

***Personal Carbon Trading: Ecological  
Citizenship or Avant Garde Consumerism?***

---

A paper for the International Studies Association  
San Francisco, March 2008

Dr Peter Doran  
School of Law,  
Queens University, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Copies available from [p.f.doran@qub.ac.uk](mailto:p.f.doran@qub.ac.uk)

“Thanks to television, I can’t remember what I did eight minutes ago”  
(Bart Simpson, *The Simpsons*)

*“...I love my car; I hate the bus. Yet I vote for candidates who promise to tax gasoline to pay for public transportation.....I have an ‘Ecology Now’ sticker on a car that drips oil everywhere it’s parked...The political causes I support seem to have little or no basis in my interests as a consumer, because I take different points of view when I vote and when I shop.”*

(Mark Sagoff, *The Economy of the Earth*, 1988)

## 1.1 Introduction

The latest Working Group report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2007) notes that changes in lifestyle and behaviour can contribute to climate change mitigation across all sectors. Specifically, the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report calls for:

*Changes in lifestyle and consumption that emphasize resource conservation and contribute to the development of a low carbon economy that is both sustainable and equitable.*

Indications that the United Kingdom Government may introduce a form of Personal Carbon Trading (PCT) or Quotas to directly involve individual citizen-consumers in realising the country’s climate change emission reduction targets, invite us to consider where such an initiative will lie within the debate on sustainable consumption, consumerism and environmental citizenship.

Mindful of the centrality of the role of the ‘consumer’ and the rhetoric of ‘choice’ under the New Labour Government, I want to propose that Personal Carbon Trading is entirely consistent with the governmentality of advanced liberal democracies, wherein responsibilities for the management of risk are increasingly laid at the doorstep of individual citizens. These citizens, in turn, must navigate between their roles as consumers and calls for environmental citizenship.

Moreover, in contrast with the current trend of carbon offsetting activities such as air travel, driving and electricity consumption, a governmental initiative on PCT or Quotas may be consistent with opportunities to promote both sustainable consumption and environmental citizenship under certain conditions.

## 1.2 The Meaning of Consumption

A substantial evidence base has been built up to inform policy decisions to support a shift towards more sustainable consumption. Three key lessons can inform effective measures. Firstly, there is a considerable gap - the so called 'value-action gap' - between people's attitudes, which are often pro-environmental, and their everyday behaviors. For instance, many people understood the waste disposal issues associated with plastic bags in the Republic of Ireland before the levy was introduced; but behavior did not change until a prompt was introduced through regulation. Some private sector responses to public concern about the environment sets out to exploit the 'value-action gap' by offering pseudo initiatives in the form of consumer choices that have little or no real impact on the consumer's 'ecological footprint'. The success of so called 'greenwash' can, in part, be attributed to the ambivalence (as well as the lack of knowledge) of consumers.

Secondly, consumer goods and services can play more than a functional role in people's lives. Cars, houses, fashions, gifts, trophies, photographs and music also play vital symbolic roles. Advertising and the associated media-entertainment complex demonstrate this point by promoting lifestyles, celebrity and aspirations that can inform desires and consumption through a range of subtle and none-to-subtle strategies. The Canadian-based Media Foundation, publishers of the magazine *Adbusters*,<sup>1</sup> are part of a counter-movement, designed to alert citizens across the world to the manifold ways in which corporate-driven consumer culture has gotten under our skin and begun to shape social relations, values, identity, and language. The work of this counter-movement underlines, perhaps above all, the need for greater attention to media literacy in the school curriculum, in the context of citizenship education.

Thirdly, far from being able to exercise free choice about what to consume and what not to consume, people often find themselves 'locked in' to consumption patterns that are unsustainable. This goes some way towards explaining the 'value-action gap'. Lock-in occurs in part through 'perverse' incentive structures - economic constraints, institutional barriers, or inequalities in access that actively encourage unsustainable behaviors. Sometimes lock-in arises from habitual practices or because 'everybody else is doing' it.

Baumann has observed how the market transforms members of society into individual consumers and how this eases the pressure on systemic legitimation, as

---

<sup>1</sup> See [www.adbusters.com](http://www.adbusters.com)

the irrationality of the system is dealt with by an increased individual consumption. For the individual as a consumer, the conditions created by failures in the modern project lead to a never relenting urge to increase the appropriation of commodities. Individual needs of personal autonomy, self-definition, authentic life or personal perfection are all translated into the need to possess, and consume, market-offered goods. (Baumann 1987:189)

Recalling Galbraith's rule on 'private affluence, public squalor', Baumann explains:

...The neglect of public consumption (that is, inadequate prevention of pollution, insufficient medical provision for the most common of ailments, erosion of public transport, starvation of public housing and schooling, etc.) can only be compensated for by the purchase of individual exemptions, which further strengthens the identification of needs satisfaction with private consumption...<sup>2</sup>

In the words of Thomas Princen (2005:14), there is a need for a language consonant with "enoughness" and "too muchness," not just words, but concepts and organizing principles. In an ecologically constrained world, people need the rhetorical and political means for turning a silencing hand to the marketers and spin meisters who tell us that the good life comes from purchasing goods, and that because goods are good more goods must be better.

Alternative measures of welfare provide a variety of indicators, in cross-section and over time, international, intra-national, and individual. One reason why we need so many different indicators is that no single one maps very precisely on to human welfare. Many measures suggest a curvilinear (non-linear) relationship. Using extended accounting and social indicators, international comparisons suggest a historical cycle of two periods. In the first, economic growth provides high welfare payoffs, as basic deprivations are remedied and basic needs are satisfied.

In the second phase, GDP goods provide diminishing, steady, or even negative returns, depending on the measure used.<sup>3</sup>

If it is true that GDP goods and services have delivered and are delivering diminishing welfare returns, the question, posits Offer (2006) is 'why?'. He offers a couple of observations. Both ecological and psychological approaches have one notion in common, namely that affluence produces congestion. In both cases, the affluent economy produces more than it can absorb. The ecology cannot absorb the extra energy, the extra traffic, the extra pollution, without

---

<sup>2</sup> My emphasis

<sup>3</sup> Xenophon Zolotas (1981) described three phases in the relation of income and welfare – of privation, steady improvements and declining ones, respectively. (Zolotas 1981, *Economic Growth*)

incurring costs that equal or exceed the benefits. Likewise, the abundance of psychic reward under affluence leads to satiation and habituation. These observations are supported by Amarach's findings in Ireland.<sup>4</sup>

Where high levels of well-being are already pervasive, it is difficult to improve them much further by raising incomes overall. What is needed, according to Offer (2006) is a more systematic targeting of *ill-being*, its determinants, and the economic costs of its amelioration. In other words, it might be more useful to shift the focus of measurement from happiness to unhappiness.<sup>5</sup>

### 1.3 Environmental Citizenship and Consumerism

The challenge for individual behaviour change, in the context of climate change, can be approached from one or two directions: environmental citizenship and/or sustainable consumption. The UK Government's consideration of a PCT scheme and a current online experiment in the introduction of voluntary personal carbon quotas, called Carbondaq, provides a timely opportunity to examine both approaches.

At the heart of the issue is a transformation in consumer behaviour and a challenge to 'consumerism', which is much more than an individual pursuit. As Zygmunt Baumann has described, whereas consumption can be described as primarily a trait and occupation of individual human beings, consumerism is an attribute of a society (Baumann 2007:28).

Consumption choices are never entirely an individual affair and are often constrained by modes of production embedded within economic, social and technological developments. Consumption choices are also determined by public and private systems of provision and the constraints that are subsequently placed on individuals who wish to make alternative choices. Individuals, for example, may be locked into private transport patterns by government decisions on public transport provision.

Baumann has argued that 'consumerism' is to be distinguished from consumption and is a type of social arrangement that results from recycling mundane, permanent and so to speak 'regime neutral' human wants, desires and longings

---

<sup>4</sup> See the Quality of Life Report, 2004: <http://www.amarach.com/uploadedfiles/studies%20and%20reports/Quality%20of%20Life%20in%20Ireland%20Report%202004.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Ill-being is not necessarily the flipside of happiness. Prospect Theory posits that losses are more acutely experienced than gains. Unemployment and discrimination have a more powerful effect on well-being than material gains. It may also be easier to reach a consensus on what counts as welfare 'bads' than about welfare 'goods'.

into the principal propelling and operating force of society, a force that coordinates systemic reproduction, social integration, social stratification and the formation of human individuals, as well as playing a major role in the processes of individual and group self-identification and in the selection and pursuit of individual life policies. 'Consumerism', he believes, arrives when consumption takes over that linchpin role that was played by work in the society of producers.

As a dominant source of identification in developed societies, consumerism can conflict with the emerging demands on citizens, notably invocations of 'environmental citizenship'. And there are sound reasons for this. In some respects it might be argued that consumerism is the antithesis of active citizenship. Consider our relationship to time, for example. Offer's (2006) thoughtful work on the challenge of affluence includes the following observation. The central paradox of affluence (an increased flow of novel goods and services and the ability to acquire them) is that the flow of new rewards can undermine the capacity to enjoy them. They all demand "attention" and "time". Attention can be taken as the universal currency of well-being. (Offer 2006:2)

At any given moment, we can 'consume' it (time, attention), by focusing on one or more pleasant or enjoyable activities. Or we can 'invest' time in some activity which holds out the promise of more satisfaction in the future.

Is this not one way of characterizing the difference between the consumer and the active citizen? The appeal to the modern consumer is - essentially - an appeal to the desire for an immediate, passive experience of gratification. Affluence and the ability to consume can breed impatience, and impatience can undermine well-being.

The appeal to active citizenship is an appeal to a restoration of the individual's willingness to '*invest*' time rather than *consume* it; to seek a reward in an 'active' rather than a 'passive' expenditure of time.

The appeal, moreover, is far from passive. The appeal to the consumer is often structured as a corporate-sponsored advertising and media regime designed to categorise, target and manufacture consenting clients for an endless array of manufactured products and services. For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, business and industry have invested heavily in public relations research (drawing on lessons learned from war time 'propaganda'), using Freudian psychoanalysis and later psychological research, to promote a 'century of the self', a 'self' envisioned as a desiring machine ready to respond to the endless flow of manufactured wants and needs that emerged with the age of mass production.

