries. It has lead to the exploitation of certain groups, for example: people in underdeveloped countries. And it has also lead to a growing need of money and power.
The more reason why consumers must take up their responsibility on a global scale because responsible consumption does not only have a local impact but also a global impact.
But how exactly can citizens take up their role as responsible consumers? Like Kofi Annan[32] said:

"Our biggest challenge in this century is to take an idea that sounds abstract – sustainable development – and turn it into a reality for all the world's people..."

Specific questions you can ask yourself to reflect on your own pattern of spending are for example: Do you want to buy products that were tested on animals? Do you want to buy products that were made by children in Third World countries? Do you want to buy vegetables or fruits that were treated with heavy chemical products that cause damage

[32] Kofi Annan, UN Press Release, 15/03/01

to nature? Or what do you think about the fact that workers in developing countries almost cannot export their agricultural products into our countries without being exploited? Since no educational programme, focussing on responsible consumption, has been put into practise yet, how can we already assess the information we get?
Some questions we can ask ourselves are:
- Is the company reliable? Is it an open, transparent company? What mistakes did the company make in the past? Or, how do they try to contribute to a just environment?
An open, transparent company provides information about its business conduct. Then we can see if the company is socially, ecologically and ethically involved and what kind of efforts they try to make.
- Has a market research been made about the product or service?
Responses of the market can provide information about products or services.
- Are there any evaluations by experts in the field?
Evaluations of reliable experts give consumers an idea of how true the information really is.
- Are there more reliable sources to verify the same information?
Experiences of friends or family can be interesting to be able to check the information.
- Are there any explanations of research techniques used to come to this information?
When research techniques were used to come to certain information, information becomes more credible.
- Is the information based on evidence?
Companies will always try to influence the opinion of consumers, but the information they provide should be based on evidence.
Enough knowledge is necessary to be able to make just decisions. Informing oneself about the company, the good or the service definitely is a first step.
And what information *can* we believe? There are already several organizations that devote themselves to, among other things, making consumers aware of responsible consumption. For example: Oxfam, The Commission for Sustainable Development, Global Compact, Life Cycle Analysis Forum, UNESCO, UNEP, Consumers International and so on. All these organs provide reliable information. Oxfam, for example, labels his products with an 'Oxfam'-label so consumers can see that the products come from fair trade. There is also a CE marking, a mandatory European marking for certain product groups, that indicates that the product meets the health and safety requirements defined in European Directives. So, to be able to purchase responsibly, consumers should look for products which have specific 'fair trade' labels, 'eco labels' or which have a 'CE mark.'
Maybe consumers ask themselves 'how can I, being only one person, make a difference?' A very simple example is: when you are a camp leader, you can buy 'honest' chocolate to take with you on a camp for children. Then you, as only one person, can already set an example for a lot of children. Responsible consumption is

also about the little things you do to help the environment and these definitely also make a difference.

Consumer citizens should re-examine the way organizations try to reach their goals, because not all the aspects of the economy are fair, simply because they are accepted. If you are a critical and aware consumer, your lifestyle influences the market, several policies and different tendencies and so on.

Taking responsibility should not be seen as a burden, but as a surplus value to one's life. It leads to a safe and healthy life and it contributes to one's dignity and self-worth. Our lifestyle influences the lives of others, even in other countries.

We should ask ourselves in what world we want to live and in what world we want our children to grow up. If we want to live in an equitable, sustainable and solidaric world, we should take up our responsibilities as consumer citizens and adopt sustainable lifestyles, because we all share the responsibility for the present and the future. We have to become a part of the solution instead of the problem. We need to start making a difference.

RESEARCH SOURCES

http://www.hihm.no/concit/
http://www.sustainable-everyday.net/
http://www.oxfam.org/
http://www.consumersinternational.org/
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The Consumer Citizenship Network conference "Assessing Information" May 2008 took place in Tallinn, Estonia and was hosted by the University of Tallinn. This compilation is a selection of papers presented at the conference.

The fifth Consumer Citizenship Network annual conference focused on:

- What information do consumers want and what do they need?
- Which information goods and services improve market transparency?
- What information should scientists, producers, governments, media, teachers, and interest organizations provide to enable consumers to make responsible shopping decisions?
- What is necessary for information to be effectively and reliably transmitted and analyzed?
- To what extent does consumers' trust in prices and labels as valid indicators of quality encourage or undermine the consumers' interest and ability to acquire information?
- How can consumer citizenship education deal with the cognitive, emotional, social and economic influences on consumer's capacity to process information?
- How can consumers break codes and identify hidden messages in commercial information?

The Consumer Citizenship Network 2 (CCN2) is an interdisciplinary network of educators, researchers and civil society organizations, (including UNESCO, UNEP and Consumers International) who recognize the pressing need for constructive action by individuals in order to achieve sustainable consumption and global solidarity.

The Consumer Citizenship Network has, since 2003, developed interdisciplinary approaches to central issues dealing with the balance between material and non-material well-being and with how one can translate ethical values into everyday practice through conscientious participation in the market. CCN2 also brings together expertise in the fields of citizenship-, environmental- and consumer education to further develop research and good practice for teaching and accessing consumer citizenship education. The Network consists of 133 institutions in 37 European countries. By focusing on social responsibility, the CCN2 addresses the growing international concern for implementation of norms and behavior which support sustainable development and cooperation.

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