Habits of Sustainable Citizenship:
The Example of Political Consumerism[1]

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This article develops the notion of sustainable citizenship, investigates the kinds of citizenship practices that emerge from and in the market and theorizes how the roles of citizen and consumer are increasingly forged together. It uses survey data to investigate the importance of everyday "ordinary consumption" of common commodities for understanding citizenship and maps the practice and rise of political consumerism, across different age groups in different nations as an inkling of how sustainable citizenship is unfolding in Western society. Sweden is given special emphasis. Important findings are high levels of "buycotting" political consumerism and the fact that political consumers stand out on all identified citizenship expectations but particularly on solidarity citizenship. The concluding section discusses more generally the consumer turn in citizenship and how and why it can be seen as evolving into a more stable or regular practice or habit.

Introduction

Citizens engage in politics in multiple ways. They may make it a habit to vote on a regular basis, always pay their taxes, join organizations and remain as long-term members, often sign petitions, make a point of contacting officials to express their opinions and exercise influence and even frequently seek information on politics and societal affairs. Citizens also increasingly turn to the market as their arena for politics. Their market-based political activism might involve more consistent and committed changes in consumer lifestyle politics, as represented

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by vegetarianism, veganism or simple living, in order to play a role in promoting sustainable development. They may also engage in creative cultural efforts like performing anti-sweatshop fashion shows in order to draw public attention to the sustainability problems embedded in the global garment trade or even alter popular brand imagery through culture jamming and anti-branding to send critical political messages about the environmental and social consequences of production and consumption. More commonly practiced and discussed below are boycotts and buycotts. These market-based political efforts imply that they decide not to purchase (that is, boycott) or deliberately purchase (that is, buycott) goods and brands on a regular basis for political, ethical and environmental reasons. They may, in other words, make it a habit to seek information about organic, fair trade, eco-friendly and animal "cruelty-free" commodities, and purchase these goods whenever they can find and afford them. Some consumers may, moreover, consider their everyday shopping as part of a larger political cause. Students in the Italian city of Palermo, for instance, appeal to local shoppers to fight corruption by frequenting identified stores that refuse to pay extortion fees to the mafia (Forno & Gunnarson 2010). In these ways, citizens use their shopping choices as tools and their everyday physical environment as venues to promote sustainable development.

These and numerous other examples illustrate how university students, other young people and even middle-aged shoppers find ways to engage in the politics of sustainable development. They tell stories about how young people, socialized in late capitalism and the more consumer-driven world, reflect upon the significance of consumer society generally, and how older age groups, who grew up in times of expansive welfare state government and a more production-driven world, take more responsibility for their everyday consumption patterns. These examples stand in contrast to a prevalent view of today's youth as politically passive and distanced from responsibilities as citizens. Some observers would even go so far as to characterize today's youth as a generation with "must-have lists" who need commercial brands to create their social identity (Bauman 2007; Kymlicka & Norman 1994; Torney-Purta et al. 2002; Putnam 2000; Macedo et al 2005).

This chapter investigates the kinds of citizenship practices that emerge from and in the market. It develops new theorizing and uses the newest survey data to investigate the importance of everyday "ordinary consumption" of common commodities (cf. Gronow & Warde 2001, 2 for a definition) for understanding citizenship. With the help of the concepts of ecological modernization and political consumerism, the chapter theorizes why and how the roles of citizen and consumer are increasingly forged together and how shopping then becomes a form of citizenship practice. It introduces the theoretical notion of sustainable citizenship to further explore how and why the processes involved in sustainable development are calling for a new understanding of citizenship. Then the chapter focuses on mapping the practice and rise of political consumerism across different age groups

in different nations as an inkling of how sustainable citizenship is unfolding in Western society at large. The concluding section discusses more generally the consumer turn in citizenship as well as how and why it can be seen as evolving into a more stable or regular practice or habit of citizenship.

Consumers, citizens and sustainable development

How can individuals alone or together in groups possibly play a role in safeguarding universal human rights and the global common pool resources of forests, oceans, air, and marine life? This question is important because much environmental policy-making in the past focused on the governmental regulation of production and the large-scale technological management of pollution (Carolan 2004ab; Spaargaren 2000). Even legal scholars and experts have traditionally concentrated most of their attention on international conventions and effective government action, for example, as important means to put an end to human rights violations (Ebbesson & Okowa 2009). Two problems with these government-oriented approaches have generated interest politically and academically. First, scholarship is showing that it can be difficult to mobilize sufficient support for large-scale international governmental solutions (as demonstrated in the stalled international climate change negotiations). Second, national governments are limited in their jurisdictional scope and resource capability to solve more complex globalized problems (Young 2010; Ruggie 2009; Voss et al. 2006; Stolle & Micheletti forthcoming). Therefore, the involvement of individuals and particularly the changing of their ordinary shopping habits are discussed as an important step to help solve some environmental and human rights problems. Today governments, civic groups in different countries and transnational advocacy networks call on their citizens to reconsider how much comfort, convenience and cleanliness they really need to live a good life (cf. Shove 2003). They encourage citizens to recycle, reduce, and refine their consumption of such common goods as apparel, food, household and offices equipment, paper, and transportation vehicles (John et al. 2011; Berglund & Matti 2006). In sum, efforts to make the world more sustainable include a top-down governmental approach that involves traditional political tools and a bottom-up citizen approach that attempts to draw citizens into a variety of new practices and habits.

