



‘What is the role for consumer choice when the patient is bleeding out? Consumer agency in a plastics circular economy’.

Professor Iain Black



Plastics are:

- Flexible, strong, resilient and useful , no doubt
- But persistent, deadly, dangerous to human health, major contributor to ghg emissions
- Single use plastics are an enabler of global trade that lies at the heart of damaging level of ghg emissions
 - 1.5 g Hero is the wrong way round. It allow and supports all of these other crimes. Transform vs Business as usual
- 335 million tonnes of plastics worldwide approx. 1gt CO2e
- If it was a country it would rank 6th, equalling Brazil
- Petroleum vs Bioplastic

- Plastics: Low price, convenience and variety
- Convenience for the consumer-less organisation, less physical effort, more stuff driven by global marketing industry
- Fits with evolved processes and consumer culture

Consumers and Consumer Agency

Juxtapose with this is:

- Euromonitor data from 2017, 74% agree concerned about impacts on their health by everyday products made of plastic
- 87% worried about impact of plastics on environment.
- Significant prolonged consumer movements rejecting the growth based accumulation model.
- Kate Soper alternative hedonism

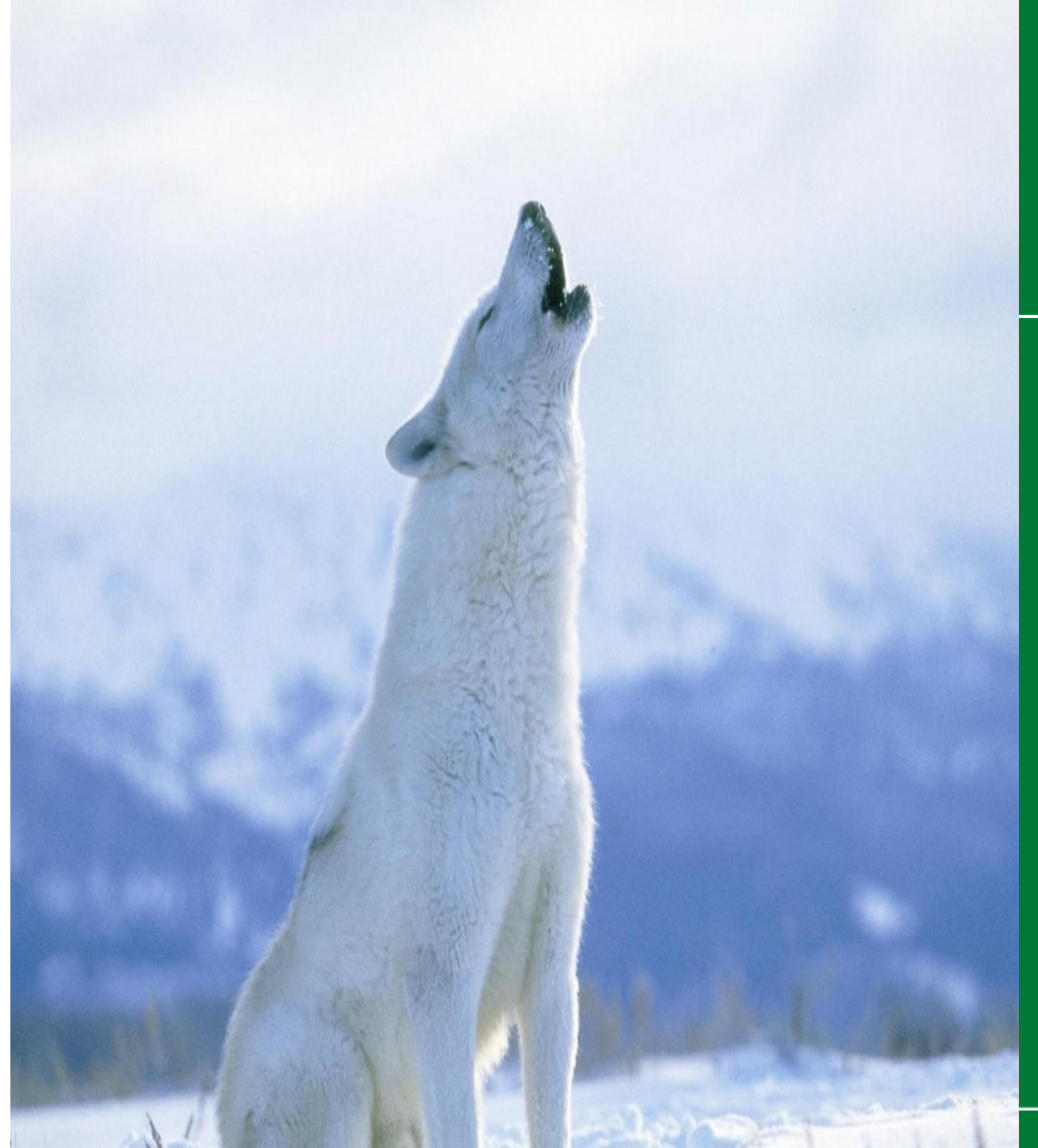
Consumers and
Consumer Agency

But solutions are choice, consumer agency based:

Agency in a world where:

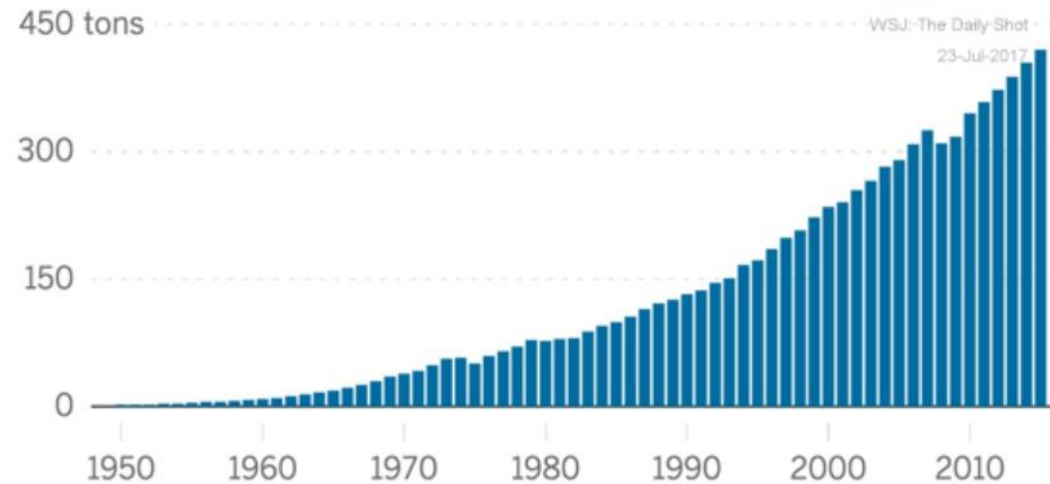
- \$1 trillion is spent on just buying media space to persuade us to consume?
- Marketing industry
- Growth model is not challenged.
- Narrative is inconsistent

Consumers and Consumer Agency



Plastic Production

Global plastic production since 1950



Source: Geyer et al

Sean Greene / @latimesgraphics

World and EU plastics production data

The world plastic* production almost reached 350 million tonnes in 2017.

Source: PlasticsEurope Market Research Group (PEMRG) / Conversio Market & Strategy GmbH

