

<Summary> Ethical Consumerism as a Part of Global Citizenship:  
Lessons from 25 Years of Public Research on Corporate Sustainability

Our behaviors as consumers can help solve global problems. Dr. Jones started his talk by introducing us to the idea of “ethical consumerism.” Based on his quarter century of research, he guided us through how his research activities have evolved over time.

Dr. Jones began with an eye-opening story comparing two very similar brands of bottled water. If we identify their producers and then trace their social and environmental impact data by utilizing the database, we find one bottle (Aquafina by Pepsi) is B-ranked while the other bottle (Dasani by Coca Cola) is F-ranked. Tap water and filtered water are A-ranked, which suggest how parts of our comfortable lifestyle actually burden both people and our environment.

Dr. Jones then discussed how ethical consumerism fits into the larger framework of “global citizenship” (including its economic, social, political and ecological aspects). To begin taking our roles as global citizens more seriously, we should be: ethical shoppers (economic), responsible news consumers (social), well-informed voters (political), and adopt more sustainable lifestyles (ecological). Dr. Jones also suggested how Japanese can shift to becoming more ethical consumers utilizing short, medium, and long-term objectives.

Finally, Dr. Jones shared a few of his ideas about how we can deepen our democracies by focusing on the example of our roles in the economy. We can begin to set up a cooperative sustainability grading system for companies (global), tailor it to consumers and products in each country (national), and finally draw ethical consumer maps at the level of cities (local). Once we develop more practical measuring system tools, we, individual consumers, could track our own ethical spending, institutions could measure overall spending and record annual improvement, and national governments could publicly share how their companies are rated in terms of ethical/unethical performance.

Democracy starts with ourselves. Just as we try to be responsible political actors by proactively engaging in politics and casting our votes, how we spend money on products and services must reflect our conscious selection as ethical consumers.

What will you buy on your way home?

Book: Ellis Jones, *The Better World Shopping Guide: Every Dollar Makes a Difference*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., Gabriola Island BC, Canada: New Society Publishers, 2022.

Website: <https://betterworldshopper.org/>