Consumerism

I ♥ CONSUMERISM

We consume a variety of resources and products today having moved beyond basic needs to include luxury items and technological innovations. Such consumption beyond minimal and basic needs is not necessarily a bad thing in itself, as throughout history we have always tried to find ways to make our lives a bit easier to live. However, increasingly, there are important issues around consumerism that need to be understood. For example:

- How are the products and resources we consume actually produced?
- What are the impacts of the production process and certain forms of consumption on the environment, society and individuals?
- Which actors influence our choices of consumption?
- Which actors influence how and why things are produced or not?
- What is a necessity and what is a luxury?
- How do demands on products influence the requirements placed upon the environment?
- How do consumption habits change as societies change?
- Businesses and advertising are major engines in promoting the consumption of products so that they may survive. How much of what we consume is influenced by their needs versus our needs?
- Also influential is the very culture of today in many countries, as well as the media and the political institutions themselves. What is the impact on poorer nations and people on the demands of the wealthier nations and people that are able to afford to consume more?

- How do material values influence our relationships with other people?
- What impact does that have on our personal values?

The impacts of consumerism, positive and negative are very significant to all aspects of our lives, as well as our planet. But equally important to bear in mind in discussing consumption patterns is the underlying system that promotes certain types of consumption and not other types.

actually: *in realtà, veramente*
to afford: *permettersi*
to bear in mind: *tenere presente*
beyond: *al di là*
increasingly: *sempre più*
luxury: *lusso*
pattern: *modello, sistema*
underlying: *sottostante, alla base*
very: *vero e proprio*
wealthy: *ricco*