

CONSUMPTION AS CONSUMMATORY EXPERIENCE: AN EXPLORATION OF TRADE-OFFS AND THE ROLE OF VALUE IN MORALITY IN CLOTHING CONSUMPTION

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Abstract

The debate around ethical consumption is often characterised by discussion of its numerous failures (Littler, 2011). Indeed, some have suggested that due to the complexity in individual trade-offs, the ethical consumer is a 'myth'. Alternatively, others have questioned the notion of the ethical consumer as 'rational maximiser', and the agency assumptions underpinning ethical consumption have been challenged through pluralist, phenomenological, identity and practice perspectives. There is a discomfort in the field, and this thesis takes 'the trade-off' as its starting point to understand how consumers attempt to navigate the 'deep moral waters' (Schwartz, 2010) of consumption in clothing purchase; a product with a history of moral controversies. Recognising the roles of both identity and practice, the concept of value for the customer is employed to explore these trade-offs, with the objectives for the research to:

- Understand the role of moral evaluation in clothing consumption practices.
- Explore the role of values in consumer trade-offs and their relationship to practice.
- Explore the roles of identity and practice in the clothing consumption practices of ethically-motivated consumers, and the implications for value evaluation.
- Investigate how ethically-committed consumers experience value in clothing consumption and to consider the implications for ethical consumption.

With an underpinning philosophical framework of pluralism, pragmatism, postmodernism and phenomenology, an in-depth study has been conducted employing phenomenological interviews and hermeneutic analysis to explore the consumption stories of a group of ethically-knowledgeable consumers. The research uncovers the location of value within a fluid, yet habitual, plurality of patterns of preferences, morals, identities and relationships. The contribution to knowledge of the thesis is to frame the roles of morality and value in consumption within a pragmatist conception of consummatory experiences; unifications of value that take place in the context of teleoaffective 'ends in view', and which continuously merge through flows of experiences and habituation.

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Prologue

It's hard to know the right choice to be made

And harder still to keep

It's easy in denial

But who's to say?

Crazy Arm (2009). 'Still To Keep'. From the album *Born to Ruin*: Xtra Mile Recordings.

This project, no doubt like every PhD, has been very much a journey of learning and conceptual development over the last eight years. This prologue is intended to give a brief background to the journey and how it has unfolded over that period of time. The project began, in some form or another, in 2005 as part of an MRes I was undertaking as a precursor to the PhD. At the time, there was a great interest in ethical consumption, both academically in response to movements such as 'voluntary simplicity' and 'downshifting', and in relation to the growing emergence of 'mainstream' markets for fair trade and organic goods. The grocery sector was an area of particular focus. In the media more generally 'ethical consumption' seemed to be growing in significance, particularly in fashion, where London Fashion Week in 2006 contained for the first time an 'esthetica' section, and where designers such as Katherine Hamnett and brands such as People Tree were rising to prominence.

My motivation for the topic arose out of a number of factors. Firstly, I had recently entered academia after a brief career in marketing consultancy, during which time I had personally become increasingly politically, socially and environmentally aware, and at the same time increasingly disillusioned with my chosen career and corporate life. Secondly, I was becoming interested in the ethics of both marketing and consumption, but was also grappling with my own consumption choices, principally in light of my growing awareness of human rights issues in supply chains, and the environmental issues associated with the globalised production of goods. As any of my friends will attest, I have never been

particularly interested in fashion *per se*, and I recoil at the prospect of having to go clothes shopping. However, I have always worn my refusal to participate in (what I perceive to be, at least) 'mainstream' culture not so much a badge of honour as such, but a matter of principle; I'm sure many of my friends if pushed would describe me as being somewhat 'contrary'... Having grown up in my teens as a fairly stereotypical 'rocker' (long hair, black band t-shirt, black jeans, leather jacket) and latterly within the punk scene (short hair, black band t-shirt, black jeans, plaid shirt) I've also never really 'known' about 'fashion'. However, this means I am interested in clothing as a consumption choice, and all of the issues related to identity, belonging, feelings, knowledge and acceptance that are inherently intertwined in it, arguably much more so than any other product purchase. Finally, being from an ex-industrial textiles town in the north of England, I have a feeling that somewhere in my mind my formative years spent undertaking school trips to industrial museums and textiles mills planted some level of interest in textiles manufacture and its associated working conditions. Thus, armed with two thirds of an MSc in Research Methods, I began a Master's dissertation in 2006 in the field of ethical clothing consumption which was originally intended to act as a pilot for this study, and from which I was fortunate to have a paper accepted to *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal* (see Hiller, 2010).

My interest in value arose from my teaching in services marketing, but also because at that time nobody had approached ethical consumption from a value perspective. Given value's central importance in the field of marketing, and also given the importance of post-purchase perspectives, this seemed an oversight, especially given the focus in the field as it developed around the trade-offs, contradictions and compromises which chimed with the work I was interested in (especially that of Zygmunt Bauman) around postmodern views of ethics and consumption, and the work Tony Woodall had done around value for the customer which provided a possible link between trade-offs and consumer evaluation. As I progressed the study (and, again was fortunate to have a paper on the early conceptual work published at the *Academy of Marketing* conference in 2011 – see Hiller, 2011), and especially as I was writing the sections on methodology, I became aware of pragmatist philosophy (and the work of Richard Rorty in particular) which seemed to fit well with both the conceptual and underpinning ontological and epistemological considerations. Whilst early drafts had focused on the role of values in

valuation, especially from means-end perspectives, as I progressed through the data collection (and as others published work from similar perspectives), it became increasingly obvious that these hierarchical and largely rational theories of consumer behaviour did not fit with my developing epistemological orientation. This came through much more strongly when I began to engage with the data, and the pragmatist thought which had been key in the methodological arguments provided a strong philosophical foundation and explanation for what I was finding through the hermeneutic analysis of these consumers' stories. Whilst I had always felt that postmodern perspectives provided a better account of the contradiction inherent in consumer choice, theories of pragmatism and pluralism offer a more practice-oriented understanding of consumer behaviour than a 'postmodern' view. The main contribution of this study is to therefore provide a pragmatist account of value in consumption for a group of morally-principled consumers; this consummatory experience in itself providing one end in view from this particular journey from which other directions of travel and journeys can begin.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Admit it. You love cheap clothes. And you don't care about child slave labour.
(Chamberlain, 2013: [online]).

The clothing industry is one of the world's most significant; globally it is worth \$1 trillion, contributing to 7% of all exports and employing 26 million people (DEFRA 2008a; Allwood *et al.*, 2006). Indeed, as Brooks (2015) notes, the clothing business is one of the cornerstones of globalisation that affects everybody in the world. In the UK, consumer spending on clothing in the five year period 2009-2014 increased from £40 million to almost £53 million (Mintel, 2014), with previous rises explained mainly, it is claimed, by the rise of the 'throwaway' clothing culture (Charles, 2010), itself driven by the liberalisation of international markets, and in particular the expiration of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement in 2005; an import control designed to protect certain countries through the imposition of import quotas (Brooks, 2015).

Since the industrial revolution, the impact of the manufacture and use of clothing on people, the environment and animals has been characterised by a multitude of ethical problems and scandals, often resulting in radical social change. From the association between slavery and the cotton fields in the USA and the UK Acts of Parliament in the nineteenth-century which sought to protect and improve the conditions of workers (and especially pauper children) working in UK cotton and woollen mills, to Gandhi's boycott of UK cotton products in India, to the growth of the anti-fur movement in the 1980s and the recognition of global sweatshops in the 1990s, the ethics of the clothing industry have been under scrutiny for some time. However, whilst ethical consumption is far from a recent phenomenon as often claimed (Newholm *et al.*, 2015), over recent years the globalisation of the industry and the rise of 'fast fashion' (Bruce and Daly, 2006) have led

to increased media and consumer interest, especially in response to a number of major disasters and high-profile media cases. In particular, the *Rana Plaza* garment factory collapse in Bangladesh in 2013 was the worst ever garment industry tragedy (Foxvog *et al.*, 2013), and followed the *Tazreen Fashions* fire and a host of other human rights and safety abuses reported in clothing supply chains. Brooks (2015) highlights the ‘countless’ cases of worker abuse across the world, including workers’ disappearing from clothing factories in Jordan, Indian violation of workers’ rights to association and the suffering of Turkish workers as a result of sandblasting denim in Turkey. Indeed, ever since Klein (2001) heralded 1995 ‘the year of the sweatshop’, in the UK many high street retailers have been the subject of documentaries and press criticism for their use of low cost manufacturers in developing countries which it is alleged breach basic international labour rights standards relating to child labour, low wages, poor working conditions and health and safety risks (DEFRA, 2008a). At the time of writing, interest has reached a sufficient level for the global clothing industry and the human and social problems associated with it to be the ‘stars’ of a film dedicated to exposing these issues (www.truecostmovie.com). It should be noted that these issues are indeed global and not just confined to developing countries; retailers have also been found to be buying from suppliers using ‘sweatshops’ based in UK cities (see Dhariwal, 2009, for example), and that problems are not limited to manufacture; Brooks (2015) and Siegle (2011) highlight issues across the whole process from growing cotton, ginning, spinning and weaving, tanning and dying, to manufacture and advertising and marketing.

At the same time, the sustainability impacts of clothing have increasingly become a cause for concern. One of the most comprehensive reports on the sustainability of clothing and textiles in the UK in the last ten years is Allwood *et al.*’s (2006) *Well Dressed?* report, which notes that the major environmental impacts of the sector arise from the use of energy and toxic chemicals, in particular burning fossil fuel to create electricity for heating water and air in laundering, and the use of toxic chemicals in cotton agriculture and manufacture. Extensive water consumption (especially in crop cultivation) is particularly high and has had devastating effects in parts of Central Asia. Indeed, the destruction of the Aral Sea resulting from the operation of the Uzbek cotton industry demonstrates that environmental disasters are often inseparable from human and social disasters (Environmental Justice Foundation, 2006). Allwood *et al.* (2006) also highlight the high

waste volumes in the sector, with UK consumers sending approximately 30kg of clothing and textiles to landfill each year. DEFRA (2008a) also notes that whilst the manufacture of clothing has significantly declined in the UK, the environmental impacts are significant; in the UK in 2006, 70 million tonnes of waste water were generated and 3.1 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent emitted from the UK clothing and textile sector as a whole. Despite the decline of manufacturing, consumption remains high, at two million tonnes (worth £38 billion) per annum. Associated with these high levels of consumption and the emergence of 'fast fashion' are high levels of waste: again, in the UK in 2006, 1.5 to 2 million tonnes of waste was generated. Madsen *et al.* (2007) map these issues across the product life cycle stages as shown in appendix 1. As Bauman (2004) observes, a marketing ideology based on the notion of 'satisfaction', especially relevant to the nature of fast fashion, fuels this system of over-production and consumption.

As a result of these impacts, the sector has attracted significant interest from different groups; The industry has responded through adoption of the number of standards that have arisen, including conversion to fair trade (explaining a good proportion of the increase in the value of the ethical market according to the Cooperative, 2012). Indeed, the rise of standards has been meteoric; in an initial consultation process, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (2005) identified over 200 initiatives and standards relevant to corporate social responsibility (CSR). Furthermore, pressure groups such as the Clean Clothes Campaign, Labour Behind the Label and War on Want have stepped up their efforts to raise awareness and lobby for improved workers' conditions and rights.

It is claimed that these issues have also provoked significant and mainstream consumer responses. Concern over the ethics of various business practices has led to the emergence of organisations, overtly positioned as 'ethical' which adopt a values-led purpose and which characterise 'positive purchasing' (Harrison *et al.*, 2005). For example, the latest Cooperative (2012) Ethical Consumer Markets report claims that ethical markets remain 'resilient', with the overall market for ethical goods and services rising in the five years from the recession in 2008 from £35.5bn to £47.2bn. It notes that consumers remain key agents of change, with average spend per household rising from £291 in 2000 to £989. Irving *et al.* (2002) list a number of 'success stories' from the early 1990s which have resulted from consumer power, including improvements to animal welfare and testing,

the environment, workers' rights, oppressive regimes, nuclear power and armaments and other social causes. Over the last ten years other studies provide evidence that the ethics or social responsibility of companies impact consumer decision making through 'positive purchasing behaviour' (see for example: Ma *et al.*, 2012; Ha-Brookshire and Norum, 2011; Connolly and Shaw, 2006; Littrell *et al.*, 2005; Kim *et al.*, 1999; Creyer and Ross, 1997; Schlegelmilch *et al.*, 1996).

Consequently, a number of writers from academia, industry and the press have sought to explore and synthesise the issues which occur throughout the industry in all stages of production, distribution, consumption, usage and disposal and which include (but are not limited to) labour conditions (and the use of sweatshops in particular), environmental concerns, political issues such as anti-union activity, lobbying, tax evasion, and problems around advertising and body image (see for example, Brooks, 2015; Gardetti and Torres, 2013; Black, 2011; Lewis and Potter, 2011; Siegle, 2011; Sluiter, 2009). In luxury fashion, Carrigan *et al.* (2013) synthesise these issues within the 'harm chain', spanning pre-production, production, consumption and post-consumption. Indeed, over the last ten years in particular, a number of academic studies have also emerged; a search of the EBSCO Business Source Complete and Ingenta Connect databases on the search term "ethical consum*" at the time of writing produces over 1000 articles in each.

However, the effectiveness of both industry and consumer responses has been challenged. As Painter-Morland (2008) notes, doubts about the effectiveness of codes and standards are often expressed by business ethicists, with common criticisms being that they reduce ethics to an issue of compliance, with little scope within them to reflect what is really valued by an organisation's stakeholders. Indeed, one of the most widely recognised ethical codes adopted by clothing retailers in the UK and Europe is the Ethical Trade Initiative (ETI), although it has come under criticism for failing to sufficiently address freedom of association and discrimination (Barrientos and Smith, in Hughes *et al.*, 2007) and for its failure to 'police' or accredit its members (Birch, 2007). Further, Hughes *et al.* (2007) note that the global management of ethical trade through such standards depends largely on the national-institutional context, and that industry governance is increasingly becoming controlled by an elite group of globalising retailers. Similarly, even widely known and adopted standards relating to cotton manufacture and production such

as fair trade and organic certification have come under fire. For example, The Economist (2006) argues that fair trade depresses prices rather than keep them high as it prevents farmers from diversifying into other crops resulting in overproduction, and that a small percentage of the mark-up on fair trade goods actually goes to the farmer. Griffiths (2011) further argues that fair trade unequally benefits the richest farmers and further increases the poverty of those poorest farmers not fair trade certified, and that as consumers are not informed of to whom in the supply chain the premiums are paid (and how much), the scheme promotes unfair trading. There remains, therefore, a question around whether the answer to these problems lies not in consumer choices but in political change. Businesses in the industry have also been criticised for being slow to act, even in response to major and very public disasters such as the *Rana Plaza* collapse.

As the opening quotation to this chapter makes blunt, the effectiveness of ethical consumption itself has also been questioned by many. As Newholm and Shaw (2007) observe, in a (consumer) culture in which ethical consumption is both a part and a consequence and which is characterised by the emancipation of the individual (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005), consumers are faced with the consequences of their actions, but without the benefit of the guidance of traditional values, 'grand narratives' or regimes of truth' (Cherrier, 2007; Bauman, 1993). Other critical perspectives on ethical consumption have acknowledged problems on grounds including: consumer uncertainty and a lack of knowledge about ethical decision making (Hassan *et al.*, 2013; Hiller Connell, 2010); the existence of the 'attitude-behaviour gap' and its underlying 'causes' (Johnstone and Tan, 2014; Moraes *et al.*, 2012; Carrington *et al.*, 2010; Auger and Devinney, 2007); neutralisation techniques (Chatzidakis *et al.*, 2004); the employment of rationalisation strategies including economic rationalisation, institutional dependency and developmental realism (Eckhardt *et al.*, 2010); and a host of other factors summarised by Littler (2011) including its role in relieving middle-class guilt, its roles as a form of individual politics or in satisfying profit-seeking organisations, and that it is too large and complex to be meaningful. In synthesising these issues, some have gone as far as to suggest the ethical consumer is a 'myth', as consumer decision-making is entirely context-specific and based on complex individual trade-offs (Devinney *et al.*, 2010). Others such as Heath and Potter (2006) argue that ethical consumption is not an answer in itself to the world social and environmental problems anyway, due to its 'voluntariness'.

This thesis takes these criticisms and contradictions as its starting point, especially Devinney *et al.*'s, 2010 assertion that (ethical) consumers are engaged in constant trading-off of macro concerns about a wider ethical agenda with micro personal concerns. Indeed, the notion of trade-offs or compromises is persistent in emerging evidence about the practice of ethical consumption (Ha-Brookshire and Norum, 2011; McGoldrick and Freestone, 2008; Valor, 2007, Shaw *et al.*, 2007). In doing so, it recognises that consumption is part of an act of processual identity construction (Cherrier and Murray, 2007), rooted in values which sustain individuals as participants in practices including (but not limited to) consumption practices (Garcia-Ruiz and Rodriguez-Lluesma, 2014). This act of 'trading off' as consumer practice has strong conceptual links to notion of value, and specifically how consumers evaluate value (Woodall, 2003). Indeed, as Holbrook (1994) argues, at the heart of all consumer research should be the consideration of the form of value that consumers hope to receive when they pay for a product or service, and that an important dimension of consumer research is to explore those aspects of consumption behaviour which are driven by virtue and ethical choice. Despite the criticisms introduced here, as Cova and Cova (2012) suggest, consumers are connected to society through their choices, assuming responsibility and its associated risks for themselves and others, or as Schwartz (2010) argues, consumers *can* be morally culpable for what they purchase through the act of purchasing products, placing them in: "...deep moral waters." (p 85). The aim of this thesis is therefore to understand how, for those with the knowledge and motivation to do so, consumers attempt to navigate these waters through the 'lens' of value.

It should be noted, as recognised by Newholm *et al.* (2015), that ethical consumption is highly complex and unpredictable; and whilst the concept of a 'trade-off' might imply the consumer as 'rational maximiser' (Newholm *et al.*, 2015), as was arguably the dominant perspective in much of the 'early' ethical consumption literature, more recent literatures have adopted pluralist and phenomenological perspectives (Cherrier, 2007), identity work (Arnould and Thomson, 2005) and the role of consumers as moral subjects (Giesler and Veresiu, 2014). These are all likely to be significant and will require consideration.

Driver (2007) notes that descriptive ethics attempts to give an account or theory of how people act. The purpose is not to evaluate moral behaviour – rather to ‘tell it as it is’; not to criticise or praise, but to report on how people go about criticising or praising. This, to a large extent, is the purpose of this study. However, the study adopts not a purely relativist ethical position, but one of pluralism (Hinman, 2003); a philosophy which holds that several (and possibly conflicting) moral standards may be relevant depending on the specific situation, and which views as positive a recognition that individuals have many standards of value, which may not necessarily be consistent with one another.

Alongside this, the study will adopt a pragmatist (Rorty 1982/1999) methodological position which recognises this difference and correspondingly acknowledges the need to arrive at consensus about the best ways to promote development and reduce suffering; whilst one may reject the existence of the ‘ethical consumer’ as a ‘myth’ as the extent to which one accepts that such a judgement relies on some structural definitions of ethics, moral practices and the construction of the knowledge that might lead us to this conclusion, a shared understanding of what makes particular practices moral or immoral, ethical or unethical must ultimately contain some objective judgements about what can be considered to be ‘right’ or ‘wrong’.

Structure of the thesis

Thompson’s (1997) work on hermeneutic interpretations of consumers’ consumption stories (to which chapter five will return) notes that any first stage of such should consist of:

...an immersion in background research concerning the historical and cultural conditions relevant to the domain of interest...the quality of the research findings is contingent upon the scope of the background knowledge that the researcher brings to bear and his or her ability to forge insightful linkages between this background knowledge and the texts at hand. (p442)

With the aim of clarifying some of the key concepts, **chapter two** will aim to provide some conceptual clarification around the term ‘ethical consumption’ to establish the scope of the thesis and also how ‘ethics’ might be interpreted for the purpose of this study. As Caruana (2007) observes, where morality is framed at a sociological level in

understanding consumption, there is a need to clarify the concept's underlying nature; it will therefore also consider the philosophical domain of ethics, as key to understanding consumers' aims with regard to ethical consumption and therefore some of the challenges in understanding the values and *reasons* for action that underpin consumer practices (Garcia-Ruiz and Rodriguez-Lluesma, 2014; Brinkmann, 2004). As Schwartz (2010) notes that there are a number of philosophical moral questions which arise from an emerging consumption ethic and which carry implications for the wider study of ethical consumption. Indeed, as Caruana (2007) argues, few studies have sought to explore the theoretical implications of morality as it relates to consumption, and that this is a requirement if consumer research is to develop in sophistication. Here a case for a postmodern (Bauman, 1993), pluralist (Hinman, 2003) and pragmatist (Rorty, 1999; Dewey [in Gouinlock, 1994) conception of morality is addressed which rejects opposing absolutist and relative moral philosophies.

Following this, **chapter three** will review the development of the literature in the domain of 'ethical consumption', taking both an historical and thematic perspective on the field in order to develop the major themes in this work and understand some of the problems and complexities highlighted in the 'myths' of ethical consumption referred to above. Here, four perspectives or 'domains' of literature will be examined; firstly the marketing perspective which underscores the role of consumer knowledge and motivation; secondly the psychological perspective, which develops the importance of ethical obligation and self-identity (Shaw *et al.*, 2000) in ethical consumption and the role of values in identity formation as a necessary consideration (Schwartz, 1994). Thirdly the sociological perspective which identifies identity as perhaps the most prominent theme in understanding consumers (Cherrier and Murray, 2007; Arnould and Thompson, 2005), and therefore a consideration of the development of the identity of the 'ethical consumer' and the role of consumption, and ethical consumption in particular, in identity construction is essential. Following this ontological position of 'being' an ethical consumer, this considers acts of consumption (Shaw and Riach, 2011) and consideration of how this identity construction manifests itself in practices (Bourdieu, 1992), and how value might help to explain these practices. The fourth and final perspective considers the myriad of complexities, highlighting the 'myths and tragedies' it is claimed exist in ethical consumption. Here, consideration is given to issues of awareness and knowledge, the

existence of the attitude-behaviour gap, and negative consumer outcomes. This review of the literature aims to demonstrate that there is a discomfort in the field; with the philosophical position outlined in chapter two (and elaborated upon in chapter six) addressing this discomfort through recognising the plurality inherent in consumer thought and action. As Miller (2012) suggests, all humans are moral beings, and morality is often expressed through a sense of duty to others (the family, for example).

Chapter four considers the role of value in understanding trade-offs. Here a brief overview of the concept of value is provided, especially the perspectives of Holbrook (1994); Smith (1999) and Brown (1999) who suggest, ethical behaviour may provide a type of value in ways which might be more integrative; for example, as personal value, or social value. However, these perspectives say nothing about *how* value might be evaluated by the consumer. It is arguably this which is central to understanding value's role in understanding trade-offs, so the connection between these concepts is examined, including the role of practices. It is argued that the overall perception of value is more likely to be represented by an 'organised whole' or form of aggregate value (Woodall, 2003), based on an evaluation of Net Value (Woodall, 2003), but rather than a cognitive utilitarian assessment, an overall view of personal advantage which is enacted through practices.

Chapter five synthesises the previous chapters to propose a conceptual framework and set of research objectives for the study. The overall aim of this study is to explore the trade-offs consumers make in ethical clothing consumption. The conceptual framework reflects a pragmatist understanding of net value for the customer or 'trade off' as a consummatory experience, which is influenced by self-identity and values, embedded in practices and resulting in an aggregate sense of personal advantage. The specific objectives which underpin this aim are:

- To understand the role of moral evaluation in clothing consumption practices.
- To explore the role of values in guiding action in consumer trade-offs.
- To explore the roles of identity and practice in ethical clothing consumption and the implications for value evaluation.
- To investigate how consumers experience value in ethical clothing consumption.

Chapter six will outline the methodology for the primary data collection including how the implications of the conclusions from chapters two to four influence the philosophical underpinnings of the research. Significantly, ontological and epistemological positions of hermeneutic phenomenology (Laverty, 2003) and pragmatism (Rorty, 1982/1999) are proposed. Data collection methods and analytical procedures are also identified. In particular, depth interviews, based on Thompson's (1997) notion of 'consumption stories' with analysis derived from grounded theory procedures (Charmaz, 2007) and hermeneutic meaning construction (Alvesson and Skoldberg's, 2000; Thompson, 1997). Sampling, access and research ethics will also be considered.

Chapter seven will present the results of the primary data collection. This includes a series of informant profiles, including analysis of Schwartz's (2007) General Portrait Values, and presentation of the results of an initial coding exercise for key themes and ideas to emerge as a basis for further interpretation and analysis, or to indicate the 'hermeneutic lens' through which the data can be examined; this provides an initiating frame of reference on which a further hermeneutic interpretation can be based (Thompson, 1997). These themes are therefore then used to structure a deeper interpretation of the interview data.

Chapter eight aims to provide an additional level of hermeneutic reflection in line with Alvesson and Skoldberg's (2000: 255) 'interaction between different levels of interpretation' to the results presented in the previous chapter, directly addressing the research objectives outlined in chapter five. The discussion will be structured by the objectives to reflect on the analysis in the previous chapter and scrutinise the dominant interpretive patterns revealed in the data so far. The intention is to critically reflect on the findings presented in chapter seven by reflecting on the lines of dominance previously outlined, and challenging the previous interpretations placed on the data by revisiting the texts and the relevant fields of literature, and in doing so outline the contribution of this study to the field.

