

“it is not about giving them a fish...

it is not even about teaching them to fish...

it is about recognising their ownership of the river”

(Codina, V. 1985)

empowerment

rights

human potential

responsibility

culpability

obligations

remembering who owns the river

Gerard Hastings

Aalborg

25th August 2017

Structure

The system is flawed

We are the system

It need not be so

Human rights

But the system is still flawed...

The system is flawed

OXFAM BRIEFING PAPER

JANUARY 2017



Members of the Shining Mothers group, a community-based women's group helping to teach business skills and raise awareness of their rights. The Shining Mothers discuss issues which affect them in their community and raise these at public meetings to ensure their voice is being heard by local government. Kawangware, Nairobi, Kenya. 2016. Photo: Allan Gichigi/Oxfam

AN ECONOMY FOR THE 99%

“New estimates show that just eight men own the same wealth as the poorest half of the world”

We know that social inequalities in health ... are caused by the unequal distribution of power, money and resources in the society

(Trondheim 2014)

The “gig economy”

- Zero hours contracts
- No security
- No holiday pay
- Minimum wage

12

The Guardian | Wednesday 16 November 2016

Special report

Fifth of Britons may lose jobs on whim as ‘precarious’ work soars



Robert Booth reports on the phenomenon that has

ern employment practices gears up. Amid growing concern about the social impact of a workforce increasingly divided between low-paid, low-skilled and insecure work and higher-paid, higher-skilled employment, the Guardian is publishing a series of articles on the consequences of the change for the kind of workers described by Theresa May as “just managing”.

The government is concerned that

self-employed drivers should be treated as workers and paid the national minimum wage, enjoy paid holidays and get sick pay.

Anxiety about low pay is running so high that more than 10,000 people called the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) minimum wage helpline in the five months to September concerned they were not receiving the statutory minimum – a

22 developed nations in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

“The rise in self-employment has been hailed as part of the economy’s success story in the recovery, but for thousands of people it can mask some worrying trends – namely being forced into precarious, low-paid work,” said Ashwin Kumar, chief economist at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. He

Mirror INVESTIGATES FOOD BANK BRITAIN

**SCANDAL OF
1/4 MILLION
SURVIVING
ON FOOD
HANDOUTS**

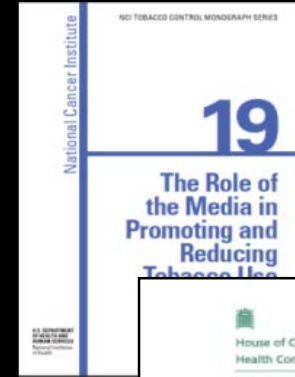
Even people in work are on breadline



Food banks in the fifth biggest world economy?



The harms of marketing are well-proven



industrial epidemics

“Efforts to prevent non-communicable diseases go against the business interests of powerful economic operators... it is not just Big Tobacco anymore. Public health must also contend with Big Food, Big Soda, and Big Alcohol. All of these industries fear regulation, and protect themselves by using the same tactics” (Chan 2013)

The need for regulation and containment of the *‘commercial driving forces’*

“of the 1,400 new drugs developed between 1975 and 1999, only 13 were designed to treat or prevent tropical diseases”

(Bakan 2004,p.49)

collective harm



mental harm

individual physical harm

community harm



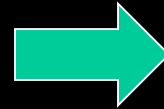
Political harm

“The world’s 10 biggest corporations together have revenue greater than that of the government revenue of 180 countries combined”

(Oxfam 2017)

Climate change

increasing growth



increasing consumption



We are heading for catastrophe

We need change

*'the people who created the crisis
will not be the ones that come up
with a solution'* (Roy)

The system is surely flawed



But...