How should these calls on individuals to develop more sustainable consumer habits be analyzed? Some scholars view these demands as implying, in effect, a newer more multifaceted perspective on what it takes to be a good citizen. They claim that the role of choices involved in private life must be viewed as part of citizenship (cf. Dobson 2003, 2007; Delanty 2000) because citizenship must be understood as a more total and complex relationship that involves identities, practices, and governance as well as a series of responsibilities (not just obligations and rights) of a vertical (individual-government) and horizontal (individual-individual)

nature. An important contribution to this emerging scholarship is the notion of sustainable citizenship. This conception of citizenship is closely associated with the United Nations' report *Our Common Future* ("Bruntland report") (UNCED 1987). Raised as an idea in the innovative multi-pronged policies and strategies that ensued from the report, sustainable citizenship includes efforts that require cooperation between consumers, public officials, and business, particularly in the field of consumer lifestyles in order to meet the needs of the present generations without compromising the ability of future ones to fulfill their own needs. The idea of sustainable citizenship incorporates themes from ecological modernization, which theorized certain aspects of the Brundtland report, questions both the "technological-fix approach" and production focus in environmental problem-solving (Spaargaren 2000, 324) and, therefore, argues that consumers should be accountable societal agents and play a key role in sustainable development (Mol et al. 2009; Spaargaren 2000). Sustainable citizenship focuses on all three pillars of sustainable development (economic growth, environmental protection and socio-political equity) and, therefore, encompasses not only the balancing of the economic and environmental concerns of sustainable development but also its "social, political, and cultural spheres" (Barry 2005, 24; cf. Bullen & Whitehead 2005, 504, 507; Lister 2007; Van Poeck et al 2009). In other words, it addresses matters concerning humans as well as animals or non-humans, regardless of whether an environmental impact is involved or not. It even shores up a weakness in some of the recent green citizenship theorizing by expanding the temporal view of citizenship to more than exclusively involving "[t]he obligations of the ecological citizen…towards generations yet to be born" (Dobson 2003, 106) by explicitly focusing on the responsibility of citizens to consider the ramification of historical instances of common pool plundering and legacies of oppression in their current practices (e.g. Huggan 2004, 702).

We believe that the notion of sustainable citizenship is an emerging model of general citizenship that should be developed more fully theoretically and investigated empirically. Like all citizenship models it includes normative claims. Its general claim is that good citizenship requires that people assume non-reciprocal responsibility for a series of spatial, temporal, and material relationships involved in sustainable development. The normative claim of non-reciprocity, which involves several different dimensions of understandings and practices, generally calls on citizens to give more weight to universal principles and the global commons than to their private desires. It can, for example, mean that they consider how the past, and particularly events and habits associated with oppression and environmental destruction, influence their views of other people and how they live their material lives (temporal dimension of citizenship), or that they consider carefully and wisely how their lives and consumer choices affect non-humans (animals, nature) (material dimension of citizenship). Finally, it maintains that good citizenship is not confined to relationships of responsibilities within one's own country or community.

This claim broadens, therefore, the spatial dimension of citizenship. Some of its proponents go so far as to maintain that sustainable citizenship must take place in "every waking minute of everyday" (Bullen & Whitehead 2005, 513) and argue that high level sustainable citizen practice can even challenge and change the underlying structural causes that have led to environmental and social justice problems in the first place (Barry 2005, 23-24). Sustainable citizenship is, in sum, viewed as functioning more outside formal political institutions than traditional and other more recent citizenship models. As such and particularly unlike the traditional citizenship models that have not viewed private consumption as part of political practice, it incorporates private choices, which can be seen as associated with more globalized good governance for the common good (O'Riordan 2002). An important aspect is its call on citizens to gauge for themselves how they should and realistically can change their values and habits (cf. Beck 1992, 1997; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2002). In this way it indicates the need for reflexivity and other-oriented thinking in individual citizen practice.

Studying political consumerism as sustainable citizenship

In order to study the degree to which sustainable citizenship has developed into a general political practice or political habit among citizens, it is necessary to investigate more extensively how individuals understand the temporal, spatial and material dimensions of citizenship. This chapter uses consumer practices, an important element of the theory, to investigate these dimensions more fully. Two reasons explain this choice of focus. First, private consumption has been found to seriously affect the balance between economic growth, global socio-political equity and common pool resources use. Private consumption is also an important part of the theories of ecological modernization and even reflexive modernization (Ostrom 1990; Spaargaren 1997; Stern et al. 1997; Beck 1992, 1997). Second, there is now more general agreement that private life has assumed more meaning for people in contemporary modern democracies (e.g., Soper & Trentmann 2007, see also references below), with shopping practices and "must-have goods" becoming "the main locus of a fulfilling view of the good life in modern society" (Barry 2005, 37). Research on political consumerism is a good point of departure for investigating these claims because it specifically theorizes on the importance of the market as an arena of politics and citizen practices.

Political consumerism is defined as the evaluation and choice of producers and products with the aim of changing ethically, environmentally or politically objectionable institutional or market practices. It is informed by attitudes and values regarding broad issues of sustainable development (Micheletti et al 2006, xiv-xv; Stolle & Micheletti forthcoming). Regardless of whether political consumers act individually or collectively or whether they act in the supermarket, on the street, in

schools, at the workplaces, at home, on the internet, through social media or within other social practices, their evaluation of the market reflects an understanding of producers and products as embedded in a complex social and normative context that can be called the "politics behind products" (Micheletti 2010). Not surprisingly then, political consumers have also been termed "citizen-consumers" (cf. Spaargaren 2000, 324). Four forms of political consumerism can be identified: 1) *boycotts* or the deliberate choice not to purchase a commodity or a brand; 2) *buycotts* or the deliberate choice to purchase a commodity by, for instance, following the simplified advice offered by labeling schemes and shopping guidelines, 3) *discursive actions* or the expression of opinions about corporate policy and practice and even consumer culture in a variety of communicative efforts and venues, and 4) *lifestyle choices* or an individual's decision to use her private life sphere to take responsibility for the allocation of common values and resources (see Stolle & Micheletti forthcoming, chapter 2 for more discussion). Although fairly new as a concept in social science, political consumerism is, in fact, an old phenomenon (for discussions see Friedman 1999; Glickman 2009; Cohen 2003; Micheletti 2007, 2010; Trentmann 2004). Important to remember is that political consumerism, unlike the high level practice of sustainable citizenship, does not necessarily promote democracy. It can be and has been used in struggles that persecute ethnic, religious or racial groups and for the advancement of nationalistic goals. The "Don't Buy Jewish" boycott that began in Europe at the end of the 19th century is the clearest example here (for others see Stolle & Micheletti forthcoming, chapter 8).