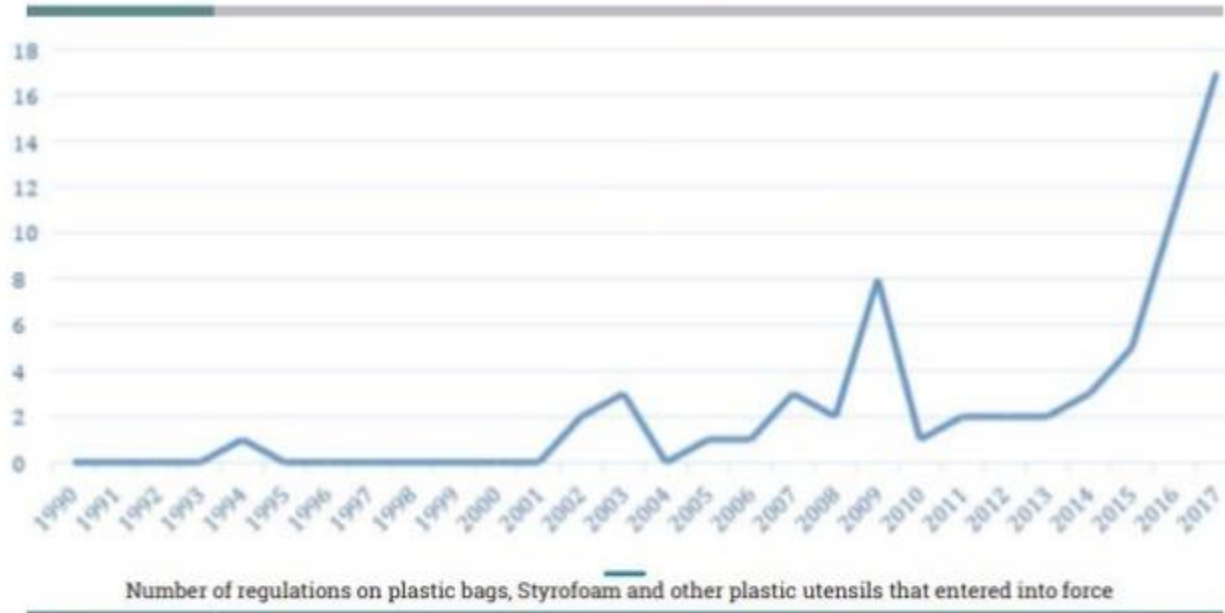


Includes thermoplastics, polyurethanes, thermosets, elastomers, adhesives, coatings and sealants and PP-fibers.
Not included PET-, PA- and polyacryl-fibers.



Plastic Control

Figure 3.3. Estimated number of new regulations on single-use plastics entering into force at the national level worldwide



Source: Data independently collected by authors

Regulations regarding single-use plastic are soaring

Image: UNEP

Define sustainability by NSF

- 1. Does not allow systematic accumulation of man-made products in the biosphere**
 - 2. Does not allow systematic accumulation of man made products in the earths crust**
 - 3. Does not allow destruction of crust by physical means**
 - 4. Does do undermine ability of society to prosper**
- Plastics industry fail all four and must be guide for COMPASS and Circular economy bill**

What direction should compass follow?

Principles of circular economy that COMPASS and SG must adopt:

- Circularity and waste as food (well known)
- Performance economy, consumer seek the value or performance not the physical good
 - Host of these performance elements currently plastics currently that can be transferred
- Reduced role for consumer agency
- Resource use rejection and reduction
- If cannot be reused, reformed, remanufactured recycled it cannot be circular and therefore it is banned until it can be.
Resource rental.
 - In a circular economy Scotland plastics manufacturers must lease their products to their customers and therefore retain ownership and liability.
 - Internalise externalities

Circular economy

Conclusions:

- Consumer agency is heavily manipulated by structural and institutional actors.
 - Changing society cannot be done without changing the structures and institutions of society.
 - Stop using hot water to wash hands by removing tap.
- Focussing policy and systems design on better decisions, is a way of avoiding dealing with the structures causing the problems and delaying action.
- 6th biggest polluter driven by a dangerous polluting supply chain upporting a dangersous polluting economic model

Conclusions:

- Circular Economy in Scotland and Compass
 - Communication with people focusses on need for transformation and bounded choice.
 - Rebalancing communications playing field
 - Adopt NSF definition of sustainability
 - Performance not plastic
 - Resource rental
 - Therefore the main focus of the circular plastics economy and the industry should be
 - Sequestration
 - Reject
 - Reduce
 - Reuse
 - Recycle
- We have to pick replacement carefully but replacement cannot be like for like.