More recently, since the end of the 1980s, in advanced liberal democracies, government responses to neo-liberalism have even more firmly embedded the role of 'consumer' as a client of governmental services. We will now examine

this transformation of governance and its implications for citizens and consumers.

#### 1.4 Governmentality: the citizen mutates into a consumer

The very current consumer practice of purchasing carbon offsets and the prospect of schemes in both the UK (and the Republic of Ireland) proposing to allocate personal carbon quotas, invites a re-reading of a number of concepts introduced by Michel Foucault and developed by others, including Nikolas Rose (1996) and Thomas Lemke (2000). As Clarke (2004) has noted, through the increasingly influential concept of governmentality, post-Foucauldian work has enriched the range of 'conduct' and its government beyond the politics-economics couplet of political economy, and challenged sociological conceptions of society and its constitution, these developments deal, specifically, with the location of the citizen-consumer within advanced liberal governmentality. It is also worth noting, at this point, that Foucault's interest in sexuality, askesis and 'technologies of the self' may also hold clues for reclaiming aspects of citizenship that have come under attack with the onset of consumerism.

On the decline of 'the social', Rose (1999) observes, for example, that while social government has been failing since its inception, the solution proposed is no longer the re-invention of 'the social'. As 'society' dissociates into a variety of ethical and cultural communities with incompatible allegiances and incommensurable obligations, 'a new set of political rationalities, governmental technologies and opportunities for contestation begin to take shape' (1999:135-6). Under the new formula of rule associated with advanced liberalism, Rose (1999:41) notes that rule seeks to degovernmentalize the State and to de-statize practices of government and detach the substantive authority of expertise from the apparatuses of political rule. Experts are relocated within a market governed by rationalities of competition, accountability and consumer demand:

*It [rule] does not seek to govern through "society", but through the regulated choices of individual citizens, now construed as subjects of choices and aspirations to self-actualization and self-fulfilment.*  
(1999:41)

Revisiting Rose's (1999) summary of the debates and attacks on 'social government' – in the current context of consumption, and consumerism – it is instructive to note the role attributed to the mass media and marketing strategies deployed in commodity advertising. Charting the collapse of the 'empire of social expertise', Rose (1999:52) notes how clients of expertise came to understand and

relate to themselves and their “welfare” in new ways. In a whole range of sectors, individuals came to reconceptualize themselves in terms of their own will to be healthy, to enjoy a maximized normality:

*Surrounded by images of health and happiness in the mass media and in the marketing strategies deployed in commodity advertising and consumption regimes, narrativizing their dissatisfactions in the potent language of rights, they organized themselves into their own associations, contesting the powers of expertise, protesting against relations that now appeared patronising and demeaning of their autonomy...In the face of the simultaneous proliferation, fragmentation, contestation and de-legitimation of the place of experts in the devices of social government, a new formula for the relation between government, expertise and subjectivity would take shape.(1999:52)*

The new strategies and rationalities of government that can be detected in “Advanced liberal” societies seek techniques of government that create a distance between the decisions of formal political institutions and other social actors, conceive of these actors in new ways as subjects of responsibility, autonomy and choice, and seek to act upon them through shaping and utilizing their freedom.

Of particular interest here is Rose’s (1999) discussion on the ‘new specification of the subject of government’, which offers a number of clues about the designations of ‘citizen’ and ‘consumer’ in an advanced liberal democracy such as the UK. Rose notes that an enhancement of the powers of the ‘client as consumer’ – (consumer of health services, of education, of training, of transport etc.) has specified the subjects of rule in a new way:

*As active individuals seeking to “enterprise themselves”, to maximize their quality of life through acts of choice, according their life a meaning and value to the extent that it can be rationalized as the outcome of choices made or choices to be made (Rose 1992,1996)*

Underlining the process of individualisation taking place here, he (1996b) describes how, within the new regime, the actively responsible selves fulfil their obligations not through their relations of dependency and obligation to one another, but through seeking to *fulfil themselves* within a variety of micro-moral domains or “communities”.

Rose (1996b) observes that it has become possible to actualize this actively responsible self or individual because of the development of new apparatuses that integrate subjects into a moral nexus of identifications and allegiances in the very processes in which they appear to act out their most personal choices. In a key phrase, which goes to the heart of this discussion, Rose adds:

*Contemporary political rationalities rely upon and utilize a range of technologies that install and support the civilizing project by shaping and governing the capacities, competencies and wills of subjects, yet are outside the formal control of the “public powers”. (1996b:58)*

To the basic nation-forming devices such as a common language, literacy skills and transportation networks, the 20th century added the mass media of communication, with their pedagogies through documentary and soap opera; opinion polls and other devices that provide reciprocal links between authorities and subjects; the regulation of lifestyles through advertising, marketing and the world of goods; *and* the *experts* of subjectivity. (Rose 1990)

These technologies do not have their origin or principle of intelligibility in “the State”. Nonetheless, they have made it possible to govern in an “advanced liberal” way. They have provided a plethora of indirect mechanisms that can translate the goals of political, social and economic authorities into the choices and commitments of individuals, locating them into actual or virtual networks of identification through which they may be governed. These include the extension of privatised responsibilities or ‘risk management’ in areas such as diet control and home security; while social work has given way to the private counsellor, self-help and expert phone-lines. The regulation of conduct becomes a matter of each individual’s desire to govern their own conduct freely in the service of the maximization of a version of their own happiness and fulfilment that they take to be their own, but which nevertheless entails a relation to authority:

*Individuals are to become “experts of themselves”, to adopt an education and knowledgeable relation of self-care in respect of their bodies, their minds, their forms of conduct and that of the members of their families. (Rose 1996b:59)*

This is no zero-sum game. While there has been a downside to the new neoliberal designations, the new dispensation also holds out a new possibility of agency... even “ethical reconstruction as active citizens” (Rose 1996b:60). For Rose, this ethical a priori of active citizenship in an active society and re-specification of the ethics of a personhood represent, perhaps, the most fundamental and

generalizeable characteristic of the new rationalities of government in advanced liberal democracies.

Advanced liberal strategies of rule no longer seek to govern by governing *society* but through the regulated and accountable choices of autonomous agents, including citizens *and* consumers.

Clarke (2004), writing on the remaking of state-citizen relationships around the figure of the 'Citizen-Consumer' in the UK under 'New Labour', focuses on the role of the 'entrepreneurial self' as the central subject of advanced liberalism. Taking up Rose's (1999) observations on how the citizen mutates into a consumer, with 'his or her activity [is to be] understood in terms of the activation of the rights of the consumer in the marketplace' (Rose 1999:164), he is focused on the rise of the consumer and the constitution of the subject.

Clarke (2004) insists that this re-working through the citizen-consumer remains an uneven and contested locus. Policing, health care and social care, for example, are marked by very different adaptations of the 'consumerist' moment. Choice and contract in the UK, according to Clarke, are still interwoven with forms of 'indeterminate involvement' that range from the consumerist forms of expressed want/need or perceived satisfaction through to more participatory forms of consultation about services and service design (from citizens' juries to user panels).

The privileged language of choice – which is so central to the shift in governmentality in advanced liberal democracies – may, in the context of sustainable consumption, have to be rearticulated in its relation to freedom, as consumer-citizens may press for more decisions on 'choice' to be edited out upstream in the supply chain.

Choice editing is a prominent policy instrument for the delivery of sustainable consumption. It is a process that ensures that important decisions about what should appear on the shelves of our stores is taken further up the supply chain on behalf of the consumer. In the words of the psychologist, Aric Sigman, "Choice is beneficial up to a point. But limitations, restrictions and boundaries can have a strangely liberating effect."<sup>6</sup>

On the rise of the 'citizen-consumer' in New Labour's Britain, Clarke (2004) stresses the importance of seeing political-cultural formations as composed of contradictory trends and tendencies, in what he describes as a 'conjunctural analysis'. He concedes that the creation of citizen-consumers is about the transformation of the 'social' into new forms – to be managed, regulated, ordered

<sup>6</sup> Sigman, A, (2004), *The Explosion of Choice: Tyranny or Freedom?*

and governed in new ways. It involves the transposition of identities from the 'marketplace' into new locations; and involves an attempt to create new subjectivities – the self-directing, choosing, citizen-consumer. For Clarke, however, it is also difficult to stress the complex conditions and contested political-cultural work that goes into bringing about such changes. Citizenship has not disappeared but has proliferated in many forms.

#### Lemke on governmentality and neo-liberalism

In his 'Foucault, Governmentality, and Critique' (2000), Thomas Lemke suggests that the key to the development of an effective critique of neo-liberalism is to question rather than go along with the core dualisms of power and knowledge, politics and economy, and subject and power. Instead, he invites us to question the role that these dualisms play in constituting and stabilising liberal-capitalist societies, and the critical contribution of the concept of governmentality in "bridging" them:

*By coupling forms of knowledge, strategies of power and technologies of self it allows for a more comprehensive account of the current political and social transformations...* (Lemke 2004:7)

Having rehearsed Rose's (1996b, 1999) theoretical contribution to our understanding of the transformation of governance in advanced liberal democracies, notably the increasingly central role of the citizen acting as consumer, and given the importance of the 'economic sphere' (e.g. media, advertising) in both driving the transition from the governance of the 'social' and replacing many of the 'technologies' that now support the civilizing project, it will be useful to take up Lemke's (2000) discussion on the constitutive role of 'politics and the economy' in the context of a critique of neoliberalism. This is because I suspect that a useful way to frame the roles of 'consumer' and 'citizen' and the tensions between the two, is to view them as a subset of the 'economy'/'politics' dualism.

The importance of this constitutive dualism of 'politics and the economy', in the context of our discussion on consumption, the consumer and citizenship, might be clearer if we digress at this point to examine the work of Jonathan Nitzan and Shimshon Bichler<sup>7</sup> as recently summarised in a paper by Di Muzio (2007).

---

<sup>7</sup> The Nitzan and Bichler articles can be accessed online at: <http://bnarchives.yorku.ca/>

### **Political Economy – Capital as a strategic, power institution**

At the heart of this question, and reflective of a larger question about the relationship between the economy and politics, is the new dominance of economic actors in both perpetuating the notion of an autonomous 'economic' sphere and its counterpart in the consumer-citizen. Neither Rose (nor advocates of 'environmental citizenship', as we shall see) have taken on board, with sufficient attention, the assault on opportunities for the exercise of citizenship represented by the saturation or colonisation of the social space by the corporate-sponsored interventions in areas of regulation and media and advertising. This section will draw on the work of Nitzan and Bichler.