Chapter nine will draw the analysis in chapters seven and eight together to offer conclusions, and summarise the contribution of the thesis, whilst **Chapter ten** offers recommendations for practice and future research in the field.

Chapter 2

The Ethical Consumer: Towards a Postmodern, Pluralist and Pragmatic Understanding

*Ours are the times of **strongly felt moral ambiguity**. These times offer us freedom of choice never before enjoyed, but also cast us into a state of uncertainty never before so agonising. We yearn for guidance we can trust and rely upon, so that some of the haunting responsibility for our choices can be lifted from our shoulders. But the authorities we may trust are all contested, and none seems to be powerful enough to give us the degree of reassurance we seek. In the end, we trust no authority, at least, we trust none fully, and none for long; we cannot help being suspicious about any claim to infallibility. This is the most acute and prominent practical aspect of what is justly described as the 'postmodern moral crisis'.*

Bauman, 1993: 21.

A sensible starting point for a study of ethical consumption is, of course, what ethical consumption *is*, and the key concepts underpinning it. This chapter aims to firstly define ethical consumption, and secondly to arrive at an understanding of how ethics might be interpreted for the purpose of this study. In doing so, it is also necessary to consider issues of consumer culpability and power in the consumption domain. This conceptual clarification will provide the foundation for the subsequent three chapters which collectively provide the background to the research.

Ethical consumption, consumer ethics, ethical behaviours, ethical outcomes

In terms of the scope of this thesis, whilst it is recognised that there is a body of literature relating to the *unethical practices* of consumers (see for example Hunt and Vitell, 1986, Vitell and Muncy 1992 & 2005, Vitell *et al.*, 2001 and Fukukawa, 2002) and that a discussion of ethical consumer behaviour may also consider *unethical consumer behaviour*, the purpose of this thesis is to focus on the buying attitudes and practices

which may be seen as an evolution of 'green' consumerism (Sparks and Shepherd, 1992) which typically includes concern for the welfare and conditions of those in the third world (Strong, 1996) in addition to environmental concerns, and defined by Brinkmann (2004) as those practices in which consumers may or may not take moral responsibility or co-responsibility. Chatzidakis *et al.* (2006) classify this as 'ethical consumption' as opposed to 'consumer ethics'; the latter of which focuses on unethical behaviour. Whilst the primary concern of the following discussion is clothing consumption, the wider literature surrounding ethical consumption will be examined where the underpinning arguments are relevant. For example, the grocery sector is another which has been subject to empirical scrutiny (see for example Memery *et al.*, 2005).

Whilst the social consciousness of customers has long been recognised (Mahoney, 1994, notes that modern business ethics can be traced back to the USA in the early 1970s, with studies of socially concerned consumers also appearing at this time), interest in the ethicality of a number of product and service groups has been increasing in recent years. Gabriel and Lang (2006: 166) note that consumer organisations focused on green and ethical concerns accelerated in the 1980s after a slow start in the 1970s, but did not 'achieve' any real coherence until the last few years of the Twentieth Century; Fuller (In Connolly and Shaw, 2006) terms this the 'Green 90s'. Gabriel and Lang (2006) term this wave of consumer activism: 'alternative consumerism', and note that recent years have seen this wave galvanise into a progressive consumer 'political activism' which includes ethical, social and ecological dimensions. However, whilst the late 1990s saw the rise of a reactive activism on student campuses in the United States of America (USA) (Houghteling, 1999) and attention from linked campaigns such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) protests (Boje, 2001), ethics in the fashion industry have only affected the high street and 'mainstream' consumers in more recent years. Indeed, Whysall (2000) notes that pioneering studies in marketing ethics focused on the practice of marketers (or the supply-side), whereas studies of consumer attitudes (or the demand side) did not emerge in any meaningful way until the late 1990s. Consequently, studies of the role of ethics in consumer attitudes generally and in clothing purchase specifically were relatively slow to emerge, but have gathered pace from the mid-2000s. However, a number of studies spanning the past thirty years relating to a proactive pro-

environmental consumerism is identified by Connolly and Shaw (2006) in a study on fair trade as a specific dimension of ethical consumption (see figure 1):

Figure 1: Marketing categorisations of 'concerned consumers'

Responsible consumers	Fisk, 1973
The socially conscious consumer	Anderson & Cunningham, 1972; Webster, 1975; Brooker, 1976; Mayer, 1976; Antil, 1984; Osterhus, 1997.
Ecologically concerned consumers	Kinnear et al., 1974; Kinnear & Taylor, 1973; Schwepker & Cornwell, 1991; Roberts & Bacon, 1997; Balderjahn, 1988; Bohlen et al., 1993.
Environmentally concerned consumers	Murphy et al., 1978; Berger & Corbin, 1992; Follows & Jobber, 2000; Brown & Wahlers, 1998.
Green consumers	Roberts, 1996; Shrum et al., 1995; Prothero, 1990; Schlegelmilch et al., 1996; Titterington et al., 1996; Laroche et al., 2001; Peattie, 2001.
Green, ethical & charitable consumer	Schlegelmilch, 1994.
Ethical consumers	Strong, 1997; Shaw & Clarke, 1999; Shaw et al., 2000; Shaw & Shiu, 2002.
Semi-ethicals / slavery	McDonagh, 2002.
Humane consumers	Ger, 1997.
Conserving consumer	Pickett et al., 1993.
Ethical simplifiers	Shaw & Newholm, 2002.
The voluntary simplifier	Shama, 1985; Rudmin & Kilbourne, 1996; Etzioni, 1998; Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002.
DownshifTERS	Schor, 1991, 1998.

Source: Connolly & Shaw, 2006: 355

Schwartz (2010) notes that a consequence of difficulties in regulating business practices which might be considered to be ethically problematic is the emergence of citizens questioning whether they could be culpable for any unethical practices associated with their purchases, and whether a moral conscience can be expressed through purchasing choices. Brinkmann (2004) suggests such moral responsibilities should be viewed as a shared responsibility of businesses and consumers, and a number of authors have attempted to clarify the forms in which these consumer choices and responsibilities might manifest themselves, and what might therefore be included under the heading of 'ethical consumer behaviour'. For example, Harrison *et al.* (2005) propose a typology of five ethical consumer practices:

- Boycotts (refusing to buy certain products/brands)

- Positive buying (for example, buying 'Fair Trade')
- Fully screened (using consumer guides and ratings to make choices)
- Relationship purchasing (attempting to change the behaviour of suppliers)
- Anti-consumerism (avoiding unsustainable products such as cars, or pursuing DIY alternatives such as mending rather than replacing clothes, often referred to as 'voluntary simplicity').

Newholm and Shaw (2007), in their review of the research around the ethics of consumption, identify six interlinked ways in which consumers may express themselves in such a way, and associated areas of study: consumer ethics relating to 'misbehaviour' (as discussed above); consumer resistance to marketing efforts; individual and semi-organised projects related to sustainability (such as downshifting or voluntary simplicity); entrepreneurial efforts in relation to creating ethical consumption opportunities and spaces (perhaps often tied to political action); expert academic perspectives on the ethics of consumption; and ethical consumption as a conscious project. Shaw and Riach (2011) distinguish between those forms of market resistance (such as boycotting, consumer rebellion, counter-cultural movements and non-consumption) and relational interactions *with* the market, and this relational approach enhances understanding of how consumers negotiate their market choices. This negotiation is key, and will be addressed in the subsequent chapter. Further, Newholm and Shaw (2007) conclude that relocating the consideration of ethical consumption (both individually and collectively) within the cultural ethics of consumption is key to understanding consumer behaviour. This 'cultural ethics' of consumption will also be considered in due course. However, it is important to recognise that the categorisations above imply both the consumption practices of ethically engaged or committed consumers, and the consumption of ethically produced products and services more generally. However, it should be recognised that ethically committed individuals may not necessarily be constantly engaged in ethical clothing consumption, but likewise the consumption of ethically produced goods and services may be undertaken by any consumer, whether categorized as 'ethically committed' or not. The implications of this for the research will be further explored in chapters five and six.

It should also be noted that the definitions above perhaps overlooks a possible interaction (and mutual influence) between a reactive kind of ethical awareness amongst

consumers which arise due to ethical *failures*, versus a proactive concern to influence ethical business practices via consumer choices. A key question therefore arises around whether ethical consumption is a 'knee-jerk' reaction against unethical business practices, or something that emerges from consumers' personal goals. Furthermore, Miller (2012) identifies a third type of moral consumption in relation to the latter; one which is not 'other'-oriented, but a morality which might be characterised by thrift and duty to the family.

Recent studies have begun to examine specific consumer ethical issues in the clothing industry and others which relate to the practices highlighted by Harrison *et al.* (2005), such as sweatshop avoidance (Shaw *et al.*, 2007) fair trade (Ma *et al.*, 2012; Kim *et al.*, 2010; Connolly and Shaw, 2006; Shaw *et al.*, 2006; Littrell *et al.*, 2005; Low and Davenport, 2005; Strong, 1997), the existence of ethical codes of conduct (Iwanow *et al.*, 2005), labour abuses in the supply chain (Hyllegard *et al.*, 2009; Moor and Littler, 2008; Valor, 2007) and organic products (Lim *et al.*, 2014; Hustvedt and Dickson, 2009). Connolly and Shaw (2006) argue that despite this apparent diversity in consumer concerns, there are common motivations across the categories they identify, and therefore propose three broad headings under which these can be grouped: green consumerism, ethical consumerism and voluntary simplicity. However, they contend that the distinction between 'green' and 'ethical' is ambiguous due to the interconnectivity between the various concerns; in particular environmental and fair trade concerns are often coupled together. They note Connolly's (in Connolly and Shaw, 2006) previous study which found that ethical consumers were often confused about which was 'best'; food which had the least environmental impact or which was fairly traded. Likewise, Newholm (2005: 108) argues that: "...specific consumer practices should not be seen in isolation. Animal welfare, human rights, environmental sustainability and corporate responsibility combine, overlap, conflict and vie for attention", and Whysall (2000) warns that there is a danger in isolating ethical issues as a single area of ethical complexity will often bring together a number of areas of ethical concern. Whilst Connolly and Shaw (2006) note how these issues can significantly add to the complexity in consumer decision making (as the interconnectivity and overlaps often arise in the minds of consumers out of a desire 'to do the right thing'), they can also exist in a palpable sense. For example, the destruction of the Aral Sea in the production of cotton has demonstrated that environmental disasters

are often inseparable from human and social disasters (EJF, 2005). Therefore, whilst initiatives such as fair trade and organic products address separate concerns, the underpinning issues of human rights and environmental sustainability may be practically linked.

A challenge, therefore, in addressing codes of ethics in the clothing industry is helping consumers to identify ethical issues which relate to their concerns. As previously discussed, and as noted by Fisher (2004), the terminology surrounding various dimensions of ethics is often used interchangeably. Furthermore, the concept of *sustainability* is perhaps most often applied by industry and Governments. Sustainability is defined broadly (and arguably most widely) as: "... the principle of ensuring that our actions today do not limit the range of economic, social and environmental options open to future generations." (Elkington, 1999: 20). This is in accordance with Elkington's (1999: 70) 'triple bottom line', which focuses on: "economic prosperity, environmental quality and social justice." Economic capital is comprised of physical capital, financial capital, human capital and intellectual capital. Thus, organisations must consider not only their economic sustainability in terms of whether demand for products and services and profit margins are sustainable and whether costs are competitive, but also whether the rate of innovation is competitive and how to ensure that human and intellectual capital remain within the organisation. The environmental 'bottom line' is discussed in terms of natural capital; both capital which is essential to the maintenance of life and ecosystem integrity, and capital which can be renewed, repaired, substituted or replaced. The final element, the social bottom line, is the one that Elkington (1999) claims businesses have traditionally overlooked; this comprises human capital (public health, skills and education) and wider measures of a society's health and wealth-creation potential; the trust between organisations and stakeholders is key here in allowing social relationships to prosper. 'Social accounting' could cover community relations, product safety (the domain of the 'original' wave of consumer activism, according to Gabriel and Lang, 2006), education and training initiatives, charitable donations, employment of disadvantaged groups, poverty alleviation, upholding human rights and employment creation.

The domain of business ethics is considered to lie in the zone between the social and economic bottom lines (and Elkington acknowledges the problems in assessing ethical

behaviours), although it is likely that the scope of business ethics is much wider than considered under the social bottom line of sustainability, but falling within the broader domain of corporate social responsibility (Fisher, 2004) as identified by Carroll (1991) and Schwartz and Carroll (2003). Fisher (2004) cites the work of Davidson and Griffin who suggest that individuals 'have' ethics, whereas organisations 'have' a social responsibility; the ethical beliefs of consumers may then 'cut across' business ethics, CSR and sustainability. Thus, organisations can create value in multiple dimensions; in the case of sustainability this value is referred to in terms of environmental, social and economic value-added or destroyed (Elkington, 2006). Indeed, there are parallels to draw between the triple bottom line and with Schwartz and Carroll's (2003) three domain model of CSR, where the economic responsibilities are defined by the economic bottom line, and issues of environmental and social responsibilities classified under (but not exclusively contributing towards) Schwartz and Carroll's 'ethical' responsibilities. It should be remembered, however, that Elkington (1999) notes that there are cycles and conflicts in and between each of the three 'bottom lines'.

As with the discussion above relating to codes and standards, Allwood *et al.* (2006) claim that consumer choice is the key to reducing these environmental impacts and social problems. However, rather than rely on codes and standards which may appeal to a narrow set of consumer concerns, in relation to clothing they propose a model of 'ideal consumer behaviour', in which the 'ideal consumer' would (Allwood *et al.*, 2006: 68):

- Buy second-hand clothing and textiles where possible;
- Buy fewer but longer lasting garments and textile products
- When buying new products, choose those made with least energy and toxic emissions;
- Only buy products made by workers paid a credible living wage with reasonable employment rights and conditions
- Lease clothes that would otherwise not be worn to the end of their natural life;
- Wash clothes less often, at lower temperatures and using eco-detergents, hang dry them and avoid ironing where possible;
- Extend the life of clothing and textile products through repair;

- Dispose of used clothing and textiles through recycling businesses who would return them for second-hand sale wherever possible, but otherwise extract and recycle the yarn or fibres.

However, barriers to consumers adopting these behaviours are considered by them to include: inertia, changes in fashion and the desire to appear to be fashionable, higher cost for more durable, environmentally and socially responsible clothes, a lack of recognition of the environmental and social consequences of the purchase of clothes and the problems associated with changes in mass behaviour. Proposed actions to address this behaviour are: consumer education (through campaigns, education or labelling), the promotion of durability as a component of fashion, encouraging customers to pay more for their clothes, new business models (where consumers might pay for repair services, for example), the promotion of repair and the development of technology to reduce the impact of clothing maintenance and recycling. The focus on new business models to improve sustainability (under the broad heading of the 'circular economy') is also increasing.

DEFRA (2008b) also identify a number of specific behaviours based upon Madsen *et al.*'s (2007) and Allwood *et al.*'s (2006) analysis which it was envisaged would improve the sustainability impacts of clothing. These are (DEFRA, 2008b): repair or adapt clothing to prolong its life, and return/recycle it at the end of its life/when it is no longer wanted; wash clothes at 30°C and use eco-friendly cleaning technologies; line dry clothes whenever possible and when using dryers reduce the drying time and separate synthetic and natural fibres; buy clothing that is sustainable and buy clothes that last for longer.

Whilst Allwood *et al.* (2006) and DEFRA (2008a/b) are therefore arguably focused more on the environmental aspects of sustainability, a wider body of ethical concerns is represented by Memery *et al.* (2005) who cite three ethics and social responsibility clusters: quality and safety; human rights and ethical trading; environmental (green) issues, although it should be noted these relate specifically to the grocery market. A wider application again is given by *Ethical Consumer* [no date] magazine's product ratings across five dimensions: environment (which includes environmental reporting, nuclear power, climate change, pollution and toxins, and habitats and resources); animals (which

includes animal testing, factory farming and animal rights); people (which includes human rights, workers' rights, supply chain policy, irresponsible marketing and arms and military supply); politics (which includes political activity, boycott calls, genetic engineering, anti-social finance and company ethos); product sustainability (which includes the presence of certification schemes such as organic, fair trade, the TCO environmental label, EU Energy label, certification from the Vegan or Vegetarian Societies, or other sustainability features not covered by certification schemes). Each company is scored against each dimension, to produce an overall 'ethiscore' on a scale of zero (worst) to fifteen (best). The company ethiscore is calculated by subtracting all the corporate responsibility categories in which the research database holds criticisms from a baseline number of 14. As one of the broadest categorisations of consumer ethical issues, the Ethical Consumer ratings therefore provide a useful framework under which to group the myriad of standards which exist.

It should be noted that both Allwood (2006) and Fisher *et al.* (2008) recommend the use of product labelling or certification, in the latter case consumers stating that this is something that they would welcome. A further study by Skillfast (see Bond, 2010) found that 'the vast majority of consumers' thought that there should be some kind of regulated label or 'kitemark' for 'green' clothing (although a much smaller percentage stated that this would actually persuade them to buy those clothes), and this principle has been supported by a number of academic studies (see for example Aspers, 2008, Fisher *et al.*, 2008, Joergens, 2006). It should be noted that such consumer concerns attempt to place responsibility on the supplier; arguably a paternalistic approach to ethics, and these issues of responsibility versus paternalism on the part of suppliers may require further examination. For example, Ratner *et al.* (2008) argue that as consumers often make poor choices due to cognitive bias or limit, emotion or possessing incomplete information, such problems can be solved by 'libertarian paternalism'; interventions which guide consumers without limiting their choices, although they acknowledge that such an approach will be objectionable to some because it manipulates consumers' behaviour towards specific outcomes. However, research into consumer attitudes towards such forms of paternalism would clearly be of benefit.

It is therefore clear that whilst a number of codes and standards relevant to the clothing industry exist, these focus on a variety of specific issues. However, it is clear that there is no 'best' standard which may account for the breadth of potential concerns. Indeed, whilst issues of human rights have perhaps been the most recognisable ethical issues in clothing, Carrigan and Attalla (2001) and Joergens (2006) found that animal rights were often viewed as being more important by consumers. This therefore arguably highlights a failure in normative ethics to deal with the numerous and complex cognitive and affective concerns that consumers may have. In addition, each of the standards has been criticised from various viewpoints; either for failing to enforce the practices they promote, for providing an insufficient 'level' of 'ethicality', or for 'displacing' ethical problems (for example fair trade products causing over-supply, or organic products causing further deforestation). The question, therefore, of how ethics should be approached is therefore critical in undertaking any analysis of ethical consumption; the term 'ethics' as it applies to ethical consumption has been interpreted from a number of different standpoints (Shaw and Riach, 2011), and a consideration of how this may be approached by consumers and within the literature will be useful before proceeding. Indeed, Caruana (2007) argues that a clear definition of morality is absent from the consumption literature, and this is especially important where consumption is treated sociologically (and in qualitative studies) and not just as another cognitive factor impacting purchase decisions within the consumer's 'black box'.

Ethics and morality: clarifying the concepts

Schwartz (2010) considers there to be two overarching questions in considering a consumer ethic: what (and how serious) are the moral wrongs being committed; and is there a strong moral connection between the act of purchase and this wrongdoing (or the question of culpability)? In attempting to address these questions, at least from the perspectives of the consumers under investigation, it is important to define the key terms and understand the range of issues that are or could be considered by consumers to be ethical in clothing consumption. The first of these definitions to understand is how the term 'ethical' might be interpreted. Wiggins (2006: 9) defines ethics as: "...the philosophical study of morals or morality". The terms ethics and morality are often used interchangeably in the literature on business ethics, although Fisher (2004) argues that it

is important to understand the distinction between them when interpreting literature on the subject as claiming that an action is immoral (in that it contravenes society's accepted norms) is very different to the claim that some action is unethical (which could mean that society's norms are found wanting in some way). Here, 'morality' might therefore be considered to be rules relating to some pre-defined standards, whereas ethics is a much more abstract philosophy which deals with right and wrong, and can therefore arguably never be discovered or known. However Bauman (1993) distinguishes between morality and ethics differently; he argues that morality is a *practice* to be negotiated between agents who are continuously learning in a culture which permits the learning and change to take place. Ethics, however, relates to rules which are bestowed on people; artificially-constructed codes to which they must conform, leaving no room for moral development and negotiation. As he argues, there is a need to 'repersonalise' morality; that personal morality makes negotiation and consensus possible (and, indeed, desirable) in bringing about social change. These notions of morality characterised by practice and negotiation are significant, and will be returned to later in the thesis.

Caruana (2007) agrees, emphasising the social processes involved in framing what it means to be a 'responsible' or 'ethical' consumer. Whilst he recognises a place for cognitive (perhaps utilitarian) perspectives affecting consumer decision making, he argues that a reliance on this conception of morality may overlook these social processes. He proposes as a response three predominant conceptions of morality; a classical view based on viewing patterns of consumption in relation to dominant social structures (perhaps in line with Bauman's, 1993, conception of ethics); a constructivist perspective, under which consumers attempt to use morality in part to develop an identification of the self and social self; and a contemporary perspective, in which morality is complex and dynamic and entirely related to an individual's existential condition and their ability to self-determine right and good (consistent with Bauman's view about morality). Goals for consumers to engage in critical self-reflection may be posed in similar terms for others within organisational systems identified by Painter-Morland (2011); to develop a sense of who they are, where they come from and who they want to be. The remainder of this chapter will therefore attempt to provide some further detail around these perspectives to arrive at some conclusions around how 'ethics' should be understood for the purposes of this study.

Driver (2007) notes that a moral issue is one which may cause *harm* or *benefit* to another and there are a number of dominant ethical schools of thought. Heath (2002) provides a summary of the main strands of ethical theory which are worthy of brief consideration. Heath (2002) suggests that three types of enquiry can be distinguished: descriptive theory (which attempts to provide a factual account of a group's ethical standpoint), normative ethical theory (which Heath defines as moral theory and which relates to the principles which individuals or groups should follow), and metaethics (which focuses less on what one should do, and more on whether moral knowledge can be objective). The purpose of this study is, in many respects, to generate descriptive theory to understand the standpoint of consumers in order to better make marketing and policy decisions and this will be a recurring theme throughout the thesis. Before continuing, however, it is necessary to consider the other types (normative and metaethical theory) in order to understand the theoretical underpinning and, as Brinkmann (2004) suggests, be able to more effectively link this conceptual domain with research into consumer ethics and consumer behaviour. At the macro- and meso-levels of ethics, companies and commentators often draw on normative theories, but at the micro-level for individual consumers, as previously noted this may not be appropriate or desirable. Heath (2002) identifies normative ethics as one of two key theoretical positions as applied to the study of ethics: 'normative' ethical theory, includes consequentialist and deontological ethics, and conventional ethics, loosely associated with a metaethical position. These normative 'moral' codes which will be considered here in detail, followed by an evaluation of metaethical theory.

Heath (2002) suggests that normative ethical codes (at a basic level) can be split into two distinctive categories; those focused on what one should *do* (acts and rules), or how one should *be* (virtues or ideals). Many of the studies of ethical consumption have focused on consumers' perceptions of ethical rules and standards and intentions to act upon them (see for example Davies et al., 2012; Ma et al., 2012; Ha-Brookshire and Norum, 2011; Hyllegard et al., 2009; Iwanow et al., 2005; Littrell et al (2005) Kim et al., 1999 and Creyer and Ross, 1997). Fewer studies have focused on virtues, although many are now starting to adopt these types of approaches (see for example Garcia-Ruiz and Lluesma, 2014; Caruana, 2007; Cherrier, 2007). Similarly, authors in the field of ethical consumption have

sought to distinguish the act of 'ethical consumption' from the ontological position of 'being' an ethical consumer (Shaw and Riach, 2011).

Normative Codes: Virtue Ethics

Early theories of ethics (particularly those of the classical Greeks) focused on virtues, where moral judgements are formed on the basis of asking what type of person one would like to be. Whilst this could be seen as a subjective ethics, Mackie (1977) points to Aristotle's theory of virtue by which virtue is a disposition for making the right choices, and these virtues are 'learned' through education and knowledge. Garcia-Ruiz and Lluesma (2014) have applied virtue ethics in understanding consumption practices; they argue that this is appropriate as deontological and consequentialist thinking foster a clear distinction, and possibly an antagonism, between ethical and non-ethical consumption and cannot account for a more developmental ethics in which, as Bauman (1993) has argued in relation to morality, consumers' understanding of the good life evolves with experience and knowledge. They also argue that consequently virtue ethics provides the best 'fit' with the consumer identity work often applied to the understanding of consumption (see the next chapter for a more detailed discussion of this). Whilst this seems an attractive perspective for understanding consumers' own interpretations and perspectives on morality and how their consumption practices help them to develop this, it arguably provides little direction on the specific ethical consumption behaviours outlined at the start of this chapter. It could be argued that 'successful' ethical consumption is reliant to some degree on a sufficient awareness and understanding of the ethical issues (see the next chapter also), and as Mackie (1977) argues that this is an incomplete theory: "...a formal sketch of the structure of the good life, with the content still to be filled in." (p186).