Empirical research and particularly survey research on political consumerism is rather recent in origin. The buycott question that can probe more fully regular or habitual political consumer practice is, for example, dated to 2000 when it was first used in a Danish survey; the boycott question was first asked in the Political Action Survey in 1974. The third and fourth forms, discursive and lifestyle political consumerism, are unfortunately not directly measured in survey research. Nevertheless, the available survey data offers a good starting point for understanding sustainable citizenship. This data shows that political consumerism is an increasingly important form of citizen practice in Western democracies (Inglehart 1997, 313; Norris 2002; Petersson et al. 1998, 55; Boström et al. 2005; Dalton 2008b; Strømsnes 2009) and that it is particularly visible in the Nordic countries (for analysis see Stolle & Micheletti chapter 3 forthcoming). The rise of political consumerism in advanced industrialized democracies leads to three important questions. How widespread is it among citizens, can it really be considered to be a *political* habit, and what kind of citizenship responsibility does it reflect? To help answer these questions, it is important to try to understand the reasons that citizens give for buycotting and boycotting; a common way of assessing this in survey research is to compare political consumers (that is, those individuals who have buycotted and boycotted) with people who do not engage in it (that is, non-political consumers). What are their concerns, goals and issues? Do they engage in

political consumerism because of their political convictions or what other concerns motivate them into these practices?

This chapter also distinguishes between younger and middle-aged/older citizens in order to compare their citizen practices and how they understand the responsibilities of citizenship and particularly for the political, environmental and ethical aspects of consumption. This study is a step towards addressing the concern discussed above that younger generations of citizens are more self-centered, shopping-oriented and showing declining interest in safeguarding society and providing for our common future. An age group comparison reveals whether younger generations of citizens might possibly differ in citizenship understanding and citizen practice from their older counter-parts. As young people began their lives in periods of high environmental risks and even in contexts that encourage them to fulfill their ambitions and create their identities by devoting more time, energy, and resources to their private life than to public commitments (cf. Bauman 2007; Kymlicka & Norman 1994; Torney-Purta et al. 2002), we might expect differences compared to the older groups who have been confronted with less concern about environmental hazards during their lifetime and more concern about serving their country.

Two general trends have identified young people as a group generally least engaged in societal issues and citizenship. On the one hand, the incentives and opportunities for citizen practices generally increase as individuals grow older, enter the labor market, make more money, acquire houses, have children, become more involved with welfare service provision, and more concerned about ordinary household consumption. These concerns tend to decline as individuals go into retirement and more frequently experience problems of health or mobility (Verba et al. 1995). Thus given these "life cycle" effects, we would expect younger age groups to be less engaged and participatory and least interested in living up to the spirit of traditional and even sustainable citizenship. Furthermore, even compared to their parents or grandparents when they were at their age, young generations of Americans in any case have been found to engage less in citizenship practices (Putnam 2000: 247-276). Well-known political scientist Robert Putman characterizes the younger generation as more consumption-oriented and as a group that "emphasizes the personal and private over the public and collective" (Putnam 2000, 259; see also Macedo et al 2005). Moreover, this development could be habit-forming just as other practices have been found to be so in the past (e.g., first-time voting or youth membership in associations, see Plutzer 2002; Hooghe et al 2003). This development might even affect how younger generations' view the role of politics in society, what they identify as political or private problems and how they understand their responsibility as citizens. The general fear is that a retreat to private life on the part of younger generations is strengthened by their turn to consumption for social identity creation (cf. Shove 2003, see references above).

Although recent research shows that the very youngest generation, socialized in the period after the September 11, 2001 attacks, has slightly reversed this trend of citizen disengagement and disinterest (Sanders and Putnam 2011), much of the previous analyses suggest that we should not count on the young to come forth with societal awareness, public-oriented responsibility and sustainable citizenship understanding. Thus some research suggests that the age group comparison into the beliefs and practice concerning sustainable citizenship will further confirm a rather bleak picture of the role of young people in providing for our common future.

However, this scholarly concern about the degeneration of citizenship is challenged by anecdotal accounts and emerging research on how citizens in general and young citizens in particular engage in creative and market-based practices that are more in line with the understanding of sustainable citizenship; some examples are offered in the introduction to this chapter. Studies also show that young people tend to see a greater confluence between politics and patterns in everyday life than older people, thus offering some evidence for the inklings of sustainable citizen practices. For instance, young people find lifestyle politics to be an interesting option for more individualized and reflexive engagements in politics and citizen practice (Sörbom 2002, 54-8; Sandovici & Davis 2010; Keeter et al. 2002; Ward 2008; Bennett 1998). A good illustration here is the higher level of non-meat-eating (a practice scholars and activists sometimes associate with responsibility for climate change and good animal treatment) among younger people in the U.S. with 12 percent of women and 9 percent of men between 18 and 34 years of age never eating meat; among teenagers 7 percent of 13 to 18-year olds abstain from meat entirely (Vegetarian Journal 2009, 2005). While more research about the motivations and citizenship beliefs of vegetarians is necessary, these results suggest that some groups of the young generations do engage with societal and political issues, just perhaps in different and previously unmeasured ways.

What needs to be established is whether lifestyle and other political consumer practices can be viewed as multi-dimensional citizenship (that is, on the broadened spatial and temporal as well as material dimensions outlined above) and, thus, whether they involve a more complex package of relationships, commitments, identities, involvements, and responsibilities to oneself, one's groups and networks and the world (Delanty 2000; O´Toole 2004; O'Toole & Gale 2010). The study of political consumerism opens up, therefore, an entirely new research agenda for assessing how people both young and old can and perhaps do develop newer understandings of citizenship, find ways of practicing them and cultivate them as political habits.