A central notion is an understanding of capital as a 'strategic, power institution' (cited in Muzio 2007) with far reaching interests and capacities to shape the social, cultural and political terrain, notably through control of the global mediascape (e.g. cinema, advertising) and influence on trade and environmental agreements. The centrality of flexible mechanisms and trading in the Kyoto Protocol itself bears testament to corporate influence in the pre-1997 negotiations.

To explain the extraordinary influence of capital and its grip on consumption patterns, I believe we need a theoretical framework, drawing on political economy, in which the *politics* of production and the power of dominant corporations to shape the terrain of social production (i.e. the entire spectrum of human activity) and reproduction in order to accumulate, take centre stage. Power itself is the vendible commodity.

For these theorists, who depart from (and advance on) both liberal and Marxist analyses, profit is a direct result of a firm's control over the productive potential of humanity and its capacity to influence the course of human development and reproduction. The goal of corporate executives is to beat the average rate of return. More to the point, in the context of this paper, however, is reliance of the earnings of dominant capital groups upon broader social, cultural and political processes. Di Muzio (2007) explains:

*In order to beat the average rate of profit, corporations must attempt to redistribute a larger share of earnings away from their competitors in the corporate universe. What this means is that corporate executives must do all they can to shape the social, cultural and political terrain in their favour. For example, the corporate earnings of Apple Computer Inc. do not simply depend upon the ability to produce its range of iPods or other goods and services by directing the labour of its workers. Rather, their corporate earnings, and the willingness of investors to bid up the price of existing shares, depend on a whole range of factors that the corporation may wish to influence: the perception that portable mp3 players are a necessity; their ability to press for new markets and trade agreements with other legal jurisdictions; the ability of the state to punish violators who infringe their intellectual property rights; the quality of their lobbyists; their public reputation; accounting practices and standards; the ability of its consumers to*

*access credit; the ability to influence anti-trust legislation and so on.* (Di Muzio 2007:522)

It is this understanding that leads Nitzan and Bichler (2004) to argue that power is both the means and the end of accumulation. Corporations exert whatever power they have over society and politics in order to generate earnings and beat the average rate of profit.

Di Muzio (2007) cites the example of the doubling in the capitalisation value of Exxon Mobil when it became the largest capitalised firm in the world with a market value of \$US381 billion, largely because of its record profits generated by instability in the Middle East and devastating hurricanes in the US. Muzio, seeking to demonstrate the pivotal role of the corporate's ability to deploy power to restructure society and affect overall development, cites examples of Exxon's actions since the late 1990s, including, *inter alia*:

- Lobbying the European Commission, the US Federal Trade Commission and politicians on Capitol Hill in order to get its merger with Mobil approved in 1999;
- Lobbying the US State Department to lift sanctions on Libya to exploit its oil wealth;
- Volunteering to train Iraqi oil workers;
- Influencing public perceptions by funding institutions who deny global warming and advising the George W. Bush administration to abandon the Kyoto Protocol;
- Hiring and supplying local military personnel in Aceh in order to protect its natural gas fields;
- garnering public funding from the World Bank in order to help finance its operations in Chad and Cameroon;
- Potentially conspiring with BP to restrict the supply of natural gas from Alaska;
- Influencing US Vice President Cheney's Energy Task Force; and
- Appealing the US\$4.5 billion dollar settlement awarded in a class-action suit to victims of the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

In other words, investors and owners are capitalising commodified forms of power when they purchase ownership claims to business entities, and corporations exert power over politics and society in order to generate earnings and beat a given average rate of return.

### **Politics and the Economy: a constitutive dualism**

For Lemke, the perspective of governmentality makes possible a dynamic form of analysis of neoliberalism that does not limit itself to statements on the "retreat of

politics” or the “domination of the market”. Instead, governmentality furnishes an analysis that deciphers “the end of politics” as a political programme in itself.

As Foucault demonstrated, the “art of government” is not limited to the field of politics as separated from the economy. The constitution of a conceptually and practically distinguished space, governed by autonomous laws and a proper rationality is *itself* an element of “economic” government. So the power of the economy, for example, is vested on a prior “economics of power” that guarantee the accumulation of capital and the production of bodies in forms of labour:

*...Labour power must first be constituted before it can be exploited: that is, that life time must be synthesized into labour time, individuals must be subjugated to the production circle, habits must be formed, and time and space must be organized according to a scheme. Thus economic exploitation required a prior “political investment of the body” (Foucault 1977:25, cited in Lemke 2000:10-11)*

A critical point in Foucault’s understanding of governmentality is that he does not limit the field of power relations to the government of the state; power relations are not reducible to the state, which is nothing more than the mobile effect of a regime of multiple governmentality. The state itself must be understood as a moment in the tactics of government, as a dynamic form and historic stabilisation of societal power relations, including and especially, the power of economic interests.

Governmentality is “at once internal and external to the state, since it is the tactics of government which make possible the continual definition and redefinition of what is within the competence of the state and what is not, the public versus the private, and so on” (Foucault 1991:103; cited in Lemke 2000).

Lemke’s reading of Foucault’s discussion of neo-liberal governmentality shows that the so-called “retreat of the state” is in fact a prolongation of government. Neoliberalism is not the end but a transformation of politics, that restructures the power relations in society. The transformation under way under the sway of neoliberalism today is not a diminishment or a reduction of state sovereignty and planning capacities but a displacement from formal to informal techniques of government.

Shopping the World

So the difference between state and society, politics and the economy does not function as a borderline but as an element and effect of specific neoliberal technologies of government. We could add a similar explanation, today, regarding the relationship between the highly individualised consumer and the embedded citizen and an accompanying shift from collective or 'social' to individualized responses to risk, including an expansion of consumer responses to threat. Szasz (2007) has recently documented this shift to what he describes as a form of "inverted quarantine":

*...the kind of response to threat that I am interested in is individualistic in both goal and method. A person who, say, drinks bottled water or uses natural deodorant or buys only clothing made of natural fiber is not trying to change anything. All they are doing is trying to barricade themselves, individually, from toxic threat, trying to shield themselves from it. Act jointly with others? Try to change things? Make history? No, no. I'll deal with it individually. I'll just shop my way out of trouble. (Szasz 2007:4)*

Rather than working together with others [citizens] to get the political system to acknowledge and deal with problems, and acting in the modality of a 'citizen in a democratic society', a person who buys some product in order to shield herself from harm is acting in the modality of 'consumer'. Szasz describes this trend towards 'inverted quarantine':

*In its classic form, quarantine is based on the assumption that the overall collective environment is basically healthy. Risk comes from a discrete source, such as a diseased individual. The community protects public health by isolating the diseased individual(s), thereby reducing the likelihood that others will be exposed and the infection will spread. What if we inverted the dyadic opposition – healthy overall conditions/diseased individuals – upon which the logic of traditional quarantine rests? The new dyadic opposition would be diseased conditions/healthy individuals. (Szasz 2007:5)*

Again, we can appeal to the work of Foucault to help explain this inevitable consumer-driven response to collectivized risk and the consumption of security. What we are witnessing is further evidence of a strategy of rendering individual subjects "responsible", entailing a shift in responsibility for social risks and for life in society into the domain for which the individual is responsible (the domain of consumption) and transforming this into a problem of "self care".

As noted by Lemke (2000), a key feature of neo-liberal rationality is the congruence it endeavours to achieve between a responsible and moral individual and an economic-rational individual. It aspires to construct responsible subjects whose moral quality is based on the fact that they rationally assess the costs and benefits of a certain act as opposed to other alternative acts:

*As the choice of options for action is, or so the neo-liberal notion of rationality would have it, the expression of free will on the basis of a self-determined decision, the consequences of the action are borne by the subject alone, who is also solely responsible for them. This strategy can be deployed in all sorts of areas and leads to areas of social responsibility becoming a matter of personal provisions (Rose and Miller 1992; Garland 1996; Rose 1996; O'Malley 1996; cited in Lemke 2000:12).*

The observations that Szasz (2007) has made in the realm of consumerism are entirely consistent with a trend observed in studies on various aspects of the transformation in “technologies of the self”, including the self-esteem movement in the US. Barbara Cruickshank shows how the borders between the private and the public are re-drawn in the neo-liberal model of rationality, so that the political is replaced by the personal and collective action replaced by invocations to personal dedication; thus altering the angle of possible political and social intervention.

#### Governmentality, Globalization and Technologies of the self

The UK has just published its first ‘National Security Strategy’ (2008)<sup>8</sup>. The document is reflective of the transformation in the discourse of security that has taken place under the signs of the emergence of a multi-polar world, ‘international terrorism’, weapons of mass destruction, pandemics and transnational crime. In turn, the report states, ‘These and other threats and risks are driven by a diverse and interconnected set of underlying factors, including climate change [and] competition for energy.’ (Cabinet Office 2008:3) Inter-state and inter-regional factors are now joined by newly acknowledged ‘threats and risks’ and responses that reflect the intimate nature of distance in an era of globalization. Environmental security will reach all the way down to future calculations around the consumption decisions of the householder.

The Security Strategy (2008) states that climate change is potentially the ‘greatest challenge to global stability and security’ alongside energy security, calling for an urgent, integrated and international response:

---

<sup>8</sup> *The National security Strategy of the United Kingdom: Security in an interdependent world* (2008), Cabinet Office, London.

*We are working at all levels – from our role in the international community and the EU, to national level, local authorities and communities, and in partnership with businesses and citizens – to make the technological and behavioural transition to a low- carbon economy. (2008:50)*

On the 'essential role' of individuals and communities can play in national security, the Report (2008) continues:

*We can also play our part in tackling the longer-term challenges, such as climate change. Through volunteering and dialogue we can also make sure that the values we share across society are upheld. (2008:59)*

As Bislev, Salskov-Iversen and Krause Hansen (2001) have noted, the maintenance of national and international social order as well as the management of the physical environment are now presented as crucial tasks for the reproduction of security. The concepts of 'security' and 'risk' have moved outside the traditional academic territory of politics and international studies, and have been taken up in social and cultural studies where they appear in papers on crime and the 'private consumption of security'.