Normative Codes: Nonconsequentialism (Deontology)

Therefore, much of the discussion in ethical consumption has focused on the *act* of ethical purchasing, and the consumer's role as a participant in the market. As Schwartz (2010) notes, two predominant conceptions of morality emerged from the Enlightenment here, which can be called into account in constructing a consumer ethic focused on answering the question of consumer culpability as previously mentioned. Firstly is that of *nonconsequentialism* – that an act may be considered right because it has some form of

inherent quality which is carried out in respect for duty. The work of Kant is based upon nonconsequentialist (deontological) theory, and Wiggins (2006) notes that as an objective ethics, there is no room for pleasure (or arguably circumstance) in Kantian ethics – merely acting in subservience to the moral law. Schwartz (2010) argues that according to Kant, the most fundamental moral duty (from which all other specific duties flow) is the duty to recognise people as rational and autonomous human beings who possess a dignity beyond all price. Thus, Schwartz and Carroll (2003) argue that the deontological standard encompasses notions of moral rights and justice and when applied to consumption more generally, this might most readily be identifiable with Rawlsian justice principles, certainly seen in the area of consumer rights. Indeed, most *codes* applied to the supply / consumption domain are based on deontological or utilitarian principles, and they are many in number; in an initial consultation process the United Nations Economic and Social Council (2005) identified over 200 initiatives and standards relevant to CSR, although McIntosh *et al.* (2003) identify eight of which are multi-sectoral and have gained global recognition (these are: the UN Global Compact; ILO conventions; OECD Guidelines; ISO 14000; the Global Reporting Initiative; The Global Sullivan Principles; SA 8000 and AA1000). However, even these voluntary principles and standards are wide in scope covering CSR, labour, environment and governance. A problem with this is, as Painter-Morland (2008) notes, this reduces ethics to an issue of compliance, with little scope within them to reflect what is really valued by an organisation's stakeholders. From a consumer research perspective, such standards are designed principally to guide businesses, and not necessarily consumer decisions (exceptions might include product certifications such as fair trade or organic), although of course code compliance may make businesses more 'ethical' in the eyes of their consumers.

In terms of consumption ethics specifically, however, there remain a number of questions in relation to deontological reasoning. Schwartz (2010) characterises the moral connection between consumers and products as 'the consumer as complicit participant'. This position asserts that making a purchase can involve a consumer in a wrongdoing, even if their individual act has no causal difference to any negative outcomes and therefore questions whether under deontological reasoning a consumer can be *culpable* if they have no knowledge of or do not seek knowledge of, the potential wrongdoing. However, Schwartz (2010) goes on to argue that any purchase which places desire for a

product above a duty to respect the dignity of persons would render an individual complicit in the act, whilst not being directly responsible for it. It could be argued this is merely the application of utilitarian reasoning, however, with consumers still deontologically responsible. Nevertheless, this raises a number of areas for debate in relation to consumer knowledge and awareness and how consumers negotiate this.

Normative Codes: Consequentialism (Teleology: Utilitarianism and Egoism)

The second response to the question of what makes an act right is that of *consequentialism*, which focuses not on the moral act itself, but the outcome (or consequence) of the act. The principle form of consequentialism is the teleological doctrine of utilitarianism (largely associated with Bentham and Mill, according to Wiggins, 2006) which includes a theory of obligation (an act is obligatory if the act will maximise 'utility', or the greatest good for the greatest number) and a theory of value (specifying what counts as 'good'). As Schwartz (2010) argues, consequentialist theory would also support the notion that consumers are morally culpable in their purchasing actions, as the purchase is often a significant part of a chain of events which may increase overall suffering (for example, where slave labour may be employed in supply chains). De Groot and Thøgersen (2015) note that many of the expectancy-valence theories of ethical consumption mentioned earlier in this chapter adopt utilitarian thinking in their approach; consumer choice is characterised as weighing up costs and benefits of ethical behaviour and factoring in personal values, with preference given to choices which result in the 'best' net benefit or utility. As Shaw et al. (2015) note, it has been argued that deontological evaluations tend to characterise broader beliefs and intentions (which are static and rooted in culture and personal histories), whereas teleological evaluations are more context-specific and tend to vary across different decisions. Rorty (1999) argues that utilitarian thinking is right in conflating the 'moral and the useful', but that it falls short in reducing human happiness to the 'accumulation of pleasures' which take no account of providing choices for alternative human lives. This type of utilitarian thinking is evident in Eckhardt *et al.* (2010), in justifying inconsistent ethical consumption choices. They find that 'rational' arguments focusing on personal utility (and predominantly reducing cost) are used by consumers to justify non-ethical product choices. (They also argue such rationalisations are culturally bound, and that this type of decision making was more evident in Australia, American and Spanish consumers.) Indeed, it could be argued also

that net value decisions (Woodall, 2003) also adopt this line of utilitarian thinking; a concept which will be explored further in chapter four. Indeed, as Shaw *et al.* (2015) argue, cognitive, rational choice approaches to trading off have been thought to include trading off self-interest against regard for others and that an ethic of the *care* highlighted by Bauman (1993) and the focus of Shaw *et al.*'s (2015) study can be manifest in teleological consumer evaluations which may be inconsistent with the wider duties and obligations also evident; it should be noted that the evaluation of purchases where teleological decision making was utilised appears to be unsatisfactory, however. This raises questions around whether utilitarian thinking can be 'other' oriented; as Bauman (1993) notes, ethical legislators have enthusiastically adopted utilitarian thinking in service to the care of the happiness of the other, but argues that this becomes merely a bureaucratic form of domination in which the 'best interests of others' can be used as an excuse for acts of cruelty, or as he explains: "The utilitarian recipe for universal happiness differs from loving care the way the latest tariff of welfare handouts differs from sharing a meal." (p103).

Schwartz and Carroll (2003) and Heath (2002) cite a second form of consequentialist theory; that of egoism (based on the philosophy of Ayn Rand, who argued that it is the only moral view compatible with capitalism); the notion that ethical theory is not required as individuals will always act in their own self-interest. Driver (2007) also argues that ethical egoism (the view that all action should be motivated by self-interest) is normative and universal; individuals will *always* act in this way. Žižek (2011) also argues that in this market-driven view of ethics people are inherently self-interested and will always be so, and what is sought is a mechanism which makes private gain work for the common good. Maitland (2002: 3) argues that self-interest should not be dismissed as being associated with or responsible for negative behaviours (such as disregard for the rights of others or greed); he contests that self-interest is inherently virtuous against each of these counts in part as satisfaction is maximised from promoting the well-being of others, and help from others and maintaining a sound reputation are required for achieving one's own goals. Whilst Žižek's (2011) objection that this is a paradox of liberalism in that the result will likely bring about the 'least worst result possible', in a consumption context, it has been suggested that the derivation of value from what have been defined as explicitly 'other-oriented' acts of morality (Holbrook, 1994) are never

entirely without a degree of self-interest and that if value is related to utility gained by a consumer, it cannot be obtained for entirely selfless reasons, and that an 'enlightened self interest' (Smith, 1999) may more readily describe a set of values which go beyond simple self-interest.

The Relevance of Normative Codes

Heath (2002) thinks it important to consider whether normative ethical codes provide: "...an important condition for successful commerce." Indeed, studies of consumer ethics have applied such codes to explain the belief formation of consumers (see for example Hunt and Vitell, 1986) and authors such as Maitland (1994) point to how normative ethical codes have been applied in 'the ethical critique of the corporation'. Whysall (2000) also highlights how deontological and teleological concepts have been applied to managerial ethical decision making in the marketing literature (noting that marketers have been 'promiscuous' in applying ethical theory). In a consumption context, Garcia-Ruiz and Rodriguez-Lluesma (2014) note that whilst deontology and teleology contain attractive arguments for proponents of ethical consumption (individuals do use principles and outcomes to evaluate their consumption decisions), they overlook other central aspects of consumption, in particular self-identity and the role of context in consumers' quests for determining who they are and making connections between life episodes.

This latter point leads to a consideration of virtue ethics, which has seen some development of interest in relation to ethical consumption as discussed earlier (Garcia-Ruiz and Rodriguez-Lluesma, 2014), and also its relationship with the concept of care (Shaw *et al.*, 2015). As Hinman (2003) notes, virtue ethics focuses on character, not actions, and that virtue according to Aristotle is "...a habit or disposition of the soul, involving both feelings and action." (p277). As Painter-Morland (2011) goes on to observe, for some virtue ethicists, the development of virtues lead to individual characters, and these virtues are developed through perceptions of value which in turn are influenced by the cultural context and circumstances in which individuals find themselves. Thus, as Garcia-Ruiz and Rodriguez-Lluesma (2014) conclude, virtues maintain individuals (and consumers) in practices and as members of a community; hence 'ethical' consumption decisions are often made for the good of communities. This in turn has led to the re-emergence of communitarian ethics as espoused, for example, by Taylor (1991). However,

it should be noted that the normative development of virtues into character assumes a consistent and singular character as a unifying form of identity. The following chapter will also return to these themes.

Towards a Pragmatist Position

Driver (2007) notes that normative ethics is concerned with how humans *ought* to act, descriptive ethics is concerned with how we do act, and metaethics is closely linked with normative ethics but is concerned with issues *about* ethics (for example: “the status of moral claims, their truth-value, whether or not there are such things as moral properties” [p5]). Ethical relativism is one such metaethical position and holds that there are no ethical frameworks which are true for everybody (Heath, 2002), and that ethical decision making is culturally and contextually grounded; that is, that the truth-value of ethical claims is relative. Schwartz and Carroll (2003) term ethical relativism ‘the conventional standard’ (as in the following of traditions). They define these conventions as: “...those standards or norms which have been accepted by the organisation, the industry, the profession or society as necessary for the proper functioning of business.” (p512). They note that these standards are relativist as the extent to which different norms are accepted will depend on different societal groups (whether cultures or industries), but they argue that this is a potential weakness and reference should therefore be made to formal codes of conduct or ethics. Indeed, Hinman (2003) agrees that there are weaknesses with relativist ethical positions as cultures or groups may (and probably do or will) overlap, cultures contain internal diversity and relativism raises the question of how one should conduct oneself when living or working within another culture. Studies of ethical consumption have sought to conduct such cross-cultural analyses (see for example Kim *et al.*, 2010; Babakus *et al.*, 2004, Sims and Gegez, 2004; Vitell and Paolillo, 2004, Armstrong, 1996). However, the resulting problems are demonstrated by Hinman (2003), who concedes that whilst relativism may be partially valid as a means of understanding people’s values and behaviour, he notes five key arguments against it as an ethical *doctrine* (that is, something which may be used for guidance): firstly, that although we might recognise that diversity exists, it should not lead to the conclusion that others cannot make judgements about the values held by other cultures. Secondly, that absolutist (or normative) claims could be made against relativism (although this will

be dealt with shortly). Thirdly, that relativism may be self-defeating as a doctrine of action. Whilst relativism may appear to encourage tolerance, it raises the question of how one should act in societies which one believes to be intolerant. Relativism could commit one to this position (that is, 'when in Rome...'). Penultimately, relativism is based on the value of tolerance, but this raises the question of why tolerance should be placed above other values. Finally, Hinman suggests that relativism is 'morally isolationist'. That is, if relativism holds that other cultures' values cannot be criticised, then: "...neither can *they* criticise *us*... It insulates against criticism from the outside." (Hinman, 2003: 48). Also, he argues that relativism inevitably leads into subjectivism; just as values may be shaped by culture, they may also be shaped by individual experiences and an extension of relativist thought is that personal morals are valid only for the individual and after this there is no moral argument for judging the values of others. He also proposes that, just as with Mackie's (1977) criticism of Aristotle's theory of virtue, absolutist standards are incomplete pictures of morality and that those who believe in the 'absolute truth' of a normative code: "...are rarely motivated to look beyond their own beliefs for further enlightenment." (Hinman, 2003: 53).

Bauman (1993: 10) also notes that in the postmodern perspective: "...a non-aporetic, non-ambivalent morality, an ethics that is universal and 'objectively founded', is a practical impossibility; perhaps also an *oxymoron*, a contradiction in terms." Bauman argues that humans are not inherently good or evil, but are ambivalent (as suggested in the ethical consumption domain (Valor, 2007), and that: "No logically coherent ethical code can 'fit' the essentially ambivalent condition of morality... What follows is that moral conduct cannot be guaranteed..." (Bauman, 1993: 10). Wiggins (2006: 328-329) also agrees, highlighting that:

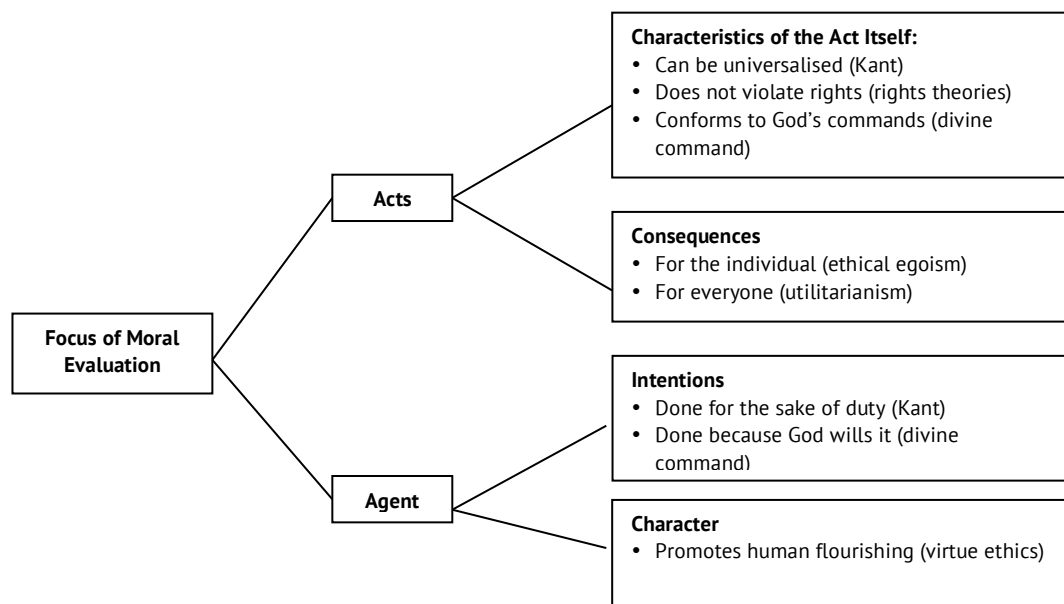
...the oft-repeated failure of moral philosophy... [is] to settle peacefully for any utilitarian aim or deontological aim or other specific aim as 'the (overall) aim of morality'. In truth... the real aim of morality is inseparable from the everyday meaning of everyday life... It is something practically apparent but apparent only within the business of life itself.

As Bauman (1993) concludes, there are complexities which characterise human and social life to which there are no ready solutions. However, he rejects political means, codes and rules to arrive at such solutions, instead recognising the power of individual and personal

moral responsibility and calls for the 'reawakening' of the individual moral *conscience*. He suggests here that this conscience is based on impulse; this precedes decision making and logic and that moral decisions based on such logic (such as teleological decision making) results in the loss of ability to be moral. Thus, consumer responses to the moral obligations they face are varied, and possibly even ad-hoc, steeped in judgements based on impulse.

Therefore, as a response to the criticisms levelled against both normative and relativist ethical positions but viewing the tolerance and contextuality that relativism affords as desirable, Hinman (2003) therefore proposes ethical pluralism which holds that several moral standards may be relevant depending on the specific situation; sometimes these moral standards will produce the same result, sometimes they will conflict. In terms of the range of standards which may be considered, Hinman includes both acts and agents as the focus of moral evaluation as follows in figure 2:

Figure 2: The Objects of Moral Evaluation (Hinman, 2003: 56)



Thus, according to Hinman (2003), pluralism recognises that individuals may have many standards of value, which may not necessarily be consistent with one another; it views a lack of compatibility and disagreement as being positive in helping understanding of how to arrive at a best course of action, without it amounting to a relativist position. As Taylor (1991) argues, global problems (and especially environmental problems) can only be

addressed when individuals arrive at a common consciousness. A pluralist position therefore rejects a theory of non-contradiction upon which typical rational logic is based, and may account for the inconsistent ways in which consumers may make trade-offs. Bauman (1993) agrees that 'ours are the times of pluralism', but highlights the 'messy' situation in which this leaves moral decision making, and referring back to the quotation at the beginning of this chapter, presents individuals with a 'crisis' as a consequence of responsibility, emancipation and autonomy.

In discounting both absolutist and relativist moral perspectives, this pluralist rejection of the philosophical position of non-contradiction and arriving at common consciousness connects with the philosophical school of pragmatism; as Painter-Morland and ten Bos (2011) argue, pragmatism can provide: "...a generic approach from which 'a reasonable pluralism' may be shown to arise." (p41). Talisse (2012) also acknowledges the consistency between pragmatism and pluralism, as he notes that pragmatism is rooted in the practice of inquiry, and that an epistemological pluralism holds that moral knowledge is incomplete, but remains open to the prospect that it could be complete if further inquiry was to be undertaken.

Bernstein (2010) notes that what is now referred to as the 'pragmatic maxim' was first proposed by Peirce in 1898: "Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object." (Peirce, in Bernstein, 2010: 3). As Bernstein (2010) notes, this challenges the subject-object distinction, arguing that consciousness cannot be separated from content which forms the basis of William James' 'pragmatic pluralism'. According to Bernstein, this plurality recognises we should not necessarily deny unity or order, but asks questions about how much unity exists and what kind of unity is meant. Thus, pragmatists do not worry about whether something accurately represents reality, but whether it will usefully serve its purpose. They do not pursue truth for its own sake; the purpose of inquiry is to seek agreement on a best course of action. Indeed, Rorty (1999) argues that the 'old' distinctions between the absolute and the relative, the 'found and the made' are not particularly helpful, and that the right question to ask is: "... For what purposes would it be useful to hold that belief?" (Rorty, 1999: xxiv).

As Ayer (1991) observes, William James built upon the work of Peirce, as his allegiance was to pluralism, but he recognised the notion of a truth which is guided by experience; that is, that truth is characterised by an epistemological dualism and ideas become or are made true by events. A further dimension of pragmatism, therefore, is that morality is not a set of principles which guide everything and which must be followed, but, as Dewey (in Gouinlock, 1994) describes, it is characterised by 'ends in view', or 'endless ends', as new habits and experiences come into view. Thus the postmodern view (Bauman, 1993) is underpinned by pluralism and pragmatism, in that for pragmatists and postmodernists, morality is relational to the given situation at any time.

Inglehart and Welzel (2005) support this to some degree by observing the rise of 'self-expression values' and the empowerment brought about by human emancipation. They suggest that rather than promote selfishness, this trend maximises human well-being, forcing organisations to be responsive to people as they become increasingly empowered, and it is for these reasons that issues such as fair trade and sustainability have become important to consumers. However, this is perhaps an overly simplistic response to the postmodern condition in which society finds itself. As Bauman (1997) notes, this is both a step forward (as Inglehart and Welzel suggest) and a retreat; a retreat as postmodernism creates 'vagabonds', who constantly move positions driven by disillusionment, and 'tourists', who: "...pay for their freedom... the right to spin their own web of meanings, they obtain in a commercial transaction." (p241). The issue of 'values' raised by Inglehart and Welzel (2005) and how these relate to ethics and purchase behaviour also requires further examination, and this will be addressed in the following chapter.

Summary and Conclusions

As the preceding discussion has attempted to argue, in attempting to evaluate ethical decision making in buyer behaviour ethical arguments for and against particular moral acts and values should not be considered from a normative perspective as normative standards cannot account for the complex context in which such ethical decision making should occur, and the 'moral truths' which have been claimed to exist do not. However, relativist approaches cannot provide sufficient guidance in terms of what might be

considered to be right and wrong. The postmodern perspective supplemented by the practice implications of pluralism and pragmatism, however, recognise that differing values do exist. It is important to note that whilst the relativist view may give an accurate perspective on morality, there still remains the problem that humans do not exist in isolation and there must be some discussion and agreement on moral standards and codes if society is to sustain a just and fulfilling existence for all its members. The existence of industry standards and certifications such as fair trade suggest that there is at least some desire to achieve this aim, and a pluralist approach may assist in reaching some such agreement; this will be an important aspect of the latter sections of this thesis. Whilst, as Feldman (1998) notes, the postmodern perspective does not necessarily provide *answers*, recognising plurality and the pragmatic approach offers the ability to understand contrasting points of view through a descriptive account of ethical decision making, and this discourse and analysis may usefully be employed to reach greater clarity on the underlying reasoning behind consumer decisions and evaluations. **A key objective of the research must therefore be to explore the role of moral evaluation in the consumption of clothing.** In doing so, the research should account for three salient issues: the meanings and practices evident in consumers' everyday lives; the complexities inherent within them; and the existence of a variety of objects of this moral evaluation.

Chapter 3

Ethical consumption: development and distinctions

Intentions without trade-offs are suspect.
(Devinney et al., 2010: 173)

Having argued the case for a meta-ethical perspective and established the need to uncover consumers' ethical aspirations, identities and perceptions of power, a brief discussion of the development of the field will be necessary. In order to synthesise the key debates in the field of ethical consumption, this theory development can be split broadly into four distinct types:

- 'Classical' marketing perspectives (segmentation and consumer motivations)
- Psychological perspectives (expectancy-belief models and value-norm models)
- Sociological perspectives
- Problems of ethical consumption: gaps, tragedies, myths, barriers and complexities

Each of these broad perspectives will be explored in turn:

Marketing Perspectives

...a Conventional Marketing Segmentation Problem
Anderson and Cunningham (1972: 23)

Firstly studies classified here as 'marketing perspectives' have largely attempted to apply traditional marketing segmentation techniques. These studies can be further split broadly into two camps: either those which attempt to discover *who* ethical consumers are (that is, their personal sociodemographic, psychographic or other traits), and studies which attempt to understand the ethical motivations of consumer groups. Regarding the former,

Anderson and Cunningham (1972: 23) were perhaps the first to recognise that in response to increasing consumer demands for social responsibility: “...the issue has shifted from one of corporate social responsibility to a more conventional market segmentation problem.” Indeed, an early and continuing aspect of the ethical consumption literature is segmentation-based. In an early study, Anderson and Cunningham (1972) attempt to discover who socially conscious consumers are by segmenting by demographic and sociopsychological variables. They find that those with a higher social consciousness possess certain characteristics (as shown in figure 3), but that there were not any statistically significant relationships across a number of variables, namely income, educational attainment and stage in the family life cycle.

Figure 3: Relationship between selected variables and social consciousness

Variable	High Social Consciousness	Low Social Consciousness
Occupation of the household head	Higher status occupations	Lower status occupations
Annual family income	NS	NS
Education of the household head	NS	NS
Socioeconomic status	Above average socio-economic status	Average and lower socio-economic status
Age of the household head	Pre-middle age	Middle age and older
Stage in the family life-cycle	NS	NS
Alienation	Less alienated	More alienated
Dogmatism	Less dogmatic	More dogmatic
Conservatism	Less conservative	More conservative
Status consciousness	Less status conscious	More status conscious
Personal competence	Less personally competent	More personally competent
Cosmopolitanism	More cosmopolitan	Less cosmopolitan

Source: Anderson and Cunningham, 1972: 30

**(NS = Not significant)*

Further studies have attempted to demonstrate links between various ‘profile’ characteristics and ethical motivation. For example, age (Ha-Brookshire and Norum, 2011; Rawwas and Singhapakdi, 1998; Vitell *et al.*, 1991), gender (Pinto, *et al.*, 2014; Ha-Brookshire and Norum, 2011 Babakus *et al.*, 2004), religion (Ramasamy *et al.* 2010; Cornwell *et al.*, 2005), culture (Kim *et al.*, 2010; Vitell and Paolillo, 2004, Armstrong, 1996) and nationality (Babakus *et al.*, 2004, Sims and Gegez, 2004). These studies tend to conclude that these characteristics are important predictors of consumer ethical motivations and attitudes, although there is some inconsistency of results with regard to such factors. Other authors argue that such demographic profiling is inherently unstable

and that psychographic criteria (Straughan and Roberts, 1999) or ethical motivation (McGoldrick and Freestone, 2008) provide the most effective basis for profiling ethical consumer behaviour. Devinney *et al.* (2010: 8) go so far as to argue that predictive demographic characteristics are ‘simplistic’ and ‘prove unfounded’. Indeed, as argued in the previous chapter, such simplistic models of causation cannot account for the complex, inconsistent and contradictory contexts in which ethical decision making is likely to occur.