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We are the system

- Ours is a consumer society, built around our needs
- Marketing is defined as *'making what you can sell, not selling what you can make'*
- Endless market research is done to ensure our every want is catered for
- The customer is king:
 - Consumer orientation
 - Consumer satisfaction
 - Excellent customer service
- We are pampered and indulged at every turn

We are the system

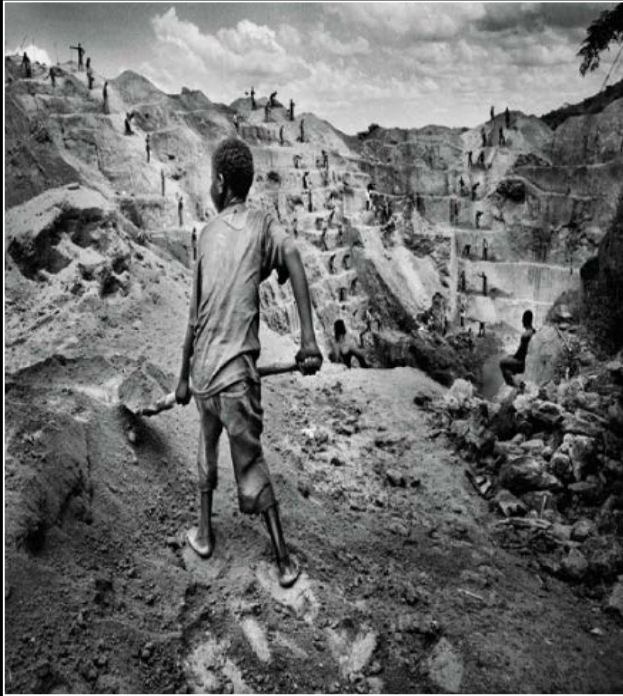
- And we collaborate with devout enthusiasm:
 - Bottled water → fast fashion → excess of stuff
- Loyalty cards:
 - Tesco's Club card: 16 million members;
 - its rival Sainsbury has over 19 million (Express 2016)
- *'shoppers in the UK are second only to those in Finland in the likelihood of having at least one loyalty card'* (Nielsen)
- The dictionary definition of loyalty is *"a feeling of devotion, duty, or attachment to somebody"*

We are the system



Coltan is a mineral found in the Democratic Republic of Congo in West Africa. It is an essential component of all mobile phones

Child labour in the Democratic Republic of Congo



Decu is 8; everyday he and his twin brother walk to work at Ruashi mines

It takes 2 hours

They use their bare hands separate the soil from mineral deposits

A day's pay buys a few pastries

The profits go to the mine owners and the phone companies

The state of the art products and services go to us.



“THIS IS WHAT WE DIE FOR”

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO POWER THE GLOBAL TRADE IN COBALT



Exposed: Child labour behind smart phone & electric car batteries

“The glamorous shop displays and marketing of state of the art technologies are a stark contrast to the children carrying bags of rocks, and miners in narrow manmade tunnels risking

but so should we; it is our choice to buy *”*

Yes this marketing should be regulated and contained, and companies must be held fully responsible...

We are the system

The Anthropocene: *“based on overwhelming global evidence that atmospheric, geologic, hydrologic, biospheric and other earth system processes are now altered by humans”*

(<http://anthropocene.info/>)

“20% of the world’s population consumes resources at a rate that robs the poor nations & future generations of what they need to survive” (Laudato si 2015)



The problems being caused by consumer capitalism depend on willing consumers

Marketing is *“the keeper of a dangerous but highly profitable secret – it knows how to promote a sense of universal neediness, to set up a wanting without end, a cult and culture of desire which must not be thwarted”* (Seabrook, 2015)

He goes on to point out, however, this is a fragile power: all that is needed for it to fail is *“that people should declare themselves content with what they have”* (op cit)

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BOX 8.3: CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking is the search for objective truth; it questions the assumptions underpinning what we think to be true, to uncover what we can objectively state to be true.

Defining qualities: analysis, questioning assumptions, search for objective truth.

“We are the only species capable of reflecting on our impact. We have moral agency. We can foresee the likely consequences of our actions, consider them, and then make choices”

(Guardian 2016)

This takes us into deep water: *“When we ask ourselves what kind of world we want to leave behind, we think in the first place of its general direction, its meaning and its values..... if those issues are courageously faced, we are led inexorably to ask other pointed questions. What is the purpose of our life in this world? Why are we here? What is the goal of our work and all our efforts? What need does the earth have of us?”*

Laudato Si, (2015)

If our behaviour is not simply a function of external stimuli, let alone well-meaning interventions, but also a product of our internal qualities, we have to understand more about what these are, about what it is to be human.