Bislev et al. (2001) are interested in the introduction of Public Management techniques as part of the transition in the governance role of the state, a trend – as we have seen – that has brought market mechanisms and managerial techniques into spheres of society not hitherto permeated by the market. These include such areas as the personal sphere, the family, voluntary sectors and the state. In sum:

*The state is now represented increasingly as an institution doing two things: delivering collective services to a large and diversified group of customers, and inspiring groups and individuals to govern themselves in certain directions. (2001:5)*

All of this has implied the implementation of new forms of regulation (in the security and other fields), often based on marketization and consumerism. Two technologies of government are at work here. First, governing through the installing of 'technologies of the self', working through a process where discourses are developed for self-governing. Groups, organizations and individuals will

employ the ideas, understandings and forms of knowledge contained in these discourses. Secondly, the authors detect a tendency towards the state becoming preoccupied with governing as such or reflexive government. (2001:6).

Both dimensions are at work in the decision by the UK Government to publish its first National Security Strategy. There is an attempt by the Government to raise and re-frame security in the context of new threats and new expectations about the respective roles of stakeholders, with the Government now positioned as one, albeit primary actor, among the many, including the individual citizen.

### 1.5 Personal Carbon Trading – The UK Experiment

The future of the UNFCCC regime and the prospects for a new lease of life for the Kyoto Protocol post-2012 are predicated, to a large extent, on what the Executive Secretary of the Climate Convention process, Yvo de Boer<sup>9</sup>, has described as the three 'ifs'. In an indicative scenario, he has outlined what the three steps would look like: If industrialized countries respond to current IPCC science and undertake to reduce their emissions by 60-80% by the middle of the century; if they buy carbon credits from developing countries equivalent to half that amount; and if carbon prices sit at around US\$10/tonne, a carbon finance flow worth some US\$100 billion a year could be generated. That would go some way towards "greening" the massive energy portfolio projected by the International Energy Agency for developing countries in the coming years. It is a neat solution that not only addresses the environmental agenda of the Kyoto Protocol but promises to unlock the participation of the major emerging economies in binding targets designed to contain their emissions trajectories.

At the heart of such a scenario is a massive expansion of the so called flexible – market-based – mechanisms that form the centrepiece of the Kyoto Protocol (2007) as it is now configured. In particular, a significant expansion and review of the Clean Development Mechanisms is envisaged as part of the next two years of UNFCCC-sponsored negotiations to put in place a new Protocol architecture for the post-2012 period. Indeed, the technical documents supporting the IPCC fourth Assessment Report (2007) allude to the expansion of the CDM and the stimulation of investment flows through ambitious target setting. The IPCC AR4's lowest stabilization scenario to contain GHG concentrations between 445-490 ppm contains a set of assumptions - in the supporting literature - about the potential contribution of non-Annex I parties, due to the availability of cost-effective mitigation options in developing countries. Burden sharing and significant

---

<sup>9</sup> Personal interview with Yvo de Boer, Nairobi, COP-6, November 2006.

investment flows to secure emissions reductions, through technology transfer and expanded use of the CDM is written into those projections.<sup>10</sup>

It is within the context of this global ambition – an ambition defined as much by its economic and technological objectives regarding massive transfers to developing countries as its environmental objectives – that the language of ‘carbon budgets’, ‘cap and trade’ and ‘carbon offsetting’ has entered into popular discourse and even gained a slate of celebrity endorsements and champions, for better or for worse<sup>11</sup>.

Moreover, as we observed at the outset of this paper, the IPCC evidence base that is helping to shape current UNFCCC negotiations has left policy-makers in no doubt that lifestyle change will have to be part of the mix when it comes to designing policies and measures that match the ambition of the emissions reduction and mitigation targets anticipated at the end of the current negotiations.

In 2006, then Environment Minister, David Miliband, announced the UK Government’s attention to examine proposals for a system of tradable personal carbon allowances or quotas. Indeed, both real and virtual citizens of the UK can now calculate their carbon footprint thanks to carbon calculators launched by the former Environment Minister online and in ‘Second Life’.

A system of ‘Domestic Tradable Quotas’ (DTQs) was first proposed by Dr David Fleming, a London-based policy analyst, in 1996.<sup>12</sup> Since July 2003, a project at the University of Manchester, funded by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, has been assessing the feasibility of DTQs as an instrument of public policy.

The DTQs is one of several proposals, including:

- a. The Rate All products and Services (RAPS) scheme: 100% of emissions rights would be allocated to individuals if it were possible to carbon rate not just fuel and electricity but all products and services.

<sup>10</sup> IPCC Presentation, AWG4, Vienna, Austria, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Alex James, of the UK ‘iconic band’ Blur appeared on the BBC’s primetime Sunday *Politics Show* In November 2006 to discuss personal carbon trading, based on an allocation of ‘carbon credits’ to help individuals monitor and contain their annual carbon emissions.

<sup>12</sup> See [www.dtqs.org](http://www.dtqs.org) and [www.teqs.net](http://www.teqs.net).

b. Ayres Scheme: An alternative scheme for allocating 100% of units to individuals proposed by Ayres (1997,1998) is similar to the DTQs with the exception of the provision that 100% of units are allocated to individuals on an equal per capita basis and organizations would only access units from the tens of millions of individuals holding a surplus.

c. The Skye Trust proposal (Barnes 2001) consists of an upstream auction of units. The revenue from this auction would be shared equally amongst eligible individuals.

In brief, the DTQ model is a “cap and trade” scheme that would operate in three phases:

a. Setting the carbon budget: establishing the maximum quantity of GHGs that may be emitted from energy use in a given year by a nation implementing the DTQs scheme. Under the scheme, the budget is reduced year-on-year in line with national emissions reductions targets.

b. Surrendering carbon units: Each carbon budget is divided into carbon units, with one carbon unit representing 1kg of carbon dioxide equivalent;

c. Acquiring units for surrender: Carbon units are allocated to eligible individuals by government on a free and equal per capita basis. The proportion of total carbon units allocated to individuals under the Entitlement is equal to the proportion of total energy emissions arising from individuals’ purchase of fuel and electricity over a given period prior to the introduction of a DTQs scheme (e.g. in the UK this is about 40%). Whilst units are free to eligible individuals, organizations would have to purchase units for surrender on a national carbon market.

DTQs are a “cap and trade” scheme for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from energy use. Emission rights are allocated to and surrendered by end-purchasers of fuel and electricity. These rights are allocated to individuals free and on an equal per capita basis whilst organizations would purchase the units they require on a national carbon market. Whenever individuals and organizations purchase fuel or electricity, they would be required to surrender to the retailer carbon units to cover the quantity of fuel or electricity purchased. Energy efficient individuals who surrender less emissions rights than they are allocated could sell their surplus onto the national market and individuals requiring additional rights or credits to those they have been allocated would have to purchase these on the market.

While the scheme is designed, primarily, to facilitate carbon budgeting – in line with national emissions reductions targets – by individuals and organizations, it would also accommodate the practice of ‘retiring’ units. Large groups of individuals (i.e. below allocation emitters who choose not to sell their surplus units) who may wish to accelerate national progress towards emissions reductions could retire units and ensure that these are no longer part of the Government’s future budget calculations.

### **Sister can you spare a carbon credit?**

An experimental online system based on the DTQ system is already up and running on a website hosted by the UK’s Royal Society of Arts (RSA).

The RSA has launched<sup>13</sup> the ‘Carbondaq’, a voluntary personal online carbon trading exchange. Anyone can register online, have their carbon footprint calculated and buy or sell personal carbon credits with virtual currency. If a participant’s carbon footprint is below the level of the personal carbon allocation, credits are awarded and these can be sold on to other participants with deficits to make up.

The Carbondaq can also facilitate individuals (e.g. based on a university campus) who wish to form closed groups<sup>14</sup> and adopt an emissions reduction target and deal in real currency. Trading in such groups is closed, or restricted to members of each group.

The RSA campaign for Personal Carbon Trading describes the advantages of such an approach by highlighting that the scheme “would provide continued choice, but within a restricted budget which stops us from consuming energy at unsustainable levels”. The RSA<sup>15</sup> further claims that the scheme would “enhance quality of life” and bring about “positive social and economic changes”, with the potential for upholding distributive justice, rewarding innovation and “encouraging social cohesion.”

---

<sup>13</sup> The RSA Carbondaq was due to go live at <http://carbondaq.rsacarbonlimited.org> in March this year (2008).

<sup>14</sup> Amongst the first groups to indicate an interest in taking part in personal carbon trading as ‘closed groups’ using real currency, are residents from the Mole Valley district Council, staff at the London Borough of Lewisham, the Climate and health Council, and the Omega Climate change Group.

<sup>15</sup> RSA Personal Carbon Trading website [www.rsacarbonlimited.org](http://www.rsacarbonlimited.org) accessed 15 March 2008.

### **Carbon Offsets or Carbon Upsets: a consumerist response to climate change?**

While the UK Government examines the merits of personal carbon quotas and the possible introduction of a domestic scheme, consumers have been taking advantage of a proliferation of options for carbon offsetting their activities, such as air travel, driving and electricity consumption. Described by critics as the postmodern form of the Catholic Church's practice of issuing 'indulgences' - to bestow forgiveness on sinners in return for cash – the voluntary carbon market has a number of weaknesses. Some of these are probably linked to the immaturity of a market which is still in its infancy, the inherent methodological problems around the hotly contested LULUCF based, for example, on an implied equivalence between the emissions generated by a low price air trip taken in Europe and a forestry project in a village thousands of miles away in a developing country; and inconsistencies in the provision of clear information to consumers of offsets.

A fundamental issue, is the risk that consumers view carbon offsets as a substitute rather than a complementary activity alongside their own responsibility to prioritise a reduction of their carbon footprint. In the unregulated voluntary sector of the market, consumers are also receiving erroneous signals regarding the price of carbon. In the absence of a cap and trade system, lower prices prevail.