Bridging the two groups of studies are segmentation models of ethical motivation such as that of Cowe and Williams (in Nicholls and Opal, 2005), who classify UK consumers into five segments (also drawing on sociodemographic factors):

Figure 4: Classification of UK ethical consumers

Segment	Characteristics	Total market share (%)
Global watchdogs	Ethical hardliners. Affluent professionals typically 35-55 years old, well-educated, metropolitan and mainly South East based, feel powerful as consumers.	5
Brand generation	Ethical issues secondary to brand, but can augment brand value. Young (one third are under 25), often students, tend to rent housing, Midlands/North based, aware of their power as consumers but only occasionally use it.	6
Conscientious consumers	Driven primarily by value and quality (defined to include ethics as one variable). Relatively up-market, not brand aware, conservative, Midlands and South East based, feel some power as consumers.	18
‘Look after my own’	Little ethical motivation. Young, on low incomes, typically live in the North and Scotland, high percentage of unemployed, often feel powerless as consumers.	22
‘Do what I can’	Weak ethical motivation but still present). Older (a quarter over 65), home owners, typically live outside London, sometimes feel powerless as consumers.	49

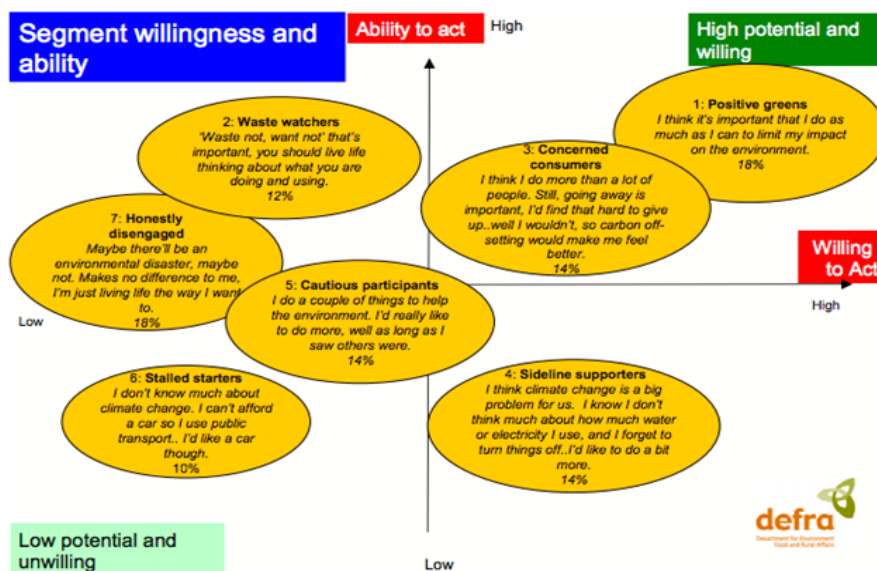
Source: Cowe and Williams (2000, in Nicholls and Opal, 2005: 186)

Whilst the research was based on a reasonably limited intercept sample of 2000, Nicholls and Opal (2005) argue that the segments which offer the most potential growth for ethical products and services are the ‘Global Watchdogs’ and ‘Conscientious Customers’, with the ‘Do What I Cans’ also ‘showing promise’. Similarly, the UK Government

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), as part of their drive to improve sustainable consumption practices in the late 2000s also developed a model to show the ability and willingness of the population at large to adopt the behaviour changes DEFRA identified as part of their drive towards greater sustainability (DEFRA, 2008). Supporting this model is a segmentation framework (shown in figure 5) to better understand how approaches can be tailored for different groups. The environmental segmentation model (ESM) identifies seven clusters, each representing a distinct set of attitudes and beliefs towards the environment, environmental issues and behaviours, including ecological worldview, sociogeodemographics, lifestyle, attitudes towards behaviours and current behaviours, motivations and barriers, and knowledge and engagement. (DEFRA, 2008).

Like the Cowe and Williams (in Nicholls and Opal, 2005) model, these segments are considered in terms of their ability to act (although Cowe and Williams discuss this in the narrower context of the subject's perception of their power as a consumer).

Figure 5: DEFRA's Environmental Segmentation Model (DEFRA, 2008: 8)



However, unlike the Cowe and Williams model, DEFRA's ESM is not restricted to those proactive consumers identified as 'ethically motivated' and covers the entire (UK) population, including those that may be reactive or not ethically aware / motivated (although Cowe and Williams' 'Look After My Owns' clearly lack any significant motivation). In the DEFRA model, three segments contain the most willing to act and

have relatively high potential to do more. Segment one (Positive Greens) could be considered to be comparable to Cowe and Williams' 'Global Watchdogs', and segment three (Concerned Consumers) are broadly similar to 'Conscientious Consumers' in that their environmental views are less strong, but this is one aspect of their personality and possible derived value. Cowe and Williams' 'Look After My Owns' broadly encapsulate segments six and seven in the DEFRA model. Drawing these parallels, it is interesting to note that the percentages of the population attributed to each segment are reasonably consistent, except with those at the 'top end' of ethical motivation, with DEFRA's 'Positive Greens' accounting for 18% and Cowe and Williams' 'Global Watchdogs' only 5%. (which could be accounted for changes occurring in the eight-year period between the studies). In line with the arguments put forward in the previous chapter, neither model addresses the pluralistic question of whether consumers might fall under different classifications in terms of their likelihood to respond to different issues, and it could be argued that these models should not be considered as one- or two-dimensional frameworks as there may be other variables which overlap, or they may be time- or circumstance-specific. Again, a descriptive account of moral evaluation may provide further direction in this regard.

The second sub-field of literature under marketing perspectives has sought to understand the attitudes and motivations of ethical consumer groups, with a focus on the 'likelihood' of ethical purchase. Most of these studies refer to proactive '*positive purchasing*' behaviour and often in relation to fair trade or organic products, although it is recognised that such behaviour only comprises one of the many ways in which consumers may exhibit ethical behaviour (Harrison, Newholm and Shaw, 2005). In 'early' studies the stated importance of ethics appears to be relatively high. For example, Creyer and Ross (1997) present the results of a survey of US consumers' attitudes to ethical behaviour which claims that ethics is an important purchase consideration and consumers will reward those seen as ethical by a willingness to pay higher prices, and punish those which are not seen as ethical, not necessarily by not purchasing, but by wanting to purchase at lower prices (it is important to note that ethical and unethical behaviours were not specified here.) Kim *et al.* (1999) present one of the first studies directly related to clothing in which they examine the relative importance of socially responsible attitudes, alongside catalogue shopping involvement and product-related attributes, as predictors of consumers' intentions to purchase clothing. Similarly to Creyer and Ross

(1997) they conclude that social responsibility is an important predictor in clothing purchase intention, although desire for individuality exerts the greatest influence. As can be seen, some of these earlier studies of ethical consumption tend towards the 'optimistic'; ethical concerns are generally seen to be of importance to consumers (although not necessarily *the* most important as highlighted by Creyer and Ross, 1997). Indeed, Connolly and Shaw (2006) argue that research suggests consumer concern for ethical issues is increasing, and Shaw *et al.* (2006: 439) argue that: "Consumers are calling for ethical products to be available on the high street..."

The results of Littrell *et al.*'s (2005) survey also show that despite generational differences with regard to political and social attitudes and style, quality and value in clothing: "...all groups held strong views related to fair trade ideology and global responsibility." (p415). Hyllegard *et al.*'s (2009) quantitative study of 'Generation Y' consumers' attitudes to fair trade advertising messages in the clothing industry finds that attitudes towards advertisements communicating fair labour principles are more positive than those using sex to sell the products; therefore: "...apparel retailers... might consider invoking fair labour messages as a promotional strategy." (p122). Mohr and Webb (2005) find that consumers value corporate social responsibility and this is an important factor in purchase decisions regardless of product parity or price, and Schlegelmilch *et al.* (1996) find that environmental awareness *may* impact on consumers' purchase decisions (although note that other moderating factors are likely to be significant). Other studies have continued this theme. For example: Schröder and McEachern (2004) examine ethical attitudes towards animal welfare standards in food purchase; Cailleba and Casteran (2010) examine customer loyalty in the purchase of fair trade coffee; Ha-Brookshire and Norum (2011) find that over half of their respondents were willing to pay more for US-grown, organic or sustainable cotton shirts, and Ma *et al.* (2012) find that young females possess positive attitudes towards buying fair trade products. Davies *et al.* (2012) examine different product types and find that ethics is more likely to be a consumer concern in commodities than for luxury goods.

These studies are based on positivist epistemologies, often through the use of surveys, on questioning respondents' attitudes, and which consequently make recommendations to the marketers of 'ethical' products. However, four issues arise: firstly, as Strong (1997)

notes, there are a number of problems in encouraging consumers to buy 'ethically'. Whilst these problems are focused on fair trade principles, they may have 'equivalence' to other ethical concerns. They are: problems in communicating the human (rather than environmental) element of sustainability, consumer commitment to the cause and consistency buying behaviour, and the availability of fair trade products. Second is the gap between stated attitudes and actual behaviour. Worcester and Dawkins (2005) point to MORI research which suggests that the public claim to be concerned about ethical issues in buying products and services, but stress that there is marked gap between attitude and action and that: "...consumer behaviour lags behind the stated level of concern about ethical issues." (as previously stated, they argue that this is largely due to the ineffective communication of ethical issues to consumers). These problems will be examined in more detail in due course in the final section of this chapter. The third issue relates to the research methods used in studies of ethical consumption. There are two considerations here. First is the likelihood of social desirability bias (this will be examined in more detail in chapter five). Also, the studies of the ethical concerns of consumers in the clothing market highlighted above are based upon narrow samples or are contradictory. For example Davies *et al.* (2012), Ma *et al.* (2012), Ha-Brookshire and Norum (2011), Hyllegard *et al.* (2009), Valor (2007) and Joergens (2006) are based upon samples of University students; it could be argued that students are more informed and politicised with regard to issues of ethics (Hyllegard *et al.*, 2009, Klein, 2001, Houghteling, 1999). Studies of the 'general' consumer are inconclusive; Iwanow *et al.* (2005) and Littrell *et al.* (2005) are based upon convenience samples of mail survey or shopping centre customers, but the former finds that ethics is not an important concern whereas the latter finds that ethics are an important dimension of customer wants, although as previously discussed these wants will not necessarily be translated into actions. Fourth, aligned with their positivist epistemological positions, these heavily statistically-driven surveys are often based on objectivist ontological assumptions and tightly defined normative characterisations of ethics. That is, 'ethicality' is defined from a range of desirable or undesirable actions which are defined and tested through the use of quantitative scales, whereas as the previous chapter demonstrated, morality is much more likely to be subjectively determined, pluralistic and fluid, and correspondingly the more relevant challenge for consumer researchers in this field is to explore individual moral consciousness as a basis for decision making.

A number of studies have therefore emerged which are largely objective in ontological framing and positivist in epistemological assumptions, largely quantitative in nature (certainly until relatively recently, qualitative studies of ethical consumption are few and far between), and which have aimed to estimate the potential size of ethical markets and make recommendations to marketers by testing respondents' attitudes towards particular ethical issues. Whilst the normative approach to ethics adopted by this study has this been argued to be inappropriate, this summary indicates, there are a number of additional problems and pitfalls highlighted by these studies. The final section in this chapter aims to examine these in more detail; to challenge some of the claims made, and examine the more critical approach which has emerged in recent years.

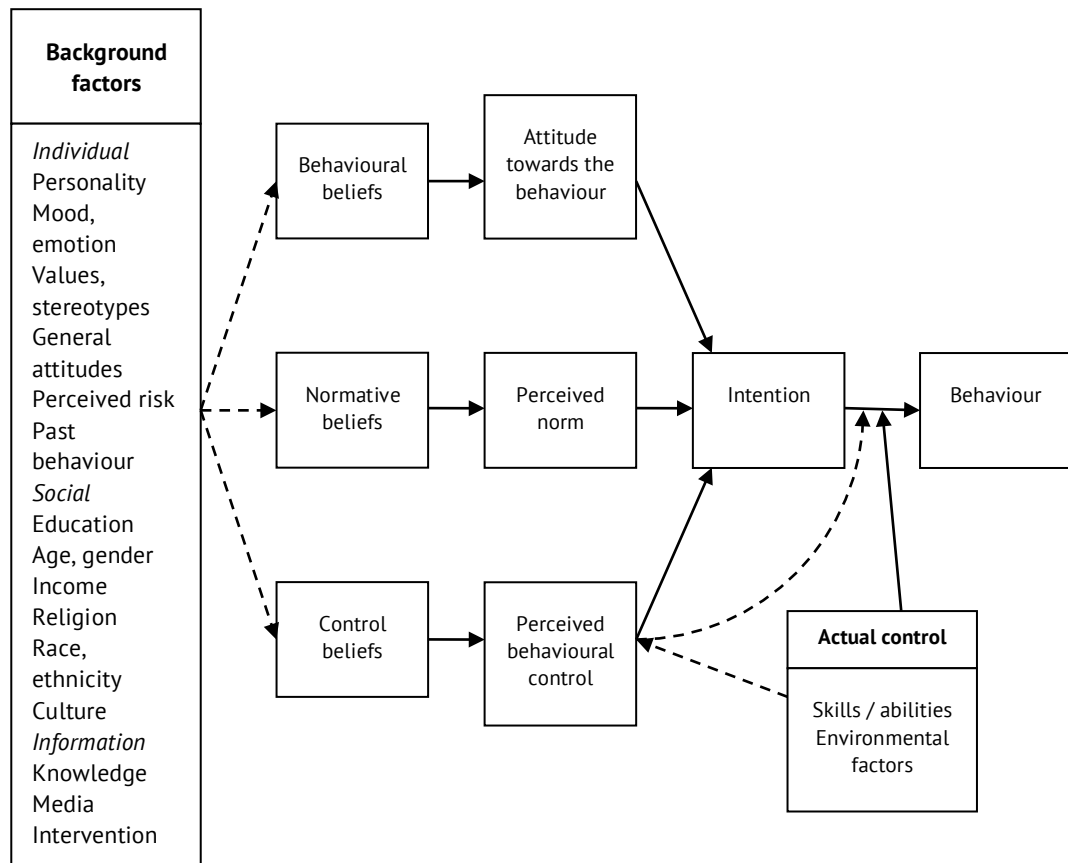
Psychological Perspectives

A second major area of literature seeks to understand consumers' ethical decision-making, largely from a psychological perspective. These studies tend to fall into one of two broad fields; those utilising expectancy-value models, and those utilising 'moral norm' or value-belief models (De Groot and Thøgersen, 2015; Stern, 2000). Expectancy-value models consider the costs and benefits of particular (ethical) behaviours (expectancy), and weigh them against personal values, with those behaviours resulting in the greatest net benefit or utility being chosen on the basis that societal utility is maximised when individual utility is maximised, but also based on deontological moral norms about the right thing to do (De Groot, Schubert and Thøgersen, 2016). Whilst such approaches run counter to the pluralist moral approach as discussed previously, Brinkmann (2004) argues, there is (until that point, at least) a focus within the consumer behaviour and business ethics literature on decision-making process models and many of the earlier studies are characterised by this approach, with many falling into this category applying the theory of planned behaviour to the study of ethical consumption (see for example, Carrington *et al.*, 2010; Shaw *et al.*, 2000, Shaw and Clarke, 1999, Sparks and Shepherd, 1992). As such, they are worthy of further consideration here.

Expectancy-Value Models: The Theories of Reasoned Action and Planned Behaviour

Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) present a brief chronology of the development of the Theories of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and Reasoned Action (TRA), noting that they first proposed the Theory of Reasoned Action in 1980. The TRA attempted to link attitudes with behaviour in order to allow a prediction of behaviour and to enable an understanding of how to change behaviour (that is, the purpose of the TRA is to try to explain or predict behaviour; Fishbein and Ajzen [2010] note that this could be in many domains, but focus principally on organisational, political and discriminatory behaviours, not consumer behaviour). The TRA was based on Fishbein's earlier expectancy-value model, which proposed that an individual's attitude is determined by beliefs about the likely outcomes of performing a particular behaviour (known as behavioural beliefs), weighted by the individual's evaluations of those outcomes. Added to this was the 'subjective norm', which represents the pressure the perceived views of others exerts on engaging in a behaviour. The TRA also included 'background' factors such as demographics, personality traits and other individual variables. After a brief diversion of careers, Ajzen then added the construct of 'perceived behavioural control' to account for the notion that an individual would be aware of factors which may enable or prevent the behaviour. The revised and most recent version has accounted for these developments, and is presented in figure 6:

Figure 6: Schematic presentation of the reasoned action model



Source: Fishbein and Ajzen, 2010: 22

The TRA proposes that intention is the most important predictor of behaviour, and this is influenced by combinations of attitudinal (positive or negative evaluations of engaging in the behaviour), normative (social pressure) and control (ability to engage in the behaviour, or *self-efficacy*) considerations. Behavioural, normative and control beliefs are underpinned by a variety of ‘background’ factors grouped as individual (including the values previously discussed), social or information factors. Sparks and Shepherd (1992) apply the model to the study of ‘green consumers’ and find that the role of ‘self identity’ is also important as a separate construct from attitude in applying the TRA to ‘moral considerations’. Self-identity here is contrasted to attitude or behaviour by the following line of thought: “I would enjoy doing A, and I think I should do A (or B), but I am the type of person more oriented to doing C.” (Biddle *et al.*, in Sparks and Shepherd, 1992: 389). The inclusion of self identity is also supported by Shaw *et al.* (2000) and Hustvedt and Dickson (2009). The notion of self identity is particularly important in the context of this study, and this theme will be developed in the following section, although it is worth noting here that it is recognised by many authors that expressing self-identity through

clothing in particular is significant, particularly for young people; see for example Dodd et al. and Lodziak (in Valor, 2007), Woodruffe-Burton (2001). It should also be noted that the self-identity reported by Biddle above is characterised by the 'rational agent'; one who plans and has an integrated and consistent sense of self, whereas the notion of the fluid sense of self is one which is likely to be more appropriate as explored in chapter two.

Shaw *et al* (2000) also note that in addition to self-identity many authors have also argued for the inclusion of 'ethical obligation': "...an individual's internalised ethical rules, which reflect their personal beliefs about right and wrong." (Shaw *et al*, 2000: 882). Ethical obligation thus relates to an individual's 'internalised' personal moral beliefs or values. Shaw *et al* argue that these two additional factors (self-identity and ethical obligation) are more significant factors than attitude and subjective norm in making ethical purchases. Significantly, both self-identity and ethical obligation are closely related to an individual's values, and there is likely be a strong conceptual link between the values identified in the TRA and self-identity and ethical obligation.

However, the TRA is limited in its application to the total consumption process for a number of reasons. Firstly, as Shaw et al. (2000) note, models such as the TRA are more suited to self-interested behaviours and are deficient in explaining ethical or moral motivations. Following from this, it is also not guaranteed that maximising individual utility will result in optimal aggregate outcomes. Secondly it assumes that a consumer's intentions to purchase are consistent with ethical judgement (Chatzidakis *et al.*, 2006). Thirdly, Sheppard et al (1988) note that the Theory of Reasoned Action is only effective when the subject has full control over a particular behaviour. However, a lack of information or ability to make a particular purchase could arguably lead to loss of control, and more widely the TRA is based on a series of assumptions about human agency, which the TPB explains through the addition of behavioural control, but the implications of which will be explored in the following section.

Value-Belief / Moral Norm Models

Partly in response to some of the shortcomings highlighted above, a second set of literature drawing on psychological perspectives has focused on deontologically-based moral norms (Thøgersen , 1996) and value theory. In an environmental-behaviour setting

Stern (2000) has termed this value-belief norm theory, based on the values-based work of Schwartz, and it recognises that there is an inherent link between an individual's values and both their ethics and their behaviour. Indeed, it is widely accepted in the field of consumer behaviour that values constitute a central influence which determines consumers' consumption behaviours (see for example Evans *et al.*, 2009; Blackwell *et al.*, 2006; Solomon *et al.*, 2006, Lages *et al.*, 2004), and studies in ethical consumption have begun to adopt this perspective (see for example Jägel *et al.*, 2012; de Groot and Steg, 2010; Shaw *et al.*, 2005). Furthermore, Smith (1999) argues that the role of values are essential in differentiating between consumption behaviour which may be considered to be 'wrong' (as with the 'consumer ethics' discussed in the previous chapter) and consumer behaviour which is a deliberate attempt to do good; as Jägel *et al.* (2012) and Shaw *et al.* (2005) note, values serve as guiding principles and therefore play a significant role in determining ethical consumption. Kahle and Kennedy (1988) note that values influence consumer behaviour, and that through the means–end chain of causation: "...the function of marketing is to help consumers fulfil their values" (p50), and Bloemer and Dekker (2007) argue that values are significant antecedents of customer satisfaction, and likewise, values and ethics are connected as ethical behaviour is claimed to be a product of values (Andrews, in Joyner and Payne, 2002). Joyner and Payne (2002) argue that values are shaped by an individual's culture, and that these values are passed down from generation to generation. They go on to argue that the growth of the inclusion of ethics in business will increase the 'cultural pull' to be ethical. As previously mentioned, Inglehart and Welzel (2005) support the notion of an increasing desire to 'be ethical' by arguing the 'self expression' values which are characterised by autonomous choice are rising internationally, and linked with this is not a decline in 'anti-civic' activity, but a rise in 'issue-oriented' forms of participation. However, rather than focusing on the 'cultural pull' they focus on autonomy which is self-selected and co-ordinated according to common interests. Here, they liken the shift from the 'old' membership of bureaucratic organisations to this new autonomously selected membership of issue-oriented groups to Durkheim's identification of the transition from 'mechanical solidarity' to 'organic solidarity'.

The development of the concept of values is perhaps influenced most by Rokeach (1973), who defines a value as: "...an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state

of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or state of existence” (p5). Therefore, values can be concerned with modes of conduct (instrumental values) or desirable end-states of existence (terminal values). According to Rokeach, terminal values may be personal (self-centred or intrapersonal, as perhaps with the concept of egoism as previously discussed, but also perhaps relating to ‘peace of mind’) or social (society-centred or interpersonal). Instrumental values consist of moral values (a narrow conception which relates to modes of behaviour and the types of values related to interpersonal instrumental values which have the potential to arouse guilt for wrongdoing), and competence values (self-actualisation values not related to morality but rather shame due to personal inadequacy, for example). The notion of ‘end states’ is thus an important one. Baudrillard (1998) notes that products serve a practical purpose, but act as elements of ‘higher order’ states which have social meanings attached such as prestige or comfort. He argues that the field of consumption relates to these higher order states, rather than the product features which relate to its use.

Gutman (1982) links these two notions by proposing that values are linked to behaviour through the means-end chain, which aims to explain how the attributes of different product or service choices facilitate the achievement of end states, or terminal values. Jägel et al. (2012) have applied a means-end chain approach to ethical clothing consumption in which they find that although they find coding the complexities problematic within the hierarchical value maps, value for money and style conflict with ethical concerns resulting in ‘value trade-offs.’

The issue with complexity in choice was discussed earlier; Gutman argues that when faced with complexity, consumer thinking is managed through ‘categorisation processes’ through which consumers group products or services by features which are emphasised or ignored. Whilst the grouping is based upon the properties (or features) of the product or service, those properties focused upon are influenced by values (it should be noted that Gutman [1982] cites the work of Howard who proposes that terminal values influence products whilst instrumental values influence brands. However, Gutman ignores instrumental values in means-end analysis as terminal values are the highest order values). Vargo and Lusch (2004) argue that the importance of the achievement of higher-order benefits through the purchase of goods has increased, and that these needs are

often associated with the provision of satisfaction (therefore contributing to their argument that goods are best viewed as distribution mechanisms for service). Schwartz (1994: 20) summarises these perspectives by noting that there is widespread agreement that values share five conceptual features: firstly that a value is a belief, and secondly that these beliefs relate to desirable end states (terminal values) or modes of conduct (instrumental values). Thirdly that values transcend specific situations, and fourthly they: “...guide selection or evaluation of behaviour, people and events.” Finally, that values are ordered in terms of relative importance to form a system of value priorities.

Gutman (1982) notes that the achievement of terminal values may often be a subconscious process, and therefore identifies three levels of distinctions: values (end states of existence), consequences (outcomes for the consumer), and grouping (product attributes and grouping them with similar products). Zeithaml (1988) contextualises this to propose that means-end chains allow a differentiation of different levels of abstraction, from product attributes through to value levels (where instrumental values precede terminal values). It has been argued that means-end theory is the most effective explanation of consumers’ buying behaviour (see for example Paul et al., 2009 and Zeithaml, 1988), and has been applied to the ethical consumption context by Jägel et al. (2012). However, it could be argued that these approaches adopt largely utilitarian reasoning in assuming consumers optimise features to achieve a particular (fixed and enduring) end goal, the problems with which were previously highlighted. Before discussing the implications of this, further, it is important to further explore the nature of the values identified by Rokeach (1973).

