

[Cigarettes or Snus? They decide...](#) [1]

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Richard Tomkins article in last weekend's *Financial Times* [makes explicit](#) [3] that the various assaults on the act of smoking have not stopped people from lighting up. The article goes on to map out the various problems facing policy makers in trying to obstruct people from smoking.

The problem with the article is that it falls into the trap as many others on this issue. It follows the illogic of the public health agenda in assuming that the government is best placed to determine whether an individual should decide to smoke. This thinking echoes the Communist paradigm of false consciousness, in its belief that the people are blind to the "truth" and must therefore have their lives decided for them. Whereas, in the real world people smoke for a plethora of personal reasons and should be allowed to continue without a government led financial and moral tirade. Personally, I smoke to relax each month upon learning how much tax the government is taking; then once more to cope with the level I'm taxed on my cigarettes.

In the same article, attention is also drawn to the potential of Snus, a moist powder tobacco product that is consumed by placing it under the upper lip for extended periods of time. It has been shown conclusively to be a healthier intake of nicotine than cigarettes. So, will the market offer consumers the choice of a healthier nicotine intake, if they so wish? Alas, no. The reason being that it is banned by European Law in an attempt to stop people smoking. Once again, the individual is being refused his or her right to choose how to live, healthy or unhealthy.

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