Can we afford choice? For it seems that choice is the inexorable path that we all follow but at a high cost. Supported by technology, through internet shopping, web based access to limitless information, ever faster product innovation and political parties that claim to give power 'back to the individual', it seems that we all seek it. But does it give us what we want, or need?

"Reduce energy consumption but don't let the price I pay get too high".

"Yes to wind farms but not in my back yard".

Can a world geared to more personal choice produce the changes we know must take place? Or perhaps more worrying, will democracy deliver what is required?

OK, we all know that "it is the worst form of government, except for every other one that has been invented". And Professor Fukuyama (now back in the news again - http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2011/may/23/francis-fukuyama-americans-not-good-nation-building?INTCMP=SRCH) famously declared that the End of History had arrived with the fall of Soviet communism, meaning that liberal democracy had won through to be the only viable political system.

But maybe democracy is the preferred system only for a particular set of circumstances: abundant resources, an educated electorate, widespread benefit from economic growth etc. Can it deal with extreme crises - like the impending path of climate change - that require changes in behaviour and perhaps severe restrictions on the individual? Are we prepared to curb our desire to choose for our own perceived benefit even at the cost of others?

It seems rather arrogant of us to think that in democracy we have found the perfect political system. Likely every society in history believed that they had got it right, until the situation changed and the status quo could not longer cope.

The key is to persuade people across the world that they should choose for the general good, not just for themselves, their family or immediate social circle. A tough ask!

So while I am not ready to ditch democracy just yet I would vote for some curbs, if only they were being offered, and if the majority would go along in choosing them. It seems a necessary step, but don't hold your breath.