Rokeach (1973) identifies a number of characteristics of values which may be of importance in the context of this study: firstly, that values are enduring as they are taught or learned to be absolute, but they are also relative in that values may be ordered in terms of importance in situations where several values may compete (and so they ‘assist’ in conflict resolution and decision making). Secondly, a value is a belief upon which one acts through choice and which has both cognitive, affective and behavioural (conative) components, and thirdly that values are versatile; they may be shared or not shared, applied to oneself or others or they may be employed as double standards. The relationships between these values can be characterised by the value system, which

Rokeach (1973) defines as: “... an enduring organisation of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of relative importance” (p5). Rokeach notes that a variety of theorists have placed the total number of terminal values an individual may possess between two and twenty eight, with several times that number of instrumental values, although he proposes a list of eighteen instrumental and terminal values as follows:

Figure 7: Rokeach's terminal and instrumental values

Terminal value	Instrumental value
A comfortable life (a prosperous life)	Ambitious (hard-working, aspiring)
An exciting life (a stimulating, active life)	Broadminded (open-minded)
A sense of accomplishment (lasting contribution)	Capable (competent, effective)
A world at peace (free of war and conflict)	Cheerful (lighthearted, joyful)
A world of beauty (beauty of nature and the arts)	Clean (neat, tidy)
Equality (brotherhood, equal opportunity for all)	Courageous (standing up for your beliefs)
Family security (taking care of loved ones)	Forgiving (willing to pardon others)
Freedom (independence, free choice)	Helpful (working for the welfare of others)
Happiness (contentedness)	Honest (sincere, truthful)
Inner harmony (freedom from inner conflict)	Imaginative (daring, creative)
Mature love (sexual and spiritual intimacy)	Independent (self-reliant, self-sufficient)
National security (protection from attack)	Intellectual (intelligent, reflective)
Pleasure (an enjoyable, leisurely life)	Logical (consistent, rational)
Salvation (saved, eternal life)	Loving (affectionate, tender)
Self-respect (self-esteem)	Obedient (dutiful, respectful)
Social recognition (respect, admiration)	Polite (courteous, well-mannered)
True friendship (close companionship)	Responsible (dependable, reliable)
Wisdom (a mature understanding of life)	Self-controlled (restrained, self-disciplined)

Whilst several authors have rejected Rokeach's values as not relating closely enough to most of life's major roles, including consumption (Bloemer and Dekker, 2007; Kahle and Kennedy, 1988; Kahle et al., 1986), Schwartz (1994) notes that few of the attempts to classify values have gained wide acceptance and further argues that Rokeach's classifications of values are all conceptually very different with little empirical correlation. He adds a further dimension to the characteristics of values by noting the importance of motivation requirements of individuals; that values represent *conscious* goals which respond to the universal needs of humans (he cites these requirements as being biological needs [organism], needs related to social interaction, and needs related

to the effectiveness and survival of groups). Thus, values motivate action and function as standards for judging and justifying action. The prominence of motivation is significant; according to Schwartz (2009), in researching values researchers who overlook this factor often confound values and attitudes, with implications for the validity of values research. Schwartz therefore defines value types in terms of a central goal (similar to terminal values), with a classification of values that represent each type (similar to instrumental values) and the requirements from which each value type is derived as in figure 8. The postmodern and pragmatist understanding of values would challenge some of these assumptions (and this will be explored shortly). However, he argues these values are applicable across all cultures, and Shaw *et al.* (2005) have utilised Schwartz's values and value meanings to explore the role of values in ethical consumption:

Figure 8: Schwartz's Motivational Types of Values

Definition	Exemplary values	Sources
Power: social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources.	Social power, authority, wealth.	Interaction Group
Achievement: personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards.	Successful, capable, ambitious.	Interaction Group
Hedonism: pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself.	Pleasure, enjoying life.	Organism
Stimulation: excitement, novelty and challenge in life.	Daring, varied life, exciting life.	Organism
Self-direction: independent thought and action – choosing, creating, exploring.	Creativity, curious, freedom.	Organism Interaction
Universalism: understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature.	Broad-minded, social justice, equality.	Group Organism
Benevolence: preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact.	Helpful, honest, forgiving.	Organism Interaction Group
Tradition: respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide.	Humble, devout. Accepting my portion in life.	Group
Conformity: restraint of actions, inclinations and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms.	Politeness, obedient, honouring parents and elders.	Interaction Group
Security: safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships and of self.	National security, social order, clean.	Organism Interaction Group

Source: Schwartz, 1994: 22

However, an important aspect of this is to recognise that, as proposed by Firat et al. (1995), contemporary consumers are increasingly fickle and unpredictable, and that whilst values take time to change they do change and, perhaps more significantly: "...they [consumers] often subscribe to highly contradictory value systems, lifestyles etc., concurrently, without feeling inconsistent and improper" (p44). Indeed, Schwartz (1994) notes that the pursuit of values has consequences that may conflict with the pursuit of other value types, and he goes on to observe that it is the relative importance of multiple values which guides action. Likewise, Brown (2006: 226) claims: "...the phenomenon known as the postmodern consumer, which comprises gendered subject positions indulging in playful combinations of contrasting identities, roles and characters (each with its requisite regalia of consumables) is now an accepted, if under-investigated, socio-cultural artifact...". Firat and Venkatesh (1995) argue that the postmodern consumer is characterised by two conditions: fragmentation and decentredness. Fragmentation describes the emancipation of the consumer from market forces as he or she engages in 'multiple consumption experiences' in an attempt to restructure his or her identity. Decentredness aims to capture the consumer in the context of individual everyday life, rather than through the 'lens of unifying theories'. It could be argued that this postmodern view of consumers is congruent with the ethical pluralism argued in the previous chapter, as pluralist positions hold that several, possibly conflicting, moral standards and values may be relevant at any one time; multiple and possibly contradictory values, emotions and cognition could be held simultaneously by consumers, leading to diversity in consumer choices (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995). This is supported to some degree by the research into fashion consumption (Thompson and Haytko, 1997) and ethical consumer behaviour. For example, Joergens (2006) notes that consumers may possess ethical motivation but may not act ethically if products do not meet aesthetic criteria. Similarly, where negative views were held about companies, consumers still bought their products if they 'liked them'. Valor (2007), as previously mentioned, highlights the central category of 'ambivalence' in ethical clothing purchase. She adopts East's definition of ambivalence which is: "... a condition of arousal that occurred in people when their beliefs did not fit together" (Valor, 2007: 686), and suggests that conflict arises around self-identity and that further work is required to explore the *conative* drivers of ethical buying behaviour in clothing. Further, Devinney *et al.* (2010) argue that the scales on which most values research are based are flawed and lack validity because they work on an assumption that

context does not 'interact' with values, and that given values are difficult to change, consumer research focused on behaviour change employing 'traditional' values research relies on a: "...religious conversion of sorts." (p172). Dewey (in Tiles, 1990), however, argues that humans are continuously engaged in a process of learning and evaluation; adjusting the way one feels or desires. He argues that values are an expression of feelings, and to claim that feelings are unchanged and unchangeable is 'contrary to common sense', although such values become manifest in habits and practices which become engrained. However, he argues that ends cannot be determined until it is known what is needed to arrive at that end. Thus ends do not subconsciously guide action; they are reciprocally determined with the means which are entrenched in habits (Anderson, 2014). Similar to Schatzki's (1997) conception of teleoaffectivity (the idea that actions are governed by orientations towards ends, with the affective dimension recognising there is no 'single' end), he therefore refers to 'ends in view' rather than 'absolute' end states. **A further objective for the research should therefore be to explore the role of values in informing action in consumer trade-offs.** The role of habits will be further examined, in considering sociological perspectives on ethical consumption.

Sociological Perspectives

Levi's does not just point towards the alleged properties of a pair of jeans, it sustains a whole world of meaning(s) which provides the background against which we experience what it is to wear jeans, the 'world' which comes with wearing jeans.
Žižek (2011: 357)

Following on from Valor's (2007) and Shaw *et al's* (2000) observations about self-identity, Newholm and Shaw (2007) conclude that relocating the consideration of ethical consumption (both individually and collectively) within the cultural ethics of consumption is key to understanding consumer behaviour. As Caruana (2007) identifies, a number of studies of ethical consumption are common in identifying the importance of locating the ethical implications of consumption practices at a sociological level, and this constitutes a third broad body of literature. These studies recognise that ethical consumption is not merely a cognitive, rational decision-making process (characterised in the consumer behaviour literature as the consumer's 'black box'), and that such a 'techno-rational' discourse focused entirely on what motivates consumers to buy overlooks the social

processes and meanings that may underpin the notion and nature of ethical or responsible consumption (Caruana, 2007). Nor is ethical consumption the result of a process of self-inquiry; cultural backgrounds, personal histories and the social context are also critical (Cherrier, 2007). This sociological perspective is largely reflected in the canon of work under the 'consumer culture theory' (CCT) banner (Arnould and Thompson, 2005), and two emergent strands of sociological thought have emerged under this perspective (Thompson et al., 2013). The first views consumption as a form of identity work (both personal and collective) and the 'lived world' of consumers (Arnould and Thompson, 2005), the second relates to Caruana's (2007) classification of constructivist perspectives. Here, ethical consumption is viewed as a sociological *practice*, in which there is increased interest for the study of consumption (Halkier *et al.*, 2011; Warde, 2005).

Consumer Identity Projects

Following from Belk (1988), Arnould and Thompson (2005) note that there is increasing interest in how consumers use consumption-related activities to display their circumstances (personal and social) and further their identity goals. Consumer identity work has gained significant momentum in studies of consumption more generally, and likewise in studies of both fashion and ethical consumption; as Thompson and Haytko (1997: 21) note, identity through fashion is often achieved through contrasting between the self and others and is something which is: "...negotiated in a dynamic field of social relations", and Cherrier (2007) observes that ethical consumption practices emerge through the 'interplay' between individual and collective identity. As previously noted, studies employing the TPB have argued the role of self-identity as being central (see for example Shaw and Shiu, 2002), whereas Szmigin and Carrigan (2006) conceptualise ethical consumption as an integrative practice (in which consumers' see their consumption as a constituent element of their identity) within Holt's framework of consumption practices. Here they argue ethical consumption may be undertaken for reasons of distinction, hedonism, love or aesthetic appreciation. Devinney *et al.* (2010) argue that the role of the individual has been understated in research into ethical consumption in favour of a preoccupation with segmentation techniques. As previously noted, self-identity has emerged as a key dimension in studies applying the TPB (Sparks and Shepherd, 1992; Shaw *et al.*, 2000; Hustvedt and Dickson, 2009), although a less significant predictor of behaviour than perceived behavioural control.

Developing this assertion from sociological perspectives, Shaw and Riach (2011) argue, the act of 'ethical consumption' should be distinguished from the ontological position of 'being' an ethical consumer, and a number of studies of morality in consumption have adopted perspectives on identity, both at the level of the individual (see for example Luedicke et al., 2009; Cherrier, 2006;) and in terms of social identity (Bartels and Onwezen, 2014). It is increasingly recognised that consumer identity is fluid (Bauman, 2008; Cherrier and Murray, 2007), especially where ethical consumer 'subjectivities' are adapted in response to changing historical conditions (Giesler and Veresiu, 2014). As Bauman (2008) argues, identities (themselves processes of socialisation) exist in a continuous lifelong process of 'renegotiation'; at no stage are they final. Indeed, as previously noted, Firat and Venkatesh (1995) note how postmodern consumer identities are restructured through participation in diverse consumption experiences. In response, Giesler and Veresiu (2014) encourage consumer researchers to consider not how cultural systems shape consumer identities, but how, for example, family and other social structures are rearticulated as consumption systems. Cherrier and Murray (2007) perhaps take a 'third way' with this and argue that identity construction is 'middle-out' in that at times consumers have the freedom to act as creative agents, and at others they are shaped by cultural and historical structures. There is therefore scope to explore these different, and potentially conflicting, perspectives on consumer identities, and the extent to which there is an influence of cultural structures, or whether social identities are reshaped as consumption systems. It should be noted that Bauman (2008) highlights a problem with the 'identity project' in its totality as it relates to ethical consumption; that the notion of responsible choice (perhaps once based on a deontological ethics and characterised by responsibility to the 'other') is now 'overshadowed' by responsibility to one's self, characterised by self-fulfillment and the calculation of risks. However, it remains a significant facet of the evidence related to factors underpinning ethical consumption practices, and is worthy of further consideration. **An objective of the research should therefore be to explore the role of identity in ethical consumption**, and in particular to consider whether and in what circumstances identity is shaped by cultural and historical systems, or whether social and family relations are rearticulated as consumption systems.

Consumption as practice

Under the practice perspective, the practice itself becomes the unit of analysis, not the individuals who perform it (Hargreaves, 2011). Whilst consumption itself would not be considered a practice in itself under Warde's (2005) definition, as Garcia-Ruiz and Rodriguez-Lluesma (2014) argue, it may be considered as a 'domain-relative practice'. That is, it possesses its own standards of 'excellence' identifiable to other practitioners, and it is related to other practices to which it is subservient. Indeed, a number of studies have adopted a 'consumption practice' perspective on consumption (Arsel and Thompson, 2011; Halkier *et al.*, 2011; Shankar *et al.*, 2009; Warde, 2005), ethical consumption and environmental behaviour change (see for example Garcia-Ruiz and Rodriguez-Lluesma, 2014; Hargreaves, 2011; Shaw and Riach, 2011; Peattie, 2010; Røpke, 2009; Connolly and Prothero, 2008), and value (Helkkula *et al.*, 2012; Holttinen *et al.*, 2010). The latter perspectives on value will be considered further in chapter four.

Shankar *et al.* (2009) and Arsel and Thompson (2011) note the relationship between practice and identity; the latter being validated and reinforced by the former within the 'social world' of the consumer. Further, Bourdieu (1992) argues that habitus (the structure of structuring norms of personality which generate and organise individual and collective practices) are products of history and therefore inherently tied to notions of self-identity, and that they can only be 'deduced' by relating the social conditions that generated them to the social conditions in which they are implemented. Significantly, he argues that the habitus: '... is a spontaneity without consciousness or will" (p56) which makes questions of intention 'superfluous', but which is a "...realistic relation to what is possible, founded on and therefore limited by power." (p65). It therefore lies between the objective and the subjective; it is not produced by 'mechanical' and observable stimuli, but neither is it based on individual conscious cognitive choices; it is a form of 'inconspicuous consumption' (Hargreaves, 2011). As Warde (2005) observes, practices therefore account for both the roles of routine and emotions or desire (and thus the conative dimension of consumer behaviour recommended by Jorgens (2006) for further investigation in the ethical consumer field). Moraes *et al.* (2012) note, many studies focusing on ethical behaviour change have been criticized for being overly-focused on individual and agency, and that habits and routine are a particularly significant dimension of consumer

behaviour; finding ways to break individual or group (such as family) habits is key to increasing ethical and green consumption initiatives.

Bourdieu's (1984) association between habitus and the development of *taste* (as a form of cultural capital) has also been applied in understanding associations with 'ethical' movements such as the slow food movement (Lee *et al.*, 2014). It is also important to note that in this perspective, all practices require consumption, and consumption is therefore an integral part of daily life (Warde, 2005), although there is no unilateral agreement on what defines a practice (Hargreaves, 2011). Warde (2005) argues that consumption is not a practice in itself, but a feature or part of every practice, and Connolly and Prothero (2008) argue this perspective in relation to environmental practices which are often part of wider life practices. In the context of pro-environmental behavior change, Hargreaves (2011) adopts Pantazar and Shove's definition of practice as being combinations of images, skills and materials/technology that are integrated by practitioners using skills in repeated actions. In this sense, the notion of practice connects with notions of the consumer as resource integrator (Arnould, 2008; Vargo and Lusch, 2008). Røpke (2009) notes that this is especially important in the context of ecological consumption, where consumers are seen as skilled participants, and not 'dupes' of a market system as has perhaps been the case in other studies of consumer culture.

Practice theory therefore addresses some of the problems associated with understanding the postmodern consumer; it recognises that variations in behaviour are not just functions of segmentation, motivation or attitudes, and accounts for other forms of value over- and above- use value, questioning which benefits accrue to people within particular practices (Hargreaves, 2011; Warde, 2005). In particular, practice theory can assist in focusing on the communities of practice, especially in relation to environmental socialisation in which social identities and interactions are formed (Hargreaves, 2011), and also on the virtues that are required to engage in consumption practices (Gracia-Ruiz and Rodriguez-Lluesma, 2014). Shaw and Riach (2011) also demonstrate how a 'collective habitus' of those with particular consumer identities promotes the legitimacy of ethical practices, and highlight the role of research for further exploring how values and practice interact. However, Røpke (2009) warns of the challenges involved in promoting sustainable consumption in the practice perspective, given that practices tend to reflect individuals'

core concerns in everyday life, and these *may* conflict with environmental concerns.

Following from the questions around identity, **there is therefore a need for the research to investigate the role of practice in clothing consumption, and its implications for value evaluation.**

Problems of ethical consumption: gaps, tragedies, myths, barriers and complexities

Consumers are not heroes... [they] cannot be expected to gather the necessary information to punish companies, process it, recall and choose responsibly all kinds of products... Consumers are not full-time consumers; they have a number of other roles to perform... At most, consumers use the limited, fragmented, incomplete and sometimes contradictory information they gather about companies and try to use it at the marketplace.

Valor (2008: 322-323)

The evidence from the literature highlighted in the previous three perspectives is imbued with problems in relation to the 'ethical consumption project', and Devinney *et al.* (2010) argue that the ethical consumer is a 'myth', based on the following assertions. Firstly, that consumers bring many values to consumption decisions; secondly that the context in which people behave is significant, and there is doubt as to how pervasive 'values-led' consumption is; thirdly that individuals are bound very strongly by specific concerns which do not relate to the notion of a 'generalised' ethical consumer as portrayed in the media; fourthly, that ethical consumption behaviour is not culturally determined (and not a predominantly European pursuit, as widely believed); and finally that the research into ethical consumption is either too general or too specific and does not address how people negotiate the complexity of the individual trade-offs of social causes. Littler (2011) notes the other criticisms levelled at ethical consumption; that it is too large to be meaningful and often imbued with contradictions; that it cannot be progressive due to the involvement of corporates, some of whom could be accused of 'greenwashing'; and that is nothing more than a high-status means of removing guilt from the middle classes.

There are clearly tensions within the field, and the following discussion will explore these tensions and debates as a central part in arriving at a point of departure for further research and analysis. However, it is worth acknowledging first a possible pragmatist response, as discussed in chapter two. Rather than seeing 'ethical consumption' as a truth or objective in itself which has to be 'achieved', a pragmatist reading would recognise the multiplicity of moral standards and inconsistent attitudes and behaviours that are brought into consumption and view these as part of a unification and continuous merging that occurs throughout the flow of individual experience. Dewey (in Gouinlock, 1994) defines this as consummatory experience, which 'constantly accelerates' towards the ends in view described earlier. Dewey acknowledges that what we see and what we think, and what we

desire and what we get are at odds with each other, but this is part of the flow of experience from one thing to another. As Rorty (1995) observes, an individual's notions of right or good change depending on previous experiences of success or failure in doing right and good. In this sense, conflict in this sense can be seen as a benefit in the overall flow of consummatory experience.

Especially in relation to clothing, Carrigan and Attalla (2001) question some of the assumptions surrounding the notion that 'good' ethical behaviour will be 'rewarded' by the market, and 'bad' behaviour 'punished' by the market and conclude that ethics actually plays little part in consumers' decision making; price, quality and value are the key consumer concerns, although often overlain with ethical conundrums (for example, they find that many care deeply about animal rights, but less about human rights). Likewise, Iwanow *et al.* (2005) find that in the clothing market specifically, ethical concerns do not significantly affect consumer choice; rather, price, quality and style are the salient factors, despite awareness of ethical issues being relatively high. Dickson (2005) also finds that only a small proportion of the market (15%) would prioritise 'no sweat' principles (a guarantee that a garment was not produced in a sweat shop) over price, quality and fibre content, although she also recognises that the research measures intentions and not behaviour. She cites a number of studies which support her findings that: "For most consumers considering an apparel purchase, ethical attributes take a back seat to product features." (p170). Other studies have continued this theme, in finding that various ethical dimensions and standards play little part in consumer decision making (see for example Cailleba and Casteran, 2010). Furthermore, Valor (2008: 315) asserts that: "...consuming responsibly is seen [by consumers] as a time consuming activity, economically disadvantageous and stressful." Indeed, as Newholm and Shaw (2007) note, there is heterogeneity and complexity in ethical consumption decisions and a body of literature has emerged which attempts to arrive at an understanding of this complexity, as follows.

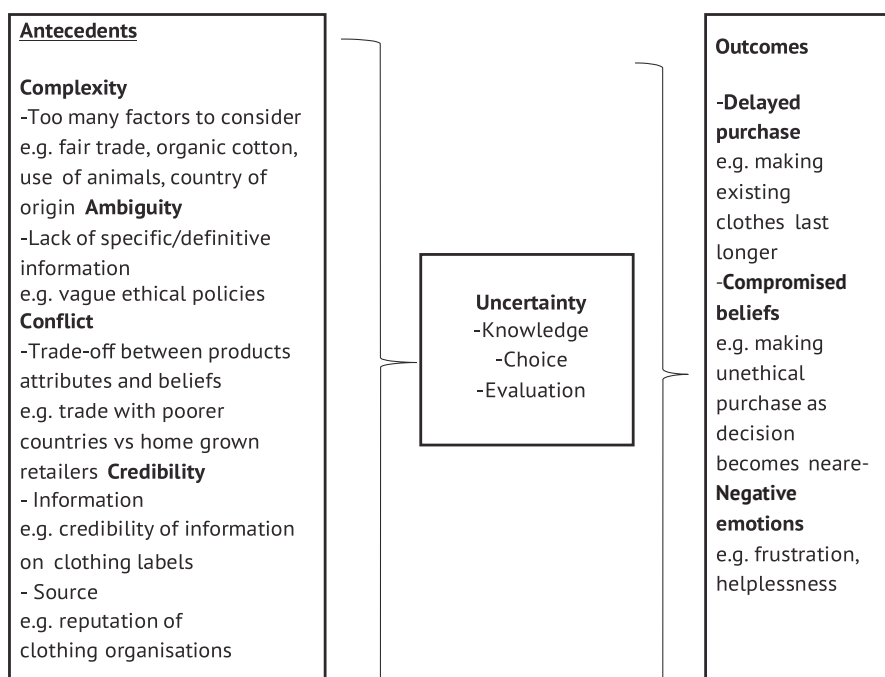
Awareness, Knowledge and Intentions

Firstly, related in part to the marketing perspective, are problems around awareness and knowledge. Certainly, a number of authors have concluded that ethical consumption is characterised by complexity in consumer choice and requires a great deal of effort and knowledge (see for example Hassan *et al.*, 2013; Connolly and Shaw, 2006, Tadajewski

and Wagner-Tsukamoto, 2006, Clouder and Harrison, 2005, Wagner, 2003). Bray *et al.*'s (2011) research finds that an avoidance of the recipients of negative press was more prevalent than a more 'active' form of engagement, and Fisher *et al.* (2008) find that in the 'general' population levels of awareness of the sustainability impacts of clothes are low (across all segments), and that clothing choices are driven primarily by concerns relating to identity and economy, even with the most 'pro-environmental' segments. With regard to economy, the impacts of fashion and price appear to be driven by the age (or 'life stage') of consumers; for example, young people in particular purchase clothing from low-budget retailers, well aware that it will not be durable.

Even where consumers possess a significant knowledge, there exists dilemmas about making the 'right' choice in consumption decisions (Connolly and Prothero, 2008). Following from Shiu *et al.* (2011) which finds three dimensions to uncertainty (knowledge, choice and evaluation), Hassan *et al.* (2013) highlight the importance of the concept of uncertainty in explaining why ethical consumers may not act in accordance with their values, and develop a conceptual model to explain its role (see figure 9).

Figure 9: A conceptual model of uncertainty in ethical consumer choice
Source: Hassan *et al.*, 2013: 189



They find that uncertainty can be classified in three ways; in knowledge (as above), choice (when information on which to base comparative judgements is scarce), and evaluation (how ethical information can be made sense of in light of other known information about products and retailers). Antecedents relate to complexity as above, but also ambiguity, conflicts and credibility, with the outcomes being either a delayed purchase, compromised beliefs or negative emotions. This raises the question of how consumers might process and act on such complexity (and perhaps further supports the argument for ethical pluralism as consumer confusion from the complexity in choice may support the need for clearer consumer guidelines). Indeed, Devinney *et al.* (2010) argue, consumers who factor the social impacts of their purchases do so very specifically, and that ethical choices rarely bear any relation to accepted definitions of 'ethical consumption'.

Valor (2007) argues that consumers adopt these strategies in order to deal with complexity in choice which specifically occurs when the sheer number of potential ethical issues leads individuals to champion a select number of causes. Shaw *et al.* (2000) suggest that the two key factors which drive this 'bounded rationality' are ethical obligation and self-identity. However, Tadjewski and Wagner-Tsukamoto (2006) observe that where awareness and knowledge is high, consumers are particularly ineffective shoppers due to 'paralysis', and that: "...green consumer behaviour [is] dependent, to some degree, on a veil of ignorance... Here, then, is the tragedy of the green consumer." (p18). Similarly, Carrigan and Attalla (2001) observe that making consistent ethical judgments that avoid harming all stakeholders can be extremely difficult. Conversely, Valor (2007) proposes that the higher the visibility of ethical problems (in this case labour abuses), the more likely ethical purchasing will occur. Nevertheless, there is little evidence that such problems affect buyer behaviour in a significant way on the high street. For example, in early 2009 Primark (the discount fashion retail chain owned by Associated British Foods) achieved an: 'excellent' performance (Urry, 2009), despite a highly publicised expose of poor working conditions and illegal rates of pay in a UK factory in the previous month, and a BBC Television *Panorama* investigation into child labour in India in the previous year (McDougall, 2009).