This is
what
makes us
human

“we are slaves, deprived of every right, exposed to every insult, condemned to certain death...” “...but we still possess one power, and we must defend it with all our strength for it is the last - the power to refuse our consent”

(Levi P 1979)

“Look inward, to your origins. For brutish ignorance your mettle was not made; you were made human To follow after wisdom and virtue”

(Dante)

Exercising moral agency also brings us together

If my father dies of pneumoconiosis I begin to empathise with the fate of other coalminers, or if a car knocks me off my bike the benefits of cycle paths for all become more apparent.

‘I rebel therefore we are’

Albert Camus (2005)

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Camus and Levi were writing in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War; when there had been a profound failure of moral agency, and there was a desperate hunger to prevent any repetition of the holocaust and its horrors.

The idea that all human beings have the same fundamental qualities, share an *“inherent dignity”*, and are equal *“members of the human family”* had powerful resonance.

The view developed that the protection and nurturing of these qualities, and recognition of them as inalienable moral and legal rights was the only progressive way forward.

UN → The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Human rights

Important protections

“inherent dignity” “equal members of the human family”

Human Potential

“human rights are less about the way people are than about what they might become” (Donnelly 1985)

The principle of participation; without this, human rights can become moribund and human potential diminished

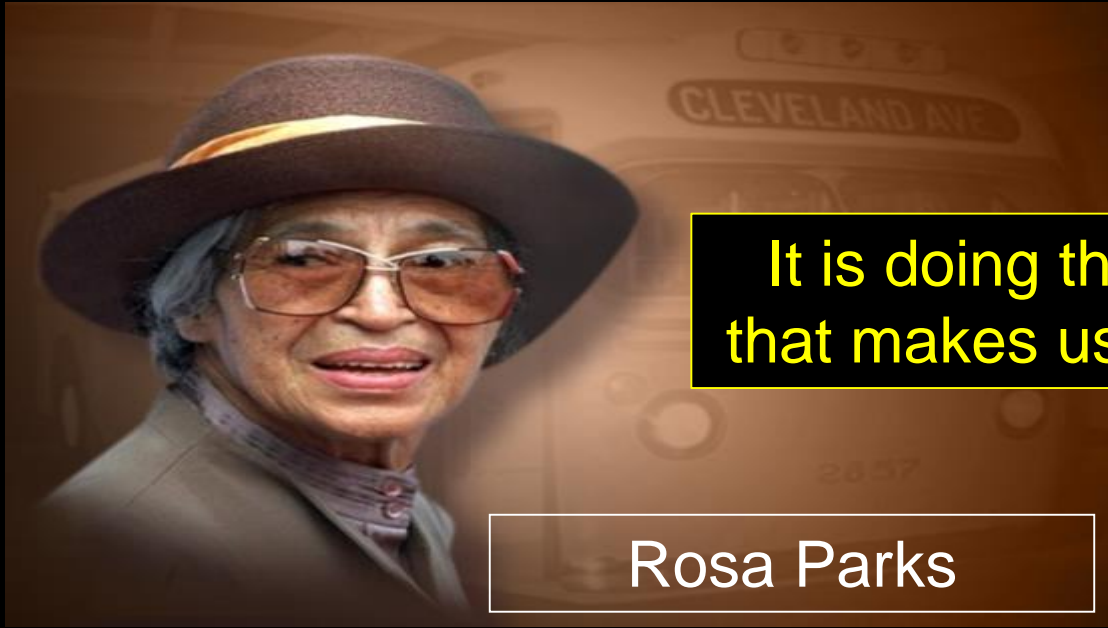
The right to participation

“The process of designing and implementing [interventions] should also respect participatory principles and empower intended beneficiaries, who should be explicitly recognized as stakeholders...Fundamentally, a human rights based approach to poverty is about empowerment of the poor...This focus on the poor and the needy for their empowerment is amply reflected in calls ... for those targeted to have a say in how services are provided, and for poor communities to be empowered to control the way money set aside for them is spent.”

(Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2006)

“it is not about giving them a fish; it is not even about teaching them to fish – it is about recognising their ownership of the river”

(Codina, V, 1985).



It is doing this stuff
that makes us human

Rosa Parks

“If you believe it’s only amazing people who are doing great things, you don’t realise you can do it, too. The reason people teach the great man theory is it immobilises you: then they’ve got you.”