A first step in this empirical analysis then is to understand who practices political consumerism and to explore if and how political consumer practices

go hand-in-hand with changing understandings of citizenship. In particular, it is interesting to explore these matters across different age groups and by singling out the younger generation of 18 to 29 year olds for further analysis because it has been socialized under different conditions of environmental awareness and within a more consumer-oriented society. While expected differences might result from various sources, e.g. life cycle or socialized generational effects, it still suggests how younger and older generations are differently implicated in the rise of more reflexive and sustainable citizenship.

## Who practices political consumerism*?*

Figure 1 presents results for various citizenship acts from the European Social Survey 2002, the most recent comparative survey that measures two forms of political consumerism (boycotts and buycotts) in terms of whether the respondent has chosen or abstained from a purchase of a product for political, environmental or ethical reasons. Although the forces of life-cycle and generation effects should be expected to depress the citizenship engagement of young people vis-a-vis their older counterparts, the figure indicates that younger individuals (aged 18-29) outperform their parents and grandparents (those between 30 and 78 years of age) on four citizenship acts, wearing a campaign badge / sticker, signing petitions, participation in lawful protests, and in illegal protest actions. However, the overall frequencies of youth engagement in citizen practices are rather low. All other political acts are performed more by the older group, thus supporting the view of the spirit of citizenship within the long civic generation (Putnam 2000). The gap is particularly large and statistically significant in several countries for electoral forms of political participation (electoral voting, work in civic group and political party membership, etc.) that represent generally less reflective and more state-centered practices of citizenship. In this 22 country cross-national sample, the older citizens are even more engaged in two measured forms of political consumerism, boycotting and buycotting. Still, on overall practice, for the younger generation, these two political consumerist activities that typically focus on the ordinary everyday consumption rank third and fourth after voting and signing petitions.

Figure 2 analyzes the same data of 18-29 year olds in a different way in order to identify if country context plays a role in levels of citizenship practice. It shows that boycotting and buycotting political consumerism has apparently become nearly a routine engagement for the young generation in certain Nordic countries, despite the fact that older generations are generally more involved. That as many as 65 percent of all young people in some of these countries buycott suggests that this form of political consumerism may, like voting, perhaps be developing into a political habit and, therefore, a more regular and stable practice of citizenship. The situation is, however, different in Southern and Eastern Europe. Explanations for

these differences can be found in the political history and political culture of the countries as well as the official and civic distribution of information to citizens on labeled goods and their availability in stores and mainstream supermarkets (Stolle & Micheletti forthcoming, chapter 4).

In sum, the cross-national survey analyses so far confirm that citizens engage in politics using the electoral channels as well as more non-institutionalized forms like signing petitions and the even less state-centered practices of political consumerism. Indeed, the two measured forms of political consumerism are fairly widespread across European societies, though with some exceptions. Confirming the expectations of life-cycle and generational arguments, young people differ in that they engage in fewer conventional forms of participation (voting or contacting a politician), but they are more active in selected acts, particularly those involving protest. More reflexive do-it-yourself practices of lifestyle politics or discursive forms of political consumerism were not measured, and there is little indication that young people in general lead in the practice of political consumerism involving purchases of generally more ordinary consumption goods. However, this comparative survey data does not offer much help in exploring other practices and beliefs of sustainable citizenship.

Figure 1. Comparing the citizenship practice among younger and older age groups
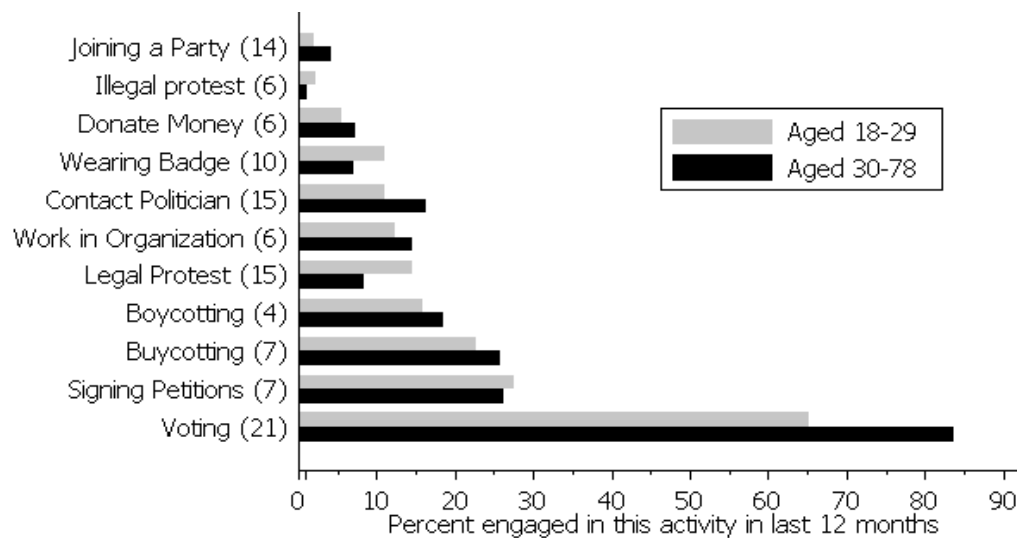
The figure shows percentages of political actions per age group comparing youth (aged 18-29) with adults (aged 30-78) in 21 European countries and Israel. See countries listed in figure 2. Data source is the European Social Survey 2002/2003 showing aggregated weighted statistics for the pooled data. Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of countries in which the differences between the two age groups were statistically significant at the .05, .01 or.001 levels (out of 22 countries).