A similar issue with different outcomes is highlighted by Shaw *et al.* (2006) who discover problems for 'highly motivated ethical consumers' who lack the necessary information to

make educated decisions. Purchase decisions here are referred to as: “a gamble... guesswork... [or]... hope” (p437). As Hiller Connell (2010) finds, these problems can be even more complex in clothing purchase, where sometimes specialist knowledge of fibres and manufacturing processes, for example, may be sought. These problems related to awareness and motivation can therefore be represented in the matrix shown in figure 10:

Figure 10: Consumer motivation towards ethical issues vs. knowledge of ethical practices. Developed from Carrigan and Atalla (2001)

		Awareness/knowledge	
		High	Low
Motivation	High	<p><i>The paralysed consumer</i></p> <p>Hassan <i>et al.</i>, 2013 Tadajewski and Wagner-Tsukamoto (2006)</p>	<p><i>The gambler</i></p> <p>Hiller Connell (2010) Shaw <i>et al.</i> (2006) Carrigan and Attalla (2001)</p>
	Low	<p><i>The unconcerned consumer</i></p>	<p><i>The unaware consumer</i></p> <p>Valor (2007) Valor (2008) Fisher <i>et al.</i> (2008)</p>

The boxes in the top half of the matrix display the outcomes proposed by Hassan *et al.*, 2013 and Tadajewski and Wagner-Tsukamoto (2006) (high awareness/knowledge and high motivation) and Hiller Connell (2010) Shaw *et al.* (2006) (high motivation/low knowledge). Consumers with low awareness, knowledge or motivation will clearly not take ethical issues in to account (as demonstrated by Fisher *et al.*, 2008 and Valor, 2007). There is little research regarding consumers in the bottom-left hand box of the quadrant (the ‘Primark paradox’ discussed earlier), however it may be assumed that if knowledge is high but motivation is low these consumers have made a conscious choice not to buy ethically. Areas of research interest are clearly focused on the consumers for whom awareness or motivation is high, or raising consumer awareness. In all four cases ‘successful’ ethical consumption appears to be unlikely, reinforcing the nature of the ‘tragedy’ in ethical consumption.

Tadajewski and Wagner-Tsukamoto (2006) and Wagner (2003) further argue that research into ‘green’ consumer behaviour which does not place consumers in context is flawed

(this will be discussed in further detail in chapter 4), and by doing so through an anthropological approach conclude that, as previously explored, there are significant differences between intention to purchase, awareness and actual purchase behaviour. Similarly, Devinney *et al.* (2010) argue that context is 'overwhelming' in determining behaviour, and examinations of segmentation variables or intentions which do not account for context are substantially flawed. Indeed, Shaw and Clarke (1999) conclude that the links between thought and action are extremely complex, and this tension, or gap, between attitudes and behaviour is a well-recognised phenomenon, and has been the subject of much discussion.

The Attitude-Behaviour Gap

Carrigan and Attalla (2001) highlight the conflicts and tensions between attitudes and behaviour in addition to the differences highlighted above. In particular, they argue that possessing the motivation, knowledge *and ability* to make effective consumer decisions is not sufficient; the motivation and knowledge must be acted upon. Consequently, various studies have examined what Newholm (2005: 108) refers to as the; "irresolvable debates... around the attitude behaviour gap", which find that consumers possess socially responsible attitudes, but these attitudes are rarely acted upon (See, for example, Hassan *et al.*, 2014; Johnstone and Tan, 2014; Claudy *et al.*, 2013; Moraes *et al.*, 2012; Bray *et al.*, 2011; Carrington *et al.*, 2010; Clouder and Harrison, 2005; Dickson, 2005). Whilst Dickson (2005: 170) refers to other: "...unforeseen conditions" which could affect purchase behaviour, a number explanatory factors for the gap are proposed:

The first relates to complexity in consumer choice. As Schwartz (2010) recognises, evaluating claims of consumer obligation are often inherently problematic as the moral issues invoked are often complex and not typical to 'everyday life'; complexities in supply chains and manufacturing processes, for example. Clouder and Harrison (2005) suggest that the array of factors involved in making purchase decisions rarely allow large numbers of consumers to switch to more 'ethical' options, although there are examples of this occurring in 'mature' ethical markets (free range eggs, for example). Claudy *et al.* (2013) find that in facing this complexity, consumers take 'cognitive short cuts', and will simplify decisions by finding rationalisation for 'easier' alternative behaviours. Valor (2007: 689) suggests that gap can be explained by: "...the complexity of human cognition

and the trade-offs that consumers have to make in order to live up to their values.” She concludes that ‘ambivalence’ is the theme which characterises consumer feelings and actions in clothing purchase; that is, that there exist trade-offs and tensions between what consumers feel they ought to do, what they want to do, and what they are able to do. Concepts of trade-offs and power are significant themes which will be revisited in subsequent analysis, although feelings of powerlessness can also be significant (Johnstone and Tan, 2014), including feelings of distance; that is that it is not felt by consumers that ethical issues in clothing affect them directly (Hassan et al., 2013; Joergens, 2006). The second is *ease*, including barriers such as time, price, a lack of available products and perceived effort (Johnstone and Tan, 2014; Valor, 2008; Joergens, 2006). Linked to this are notions of practice; Bray *et al.*, (2011) highlight the role of inertia as a key barrier to behaviour change, and as Moraes et al. (2012) note, as consumer action is characterised by habitual behaviour and they argue that the attitude-behaviour gap can be reduced through the formation of ‘new consumption communities’ which promote ‘collective choice editing’, or Carrington *et al.* (2010) recommend in-store reminders to help consumers ‘snap out’ of their usual habits. Thirdly, reasons which might be best labelled as cynicism appear to be significant. This includes doubts about the ‘ethicality’ of ethical alternatives (Johnstone and Tan, 2014) or the claims made by organisations (Bray *et al.*, 2010). Joergens (2006) also finds an unwillingness to ‘judge’ the ethical standards of overseas companies; Johnstone and Tan (2014) discover evidence that there is a ‘stigma’ associated with being ‘green’ that can conflict with perceptions of self-identity.

Neutralisation and Licensing

A further challenge for ethical consumption lies in what Chatzidakis *et al.* (2004; 2006) define as ‘neutralisation; a means for coping with cognitive dissonance following ‘attitude-behaviour discrepancy’ in ethical consumption (where the attitude-behaviour discrepancy might be considered to be a ‘violation of personal ethical beliefs and values’) although no distinction between ethical consumption and consumer ethics is made. The five neutralisation techniques in the consumption context stated are: denial of responsibility; denial of injury; denial of victim; condemning the condemners; appeal to higher loyalties, and the authors propose that such neutralisation techniques might occur at any stage of the ethical decision making process. However, although the authors note

that neutralisation may normally be viewed as occurring post-purchase, they also claim that it can occur pre-purchase to make 'unethical' behaviour possible. Indeed, the focus of neutralisation theory here is to understand how consumers may mitigate the impact of their ethically questionable activities.

The notion of mitigation is also developed by Mazar and Zhong (2009), who argue that purchasing 'green' products can act as a 'licence' to engage in subsequent unethical behaviour. That is, that virtuous behaviour is often undertaken as a response to moral 'transgressions', and by the same token once a good deed (such as an ethical purchase) has been undertaken, the moral implications of a subsequent act are less likely to be considered. Here, Mazar and Zhong (2009) link the fields of consumer ethics and ethical consumption to imply that ethical consumption may 'licence' consumers to engage in dishonest or other unethical consumption behaviours. Monbiot (2009) suggests that this principle can be seen in action with consumers who engage in small 'green' acts (such as recycling) to justify much worse 'green' behaviour (such as taking numerous long haul flights).

Emotions and outcomes; dissonance, guilt and dissatisfaction

As noted earlier, Hassan et al. (2013) provide a reminder that, for ethical consumers at least, there are negative emotional outcomes such as frustration or helplessness which may result from engaging in behaviour that compromises ethical beliefs or values. Gregory-Smith et al. (2013) suggest that the role of emotions could be one explanatory factor in the existence of the attitude-behaviour gap, as emotions may override attitudes in decision making. Whilst they find an hedonic aspect to positive purchasing, they also discover that guilt is the most salient negative emotion associated with dissonant behaviour, along with regret, disappointment and embarrassment, although they find that (as with licensing behaviour) guilt can be compensated with previously 'good' behaviour. Other studies have also examined the role of emotions in ethical consumer behaviour. For example, Chatzidakis (2015) draws on psychoanalytic theory to consider guilt in ethical consumer choices. Whilst the focus is perhaps on consumer ethics, he notes that it is necessary to move away from cognitive and rational perspectives and that the market itself can create guilt that can be alleviated through consuming 'ethical' products and services. Conversely, Bray *et al.* (2011) also find that consumers may develop a sense of

guilt retrospectively following a choice not to buy an ethical option (although they find it is not part of the decision making process, and a post-purchase response). Antonetti and Maklan (2013), however, find that the role of guilt is more cyclical; they argue that the regulation of consumers' behaviour is mediated by perceived consumer effectiveness, and that this is reinforced as consumer agency when feelings of guilt are experienced post-purchase, thus moderating future behaviour. As previously argued in relation to the context-specific nature of consumption, Gregory-Smith *et al.* (2013) argue that the role of emotions alongside other contextual factors in explaining the attitude-behaviour gap renders it transitory.

Conclusions: From Tragedies and Myths to Trade-Offs

Each of the four areas of consumer research into ethical consumption carries in itself both benefits and problems. However, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and should not be seen in isolation. These studies do, however, begin to highlight some of the complexities and contradictions in the field; Connolly and Shaw (2006) conclude that there is a great deal of diversity in consumer views and behaviour, and that organisations rarely understand these opinions. This is further complicated by the complex relationships between awareness, attitudes and behaviour, the problems in adopting a purely psychological or sociological perspective, and the methods used to research consumer ethics. Of course, the consequences are that if ethical consumption is complex for those with ethical awareness and intentions, this will be more the case for those without such motivations.

As the previous discussion has shown, marketing perspectives have tended to overstate the importance of segmentation variables which are inherently unstable or rational, cognitive decision making which is also limited and limiting in explaining the complex and contextually-based domain of ethical consumption. It should also be noted that, with the exception of Antonetti and Maklan (2013), Chatzidakis (2006), and Wagner (2003), few studies have attempted to understand the affect of ethical consumer behaviour on the *post-purchase evaluation* of purchase and on intention to (re)purchase. This is significant in terms of sustaining practices as previously discussed, and also from a commercial imperative because there is significant evidence to suggest that there is a positive

connection between positive post-purchase evaluations and profitability, and a negative correlation between negative post-purchase evaluations and profitability: Kincade *et al.* (1998) note that in the clothing industry such post-purchase evaluations are important in relation to organisational performance, and a number of authors have proposed a positive relationship between CSR and business performance, perhaps at least partly explained through a link with satisfaction (Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006; Capaldi, 2005; Balabanis *et al.*, 1998).

Expectancy-value models under the psychological perspective have been argued to reduce ethical decision making to a purely cognitive process of arriving at utilitarian outcomes which predominantly serve self-interested behaviours, are deficient in explaining ethical or moral motivations, are poor predictors of likely behaviour and assume consumers have full control (De Groot, Schubert and Thøgersen, 2016). In rejecting consumers as rational individual-optimisers, Thøgersen (1996) argues the case for moral norm theory, which focuses on values and which marketers should attempt to 'awaken' in promoting pro-environmental behaviour (De Groot, Schubert and Thøgersen, 2016). Indeed, as Devinney *et al.* (2010) argue, values *are* brought into the purchasing context, but they are only one of many contributors to the consumption decision. The sociological perspective in terms of self- and social-identities appears to address many of the problems associated with marketing and philosophical perspectives, although as with expectancy-value models perhaps runs the risk that the notion of responsible choices relate only to self-fulfilment. Likewise, practice theory appears to be helpful in further understanding consumption contexts, which may result in conflicts between individuals' core concerns in everyday life and environmental concerns.

Whilst each of these approaches and perspectives has its own attractions and pitfalls, a concept that emerges as a central theme and unites these four areas of literature is that of *trade offs*. As Arnould and Thompson (2005: 871) state: "Consumer identity projects are typically considered to be goal driven, although the aims pursued may be... marked by points of conflict, internal contradictions, ambivalence and even pathology.", and a number of studies discussed above highlight their importance, and the notions of conflict, contradictions, compromise and ambivalence. For example, McGoldrick and Freestone (2008) note the trade-offs inherent in ethical purchasing in terms of a cost-benefit

approach, or a 'conflict' approach to decision making. Likewise, Valor (2007) and Shaw *et al* (2007) note the 'compromises' consumers have to take in making an ethical stance, and Valor's (2007) identification of ambivalence as being a key characterisation of ethical consumer behaviour demonstrates the conflicts and contradictions which characterise this field.

In the psychological perspective, expectancy-value models rely on rational utilitarian trade-offs (De Groot, Schubert and Thøgersen, 2016), and in the moral norm perspective Jagel *et al.* (2012: 396) conclude that "consumers have to compromise and balance their conflicting end goals", thus supporting the emerging body of evidence for the existence of trade-offs. In practice perspectives Røpke (2009) notes conflicts between individuals' core concerns in everyday life, and environmental concerns. Similarly, Littler (2011) argues that ethical consumption is increasingly becoming what might best be describes as 'contradictory consumption' as it often involves a number of different practices which are often in conflict with one another (buying locally grown vegetables but fair trade wine from Chile rather than something locally produced, for example). Further, in linking identity and practice approaches, Shaw and Riach (2011) note that the practice of ethical consumption and the identity of 'ethical consumer' may be characterised by contradictions, which carries a need to understand the tensions created when values and actions may mismatch. Finally, as Devinney *et al.* (2010) argue, behaviour (and especially ethical consumer behaviour, which involves difficult and inconvenient choices), is based upon trade-offs of valuation, and they argue that research should examine the inconsistencies between attitudes and behaviour and consumer choices.

Therefore, with regards to research into ethical consumer behaviour, the following salient points are noted. Firstly, regardless of stated problems with expectancy-value models, ethical obligation and self-identity (Shaw *et al.*, 2000) are key constructs which also recur throughout the literature and which may be characterised by the priorities held by individuals in relation to their values. Here the pluralist perspective argued in the previous chapter should be adopted, with a focus on the acts and agents of moral evaluation as proposed by Hinman (2003). Despite Devinney *et al.*'s (2010) warning against a focus on values, they remain an important dimension of ethical consumer behaviour (Jagel *et al.*, 2012), and Shaw and Riach (2011) highlight the need for research to further

explore how values and practice interact. Certainly the importance of context, practices and consumer identities remain pressing factors; purely cognitive, affective or conative studies which aim to understand how consumers deal with making trade-offs are likely to provide an incomplete picture of the complex practices and decisions which face individuals.

A pragmatist conception of values highlighted by Painter-Morland (2011) helps in characterising this issue by drawing on two key theories. Firstly, Dewey notes that no values are superior to others, and rather than seeing values as fixed ends, argues for the perspective of 'ends in view' in which values are continuously constructed. Similarly, the postmodern position would also hold that the postmodern subject is not necessarily the knowledgeable rational decision-maker who deliberately acts out of values (Bauman, 1993). It was noted earlier that conflicting attitudes and behaviours are natural elements of experience. Here, Dewey's (in Gouinlock, 1994) discussion of ends is also relevant to the notions of the attitude-behaviour gap and cognitive dissonance. Dewey argues that ends are ends in view (as argued in chapter two) or aims. These aims arise out of experience and are enacted in imagination, of what might happen in the future, and what has happened in the past. In terms of action, Dewey argues that individuals 'shoot and throw', initially instinctively, and the result then gives new meaning to the activity, and the ends are constantly shifting as new activities result in new consequences. Thus conflicting positions need not necessarily be mutually exclusive. However, aims can only become ends or aims when the actual conditions for their realisation have been worked out. Both of these factors (ends in view, and the conditions for realisation) are a natural part of an ever-shifting experience of value. Secondly, Rorty (1984/1999) emphasises the relational aspect to values; value is assigned to things on the basis of their relationships to other people and things. Thus, studies need to account for the fluid and relational way in which trade-offs are negotiated, and to develop an alternative perspective on agency which goes beyond the subject as rational decision-maker making deliberate trade-offs. **A further objective for the research must therefore be to understand how consumers define and navigate trade-offs.** The next chapter will propose an analytical framework for understanding this perspective on trade-off negotiation.

Chapter 4

Negotiating Trade-Offs: Value for the Customer

Self-love is what we each and every one of us experience and by what we are 'naturally' guided in what we do. We all wish pleasures and we all want to avoid pain; but self-love is not guaranteed to achieve what it is about, unless enlightened.

Bauman, 1993: 27

In order to understand how to arrive at a framework for explaining the negotiation of trade-offs, it will be necessary to return to the key concepts highlighted in the previous chapter, and to consider initially the psychological perspective encountered in the previous chapter.

Trade-offs have been conceptualised in the ethical consumption literature in different ways, although the analytic device to understand the trade-off has been the subject of little attention. Devinney *et al.* (2010) have perhaps applied the most focus by applying a 'best-worst' (BW) experiment in which consumers are asked to rate the relative importance of objects of (conflicting) perceptual difference, thus asking respondents to rate the trade-off. However, this study only analysed the trade-offs between different areas of social, economic and political concern, and so was limited in understanding the totality of consumption experience. In some studies they are positioned as being negative balances of positive outcomes. For example, Moraes *et al.*, 2010 highlight the benefits experienced by participants in new consumption communities (personal benefits such as personal development, spiritual benefits and, control/empowerment, social benefits such as a sense of community, and environmental benefits), and position the 'trade-offs' as being investments of time, convenience and effort, group conflicts, and expense. Likewise, Schröder and McEachren find value conflicts (2004) relating to guilt and breaking ethical rules. Others have examined (mainly) benefits against only (financial) cost (Lim *et al.*, 2014). Shaw *et al.* (2015) also denote trade-offs as largely rational, cognitive choices, citing trading off self-interest with regard for others, or

conflicts between deontological (slow, and formed through culture and experience) and teleological (individual reflection) evaluations. Their rational choice interpretation accommodates more traditional notions of utility, such as price, and highlight barriers to enactment being knowledge, or the postmodern view espoused earlier surrounding complexities attitudes and identities.

The trade-offs referred to in these studies imply that the consumer is engaged in an act of preferential judgement; that multiple factors are compared to arrive at a course of action which balance the relative importance of both the benefits and sacrifices of engaging in an act. This balancing of benefit and sacrifice has been one of the central strands within the work on the concept of value (Ng and Smith, 2012; Sanchez et al., 2009), itself considered to be one of (if not the) most fundamental concepts within the concept of marketing (Vargo and Lusch, 2012; Gallarza *et al.*, 2011; Holbrook, 1994). However, there are two issues with this notion of trade-offs. Firstly, as Painter-Morland (2011) notes, the rationality employed in such utilitarian models is based on a number of spurious principles, including commensurability (the notion that the things to be valued can be measured on a single scale); aggregation (weighing up the various factors); and maximisation (the effort to arrive at the optimum result). Whilst it is likely that issues such as scaling and measurement are likely to be impossible, these principles also take no account of the personal and contextual factors that may inform how they experience value.

Secondly, Vargo and Lusch (2012) note that value is *contextually specific* and contingent on the availability and integration of other resources; that is, that value is determined (or perhaps created) through integrative practices which are not 'simple' cognitive trade-offs, but embedded within the structures within which 'actors' exist, which themselves are both enabling and constraining. Indeed, practice is central to the debate, and it was argued previously that changing behaviours can mean changing ingrained and long-standing habits. With regard to the retail clothing industry, the importance of habits and practice in consumption has started to emerge (Michaelidou and Dibb, 2009; Dawes, 2009; Carpenter and Fairhurst, 2005; Wood, 2004), but more significantly, Ng and Smith (2012) argue for a view of value which is characterised by a: "...phenomenological practice of value creation for outcomes" (p232); that is, it is not 'perceived', but

performed, with the object (in this case clothing) becoming an inherent element of the individual's social and cultural practices (the connection of value and practice will be revisited shortly). They argue that this phenomenological view relates also to ethical and moral dimensions of value as the 'goodness' of the object is enacted by individuals and their values in their social and cultural practices; it is this perspective, therefore, which renders rational, cognitive approaches unlikely.

Therefore, as previously argued, value is likely to be significantly influenced by an individual's identity and values; as Lages and Fernandes (2005) point out, one of the most powerful means of understanding consumer decisions, choices and opinions is through understanding values systems. However, whilst Rokeach (1973) claims values are 'relatively enduring', there is growing evidence that whilst this may be true to some extent, as Firat and Venkatesh (1995) argue, values do change over time and 'postmodern consumers' may possess multiple value systems under which different emphases may be placed on different values in different contexts (although Brown, 2006, claims that this phenomenon is under-investigated). There are links here between the ethical obligation and the pluralism discussed earlier; again the importance of context was highlighted as being crucial, and Ng and Smith (2012) note that context is an aspect of value critical to its understanding.

An examination of the concept of value must therefore be undertaken in greater detail in relation to the notion of trade-offs; as noted by Holbrook (1994), the theory of value (known as *axiology*) is a critical perspective for consumer researchers, and whilst many studies (such as those examined in the previous chapter) have examined *what* is valued by consumers and their values, few studies have sought to understand *how* consumers evaluate value.

Customer Value

Khalifa (2004) notes that value can broadly be clustered around three main categories: shareholder value, stakeholder value and customer value. This thesis is primarily concerned with the latter; 'value' as it is applied here relates to a demand-side definition (or the value the customer receives, or expects to receive) as opposed to the value

derived from customers by organisations (Woodruff, 1997), although it should be noted that Khalifa points out that increased shareholder value is likely to occur for organisations who are able to provide superior customer value, and these categories are likely to be linked (Martelo-Landroque *et al.*, 2015). Woodruff (1997) notes that value is something which is perceived by customers rather than objectively determined by suppliers. Vargo and Lusch (2004) further this to argue that an organisation can only offer 'value propositions'; the term proposition is significant in emphasising that value is not only determined by, but also co-created by customers in an emergent process which occurs through a relationship. Woodall (2003) terms this concept 'value for the customer', but recognises that there are variations in the literature in its terminology (Sanchez and Iniesta, 2007, refer to the concept as 'perceived value') and application in broader and marketing-specific discourses. For example, value has applications in economics from exchange, use and utilitarian perspectives, and from more abstract philosophical perspectives related to personal evaluations. Consequently, as previously noted, customer value is a concept which is of increasing value to those involved in the study and practice of marketing due to this link between consumer behaviour and marketing strategy (that is, its correlation with consumer evaluations, behavioural intentions and repeat purchase) (Overby *et al.*, 2004). Indeed, it is commonly recognised that value is an evaluative judgement (Holbrook, 1994) which is the result of a trade-off between benefits and sacrifices (Payne and Holt, 2001, Sanchez and Iniesta, 2007), and an interaction between the consumer and the product/service (Sanchez and Iniesta, 2006). However, it is argued by many that consumer value research is still in its early stages of development and is not adequately conceptualised, or even often misunderstood (Payne and Holt, 2001; Khalifa, 2004; Sanchez *et al.*, 2009, Boksberger and Melsen, 2011). However, this section will aim to give an overview of current thinking and consider how the concept of value might provide insight into the trade-offs it is claimed exist in ethical consumption.

A number of reviews of the literature in relation to customer value have recently sought to synthesise the range of academic work which attempt to define and conceptualise the concept (Ng and Smith, 2012; Boksberger and Melsen, 2011; Gallarza *et al.*, 2011; Sanchez *et al.*, 2009; Sanchez and Iniesta, 2006 & 2007; Khalifa, 2004; Woodall, 2003). It is not the purpose of this thesis to synthesise new directions for value as a concept in itself, and given the range of perspectives highlighted by the existing reviews of the literature these

will be critiqued as the primary form of analysis, examining original key works in the field where appropriate. Of course, each of these reviews also provide their own contribution to the theory of value.

Sanchez *et al.* (2009) argue that marketing academics have largely treated value as a 'cognitive' concept (treating value as noted above as a conscious trade-off between benefits and sacrifices); they suggest that this is largely a unidimensional approach, in which value can be measured by a set of self-reported items relating to consumer perceptions of value (which tend to be cognitive and utilitarian). They note that a second group of researchers have adopted a wider multidimensional approach in which value is treated as a much more complex phenomenon consisting of a number of interrelated dimensions, which may (but not necessarily) also be cognitive and utilitarian in nature. The latter case is more likely as previously discussed, but this perhaps presents a narrow view of unidimensionality. Khalifa (2004) identifies three categories of customer value; value components models (essentially based around product features), utilitarian models (benefit versus cost models) and means-end models (where value is defined in terms of personal values, or personal teleological structures). The first of these three is perhaps overlooked by Sanchez *et al.* (2009) to some degree, but value components models and utilitarian models correspond to their conception of multidimensional approaches, whereas means-end models perhaps correspond more to the unidimensional models identified by Sanchez *et al.* in which more complex processes are engaged to arrive at an overall perception of value (and which is perhaps, therefore counter-intuitively infinitely dimensional). Similarly, Boksberger and Melsen (2011) identify two broad perspectives on value; the utilitarian perspective (as with the cognitive concept) and the behavioural perspective. Alternatively, Woodall (2003) argues there are essentially five interpretations of value: use, utilitarian, and human (all subject-based) and exchange and intrinsic (object-based). The subject/object distinction is important (Walker *et al.*, 2006), although as Woodall (2003) notes, the subject and object are inextricably connected and value can only be evaluated at their intersection, but valued differently and in different ways at different times. This would correspond with a pluralistic perspective on value in which different factors would be relevant in the evaluation of value depending on the specific situation; sometimes consistent and sometimes contradictory. The implication for understanding value in the context of this thesis will be discussed in further detail in due

course. However, before doing so it will be useful in terms of understanding value from a moral perspective to examine one of the most widely cited typologies of value; that of Holbrook (1994).