(Judy Richardson 2016)

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Climate Change

Three logical responses to this threat:

Containment of consumption and marketing (eg by regulation)

Counteracting its spread (eg by alternate narratives)

Critical capacity building in the population (eg trade unionism; social movements; education)

in a democracy
these are
symbiotically
connected

climate change

National & international Gvt: regulation and containment

Civil Society: pushing sustainability and critical analysis

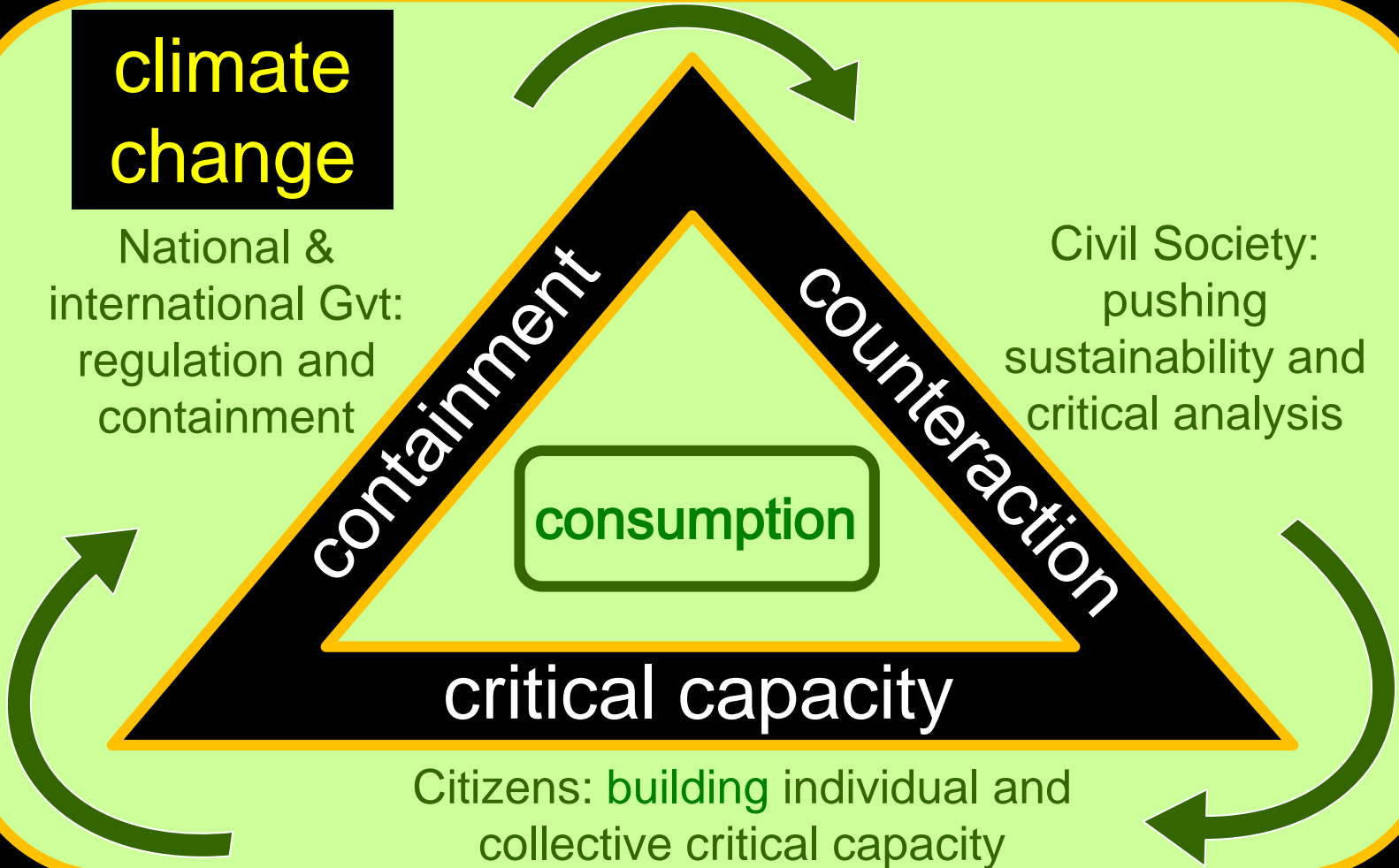
containment

counteraction

consumption

critical capacity

Citizens: building individual and collective critical capacity



conclusion

Rights and responsibilities

Moral agency and the power of rebellion

Citizens not consumers:

It is our right

It is our river

It is our humanity

**It is also great
public health**

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