Figure 2. Political consumerism among the young in Europe, in percent
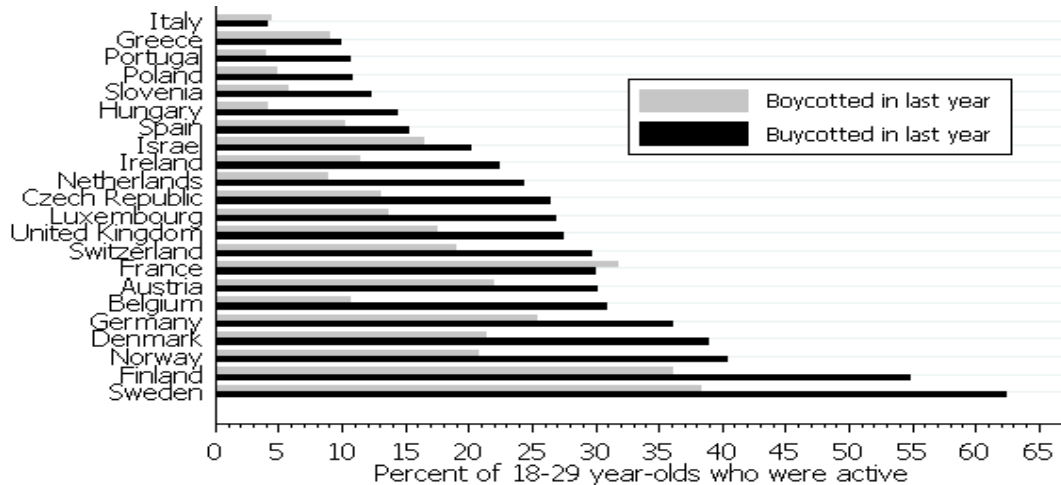
The figure shows percentages of political consumerism (buycotting and boycotting) only for 18-29 year olds in 21 European countries and Israel. Data source is the European Social Survey showing aggregated weighted statistics for the pooled data.

Political consumerism in Sweden

Figure 2 shows that political consumerism is particularly prevalent in the Nordic countries and Sweden stands out as a leader. Sweden is thus a good case for trying to better understand the generational dynamics of political consumerism and sustainable citizenship. In order to move beyond cross-sectional analyses, we begin by using available data to map Swedish political consumerism over time. Figure 3 allows for a generational study of the practice of political consumerism between the years 1997 and 2009 for two age groups. It shows clearly that political consumerism has increased as a citizenship practice among people of both age categories (18-29 and 30-78). Buycotting has risen considerably between 2003, when it was first measured in a national Swedish survey, and 2009. Contrary to the cross-national findings earlier and even the expectation from life cycle and generational effect research discussed briefly above, younger generations of Swedes both boycott and buycott more than the older generations, with the exception of 2003. The marked (and significant) rise in buycotting among the young is most likely explained by the increased availability of labeled goods that appeal to younger people (e.g., fair trade and eco-labeled coffee and bananas, eco-or organic labeled affordable clothing) as well as the efforts of civic groups and the labeling schemes themselves in informing and convincing younger people that they should take more responsibility for their consumer choices because this citizenship practice is part of their common future. But the fact that young Swedes are more engaged as political consumers than many of their European counterparts needs further explanation.

Figure 3. Comparing Swedish political consumers 1987 to 2009, in percent
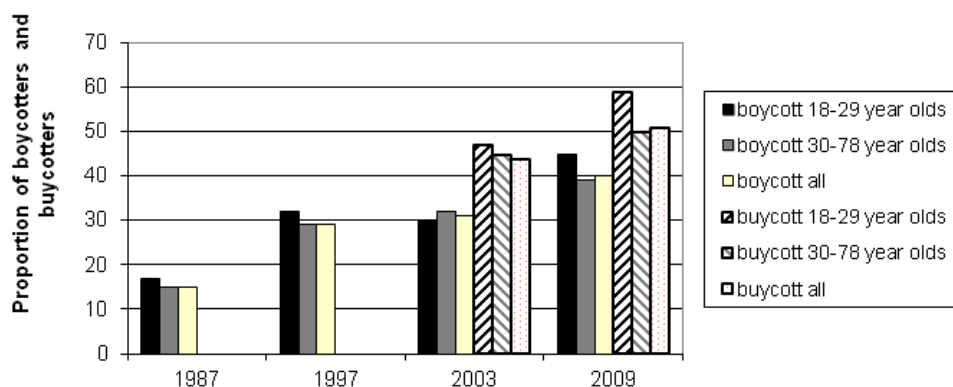
The figure shows the percentages of citizens who responded that they have boycotted or buycotted goods within a 12 month period in order to bring about improvements or prevent deterioration in society. The data sources are Swedish representative national surveys. The 1987 citizen survey (N=2062) was conducted by the Swedish Study of Power and Democracy in Sweden (see Petersson et al. 1989), the 1997 citizen survey (N=1456) by the SNS Democratic Audit (see Petersson et al. 1998), the 2003 survey (N=1688) by the research project Political Consumption: Politics in a New Era and Arena (see Micheletti & Stolle 2004), and the 2009 survey (N=1029) by the research project Sustainable Citizenship: Opportunities and Barriers for Citizen Involvement in Sustainable Development. The 1987 and 1997 surveys only included a question on boycotts. The buycott measure was first introduced in Swedish survey research in the 2003 survey.