Value as Interrelated Dimensions: Holbrook's Typology of Value

Perhaps the most prominent axiological analysis in the context of consumer value was undertaken by Holbrook (1994), who presents a metanormative analysis of (an examination of the nature of) value. Holbrook argues that value is an interactive, relativistic *preference experience*: interactive as it involves the *valuation* by a subject of an object, where the value is a property of an object, but relative to a subject). That is, value can only be derived from an interaction between consumer and product/service, which is reflected in the notion of its co-creation as highlighted earlier; relativistic as value is comparative (in relation to another object), personal and situational. The act of 'preferring' something is linked here to the values discussed earlier in terms of guiding principles), and the experiential perspective relates to the value derived from the consumption experience (that is, value in consumer behaviour does not reside in the object or in possession of the object, but the experience derived from it, as also argued by Vargo and Lusch, 2004). As Smith, 1999 notes, the act of purchase is rarely an end in itself, but a means of gaining experiences derived from the product). Following this, Holbrook proposes a typology of value to encompass all of its potential roles:

Figure 11: A typology of value in the consumption experience

		<i>Extrinsic</i>	<i>Intrinsic</i>
Self-Oriented	Active	Efficiency	Play
	Reactive	Excellence	Esthetics
Other Oriented	Active	Politics	Morality
	Reactive	Esteem	Spirituality

(Source: Holbrook , 1994: 45).

Extrinsic value is associated with instrumental values and utility; the use derived from a thing or action. Intrinsic value is derived from appreciation 'for its own sake'; that pleasurable experiences are 'worth having' for themselves. Self-oriented values are those directed towards self-interest, whereas 'other oriented' are those directed towards others. Active value arises from the subject's manipulation of the environment by an object (for example playing a video game). Reactive value occurs when the subject allows the object

to act upon it. This typology results in eight types of value as shown in figure 11. Smith (1999) acknowledges the contribution of the typology, but recognises that there may be additional dimensions to the three posited by Holbrook, for example affective, economic or tangible/intangible in addition to the extrinsic/intrinsic, self/other and active/reactive dimensions identified. Furthermore, as the practice perspective has previously highlighted, there may also be intuitive dimensions to value. Indeed, other researchers have provided slightly different frameworks along similar lines – for example Rintamaki *et al.* (2007) provide a framework consisting of four value dimensions: economic value, functional value, emotional value and symbolic value, and suggest that the key dimensions of customer value can be identified hierarchically, and principally from one or two of these perspectives. Smith (1999), however, also notes that there is uncertainty regarding the antecedents and consequences of such dimensions. The implications of this will be discussed in due course. Before doing so, the most pertinent value in relation to this thesis, morality, will be further considered.

Morality as a Consumer Value

Whilst Holbrook (1994) identifies morality as a form of value which is derived from consumption, he warns that the types of value do not provide neat distinctions, and similarly to the nature of consumption experience discussed earlier any consumption experience is likely to involve more than one type of value simultaneously. Whilst Holbrook suggests this may be complementary (for example, a building can provide both aesthetic and utilitarian value at the same time), it may be that these forms of value can also compete; for example a clothing product which provides moral *and* aesthetic value may not be available, so one ‘type’ of value would have to be chosen over the other. It is this which makes the pluralistic perspective necessary; they cannot be accounted for on a single scale and are reflected in the trade-offs made by consumers under this perspective.

Whilst it should be perhaps recognised that from an egoist perspective morality may well be considered to be self-oriented, Holbrook sees it as other-oriented and argues that once a moral act stops being an end in itself it takes some other form of value. It is therefore intrinsically motivated and also active. He also adopts a largely deontological perspective in his definition of ethics. Whilst the role of self-identity discussed previously may support this intrinsic view, Smith (1999) advises caution, noting that acts may never be, or

known to be, entirely without self-interest and the role of ethical obligation also discussed earlier may perhaps support this view to some degree. He therefore argues that Holbrook's view is too narrow and proposes a broader, alternative conceptualisation of ethics as (derived) consumer value which embraces the notion that it arises: "...in a consumption experience when the individual engages in an affirmative act of goodness, promoting one or more moral values for the well-being of others and for reasons of enlightened self-interest." (Smith, 1999: 156). This 'enlightened self-interest' attempts to resolve the problems with altruism as highlighted by Smith, and recognises that : "...values possess legitimacy beyond the boundaries of simple self-interest." (Donaldson, in Smith , 1999: 156). Smith's discussion of morality as a consumer value as proposed in Holbrook's typology (that is, derived through consumption) supports the previous arguments for the complexity inherent in both ethics and consumer decision making, and reiterates the problems presented when competing or conflicting values may be present in a consumption experience. Indeed, Brown (1999: 162) argues that matrix typologies are: "...undeniably arbitrary, authoritarian, restrictive, repressive, mechanistic, methodical, utilitarian, unimaginative, inflexible [and] intolerable", and that: "...the butterfly of value is killed in the very act of pinning it to the scholarly display board" (p164). The pluralist perspective argued in chapter two would support this view, meaning that value is perhaps best viewed as an aggregation (Woodall, 2003); something which emerges as a 'whole', which may be more likely to be intuitively stated and therefore arguably more authentic. Furthermore, Brown asserts the ultimate arbitrariness of value; he argues that one set of values should not be replaced with another, but one must: "...question the value of the values we value." (p164).

Holbrook (1994) therefore argues that behaving ethically can provide value to consumers, and morality may be one form of value derived from a consumption experience. However, as previously noted it could be questioned whether morality can be derived via consumption, or whether morality drives consumption as a human value. As Smith (1999) and Brown (1999) suggest, behaving ethically might be better considered as providing value in ways which might be more integrative; for example, as the discussion around 'enlightened self-interest' demonstrates, acting ethically could provide personal value, or social value through an identification within a wider community of practice as highlighted in Moraes' (2012) study discussed previously. Also, whilst understanding morality as value

in this way assists in conceptualising this type of value (that is what value is derived), it says nothing about *how* value might be evaluated by the consumer. It is arguably this which is central to understanding value's role in consumer behaviour. The following section will therefore examine what the value literature can contribute to the notion of the 'trade-off'.

Value and Trade-Offs

As previously noted, many of the studies relating to ethical consumption refer to the trade-offs it is claimed consumers make as largely cognitive, utilitarian evaluations, similar to those put forwards in the value literature. For example, Sanchez and Iniesta (2007) argue that value perceived as a trade-off between benefit and sacrifice is naturally utilitarian, but that this view fails to account for the complexity inherent in value perceptions which include intrinsic, intangible and emotional factors, although as they point out, this makes the concept ambiguous. For example, they note that if value is perceived as utilitarian and hedonic, an affective component should also be included. However, it could be argued that there is no reason that this affective component cannot be conceptualised as a benefit if present or sacrifice if absent. The concept of a sacrifice in itself could be seen as counter to the pluralist and pragmatist perspectives put forward earlier, where rather than 'give something up', different values and identities present themselves as being salient in an intuitive way (Dewey, in Boydston, 2008), rather than necessarily registering as a conflict. However, as the literature on ethical consumption explored in chapter three has shown, there may be many potentially negative outcomes, and as Schatzki (1997) notes, the avoidance of anxiety may be a key dimension in human wants. The notion of sacrifice here is therefore sufficiently broad to include this avoidance of anxiety or other form of disequilibrium. This will be explored later in due course.

Also, as previously noted, Khalifa (2004) identifies three predominant interrelated and complementary models within the value literature. Firstly, the value exchange model encompasses the conceptions of value as a benefit/sacrifice trade-off which includes net value, utility and 'psychic' value. Secondly, the value build-up model examines total (or gross) customer value, including the customer's perception of the quality and longevity of

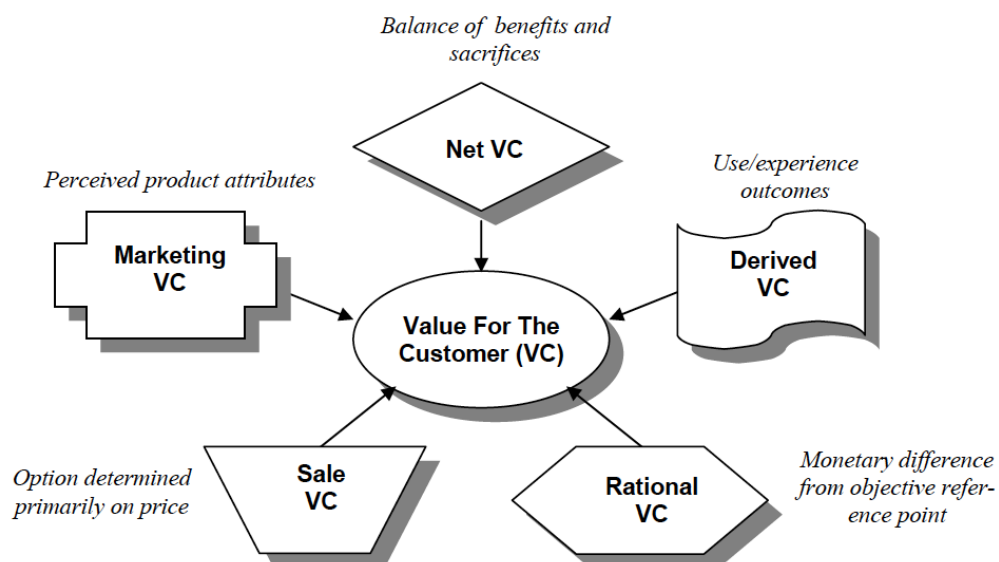
the relationship, with a focus on experience rather than tangible benefits and a link to values and means-end modelling. Finally, the value dynamics model examines the dynamics of how customers evaluate an organisation's offering in terms of dissatisfaction, satisfaction or delight with product or service attributes (noting the Kano model in particular). Whereas Sanchez and Iniesta (2007) perhaps overlook much of the literature in relation to benefit/sacrifice and value evaluation, Khalifa in turn focuses on these aspects perhaps at the expense of the axiological issues discussed by Sanchez and Iniesta.

In terms of these conceptualisations of value as a 'trade-off' (which may be uni- or multi-dimensional) perhaps the most common is reflected in the work of Heskett *et al.* (1997: 40), who define value in terms of an equation which consists of results produced for the customer plus process quality over price to the customer and costs of acquiring the service (so adopting more of a multi-dimensional approach). Likewise, Lai (1995) proposes a model based on Day's original value equation which consists of an evaluation of product benefits and logistic benefits over perceived costs, all of which is influenced by customer characteristics, and Gronroos (1997) describes value as a core solution plus additional services, over price and relationship costs. Sanchez and Iniesta (2006) implicitly classify these under a 'cognitive/affective' heading, noting that whilst such exchange models have been considered predominantly from cognitive perspectives, the role of affect may also be significant as previously noted, whereas Khalifa (2004) includes the quest for meaning in the value exchange model. Indeed, Carpenter and Fairhurst (2005) note that many authors have demonstrated the existence of both utilitarian (predominantly rational) and hedonic (predominantly affective) shopping value in clothing purchase, and it is likely that the domain of ethical consumption is characterised by the 'symbolic meanings' Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982) identified in the experiential view of consumption typified by the role of affect, and that any weighing up of benefit or sacrifice is never completely cognitive. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) go on to argue that consumer information processing may involve 'the full gamut' of human emotions, in addition to 'like' or 'dislike' or particular brands or brand characteristics. Indeed, the role of attitude in ethical consumption was recognised earlier in this thesis. Thus, output consequences of consumption may be utilitarian in nature (purpose or function), but also affective in the pleasure that a consumer may derive from the experience; in the ethical

consumption domain this is likely to be a feeling of ‘doing good’ or the reinforcement of values, and as previously noted, others have included conative or intuitive perspectives under practice theory (Helkkula *et al.*, 2012; Holttinen, 2010).

Woodall’s (2003) synthesis of the various forms of value reveals its complexity and multidimensionality. These various perspectives to argue that value for the customer (VC) consists of five primary forms in its usage: Marketing VC (associated with product attributes), Sale VC (concerned mainly with price), Rational VC (a utilitarian perspective which balances price with other product attributes or benefits), Derived VC (the linking consumption/use experiences to social or human values, as discussed earlier) and Net VC (an holistic balancing of benefits and sacrifices), and sub-forms of VC which relate to how VC might be *derived*, or when, where and how value might occur (*Contingent VC*). It is noted that there is a longitudinal dimension to the latter, which may relate to pre-purchase expectations or post-purchase evaluations. However, Acquired VC acts as an antecedent to satisfaction only in post-purchase evaluations. However, this approach is limiting, and indeed Woodall (2003) combines these perspectives in ‘Net VC’. Woodall also identifies a number of other sub-forms of value relating to ‘derived VC’. The primary forms of value are summarised in figure 12:

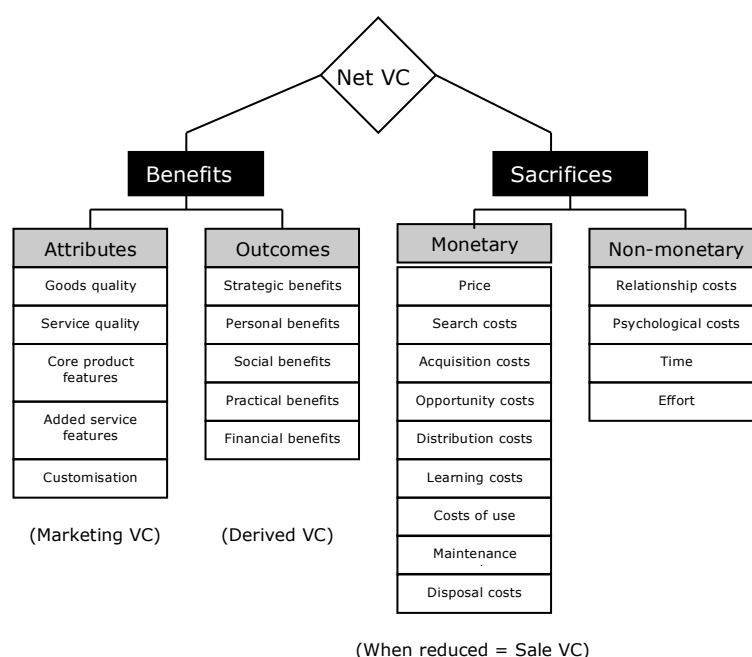
Figure 12: Primary forms of value (Woodall, 2003: 7)



Woodall (2003) takes a more holistic approach to the ‘trade-off’ perspective, noting that whilst different forms of value can be identified which may exist independently, all forms will ‘subordinate’ to an overall view which accounts for both benefit and sacrifice across a

number of dimensions of value which have the potential to account for its different forms. This concept of 'Net VC' is illustrated in figure 13, which classifies benefits both in terms of attributes and outcomes, and non-monetary as well as monetary sacrifices. The inclusion of personal and social benefits, for example, may include identity and social-identity related advantages, whereas relationship and psychological costs may include the anxieties it was noted previously that consumers may wish to avoid.

Figure 13: Net VC (Woodall, 2003: 14)



Woodall (2003) notes that the problem with Net VC as an evaluative tool is that consumers are unlikely to make such rational (or cognitive) appraisals. Also, as Painter-Morland (2008) observes, there are issues with scalability; these items cannot be compared on a single scale. Indeed, such overall valuation processes are likely to be largely unconscious, and, as previously mentioned, the roles of affect and intuition may also be significant. Instead, Woodall (2003) suggests that an overall aggregate response may be more appropriate in which VC is developed over time through all of the customer's experiences by largely non-rational processes. This could be compared to the phenomenological awareness that develops in individuals through experiences as discussed earlier, which is likely to result in a form of 'aggregated VC' as identified by Woodall (2003); whilst Net VC (in some form at least) will represent a consumers' overall view of value delivered, the reflection and consolidation of the various aspects of the experience is, as previously argued, unlikely to be exclusively cognitive and rational, and

will develop over time, reflecting on the past and projecting on the future which results in some form of personal advantage (this term is perhaps preferable to 'value', which carries some of the baggage and limitations of the perspectives discussed previously, but perhaps which also more accurately reflects the trade-offs that consumers make). Woodall (2003: 21) therefore defines VC as:

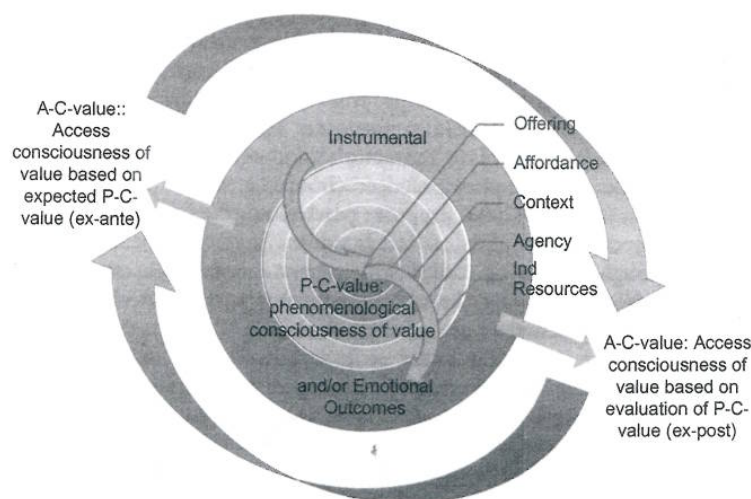
...any demand-side, personal perception of advantage arising out of a customer's association with an offering, and can occur as a reduction in sacrifice; presence of benefit (perceived as either attributes or outcomes); the resultant of any weighted combination of sacrifice and benefit (determined and expressed either rationally or intuitively); or an aggregation, over time, of any or all of these.

The notion of weighted benefit and sacrifice would still support the notion of a rational decision-maker who is involved in the cognitive calculation of trading-off opposing values. However, the intuitive aggregation of factors over time may include incompatible values and, again, may correspond with Dewey's (in Guignon, 1994) notion of a unification of value that takes place in the context of 'ends in view'. As Dewey (2008) notes, value involves thought and synthesis, and argues that value (or 'liking') may differ in its intensity, but each value replaces another through a process of improvement and cultivation ; they are not absolute, they emerge through experience, and are dependent on context. The resulting experience, as with the notion of an *aggregate* value, defined by Dewey, is *consummatory*, a concluding unity which: "...possesses a single quality that pervades the entire experience in spite of the variation of its constituent parts." (Dewey, in Gouinlock, 1994: 76). This unity is expressed in the name given to experiences, or in this case, purchases: 'that' meal; 'that' coat, and it is not emotional, cognitive or behavioural, for these labels separate distinctions of elements within the experience that do not capture its unity. However: "In going over an experience in mind after its occurrence, we may find that one property rather than another was sufficiently dominant so that it characterises the experience as a whole." (*Ibid*)

This latter view is supported to some degree by Ng and Smith (2012) who note the limitations of seeing benefits as purely tangible and intangible dimensions of the offering, and note that under this perspective value would change if the consumption context changes, consumer agency changes, or whether the assessment was pre-, during-, or post-consumption. They propose value is best achieved through seeing value in two

ways (shown in their integrated value framework in figure 15: firstly a phenomenological assessment of the engagement and use experience of the offer. This corresponds to the aggregate assessment suggested by Woodall (2003) which relates to the overall experience of the individual in terms of the context in which value is perceived. Under this perspective clothes would be seen as wear-able; the value lies in what the thing affords within a particular context (P-C Value). Secondly, value is perceptual; it drives choice before purchase and evaluation after purchase, and is an evaluation of what the individual believes the offering will deliver based on the properties of the thing itself (offering), what they believe it will deliver (affordance), what situation the object can provide value in (context), the ability of the individual to consume the object (agency) and whether the individual has the skills and resources to do so (A-C value). Again, however, whilst this addresses issues of phenomenological determination, context and agency discussed previously, and addresses how consumers create value through perceptions of P-Value when enacted, but moderated by A-C value (for example, willingness to pay), the evaluation leaves little room for an exploration of the trade-offs consumers have to make in arriving at the access 'consciousness' of value.

Figure 14: The Integrated Value Framework (Ng and Smith, 2012: 230)



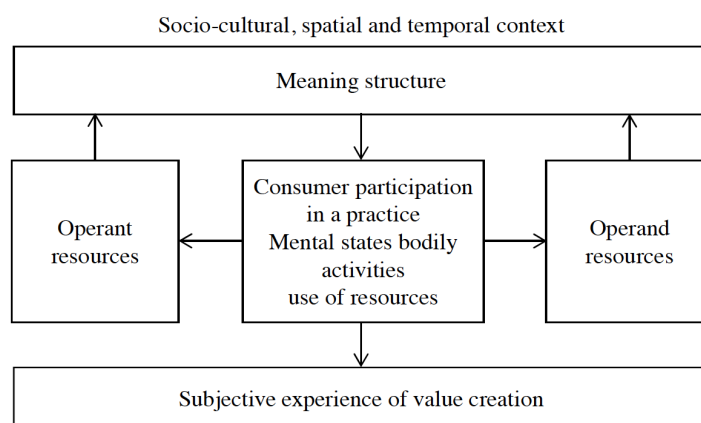
Furthermore, whilst these studies take account of utilitarian/hedonic and cognitive/affective evaluation (and the likelihood as argued above is that decision making is a hybrid process which combines the two), there is little consideration of habits and the

practice perspective highlighted earlier, and whether there is a conscious/unconscious or purposive/intuitive dimension to value. This will now be explored further.

Value and Practices

It was noted in chapter three that practices and value have been the subject of recent attention, and it is worth returning to practice theory perspectives on value here. Holttinen (2010) argues that value is tied to practices (not offerings, as proposed by much of the services marketing literature). She offers a framework (see fig. 15) for value creating practice which ties practices to a specific socio-cultural time and place, the resources (operant and operand) used within the practice, consumers' voluntary participation in the practice, the meanings structures that explain why consumers participate in certain practices, and the subjective experience of value creation. Meaning structures reflect what consumers see as desirable, the teleoaffective structures (Schatzki, 1997), ends in view (Dewey, in Gouignon, 1994) or goal-oriented motivations mentioned earlier, and the kinds of value (for example functional benefits or emotional rewards) that consumers are seeking. In this perspective, it is stressed that each consumer has an individual conception of this meaning structure, and that individuals do not necessarily act rationally, but developing a unifying perspective on what makes best sense at that particular point in time, again corresponding with the notion of 'aggregated VC' put forward earlier.

Figure 15: The Constellation and Operational Logic of a Value-Creating Practice (Holttinen, 2010: 102)



Helkkula *et al.* (2012) as previously mentioned also adopt this practice perspective to value, in which they differentiate practices from experiences; the former being routine action based on tacit knowledge and lacking in conscious reflection and the latter specific events which are 'meaning-laden'. Helkkula *et al.* (2012) argue that phenomenological value is largely derived from experiences, whereas practices are imbued with social and cultural meanings, but ultimately value-creation practices are units or subsets of the experience of value; that each consumer experience (observable at the individual phenomenological level) is formed of a number of practices (observable at a longitudinal, collective level). They argue social practices are therefore correspondingly units of value, regardless of whether they are consciously 'valued', remembered or observed. The implications for value and value research are that phenomenological perspectives reveal the individual aspects of the experience of value which cannot be understood from observing routines, but also that individuals, practice and culture are inseparable and in attempting to understand how value is evaluated (or co-created), the intersubjectivity of social relations must be considered in relation to individual experience.

Value for the Customer: Conclusion

In conclusion, the reviews of the value literature examined reveal that there are a number of common characteristics of customer value throughout the literature, principally that it is often perceived as being multi-dimensional (although there is a lack of agreement about the nature of these dimensions as discussed), it is contextual and only emerges through a customer's engagement with an organisation's offering. Also, as summarised by Sanchez and Iniesta (2006): that it is a preferential evaluative judgement; that it is based on customer perceptions; that it possesses a higher-level of abstraction that, for example, links to customer values and the means-end chain; and, it involves some weighing of benefit/sacrifice, although this may work cognitively or affectively. Furthermore, as noted by Vargo and Lusch (2004), value is co-created between customer and organisation, and emerges through the customer-supplier relationship.

However, whilst the reviews agree that the various strands of literature do all contribute to our understanding and argue that these strands require amalgamation into a 'cohesive whole', they are in themselves limiting in that they tend to be rooted in particular

discourses and focus on particular aspects of value. For example, the work of Sanchez and Iniesta is very much rooted in a 'marketing' axiological perspective which leads them to the adoption of Holbrook's model; this relates broadly to the psychological dimension of value identified by Gallarza *et al.*, 2011), whereas Khalifa's work is grounded very much in a 'quality' discourse, with an emphasis on satisfaction/dissatisfaction and product/service attributes (perhaps more broadly related to the 'economic' dimension of value as identified by Gallarza *et al.* (2011). Whilst the proponents of Holbrook's approach have perhaps 'shied away' from benefit/sacrifice approaches to some degree, Gallarza *et al.* (2011) further call for research to be done into the various cognitive and affective 'antecedents' of value by researchers in the 'trade-off domain' such as price, time, quality, play and novelty, to further conceptualise the nature and types of customer value. Boksberger and Melsen (2011: 233) conclude that: "...the perceived value of services is a combined assessment of consumers' perception of benefits and sacrifices, including quality and price, for a variety of perceived value dimensions with original behavioural intentions and customer satisfaction playing a role in overall evaluation." However, these approaches are largely utilitarian and, despite 'nods' to the role of affect, cognitive in nature, and cannot account for the pluralistic nature of value as it is experienced and practiced by consumers. This may also be true of Woodall's Net VC as a balancing of benefit and sacrifice, although the overall aggregation is perhaps more intuitive.