Offsetting plays into the hands of the consumerist response to problems. As the Carbon Trade Watch group have observed:

*The structure of such schemes [carbon offsetting] means that the onus for climate change is placed entirely on individuals acting in isolation from others. This inhibits their political effectiveness. Offset schemes assign a financial value to people's impetus to take climate action, neatly absorbing it into the prevailing logic of the market.* (Transnational Institute 2007:10)

While individuals are encouraged to respond as 'consumers' rather than collectively as citizens who might engage in a 'Transition Town' project or join an environmental NGO, they are also more prone to accepting the unsustainable claims made for offsetting in advertising. In one example cited by Carbon Trade Watch, Terrapass, a US-based offsets website is described, encouraging its users to think that "me and my car are doing something good for the planet". In another example, British Airways went into partnership with the offset company, Climate Care, to present passengers with the option of flying free from concern over the

impact of their emissions, while also opposing green taxation on aviation, promoting the massive expansion of British airports, and launching its own budget airline. (Carbon Trade Watch 2007:11)

The carbon offset market has also been examined by the UK Government. The House of Commons Environmental Audit committee has conducted an inquiry into *The Voluntary Carbon Offset market*<sup>16</sup> and the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has conducted a consultation on a *Code of best practice for the provision of carbon offsetting to UK customers*<sup>17</sup>.

Both the Inquiry and the Consultation were triggered by fears within the Government about the negative impact on public confidence of currently unregulated practices in the voluntary sector of the carbon offset market. The Inquiry seems to reflect an anticipation that the voluntary market will continue to grow. The current market is modest: £60 million in 2006 with projected growth to £250 million in 2009 (EAC 2007). The EAC recommended that energy-intensive industry sectors encourage their customers to offset, to help accelerate the development of the market.

The voluntary carbon offset market operates alongside, and undoubtedly derives some of its popularity and legitimacy from, the official or 'Compliance Carbon market'. The latter has developed as a result of the Flexible Mechanisms which form the centrepiece of the UNFCCC Kyoto Protocol. *Unlike many of the credits generated in the voluntary offset market, the activities conducted under the Protocol's Flexible Mechanisms and the credits they generate must be verified and certified using criteria agreed by the Parties to the Protocol.* In the context of the CDM, the methodologies are under continuous scrutiny and negotiation by the Parties. So it should come as no surprise that the voluntary counterpart of this market has fallen under deep suspicion, given the highly contested nature of the claims made about the integrity of the credits generated.

a. **The Clean Development Mechanism:** The CDM allows the Protocol's Annex I parties to meet their emissions reduction targets by generating cost-effective credits from emissions reducing or saving projects in developing countries. The projects generate emissions credits called **Certified Emissions Reductions (CERs)** which can be bought and traded.

<sup>16</sup> House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee, *The Voluntary Carbon Offset Market: Sixth report of the Session 2006-07*, 3 July 2007.

<sup>17</sup> DEFRA Inquiry conducted January 2007.

A CDM 'Gold Standard' has been developed by a group of UK NGOs, led by the Worldwide Fund for Nature. The standard is built on the foundations of CDM standards as defined by the CDM Executive Board, but also incorporates guidelines to demonstrate a project's sustainable development achievements. Projects are restricted to renewable energy and en-use-energy efficiency projects.

b. **Joint Implementation:** Joint Implementation allows developed, Annex I countries within the Kyoto Protocol to meet their emission reduction targets through projects carried out in other developed countries with legally binding targets. These projects generate tradable credits called **Emission Reduction Units** (ERUs).

b. **Emissions Trading:** The Kyoto Protocol emissions trading system is a cap-and-trade scheme. Similar to the proposed domestic schemes, under the Kyoto Protocol allowances are allocated based on an emissions reduction target. In the Kyoto Protocol scheme, an allowance is called an **Assigned Amount Unit** (AAU), which is equivalent to one tonne of carbon equivalent. Parties who can meet their reductions internally, can trade their surplus. The EU's regional emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) is the largest trading scheme set up as a result of the Protocol.

The voluntary carbon market has developed independently of government politics and climate targets. Carbon credits generated in the voluntary market are generally not tradeable under the Kyoto Protocol mechanisms. Some are verified under independent or offset retailers' standards and criteria<sup>18</sup>, and many are not.

Carbon offsetting generates a range of strongly held opinion, as evidenced in submissions to and exchanges with the UK parliamentarians on the Environmental Audit Committee. These views could be described as: outright opposition; support from the offset retail industry itself; and the middle ground view that recognises the pros and cons:

a. For the opposition, organisations such as The Corner House and FERN told the Committee that carbon offset schemes are a 'dangerous distraction' from generating public support for policies that will help avoid climate change and the

---

<sup>18</sup> Emerging voluntary market standards include: the Voluntary Gold Standard, a simplified version of the CDM Gold Standard launched by the WWF-UK; the Voluntary Carbon Standard developed by the Climate Group and the International Emissions trading Association; the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standards developed by the Climate, community and Biodiversity Alliance; and the Vivo System managed by BioClimate Research and Development to manage the supply of verifiable emission reductions from rural communities in a way that promotes sustainable development. Some offset retailers have developed their own standards.

transition to a low-carbon economy. Typically, strong opposition is based on these arguments:

- Climate change cannot be tackled by cutting emissions in poor communities, whilst allowing the activities of the rich (e.g. flying, driving) to continue unabated;
- The incoherence of the 'offset' concept, which reflects the logic of the market rather than the requirements of climate change. Specifically, the claim that there is equivalence between emissions and offsets is spurious e.g. making a chemical plant more efficient is not the same as supplying efficient light bulbs to Jamaica.
- Compelling arguments about methodologies, measuring and accountability (reflected in technical debates about the operation of the CDM).

b. In support, the offset providers counter that their projects deliver real reductions in carbon emissions in a cost effective way.

c. Most of those who gave evidence to the Environmental Audit Committee fell between the pro- and anti- offset positions. The Energy Saving Trust underlined the relative importance of offsetting, but only 'after UK citizens and businesses have worked to reduce their own carbon footprint first'. This is a common position, which is based on a hierarchy of priority actions beginning with local and practical action (including consumer choices) to reduce direct emissions, then direct emissions, and finally offsetting.

The Committee went along with the latter position, restating that it is primarily individuals who have to take steps to avoid and then reduce their own carbon emissions. Alongside this, carbon offsets can play a role in both reducing emissions, raising awareness, and providing funding. They called for research to clarify whether the purchase of offsets has any impact on the behaviour of customers.

The Committee heard evidence on two categories of problems with the voluntary offset market: problems with offset projects; and problems with offset provision to customers.

Project issues include project failure and unintended detrimental consequences (e.g. impacts on local farming communities in developing countries); the difficulty of demonstrating 'additionality' i.e. an ability to demonstrate that an offset project would not have been funded otherwise; calculating accurate carbon reductions or savings, especially where the projects are based on the sequestration of carbon e.g. forest projects; and verification issues.

On provision to consumers, the Committee heard evidence from the RSPB about the low availability and transparency of information on projects and certification, variations in the methodologies used to calculate prices for carbon reductions, double counting, and future value accounting.

### **Personal Carbon Trading and Carbon Offsets: an assessment**

While proposals for a DTQ system promise to impact on individual behaviour by offering an incentive to participants to reflect on their choices regarding the consumption of electricity and energy, and reduce their individual consumption, carbon offsets based on the mitigation or sequestration efforts of others offer an altogether different proposition.

Proximity is a key distinguishing feature. The sphere of decision-making, impacts and adjustments in the context of DTQs is local and, thereby, qualitatively different. This is because there is an asymmetry in the responsibilities of highly industrialised countries and developing countries<sup>19</sup>; so the onus on local behaviour, including a shift in consumption patterns (reduction and change) and technological shifts (e.g. towards more distributed and renewable energy sources), and absolute reductions in emissions, remains on the OECD countries.

The DTQ schemes are promoted within the language of advanced liberal democratic governmentality, with potential for inspiring a highly individualised response to climate change while stimulating, as part of the same rationale, potential joint citizen initiatives e.g. working through an environmental NGO to collectively retire units and thus comment and impact on the adequacy of nationally-defined emission reduction targets as translated into a carbon budget for the purposes of the PCT. It is also conceivable that collective responses will be stimulated by systems such as the DTQ e.g. consumer-citizens may opt for car and other resource sharing arrangements, and be more likely to participate in 'Transition Towns' initiatives to prepare for the impacts of peak oil.

In carbon offsetting, the consumerist ethic is still at work, and is much less likely to generate collective citizen-led responses to climate change. There is little or no evidence, for example, to suggest that those who purchase offsets also change their immediate behaviour regarding their impact on climate change. And, as outlined, there is a tendency – on the part of energy-intensive businesses – to seize on offsetting as rebranding tactic that could possibly result in a delay in

---

<sup>19</sup> This asymmetry is summed up in the UNFCCC text as 'common but differentiated responsibilities.'

genuinely effective measures to reduce the emissions profile of their activities. Offsetting plays into the hands of the 'fact-value' phenomenon observed in the sociology of consumption. This refers to the *gap* between what consumers report to be their concern and intended response, and their actual behaviour.

## 1.6 Environmental Citizenship, Consumerism & Sustainable Consumption

Climate change in general, and schemes such as the DTQ and offsetting, will continue to place demands on individuals, acting as consumers and citizens. The shift in patterns of governance in advanced liberal societies has coincided with the rise of sustainable development as a central policy consideration, with complex implications and challenges that will test the limits of the new role of the risk-laden consumer, and perhaps open up possibilities for unforeseen responses by consumer-citizens seeking to respond locally (through practical local initiatives, combined with changes in consumption patterns) to choices now mediated by global environmental and ethical demands that have novel and non-reciprocal dimensions.

A useful benchmark for assessing future responses may be the concept of 'environmental citizenship'.

Dobson and Bell (2006:3-4) draw a useful distinction between changes in *behaviour* and changes in *attitude*. Citing the example of the successful Plastic Bag Environmental Levy (PBEL) in the Republic of Ireland<sup>20</sup>, they suggest that market-based instruments, which are by far the most widely used in liberal-capitalist and social democratic societies, are potentially good at changing behaviour, but may be less good at triggering changes in attitudes. They go on to deploy Rousseau's (1762:63) distinction between the "will of all" and the "general will", wherein the general will refers to the common interest while the will of all refers to the individual and private interest. Dobson and Bell explain (2006:5):

*One way of thinking about the contrast between market- and citizen-based routes to sustainability is in terms of Rousseau's distinction, with the latter focusing on individuals making decisions in virtue of what they perceive to be the common sustainability interest, rather than in terms of what they – as individuals – might or might not gain from pursuing particular courses of action.*

---

<sup>20</sup> A 90 per cent reduction in the use of plastic bags was reported in the early years of the introduction of the PBEL. See Friends of the Irish Environment, 2004.