Table 1. Comparing younger and older age groups of Swedish political consumers, 2009, in percent

| | Age Categories | | | | | |
| | 18-29 | | 30-78 | | All | |
	% PC	N	% PC	N	%PC	N
Women	68	93	61	451	62	544
Men	54	59	49	421	49	480
Low income	68	44	42	111	50	155
Medium low income	58	33	51	255	52	288
Medium high income	57	37	54	256	55	293
High income	59	27	65	217	65	244
Low education (no college/university)	51	93	47	531	47	624
High education (college/university studies or diploma)	81	59	69	329	71	388
Rural area or smaller town	51	37	49	342	49	379
Town or urban area	62	60	56	257	57	317
Large city	72	53	61	256	63	309
Sympathizer of party in red green bloc	68	76	58	314	60	390
Sympathizer of party in non-socialist bloc	63	35	55	391	56	426
Low political interest	56	88	46	353	48	441
High political interest	73	63	62	509	63	572
Low interest in foreign affairs	51	65	44	383	45	448
High interest in foreign affairs	72	86	64	480	65	556
All	63	152	55	872	56	1024

The table reports the percentage of political consumers within each category and age group. For example, 68% of young women are political consumers, and by logic, 32% are non-political consumers. Political consumers are those who report that they have either boycotted or buycotted a product or done both, at least once within the last twelve months. Low income <200 000 kronor/ year; medium income 201 000-600 000 kronor/year; high income > 600 000 kronor/year. High education refers to those who study or have studied at the college or university level. Low education refers to those who have not. The red green bloc consists of the Left party, Social Democrats and the Greens. The non-socialist bloc consists of the Centre party, the Liberal party, the New Moderates and the Christian Democrats. Interest in politics and foreign affairs are measured with a 0-10 scale. Those who placed themselves on 7 to 10 on these scales are categorized as having high interest, and 0-6 low interest.

Table 1 offers general information on the basic characteristics of Swedish political consumers, based on the representative national survey Consumption and Societal Issues from 2009 (N=1053). In the discussion, the results of a multivariate analysis of all socio-demographic factors are also included (multivariate analysis shown in appendix 1). First and most importantly, more women than men are political consumers, a result also found in other surveys (Ferrer-Fons 2004; Petersson et al. 1989, 1998; Stolle & Hooghe 2006; Stolle & Micheletti forthcoming). Gender scholars have long argued that women tend to seek citizenship involvement in a more decentralized and non-hierarchical way and in settings related more directly to their everyday lives (Ackelsberg 2003; Lowndes 2000). Political consumerism can be seen as an example of this. While there is a gender difference in table 1, in a multivariate analysis, gender becomes a non-distinguishing factor for the young age group (see appendix 1), thus offering insights about the more general hold of sustainable citizenship in Sweden in this generation. Of course, the question still is whether the de-emphasis of gender remains when this generation grows older. Second, confirming the findings in figure 3, even controlled for other factors, younger Swedes are more involved in political consumerism than older citizens, that is, 63 % of the young are political consumers compared to 55 % among the older group (this difference is statistically significant at the 90 % level). Again this is an interesting finding given the discussion above on life cycle issues and generational effects. In Sweden it appears that younger people are not so much behind, indeed they are in some ways forerunners in using more emerging voluntary "beyond compliance" forms of citizenship practices. Third, highly educated citizens are more likely than those with lower education to engage in political consumerism (difference statistically significant at the 95 % level), a result also found in previous surveys conducted in the Scandinavian countries (see Boström et al. 2005) and generally in citizen engagements in politics (e.g., Petersson m fl 1998, 1989; Verba et al. 1995). Since reflection about the role of consumption in sustainable development has tended to require information-seeking and gathering, this result is not surprising. Indeed, it underscores the more challenging character of the emerging less state-centered and less duty-bound demands on citizenship (see also Stolle & Hooghe 2011). This educational effect is particularly strong for the young, where low and high levels of education accounts for a difference of 30 percentage points in political consumerism. Fourth, given the general tendency for labeled products to be more costly than non-labeled ones, it is not surprising either that household income is important (the difference between citizens with high and low incomes reported in table 1 is significant at the 95% level, and the effect of income in the multivariate analysis in appendix 1 is significant at the 90% level). Fifth, for both age groups, political consumerism is most prevalent in large cities. Sixth, Swedish political consumers lean slightly more to the left, which most likely reflects the kinds of issues of concern for political consumers and even the way the survey questions are formulated. Nevertheless, this result is in accordance with comparative research on political consumerism (Stolle & Micheletti forthcoming),

but it does not hold in a multivariate analysis when other factors are also included. Seventh, contrary to what is often said about political consumerism in the public and academic debate, political consumers—no matter in which age category— show considerable general interest in politics and particularly in foreign affairs, thus offering some partial evidence on the broader spatial dimension embraced by the notion of sustainable citizenship. A comparison between those with low and high levels of interest in politics and in foreign affairs results in about a 15 to 20 percent difference in political consumer engagement. This finding in itself suggests that those citizens who seek information about circumstances beyond their national boundaries assume a more expanded understanding of citizenship responsibilities as well.

Towards a broader, more reflexive understanding of citizenship

The discussion early in the chapter and the survey findings reported above suggest that political consumers tend to show a reflexive character (that is, recognize how outside forces, including consumer culture and political advocacy, affect them and how they can employ it or break with it to achieve a newer vision of good citizenship) and are knowledgeable about and active in politics (Beck 1997, Giddens 1987). Yet unlike individuals who solely engage in electoral forms of citizen practice which tap older models of less reflexive and more state-centered citizenship, they consciously choose an arena for politics that empowers them to fuse their pocketbook and private life more with citizenship. Political consumers seem, therefore, to understand the responsibilities of citizenship differently than other citizens. If so, why do they do this? This section explores two theoretical answers. The first one uses theories of risk society/subpolitics/reflexivity and postmaterialism to help understand this form of citizenship practice. These theories suggest a concern about the capacity of the government to deal with the complex globalized problems involved in sustainable development. The second answer brings beliefs and values pertaining to the notion of sustainable citizenship into the analysis and, therefore, also addresses the idea that younger generations tend to emphasize personal and private matters over public and collective concerns.