This distinction appears to map onto a key distinction that is drawn throughout this paper. It is the distinction between behaviour change and attitudinal change. Market-based instruments are designed to allow individuals to keep behaving self-interestedly, while citizenship approaches acknowledge a potential gap between self-interest and environmentally responsible behaviour – the closing of which may require attitudinal as well as (or leading to) behaviour change.

**Table 1: Dimensions of ‘Environmental Citizenship’<sup>21</sup>**

Axes	<b>Environmental Citizenship</b>
Liberal (rights)/Republican (responsibilities)	Shares aspects of both traditions rights (‘environmental rights’) and responsibilities (‘responsibility to contribute to sustainability’). Goes beyond reciprocal rights to embrace non-reciprocal rights.
Virtue	Draws on virtues associated with both Liberal (tolerance, dialogue) and Republican traditions (duty and willingness to work for common good i.e. environmental sustainability). Justice, compassion and care.
Political Space (municipality, city, state etc.)	Post-Cosmopolitan(ecological footprint, linked to justice discourse), also local, regional and national
Public/Private	Public and Private

For Dobson and Sáiz (2005) part of what it might mean to be an environmental citizen is to examine the effects of self-interested behaviour on the common good objective of sustainable development.

Implied in the ‘turn to citizenship’ (Dobson and Sáiz 2005) is a recognition that sustainability requires shifts in attitudes at a deep level – deeper than those reached by fiscal measures such as traffic congestion charging or charges levied on household waste.

Both the sustainable development and globalisation agendas, and their intersection, provide interesting challenges for the development of citizenship.

<sup>21</sup> Based on Dobson and Bell’s introduction to their edited volume, *Environmental Citizenship* (2006)

Clearly, many environmental problems of a global dimension and transnational solutions are required. Equally, it is possible today to think and act both globally and locally at the same time because 'the spatial differentiation of global and local has gone' and 'the tools of citizens' juries, of citizens' forums and of virtual citizens' networks are all becoming available. (cited in Valencia Sáiz 2005; O'Riordan 2001: 237).

An interesting dimension in the context of consumption is the expectation by authors such as Valencia Sáiz (2005, 2000) that environmental citizenship will mediate and facilitate a process that might be described as ecological concientization, underlining:

*...the responsibilities and obligations of the citizen in the framework of a sustainable society and in relation to under-represented collectives, as well as its socialising role as a facilitator of ecologically conscious citizens. It is about, then, an active citizenship which must go hand in hand with an extension of political participation. (Valencia Sáiz 2000)*

There is support for this view in Torgerson's work on the 'green public sphere' and the importance of political action that is valued for its own sake as artful performance. He recalls Arendt's work on the performative and constitutive dimensions of politics, including her references to the 'actual content of political life': 'the joy and gratification that arise out of being in company with our peers, out of acting together and appearing in public, out of inserting ourselves into the world by word and deed.' (Arendt 1968: 263) This is a dimension of the so called 'happiness debate' that does not figure with much prominence in today's discussions about 'new economics'. Writing in 1968, Arendt wrote about the Berkeley Free Speech Movement in the 1960s, for example, and described a generation that had discovered what the eighteenth century had called 'public happiness'.

### **Sustainable Consumption in the UK**

If the work on environmental citizenship is to have any purchase on individual, collective and consumer behaviour, it will be within the framework of the public discourse on sustainable consumption and production. The UK's DEFRA and SDC have been actively promoting the concept in line with commitments that date back to UNCED (1992) and the WSSD (2002).

In the decade since Agenda 21 (UNCED 1992), technological development and innovation have increased resource efficiency at some levels and in some sectors. However, these developments have not amounted to an adequate

response to address critical patterns of unsustainable consumption and production. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, negotiators revisited the sustainable consumption agenda and agreed the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (Chapter III) which includes a call for the development of “a 10-year framework of programmes<sup>i</sup> in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production.(SCP)”, with a focus on policy responses in the EU and OECD countries. The 10-year framework<sup>ii</sup> is being developed to strengthen international cooperation and increase exchange of information and best practices to facilitate the implementation of national and regional programmes to promote sustainable consumption and production. In March 2003, the European Council (the EU Heads of State or Government) identified sustainable consumption and production as one of the key priorities of the EU in its follow up to the WSSD and is now due to publish a comprehensive action plan.

### **Ecological Citizenship and the Economy**

Citizenship is a hot topic for consumers, according to Gill Seyfang ( Seyfang 2005), with shopping and consumption behaviour increasingly regarded as a public arena for activism and the expression of responsible citizenship. In a critical evaluation of the UK’s sustainable consumption policies as a ‘tool for ecological citizenship’, she describes two competing perspectives: once concerned with reform of the mainstream, and another more radical alternative e.g. local farmers markets, which affords enhanced opportunities for the practice of ecological citizenship.

Seyfang (2005) has shown how tensions and competing perspectives have been part and parcel of the sustainable consumption concept since its introduction in Agenda 21 at UNCED in 1992, the first global Conference on the environment to implicate over-consumption in the developed world as a direct contributor to unsustainability. The proposed solutions included promoting eco-efficiency and using market instruments for shifting consumption patterns; and a second recommended that governments should develop ‘new concepts of wealth and prosperity which allow higher standards of living through changed lifestyles and are less dependent on the Earth’s finite resources and more in harmony with the Earth’s carrying capacity’ (UNCED 1992: section 4.11, cited in Seyfang 2005:140)

Part of the difficulty with the latter, more far-reaching governmental agenda of redefining wealth and prosperity, is that it runs against the grain of embedded assumptions about consumption in liberal democracies. As Offer (2006) reminds us, modern consumption theory assumes that rational consumers make choices that are well informed, far-sighted, and prudent. Consumers reveal their preferences by means of market choices, and market choices correspond to their well-being (‘welfare’). Taking account of the expected value of lifetime wealth,

consumers maximize welfare by smoothing consumption over the life cycle. An 'invisible hand' then acts to aggregate individual choices to maximize the economic welfare of society.

Offer (2006) points out that a great deal is at stake in the model of 'revealed preferences' as the source of well-being. It is nothing less than the conceptual underpinning of liberal society. The doctrine regards the free exercise of market choice as not only economically efficient, but also as a vital human aspiration. It is, in part, for this reason that political leaders have been slow to pursue the 'sustainable consumption' agenda since the UN Conference on Environment and Development.

Seyfang (2005) believes that the definition of sustainable consumption narrowed post-1992 as it 'evolved' in the course of negotiations at a range of international policy arenas and became more widely accepted as a policy goal. She cites, for example, the work of the OECD during the 1990s and its conclusion that market failure was the prime cause of unsustainability. She writes: "In this strongly market-liberal perspective, governments are expected to correct prices and provide regulatory frameworks to influence producers and to be more eco-efficient and offer consumer choices of 'green' products (OECD, 2002). This perspective on sustainable consumption has become widely adopted by governments..." (Seyfang 2005:140)

In a 2003 strategy on sustainable consumption and production, the UK Government closely mirrored the OECD approach, defining sustainable consumption and production as: 'Continuous economic and social progress that respects the limits of the Earth's ecosystems, and meets the needs and aspirations of everyone for a better quality of life, now and for future generations to come' (DEFRA 2003:10). In practice, Seyfang (2005) believes, this emphasis on decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation, to be achieved through a range of market-based measures and education initiatives, represents a narrowing of the sustainable consumption agenda from the initial possibilities of redefining prosperity and wealth and radically transforming lifestyles. The focus, instead, is now on improving resource productivity and marketing 'green' or 'ethical' products.

Sustainable consumption in the UK is implicitly defined as the consumption of more efficiently produced goods, with the 'green' and 'ethical' consumer as the driving force of market transformation. This approach assumes that consumers know and care about the social and environmental implications of their consumption habits, and have the motivation and opportunity to act on that knowledge to change their behaviour. In other words, according to Seyfang (2005:141), there is an assumption that consumers will behave as ecological citizens when they make purchasing decisions. Seyfang (2005) finds that the UK's sustainable consumption and production strategy embodies a mainstream policy strategy reliant upon motivated consumers, which is an ineffective tool

for ecological citizenship. This is, first and foremost, because ecological citizens recognise that their individual consumption choices are environmentally important but that their control over such choices is constrained, shaped and framed by institutional factors and political forces that are amenable only to collective citizen action (Maniates 2002).

Burgess (2003:285; cited in Seyfang 2005:150) summed up the weakness of the mainstream approach, stating that an individual cannot be expected to take responsibility for uncertain environmental risks in a captured market. It is simply asking too much of the consumer to adopt a green lifestyle unless there is a social context which gives green consumerism greater meaning. This alternative direction would involve changes to lifestyle, infrastructure and social and economic governance institutions, in order to redirect development goals and reduce absolute consumption levels in a way consistent with a reduction in ecological footprints.

Experiments in radical change in consumption patterns can be found throughout the UK. Seyfang believes that these could grow and thrive in a new context, if surrounded favourable by social conditions and social institutions.

She challenges this assumption of mainstream sustainable consumption on a number of levels:-

- a. Market Failures: failures of pricing, measurement and information. For example, the externalisation of environmental and social costs of economic activity and the sending of confusing signals to both producers and consumers.
- b. Impact: failure to make an impact. For example, individuals may not be able to act on their ecological citizenship preferences for a variety of reasons due to barriers such as affordability, availability or convenience. The mainstream discourse on sustainable consumption can also fail to reflect the diverse motivations for the act of consumption, which range from aspirational consumption, retail therapy, and self-expression to the need for belonging, status or self-esteem. Perhaps most significant is what Seyfang (2005) describes as the 'category error' which pits individuals against global institutions to solve global problems... 'Sustainable consumption as defined in mainstream policy relies upon the summation of many small acts of atomised consumer sovereignty to shift the market....While 'green growth' and 'market transformation' offer the promise of an environmentally friendly future which does not threaten the political or commercial *status quo*, green consumerism and individualisation of responsibility for the environment bely the powerful institutions and interests at stake.' (Seyfang 2005:144)

Despite these limitations, Seyfang (2005) does not dismiss the mainstream sustainable consumption discourse. Instead, she suggests that the approach does achieve significant benefits in terms of raising awareness of the social and

environmental impacts of behaviour, and encourages individuals to think about these and reflect the difference they can make through altering consumption patterns.

Seyfang's (2005) alternative or radical approach to sustainable consumption is associated with the 'new economics' and 'deep green' environmentalist literature and includes radical re-organising of economies to be more localised, decentralised, smaller-scale, and oriented towards human well-being and environmental protection. A central question for this approach is the nature of economic growth. These alternative proposals entail cutting absolute levels of consumption in order to reduce the ecological footprints of modern industrialised societies. Examples include:

- a. Indicators that redefine 'progress' and 'wealth' and create new national accounting mechanisms;
- b. Localised food supply chains.
- c. Non-market exchange mechanisms, such as community currencies (i.e. LETS).

#### Ethical Investment as Environmental Citizenship

In an exploration of the relationship between ecological citizenship and ethical investment, Carter and Huby (2005) raise questions that overlap with our concerns about consumption and consumerism. They view ethical investment as a fascinating laboratory for applied ethics, for it implies that individuals maybe prepared to place ethical concerns, such as a desire to protect the planet from pollution, above financial returns in their personal investment choices. And from an environmental policy perspective, they suggest that ethical investment could be regarded as an example of ecological modernisation.

Carter and Huby (2005) want to determine whether individual ethical investors might be regarded as ecological citizens. To do so, in part, they draw on a survey of ethical investors to establish the distinguishing features of ethical investors. They find that the most prominent distinguishing features are value systems and lifestyles. They are, for the most part, middle aged and middle class, but are found more frequently in caring professions (notably health and education) and they are more likely to be religious, active in pressure groups and supportive of liberal and green political stances. A more detailed examination of the investors' profiles convince the authors that there is a strong case for regarding individual ethical investment as a form of ecological citizenship.

*The main issues that motivate them – nuclear power, ozone-layer degradation, the Third World, armament production and animal testing – are consistent with the sustainability agenda that underpins ecological citizenship. (Carter and Huby 2005:108)*

Carter and Huby (2005) also believe that ethical investment is consistent with four of the defining characteristics of ecological citizenship, as set out by Dobson (2003). Firstly, ethical investment is non-territorial in the sense that investment activities and their implications are not necessarily confined to a single nation-state. Secondly, it is concerned with the private activities of individuals – the way they spend their personal finances – which have an impact on the public realm. Thirdly, a wide range of citizen virtues is implied by the act of ethical investment, most notably a wish to secure a greater social and environmental justice, but also care and compassion for disadvantaged people and the state of the environment. And finally, a willingness to make a financial sacrifice in pursuit of personal values, which is consistent with non-reciprocal responsibility towards strangers, near and far. (Carter and Huby 2005: 108)

## 2 Critical Theory: reduced to a 'fetishized quietism, stunned surrender'?

As Luke (1999) observed in his ground breaking *Capitalism, Democracy, and Ecology*, the consumerist social model calls for a 'political economy of social ecology and voluntary simplicity' (1999:198). By voluntary simplicity, Luke means a voluntarily simplified mode of living, implying a movement towards less consumption of consumer goods, more self production of personal goods and services, more energy efficiency, and less dependence on corporate and state services. He also envisions what could be described as the activities associated with active citizenship, notably time devoted to enlivening local institutions such as co-ops, collectives, and neighbourhood organisations.

Citing the work of E.F Schumacher, Hazel Henderson, Ivan Illich and Duane Elgin, Luke describes voluntary simplicity as an essential part of a practice as an oppositional form of struggle against the regimes tied to transnational corporate capital, and designed to undercut the extravagant consumption, social passivity and personal impotence engendered in the everyday life of the consumer. These writers draw attention to the way in which the corporate culture of consumption contributes to an undermining of the potential for the mobilization of environmental citizenship or any form of active citizenship. Illich (1974) describes how the proliferation of useful things and excessive wants under consumerism culminates in modernized poverty "when the intensity of market dependence reaches a certain threshold" and many experience frustration and passivity in the face of their "overwhelming reliance on the riches of industrial productivity."

Luke cites the literature on voluntary simplicity in the context of opposition, as the source of a new economics based on concrete moral ends, committed centrally to simplicity, non-violence and frugality. The example of Buddhist economics, for

example, is cited as the systematic study of how to attain given ends with the minimum means. Hattam's (2004) work on a Buddhist critical social theory and the translation of Buddhist teachings into a postmodern Western setting deals with a number of themes that have emerged in this paper.

What Hattam (2004), Nhat Hanh (1993), and Bachelor (1997) have come to recognise, is the need for tools and techniques that counter the social conditions that can undermine individuals' attempts to pursue ethical practices. Hattam (2004:187) writes:

*...when these precepts [no killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct and intoxicants] are understood in terms of right livelihood in (post)modern conditions, ethical practice demands actively resisting the social conditions that give rise to these negative actions...*

Hattam (2004) suggests that zen meditation (with which Erich Fromm conducted an extended dialogue (Suzuki, Fromm and de Martino 1960)), for example, should be regarded as a 'technology of self' (Foucault 1988) and a basis for an ethico-political life consistent with a culture of opposition to the logic of capitalism and consumerism. He recalls Foucault's interest in askesis (Foucault (1985) or certain kinds of training to bring about behaviour that is to be manifested. Hattam (2004:112) continues:

*What comes into focus as a consequence of this turn towards 'technologies of self' is a range of alternative knowledges that have as their purpose the constitution of self. These knowledges are yet to be commodified, or tamed by the human sciences, and have as their modus operandi a form of consciousness that is the antithesis of the logic of capitalism (Hattam 2004:112)*

Reading Freud and Marx through the lens of Zen, Erich Fromm saw an affinity between psychoanalysis and Zen. This helped to inspire his later work on the problem of the 'art of living' as the pursuit of 'optimal well being', in which he contrasts two modes of living: 'to have' or 'to be'. The having mode is associated with human immersion in a system of exchange value, in which humans have become the commodities. This orientation is clearly associated with the culture of consumerism.

Fromm's understanding of the 'being' mode might be associated with motion, becoming, and activity and is more consistent with the orientation we might associate with active citizenship or environmental citizenship. However, it is not limited to social engagement. For Fromm, 'the character structure of the average individual and the socioeconomic structure of society of which he or she is a part are interdependent' (1978). This claim has been borne out by those who have sought to demonstrate the radical impact on ideas about the 'self' generated by the corporate-sponsored media and advertising industries, during the era of mass consumption.

While the early public relations industry in the United States and the resulting global advertising industry drew heavily on Freudian and other psychological theories to promote their project, there is less evidence in writings on 'environmental citizenship' and sustainable consumption that these impacts have been adequately registered, and counter-strategies examined.

### 3 Conclusion

Torgerson's (1999) work on a green public sphere is an appropriate note with which to begin to wrap up. He recognised that the distinction between consumer behaviour and citizen action ('quiescence') is vital for efforts to enhance democratic practice through discourse and deliberation in a public sphere. He draws attention to the limits of the solitary citizen and the decisive role of deliberation and debate, through which individuals not only seek to achieve ends. He recalls, after Arendt, that debate – the essence of politics – fosters an imaginative interplay of identities, interests, and perspectives that encourages evaluations and judgements from an *enlarged point of view*.

He makes an interesting observation, in the course of summarising the way in which the 'rational economic individual' came to be prized as economic activity was constructed on the model of a self-regulating market, and narrowly acquisitive behaviour came to be viewed as reflecting the virtue of industriousness than the sin of greed:

*Mastery of nature was externalized; it no longer meant self-control of bodily passions, of internal nature – as it had with monastic discipline – but a redirection of the passions for the sake of achieving collective human control over external nature. (Torgerson 1999:130)*

Torgerson's (1995) observations on the narrow dimensions of citizenship as experienced in liberal democratic states chimes with the mainstream discourses on citizenship. Recent debates about citizenship in both the UK and the Republic of Ireland have tended to focus on the individualised dimensions of political participation, such as voting, voting age, and membership of political parties.

The literature on ecological citizenship tends to over-invest the notion of citizenship with transformative potential with a significance and richness that is rarely found outside the most committed of environmental activist circles and NGOs. This point is recognised in Geyfang's (2005) work, which demonstrates that the decision-making environment for individual environmentally committed citizens remains constrained, and the radical hope for the activation of a rich notion of ecological citizenship remains with more experimental and localised activities.

I will list my further conclusions & questions for further reflection under the relevant headings:

#### **Governmentality and individual responses to climate change:**

Prompted by the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, Governments, including that of the UK, have begun to give serious attention to devolving responsibility for managing their emissions reduction targets to individual 'consumer-citizens'. Individual responses to initiatives such as Personal Carbon Trading will be framed by shifts in governance, which have seen risk and responsibility shifted onto individuals regarded as 'entrepreneurial selves'. This development is not a zero-sum game, and offers prospects for innovation, where individuals maintain or reclaim the capacity to act as 'citizens' alone and collectively.

The question of the relationship between consumerism, the role of the 'consumer-citizen' and the legitimacy of the liberal state will emerge as one of the more critical questions around the State's response to climate change and other environmental challenges. Baumann (1987) and Offer (2006) have both offered insights into this problematic relationship, which is also tied up with the observations of Rose (1999) and others on the transformation of governance of the liberal state under the sign of neoliberalism.

#### **Personal Carbon Trading (and carbon offsets):**

The IPCC evidence base that is helping to shape current UNFCCC negotiations has left policy-makers in no doubt that lifestyle change will have to be part of the mix when it comes to designing policies and measures that match the ambition of the emissions reduction and mitigation targets anticipated at the end of the current negotiations.

The proposed Domestic Tradable Quotas (DTQs) model (and its experimental online counterpart: the Carbondaq), is consistent with the rationality associated with recent shifts in governmentality in advanced liberal democracies. It will appeal to the consumer-citizen, with dimensions that extend individualised consumer responsibility (climate risk management) and allow for collective citizen-led responses e.g. collective efforts to retire emissions units.