First, worries about the capacity of government are an important gauge of more reflexive models of citizenship, including sustainable citizenship. If citizens fear that government either does not understand or cannot control new uncertainties and risks that characterize modern society, they may search for new ideas, arenas and methods to take more active responsibility for the solving of these important political problems (Beck 1997; Inglehart 1997). If this theoretical reasoning is correct, we should find that political consumers are more worried about or distrusting of conventional institutions than other citizens. However, contrary

to these expectations, high trust in national representative political institutions seems to spur political consumerism among those aged 30 and above (at least in Sweden), but not for the young age group. On the other hand, higher levels of trust in sustainability institutions are positively associated with engagement in political consumerism, particularly (but not only) for the young citizens. Finally as shown in other research (Berlin 2011), dissatisfaction with governmental performance on issues of the environment, human rights and war on poverty mobilize people to practice political consumerism.

Table 2. Different age groups of Swedish political consumers and institutional trust

	18-29 years old			30+ years old		
	% PC	% not PC	N	% PC	% not PC	N
Low political trust	64	36	99	52	48	451
High political trust	63	37	49	59	41	405
Low trust in sustainability institutions	56	44	96	49	51	519
High trust in sustainability institutions	78	22	49	66	34	327

The table reports the percentage of political consumers (PC) and non-political consumers (not PC) within each trust category per age group. Political consumers are those who report that they have either boycotted or buycotted products or done both at least once within the last twelve months. The trust measures are additive indexes. Political trust refers to trust in the national parliament and the national government. Trust in sustainability institutions refers to trust in public authorities responsible for environmental issues, the items are The Swedish Consumer Agency, environmental and consumer organizations. The survey question was: "How much trust do you have in the way in which the following institutions and groups manage their work?" The indices were rescaled into a 0-1 range. Respondents scoring over 0.6 are considered to have high trust.

Second, scholars agree that good citizenship involves a series of beliefs about shared sets of expectations or understanding of the role of the individuals in society and that voting, obeying laws, and putting the collective interest before one's own are examples of what is meant by good citizenship (Dalton 2008a, 78; van Deth 2010). Some researchers, including the authors of this chapter, argue that societal changes, threats from complex problems and multifaceted global developments are leading to a necessary reconfiguration of citizenship. The claim is that this reconfiguration must involve more than the traditional spatial and temporal dimensions, including those regarding the relationship between the political individual (the citizen) and government, by including decision-making in private life, on biodiversity, for the situation of people in other countries and even for future generations (Dobson 2003; Bullen & Whitehead 2005; see also Dalton 2008b), in other words the elements of sustainable citizenship discussed above. What is good citizenship according to Swedish political consumers and non-political consumers? Do the young and older age groups identify the characteristics of good citizenship differently? Of particular interest for this chapter is whether young political consumers represent a different "breed" of citizens and have a different understanding about how citizenship should be practiced.

Table 3. Citizenship expectations across different age groups of Swedish political consumers, 2009, in means

Age Categories		Solidarity expectation	Duty expectation	Information Seeking expectation
			Citizenship Expectations	
18-29	Non-political consumer	6,3 (54)	7,8 (57)	6,6 (55)
	Political consumer	7,8 (95)	8,3 (94)	6,8 (93)
All 18-29		7,3 (149)	8,1 (151)	6,7 (148)
30-78	Non-political consumer	6,6 (375)	8,6 (275)	6,7 (361)
	Political consumer	7,6 (475)	8,7 (477)	7,3 (464)
All 30-78		7,2 (846)	8,7 (860)	7,1 (832)
All		7,2 (989)	8,6 (1003)	7,0 (973)

The table reports averages for three types of citizenship expectations measured on a scale from 0-10 by political consumer status and age group. The survey question on citizenship expectations asked "There are different views on what it takes to be a good citizen. In your personal opinion, how important is it to" and included 14 questions that can be rated from "not important at all" (0) to "very important" (10). These items were computed into three additive indexes, which were rescaled to a 0-10 range. The solidarity expectation includes 4 questions: "Show solidarity with people in Sweden who are worse off than yourself; show solidarity with people in the rest of the world who are worse off than yourself; put others' interests before your own, and do not treat immigrants worse than native Swedes." The duty expectation includes 3 questions: "Never try to evade paying tax; always obey laws and regulation and never commit benefit fraud." The information seeking expectation includes 5 questions: "Develop your own opinions independently from other people's; stay well-informed about what is happening in society; be prepared to break the law when your conscience requires it; don't expect the state to solve problems; instead, act on your own initiative, and try to actively influence societal issues."

For this part of the analysis we compare citizenship beliefs across political consumers and non-political consumers as well as age groups. As can be seen in table 3, political consumers have in general higher level citizenship beliefs on all dimensions. That is, they believe that good citizenship entails state-centered "command and control" following the laws of the land and codes of conduct of the welfare state (so-called duty expectation or beliefs), showing consideration and concern for others (so-called solidarity expectation), and being prepared to take more active responsibility for seeking out facts and explanations for societal developments (so-called information seeking expectation) (See note in table 3 for more information on the measurements of these three citizenship beliefs). The solidarity expectation shows the strongest difference, indicating that political consumers can be distinguished most clearly by this type of citizenship belief that brings in some concerns about non-reciprocal spatial and temporal dimensions involved in sustainable citizenship. This is particularly true for young people, where political consumers (18-29 years of age) rank solidarity as part of good citizenship much higher than younger non-political consumers (7.8 v. 6.3)[2] but still not as a high as the more "old-school" duty-based citizenship. This result holds even when

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2   These are means from a 10 point scale with 0 being the lowest and 10 the highest assessment.

other variables are controlled. What stands out clearly is that the older generations in general put much more emphasis than their younger counterparts on duty-based citizenship (8.7 v. 8:1) and somewhat more emphasis on information-seeking (7.1 v. 6.7) as a part of good citizenship. Data not shown indicate that it is particularly citizens over 60 who are more duty-based than others, a finding which illustrates characteristics of the "long civic generation" and its appreciation of membership organizations and other forms of hierarchical and state-centered leadership (see Dalton 2008b). However, when other variables such as education and political interest are included, older political consumers appear to be less dedicated to duty-based citizenship than non-political consumers (results not shown). That is, for their (high) level of education and interest, they score lower than would be expected compared with non-political consumers on belief in duty-based citizenship. Thus, the findings that political consumers in general and young political consumers in particular display higher levels of expectation in solidarity citizenship than those who are non-engaged in political consumerism refute the thesis that the younger generations have developed a habit of "disengaged-citizenship." It refutes the assertion that this age group can be characterized exclusively as self-centered, consumption-oriented and only interested in "branding" a personal identity, providing themselves with creature comforts and ensuring their own well-being. These findings also underscore that a group of younger people, that is those who are political consumers, are seeking ways of developing practices of citizenship that better conform to their less state-centered and more private life-oriented world view.