Unlike carbon offsetting, the DTQ model will provide an incentive for localized behavioural (if not a change in attitudes) change. In the context of climate change, proximity and the quality and integrity of action are related. For this reason, the local actions spurred by a DTQ model matches the requirements of the international climate change regime, which calls for non-reciprocal practical and ethical responses from the beneficiaries of highly industrialised countries.

In contrast, in the case of carbon offsets, there has been a tendency – on the part of energy-intensive businesses – to seize on the rhetoric of ‘carbon neutrality’ as a rebranding tactic that could possibly result in a delay in genuinely effective measures to reduce the emissions profile of their activities, and disguise a lack of effective emissions reductions in advanced industrialised countries. Offsetting plays into the hands of the ‘fact-value’ phenomenon observed in the sociology of consumption.

### **Environmental Citizenship:**

Rose’s (1999) discussion on the ‘new specification of the subject of government’, offers a number of clues about the designations of ‘citizen’ and ‘consumer’ in an advanced liberal democracy such as the UK. Rose notes that an enhancement of the powers of the ‘client as consumer’ – (consumer of health services, of education, of training, of transport etc.) has specified the subjects of rule in a new way. The opportunities for ‘environmental citizenship’ will be framed by the contested choices (Clarke 2004) open to the consumer-citizen of advanced liberal society. While there has been a downside to the new neoliberal designations, the new dispensation also holds out a new possibility of agency...even “ethical reconstruction as active citizens” (Rose 1996b:60).

However, neither Rose (nor advocates of 'environmental citizenship', as we shall see) have taken on board, with sufficient attention, the assault on opportunities for the exercise of citizenship represented by the saturation or colonisation of the social space by the corporate-sponsored interventions in areas of regulation and media and advertising. This section will draw on the work of Nitzan and Bichler (2004).

The literature on environmental citizenship is distinctive in its attempt to address a requirement of deep societal transformation in the face of the challenge of climate change, namely a change in attitudes through what we might call a form of 'ecological conscientization'. Market- and policy-driven initiatives cannot promise this depth of change in individuals or groups. The magnitude of the climate change policy challenge suggests that dimensions of environmental citizenship will be required to sustain the level of societal change required. In this context, the work of Torgerson (after Arendt) is important in drawing attention to the quality of collective action as an outcome worth pursuing in its own right.

The environmental citizenship debate will continue to act as an important corrective in the face of the trend observed by Seyfang (2005) towards a narrowing of the possibilities implicit in the discourse of sustainable consumption. This tension will also inform responses to proposals for Personal Carbon Trading, pulling some towards a preference for localized action and others towards the narrower choice of carbon offsets that release individuals from localized obligations. Social context, and opportunities for localized collective initiatives will be important in supporting one response or another, as implied in Seyfang's (2005) work.

A dimension that has not been emphasized in the work on consumption, consumerism or citizenship is the relationship between initiatives for 'voluntary simplicity' as a dimension of practice in the context of resistance to consumerist society and 'technologies of self' (e.g. zen practices). There may be some merit in revisiting Foucault's work on askesis, together with the writings of somewhat marginalized figures such as Erich Fromm, to recover a literature on the relationship between the individual basis for an ethico-political life consistent with a culture of opposition to the logic of capitalism and consumerism and effective collective action.

### **Sustainable Consumption and Consumerism:**

Consumption is not only a part of the solution to climate change, via a transition to sustainable consumption. It may also be part of a problematic response to

insecurity<sup>22</sup> and risk in modern societies. As Baumann (1987) and Szasz (2007) and others have observed, failures in the modern project (and the saturation of the individual's decision-making environment by the colonisation of the social by private interests) can drive consumers to respond to risk (including environmental risk) by embarking on another shopping trip.

In the context of sustainable consumption and responses to climate and energy concerns, the consumer-citizen may seek to reverse the proliferation of choice, and support policy approaches such as 'choice editing'. This re-articulation of the association of choice with freedom and self-direction.

## REFERENCES

Arendt, Hannah 1968 *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, New York: Viking Press.

Ayres, R 1997 *Turning Point: And end to the Growth Paradigm*. Earthscan: London.

Barnes, P 2001 *Who Owns the Sky? Our common Assets and future of Capitalism*. Island Press: Washington DC.

Bichler, Shimshon and Nitzan Jonathan 2004, 'New Imperialism or New Capitalism', article submitted to the journal, *Review*, for publication in June 2005. The unpublished version of the article was accessed at the Nitzan and Bichler online archives on 10 January 2008 at: <http://bnarchives.yorku.ca/>.

Bislev, Sven, Salskov-Iversen, Dorte, and Krause Hansen, Hans 2001, 'Globalization, Governance and Security Management', Working Paper No. 43, Presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, August 29-September 1.

Burgess, J., Bedford, T., Hobson, K., Davis, G. and Harrison, C., 2002, '(Un)sustainable consumption', in F Berkhout, M. Leach and I. Scoones (eds), *Negotiating Environmental Change: New Perspectives from Social Science*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, pp.261-91.

Cabinet Office 2008, *National Security Strategy*, London: Cabinet Office/HMSO.

Clarke, John 2004 'Consumerism and the remaking of state-citizen relationships', Paper prepared for ESPAnet conference, Oxford, 9-11, 2004.

Daly, Herman and Kenneth Townsend 1993, *Valuing the Earth: Economics, Ecology, Ethics*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp.360-361.

Dobson, Andrew 2005, 'Environmental Citizenship: towards sustainable development', May 2005, RICS Research.

---

<sup>22</sup> Consider, for example, the Presidential call on US citizens to respond to the 9/11 attacks by shopping.

Fleming, D 1997 *Paper 11 - Tradable Quotas: Setting Limits to Carbon Emissions*. The Lean Economy Initiative: London.

Foucault, Michel 1977 *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. London: Allen Lane.

Foucault, Michel 1991: Governmentality, in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester: Harvester Wheatsheaf, pp.87-104.

Fromm, Erich 1978 *To Have or To Be*. London: Abacus.

Illich, Ivan 1974 *Energy and Equity*. New York: Harper.

Kelly, Mary, 2003, 'Attitudes to the Environment in Ireland, How Much Have We Changed Between 1993 and 2002?', paper presented to the Environmental Protection Agency Conference, Pathways to a Sustainable Future, by Dr Mary Kelly, Department of Sociology, UCD, Dublin, 15-15 May 2003.

Lemke, Thomas 2000 'Foucault, Governmentality, and Critique'. Paper presented at the *Rethinking Marxism Conference*, University of Amherst (MA), September 21-24.

Luke, Timothy W. 1999 *Capitalism, Democracy and Ecology: Departing from Marx*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Maniates, M 2002, 'Individualization: plant a tree, buy a bike, save the world?', in T.Princen, M. Maniates and K.Konca (eds) *Confronting Consumption*, London: Pluto Press.

O'Riordan, T (2001) 'Taking the transition forward', in T O'Riordan (ed), *Globalism, Localism & Identity: Fresh Perspectives on the Transition to Sustainability* (London: Earthscan)

Kuhndt, Michael, Tuncer, Burcu, Andersen, Kristian Snore, and Liedtke, Christa (2004), 'Responsible Corporate Governance: An overview of trends, initiatives and state-of-the-art elements', Wuppertal Papers, No. 139, January 2004.

DG Environment and DG Joint Research Centre, May 2006, 'Environmental Impact of Products: Analysis of the life-cycle environmental impacts related to the final consumption of the EU-25', IPTS/ESTO Project.

Pender, Anne, Dunne, Louise and Convery, J, Frank (2007), 'The use and regulation of environmental claims as a means for promoting sustainable consumption in Ireland; Final Report', prepared for the EPA and The Environmental Institute, UCD.

Rose, Nikolas 1990 *Governing the soul: the shaping of the private self*. London: Routledge.

Rose, Nikolas 1996 *Inventing Ourselves: psychology, power and personhood*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rose, Nikolas 1996b 'Governing "advanced" liberal democracies', in Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne, and Nikolas Rose (Eds) *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neoliberalism and Rationalities of Government*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sagoff, Mark 1988 *The Economy of the Earth: Philosophy, Law, and the Environment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Szasz, Andrew 2007 *Shopping Our Way to Safety: How we changed from protecting the environment to protecting ourselves*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Tucker, Arnold 2005, 'The relevance of Sustainable Consumption Policies for Realising Decoupling', paper for ERSCP 2005, 5-7 October, Antwerp, Belgium.

Valencia Sáiz 2000, 'Teoría política verde: Balance de una disciplina emergente', *Revista Española de Ciencia Política* 3: pp.181-194.

Walsh, H and McCarthy, C 2005, 'Ireland's Cleaner Greener Production Programme - making business lean and green', Paper delivered to ERSCP, Antwerp, Belgium, 2005.

- i · Identify specific activities tools, policies, measures and monitoring and assessment mechanisms, including, where appropriate, life-cycle analysis and national indicators.
- Adopt and implement policies and measures aimed at promoting SCP patterns, applying, inter alia, the polluter-pays principle.
- Develop production and consumption policies to improve products and services.
- Develop awareness- raising programmes on the importance of sustainable consumption and production patterns, particularly among youth and relevant segments in all countries, through inter alia, education, public and consumer information, advertising and other media.
- Develop and adopt consumer information tools to provide the information related to SCP.
- Increase eco-efficiency, with financial support from all sources, where mutually agreed, for capacity-building and technology transfer.

ii The “Marrakech Process” was launched at the [first international expert meeting](#) on the 10-year framework held in Marrakech, Morocco, 16-19 June 2003, organized by [DESA's Division for Sustainable Development](#) and [UNEP](#). The “Marrakech Process”, includes regular [global](#) and [regional meetings](#), informal [expert task forces](#) and other activities to promote progress on the 10-year framework on sustainable consumption and production. [UNEP](#) and [DESA's Division for Sustainable Development](#), have been identified as the leading agencies in promoting and developing the 10-year Framework of Programmes at the global and regional level. The [CSD](#) will consider the 10-Year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns as one of the themes in the 2010/2011 cycle of its [multiyear programme](#) of work.