Conclusion

This chapter theorizes the notion of sustainable citizenship, develops it further for empirical research and employs available survey data on citizen practices and particularly political consumerism to investigate whether or not it is taking hold as a habit in Western societies. Among other results, it finds high levels of particularly buycotting across both younger and older age groups. This result most likely reflects the growing presence and importance of labeling schemes for making more sustainable consumer choices. Not only do these schemes simplify at least partially the complex message of the importance of sustainable consumption and production for present and future generations, they also in varying degrees attempt to mitigate the complex human rights and environmental problems involved in the historic relationship between the South and the North. Where these labels are found on an increasing numbers of ordinary consumption commodities now available in most large supermarkets, we also find high levels of buycott political consumerism (see Stolle and Micheletti forthcoming, chapter 4). This presence of labeled goods in stores lowers the threshold for this particular example of sustainable citizenship practice.

Interestingly, as trademarked logotypes developed for marketing identification purposes, fairtrade, organic and eco-labeling schemes also reflect and reinforce the centrality of brand-orientation in contemporary consumer culture. Such branded goods make it easier for individuals to make quick sustainable choices that give more consideration to the material, temporal and spatial dimensions of sustainable citizenship. It would seem, then, that their regular and increased presence in stores, coffee shops, and cafés encourages individuals to make buycotting political consumerism a political habit that can begin as soon as one starts to reflect on the role of consumption and multitude of consumer choices even at a relatively young age. This study suggests so, in that in Sweden a higher percentage of younger people state that they purchase goods for political, ethical and environmental reasons, and there are indications that these ordinary shopping choices are to a large extent based on considerations involving processes of sustainable development.

Other interesting results from the comparative Swedish study of younger and older age groups concern citizenship beliefs (or the expectations, ideals, values and understanding of good citizenship). Scholars define these beliefs as "a shared set of expectations about the citizen's role in politics" that can shape their view on "what is expected of them, and what they expect of themselves." These expectations have been found to promote a healthy and well-working political community (Dalton 2008a, 78). Given this, it is of interest that political consumers stand out generally as higher on all three identified expectations and particularly in terms of the solidarity expectation, which is the most non-reciprocal and less state-centered of the ones included in the study. While the duty expectation still prevails overall, the solidarity expectation clearly spurs political consumerism. Whether or not these initial indications foreshadow the emergence of sustainable citizenship as a prominent understanding of the spirit of citizenship and the role of citizens within it is too early to tell. However, a more general interpretation of the analyses in the chapter suggests that political consumers have latched on to the latent political agency embedded in the ordinary consumption choices that can be made in the marketplace and associate their power of choice with available institutional mechanisms, including labeling schemes, which attempt to offer solutions to the complex globalized problems challenging the goal of worldwide sustainable development. Therefore, political consumers adjust in different degrees and fashions their consumption practices to meet their own needs while attempting to safeguard nature, animals, and fellow human beings. The crucial question is still whether the consumer turn toward sustainable consumption within political consumerism and related habits have the capacity to safeguard the ability of future generations to fulfill their own needs.

**Appendix 1. Multivariate analysis of political consumerism in Sweden.
Binary logistic regressions, odds ratios**

	18-29 years	30-	All
Gender (woman=1)	1.2 (ns)	2.1***	2.0***
Education (higher education=1)	1.4 *	1.2***	1.2***
Income	1.1 (ns)	1.1 (ns)	1.1*
Place of residence (large city=1)	0.5 (ns)	1.0 (ns)	1.0 (ns)
Political interest	1.4 (ns)	1.1	1.1
Foreign affairs interest	1.0 (ns)	1.1**	1.1**
Party sympathy (non-socialist bloc=1)	0.7 (ns)	0.9 (ns)	0.8 (ns)
Trust in political institutions	1.1 (ns)	1.0 (ns)	0.9 (ns)
Trust for institutions working with sustainable development	38.0 (ns)	8.0***	8.7***
Solidarity expectation	1.7**	1.2***	1.2***
Duty expectation	1.1 (ns)	0.9*	0.9*
Information seeking expectation	0.7 *	1.1 (ns)	1.0 (ns)
Constant	.001***	.012***	.013***
Nagelkerke R2	.37	.23	.23
Model Chi2	28.6*** (df 12)	116.0 *** (df 12)	136.0*** (df 12)
N	92	620	712

Source: Survey conducted in 2009 for the project "Sustainable Citizenship: Opportunities and Barriers for Citizen Involvement in Sustainable Development."

*p<.1; ** p<.05; *** p<.01

The table shows the results from a binary logistic regression. Cell entries are odds ratios for each of the included variables and model performance statistics for each model.

For measurements of political consumers and political trust see Table 2 and for measurements of citizenship expectations see Table 3.

For measurements of political consumers and political trust see Table 2 and for measurements of citizenship expectations see Table 3. For measures of party sympathy and political interest see Table 1.

Income level is measured by an 8 point scale with 100 000 SEK intervals from under 100 000 SEK to over 700 000 SEK per year.

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