Also, Sanchez and Iniesta (2007) conclude by proposing Holbrook's typology as the most useful as it: "...defines more sources of value than other studies." (p441). The problem here is that such sources might be identified (as in the previous section), but typologies such as Holbrook's say very little about *how* value is evaluated from the consumer's point of view, and consequently are of limited scope in understanding value evaluations. Indeed, Boksberger and Melsen (2011) note the lack of critical reflection in the number of studies which have proposed Holbrook's typology, and identify only two studies which have applied the concept. Sanchez and Iniesta (2007) do recognise that all of the value streams they identify have some merit and contribute to our understanding of the concept, offering the suggestion that the different approaches offer 'simple' or 'complex' perspectives. However, earlier criticisms of Holbrook withstanding and the omission from the typology of benefit/sacrifice and other perspectives leave this as an unsatisfactory model for fully exploring trade-offs and how they drive value.

Woodall proposes Net VC as the form to which all others 'subordinate'. As previously identified, there is extensive support for this in both the 'value' and the 'ethical consumption' literature for the following reasons: firstly, even if consumers might be seeking a particular form of value (in this case perhaps conditional value, morality or ethical value as a form of derived VC), different types of value may 'compete' as previously identified by Holbrook (1994) and as noted by Valor (2008) and other authors, multiple types of value may be sought in the act of an 'ethical clothing purchase', including 'morality' (or enlightened self-interest) but also including aesthetic, social and functional value amongst many potential others. Also, as Sheth et al. (1991) observe, consumer choice is a function of multiple consumption values, and as Brown (1999 and 2006) and Firat *et al.* (1995) have noted, consumers are unpredictable and contradictory and may derive different, and often contradictory, forms of value at different times, all of which contribute to an overall individual perspective on value.

However, it was argued that the overall perception of value is more likely to be represented by a unified aggregation. This corresponds with Helkkula *et al.* (2012) and Ng and Smith (2012) who identify the importance of the phenomenological perspective; with the former authors further differentiating practices from experiences; practices based on tacit knowledge and lacking in conscious reflection, together contributing to experiences more characterised by meaning and delivering phenomenological value. Indeed, the notion of intuitive practice also connects with the notion of an overall aggregated perception of value; one which takes into account all of the factors relevant at any particular time, drawing on the past and seeing ahead into the future (the teleoaffective dimension, as previously discussed). Indeed, there is a temporal aspect to value which also means that different forms of value might be perceived or derived at different times and this total experience will further contribute to an overall value evaluation.

It is therefore proposed that trade-offs may best be explored utilising Woodall's 'Aggregated VC'; a form of aggregated value for the customer or personal advantage which recognises the balance of benefits and sacrifices (whether they may be cognitive, affective or intuitive), and which may occur at different levels of action, practice and experience. However, the phenomenological perspective (and particularly for personal

experiences) recognises the subjectivity of terms such as 'benefit' and 'sacrifice' and the pluralist / pragmatic view of value and values, and that value may be fluid in terms of changing identities in response to shifting ends in view. These trade-offs should be considered in terms of how consumers *enact* value in their practices. The term enact as used by Ng and Smith (2012) is preferred here as it is an inherent part of the individual's practices, and may include the value the consumer expects to receive *ex ante* or derives *ex post*, although it is recognised that this level of experience may be largely sub-conscious.

A further objective for the research must therefore be to investigate how consumers experience value in ethical clothing consumption. As with the relationship between aggregated VC and Net VC, in service of understanding *how* consumers value, it will also be necessary to consider *what* is valued. Further, in service of understanding the experience of value and its connections with identity, the role of values in shaping identity and moral evaluation will also be a key dimension.

Chapter 5

Research Objectives and Conceptual Framework

The previous four chapters have established the persistence of ethical problems and dilemmas in the clothing industry, the nature and role of ethical consumption in addressing these problems, and the major themes and debates within the ethical consumption literature to date, along with consideration of how ethics should be conceptualised in relation to consumption. The pluralist and pragmatic perspectives, and literature examining problems of ethical consumption have largely discredited the 'marketing' perspectives on ethical consumption (here referred to as the studies analysing segmentation and attitudes towards ethical products and services), found a 'pure' psychological perspective potentially limiting, but has recognised the sociological perspectives of identity and practice as being relevant. Throughout the literature is the central theme of trade-offs, and it has been argued that trade-offs might best be understood through the concept of value, and in particular chapter four made the case for 'aggregate value for the customer' (or perhaps more simply, personal advantage) as the theoretical lens through which the trade-offs might be explored. In service of this, it is proposed that Woodall's (2003) concept of net value for the customer (resulting in an aggregate VC) is the most appropriate analytic device to understand these trade-offs; to explore the nature of the benefits and sacrifices which may be traded off (and if this is indeed the case), but recognises the pluralist, phenomenological and contextual dimensions inherent in consumer thought and action, but also by adopting the pragmatist perspective in order to reflect new insights about valuation and habituation.

The study therefore aims to explore the issues involved in navigating the trade-offs inherent in ethical consumption, with aggregate value, or personal advantage, as the output. In service of understanding these trade-offs, it is recognised that identity is one of

the things which constantly shifts in relation to ends in view, and practice will also have an impact; chapter three established that there is significant emerging evidence that identity is important in determining ethical consumption, and consumption is carried out through a set of practices. However, whilst identity is continuously negotiated, there is an end point to strive for (here classified as personal advantage), which may be related to an individual's values. This 'teleoaffectivity', or orientation towards ends and the ways in which things matter to individuals, is argued to be the predominant influence in the organisation of activity in practice theory (Schatzki, 1997), but also as previously discussed, a key driver of value and connected to identity, whilst recognising that these are likely 'ends in sight', rather than 'absolute' end states. This connects with pragmatist theory, but raises key questions around whether consumers *seek* to maximise value (or personal advantage) in the pursuit of establishing particular identities or the maintenance of their practices, or whether the achievement of these identities and practices *provide* value within the particular temporal, cultural and social context of consumers' lived experience.

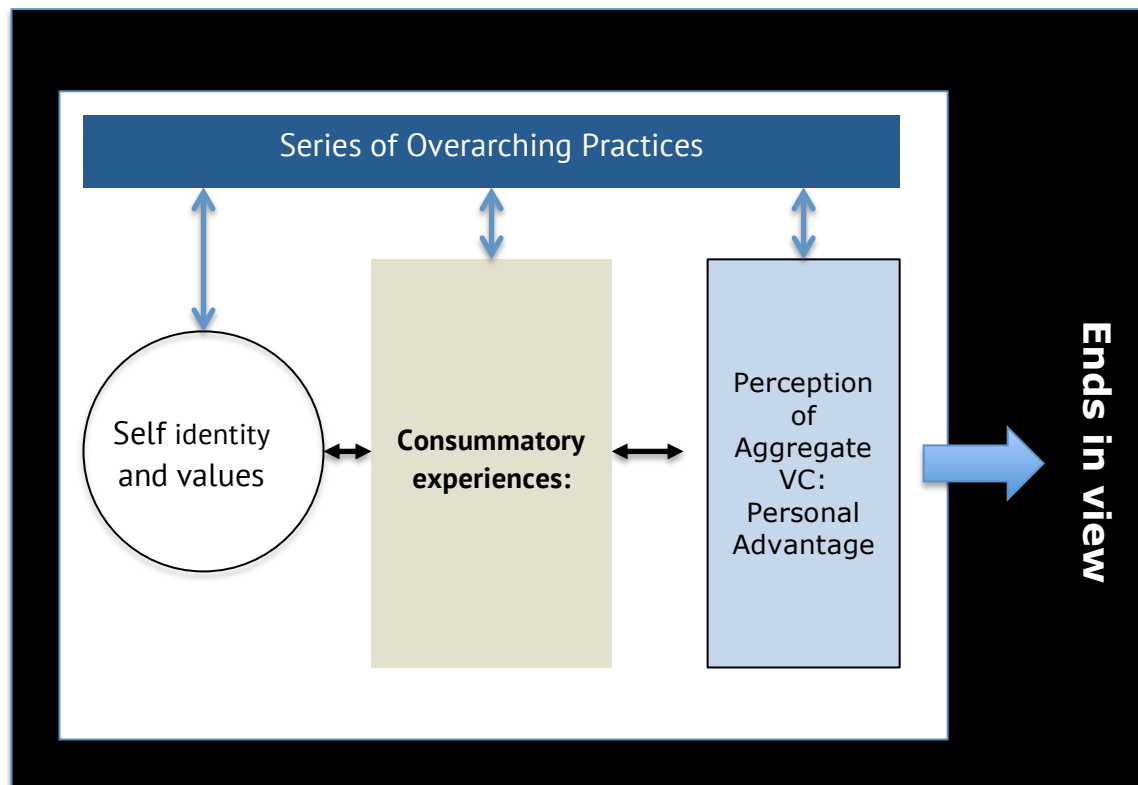
The overall aim of this study is therefore to explore the trade-offs ethically-principled consumers make in clothing consumption. As noted in chapter two, a discussion of 'ethical consumption' may involve the consumption practices of ethically engaged or committed consumers, and the consumption of definably ethically produced products and services. The central recognition of the trade-offs it is claimed are inherent in ethical consumption would imply an acknowledgement that the focus of such debates is on those ethically committed individuals who may or may not necessarily be constantly engaged in ethical clothing consumption, and this is also therefore the focus of this research, rather than the consumption of ethically produced clothing in and of itself. Following from the concepts presented as being relevant in the review of the literature, as highlighted throughout the previous chapters, the specific objectives for the research are:

- To understand the role of moral evaluation in clothing consumption practices.
- To explore the role of values in consumer trade-offs and their relationship to practice.
- To explore the roles of identity and practice in the clothing consumption practices of ethically-motivated consumers, and the implications for value evaluation.

- To investigate how ethically-committed consumers experience value in clothing consumption and to consider the implications for ethical consumption.

The resulting conceptual framework which demonstrates the connections between these key concepts as they apply to the study is shown in figure 16 overleaf. Following from the previous discussion, the framework shows the consummatory experiences which can be characterised as a *unification* of a multiplicity of moral standards and inconsistent attitudes and behaviours (Dewey, in Gouinlock, 1994), or the ‘messy’ pluralistic moral decision making (Bauman, 1993) facing individuals which are based on inconsistent and often contradictory values (Hinman, 2003). This consummation may also lead to an aggregation of the concept of Net VC (Woodall, 2003), which is not necessarily a cognitive or conscious balancing of benefit and sacrifice. This occurs within a series of overarching consumption (and other) practices in which individuals are engaged (Warde, 2005). These experiences and practices are inherently tied to self-identity, values and the personal histories that underpin them (Bourdieu, 1992). The practices also include the trade-offs that characterise much ethical consumption, here again characterised by a form of ‘aggregate VC’ (Woodall, 2003); a conception of the value which is enacted, that is, phenomenologically integrated into the individual’s social and cultural practices (Ng and Smith, 2012). This also recognises that at the heart of much of the value and practice theory lies the notion of end states as being teleoaffective (Schatzki, 1997), which could be compared to Dewey’s (in Anderson, 2014) notion of ‘ends in view’. The multidirectionality of the relationships between aggregate VC, identity and practice acknowledges whether consumers *seek* to maximise personal advantage in the pursuit of identity establishment or the maintenance of practices, or whether the achievement of these identities and practices *provide* value within a particular context. Thus, the key dimensions of practice, value and identity with the trade offs at their centre are reflected within the overall domain of moral decision making in consumption.

Figure 16: Conceptual framework



Chapter 6

Research Methodology

One thing is clear, don't do any research. Don't ask the public any questions on this subject. The answers are never reliable. In instances where the head says one thing and the heart another, studies are useless if not misleading.

Ulrich and Sarasin (in Carrigan and Attalla, 2001: 566)

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is largely threefold: firstly, as discussed in the previous chapter, to consider the epistemological assumptions, adopted methodologies and methods used in previous research into ethical consumer behaviour and their implications for the validity and reliability of such research. Secondly, to attempt to argue the case for the particular paradigm which shaped the research conducted for this thesis, partly in response to the evaluation undertaken of existing research to date. As a result of this, the third aim of this chapter is to discuss the methods that were used in the research.

In relation to the first and second aims, Arbnor and Bjerke (2009) note that such methodologies will be based on a set of philosophical presumptions and methodological viewpoints, or paradigms, which affect the collection and analysis of data, and consequently which have implications for the conclusions reached. They note that such paradigms consist of a conception of reality, a conception of science, a scientific ideal and ethical / aesthetical aspects. This is significant, as Easton (in Moller & Wilson, 1995: 413) states:

Most researchers are very little exercised by the *how* of research.... There is also a widely held belief that the broader issues of methodology are irrelevant to 'practical researchers'.... but what is often obscure is the fact that assumptions have been made and values smuggled into the decisions without the decision

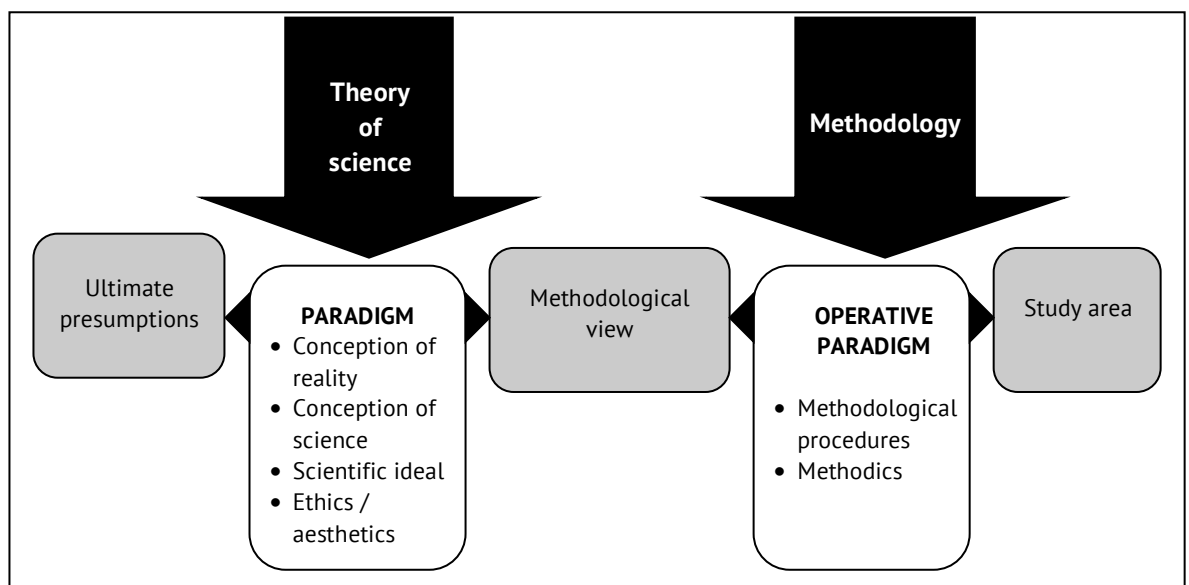
maker being aware of the process. Furthermore, it is not always realised how the methodology used in a research program critically influences the output of the research process and its interpretation.

Therefore, views on the nature of the world, reality, and the way in which knowledge is developed have profound implications for the methods used to conduct research. As Easton suggests, this then influences the way in which research is undertaken, the type of data gathered, the way in which it is interrogated, and ultimately the outcomes. The choice of methods therefore influence the output from those methods. The following section will therefore address both of these aims by addressing the research paradigms relevant to the study. This will be done both with reference to the literature concerned specifically with research philosophy and methodology, but also to the marketing and ethics literature discussed in the literature review.

Research Methodology

As previously mentioned, Arbnor and Bjerke (2009) note the importance of research paradigms. They argue that such paradigms are based on a series of assumptions, and they in turn affect the ultimate choice of research methods (or the *operative* paradigm). This series of relationships is shown in figure 17:

Figure 17: Paradigm and operative paradigm (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2009: 17)



Therefore, they define methodology as: "...the understanding of how methods are constructed, that is, how an operative paradigm is developed." (p17). However, they argue a discussion of methodology must include all of the above elements, and the elements cannot be described in isolation as this operative paradigm relates the study to a methodological view, which in turn is based upon a paradigm. Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) support this, reasoning that an understanding of philosophical issues (the 'theory of science' noted above) assists in clarifying research designs, recognising which designs will work and which will not, and identifying designs which may not have previously been considered. Therefore, any discussion of research methodology must establish both the paradigm and the operative paradigm. This chapter will therefore begin by examining the philosophical issues (or 'theory of science') appropriate to the objectives outlined in the previous chapter. In doing so, a critique of previous studies of ethical consumption will be offered to help better understand the research to date. Issues of methods (methodological procedures and research techniques) and methodics (the planning and conducting of the research) will then also be considered.

Theory of Science: Research Philosophy and Approach

As previously established a research paradigm relates to a theory of science containing four key elements as follows. Firstly, the conception of reality relates to the philosophical ideas about the construction of reality (ontology). A conception of science relates to the nature of knowledge (epistemology), the scientific ideal relates to the role of the researcher in the research process, and ethics / aesthetics relate to claims about what is morally suitable in the research and how the research should be presented. The latter element will be discussed later in this chapter.

Conception of reality: ontology

Problems of reality relate to *ontological* considerations. According to Connolly (1995: 1) ontology is: "...the study of the fundamental logic of reality apart from appearances". Hindess (1977: 4) notes that:

Where ontological doctrines are invoked with respect to the social sciences they generally concern an alleged distinction between the essential properties of things social and those of (all other) things natural which, far from being established by scientific investigation, is supposed to call for a corresponding distinction in scientific methods of investigation.

Therefore, in addition to comprising theories about what exists by drawing contrasts between the natural and social worlds, ontology is also inextricably linked to the conception of science highlighted above, and this will be developed in the following section. In relation to these two contrasting views, Bryman and Bell (2007) note that they are referred to as objectivism and constructionism. Here Bryman & Bell (2007: 22) define objectivism as an ontological position which: "...implies that social phenomena confront us as external facts that are beyond our reach or influence", and constructionism in which: "...social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors... not only produced through social interaction, but also in a constant state of revision." Philosophical arguments rage on each side: as Hindess (1977) notes, objectivist thought has a long history, recognised most readily in the work of Kant who, as with the previous discussion relating to ethics, sees no difference between social and natural science: "...human actions, like every other natural event are determined by universal laws" (in Hindess, 1977: 13). Constructionist thought has its roots in more recent traditions, with an ontological enquiry of 'being' significantly developed by Heidegger (influenced by Hegel and Nietzsche) and his phenomenological concept of 'Dasein', or "being there" (Sedgwick, 2001, Guignon, 2006). Sedgwick (2001) notes that phenomenology here is a term coined by Heidegger's teacher, Husserl, and is composed of 'phenomenon' (to show itself; the manifest) and 'logos' (discourse). Thus phenomenology is the meaning grasped whenever one engages with the world; it is concerned with the meaning of 'being' being rooted in understanding; to *be* means to be *understood as something*. As van Manen (1990) notes, phenomenology is the study of lived experience; to understand: "What is this or that kind of experience like?" (van Manen, 1990: 9). The ethical perspectives and arguments put forward in chapter two as well as some of the identity work considered in chapters three and five clearly depend on this particular ontological paradigm, and this will be considered further in due course.

It should be noted that Lavery (2003) posits a difference, however, between Husserl's *phenomenology* and Heidegger's *hermeneutic phenomenology*, the former of which understands humans as 'knowers', the latter of which comprehends humans as: "...concerned creatures with an emphasis on their fate..." (p7). That is, phenomenology seeks to answer primarily epistemological questions about 'how we know what we know',

whereas hermeneutic phenomenology seeks to arrive at an understanding 'what it means to be a person' (Lavery, 2003). It should be noted that there are problems with both of these ontological and epistemological viewpoints, however which require further exploration. In order to highlight these it will first be useful to explore the development of ontological thought and how it relates to the arguments put forward earlier in this thesis.

The phenomenological concerns described influenced poststructuralists and postmodernists such as Rorty, Derrida and Foucault (Guignon, 2006). This poststructuralist thought, as it applies to the social world is worthy of further discussion, particularly as it applies to conceptions of ethics as discussed in the previous chapter. Sedgwick (2001) argues that structural thought is based around reaching an understanding of the conditions in which meaning is produced in social forms, but in order to formally understand these conditions, they must be conceptualised as being fixed; essentially that there is some 'absolute truth' which underpins these forms. Thus, structuralism must be rooted in an objective ontological perspective. However, Foucault realises that there is no 'absolute truth', only 'epistèmès' or perspectives: "... the will to knowledge does not achieve a universal truth; man is not given an exact and serene mastery of nature." (Foucault, 1971: 95). Thus, Foucault takes the Nietzschean perspective that new ways of being can be created, and believes that creation occurs through discourse or knowledge. Similarly, Derrida (2001: 4) argues that the totality in structures cannot be revealed: "...the relief and design of structures appears more clearly when content, which is the living energy of meaning, is neutralised."; that is, any representation of an object merely shows that object at any given moment in its history. Likewise, with history, Foucault (1971) takes a synchronic approach; there is no beginning, end, or inevitabilities, only synchronic structures made up of particular isolated epistèmès, and each society has its own 'truths'. Therefore, for the post-structuralists the existence of an objective reality is unlikely, perhaps even impossible, as 'reality' or 'being' only carry any meaning if that reality or being can be perceived. Hollis (2002: 203) also refers to *hermeneutic* ontology, which: "rests with intersubjectivity and a meaningful order as it is understood to be from within", or as he cites Dilthey: "...life has no meaning outside itself." (p219). However, Hollis concedes that it is unlikely the two ontological viewpoints will ever be reconciled, and

whilst he only takes the perspective of an 'umpire', a relativist argument is suggested, noting that:

...science is a human institution and, like all other institutions, needs to be understood from within. It no doubt includes rules for arriving at objective conclusions, but these rules too are social and the objectivity of the conclusions is internal to the process by which they are reached.

Indeed, it was argued in the previous chapter that an objective ethics is an impossibility, but that through their personal perspectives consumers create their own 'internalised' rules (or conclusions reached through social and internal processes), although the relativist positions invoke the problems also previously discussed. As Inglehart and Welzel (2005) have argued, the effect of pluralism was the emancipation of people from 'moral objectivism', and as Bauman (1993) argues, despite the efforts of twentieth century philosophy to reduce plurality, morality is 'cast' in the practice of everyday life; human conduct is not governed by a series of set rules which are not open to interpretation. These arguments are borne out also in the marketing literature; similarly, in terms of value Firat and Venkatesh (1995) had posited the multiple values, choices and practices of consumers which are contextual, fluid, changing and often contradictory, and Gabriel and Lang (2006: 9) point out that consumerism is a: "...complex... phenomenon that both describes social reality and also shapes our perceptions of social reality.". Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982) have argued the importance of the experiential aspects of consumption which are often overlooked through the adoption of objective perspectives. Significantly, Vargo and Lusch (2008) argue that value, as they understand it, is phenomenologically and idiosyncratically determined, and highlight the experiential nature of value, with a role for consumer culture theorists to understand how consumers: "...perform service with firm-provided offerings." (Arnould, in Vargo and Lusch, 2008: 4). Here they do not distinguish between 'phenomenological' and 'experiential'; whilst Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982) had identified the experiential nature of consumption, this was limited to particular forms through which the role of affect is prominent. It is more likely, however, that all consumption is rooted in experience and the term 'phenomenological' accounts for this wider definition.

However, whilst it may be easier to concede that there is no universal, objective 'value' which is derived by consumers as argued in chapter four, the danger of a purely subjective

ontology is similar to that which faces a relativist moral position; it is difficult to arrive at universal moral obligations rather than just a series of social or moral preferences held by individuals. As Searle's social ontology (in McGann, 2011) asserts, social 'facts' are ontologically subjective, but they may have a 'truth' behind them which means they can be studied in the same way as objective phenomena. For example, local or international laws related to the protection of the human rights of workers or the polluting effects of particular chemicals do have objective properties; they can exist, and they can protect from harm (bearing in mind Bauman's [1997] warning that ethical authority does not derive from the state's powers to legislate). Care should therefore be exercised in the application of ontological considerations; it can be easy to focus on the debates between the 'two traditions' at the expense of focusing on what the research aims to achieve. Indeed, Rorty (1999) agrees with Hollis (2002), noting that the ontological debates around objectivity and intersubjectivity had not really changed over his lifetime, and the result of this argument is his realisation that: "philosophy was no help in dealing with Nazis and other bullies." (p16), and also that his reading of Hegel was that: "...Philosophy is just a matter of out-redescribing the last philosopher." (p11). The pragmatist thought introduced in chapters two and four, and in particular the work of Rorty (1982 and 1999) is worthy of further consideration here in respect of not only a solution to this problem, but also a philosophical connection between ontological and epistemological concerns and the issues discussed in the previous chapter.

Rorty (1999) defines ontological differences as the opposition between reality and appearance. His agreement with a socially constructionist ontological position is clear in rejecting terms such as 'objective value' and 'objective truth', and in stating his agreement with the postmodernist criticisms of the 'traditional' philosophical discussion of 'reason'. However, due to the continued debates around objective and subjective reality Rorty adopts a pragmatic position; not concerned with asking questions about reality or knowledge (and therefore not concerned about ontology), but with philosophical practices which are socially and politically useful. Indeed, Connolly (1995) notes that ontological considerations have been neglected at the expense of epistemology in recent times, because despite the notion that: "...modern practices express an overlapping, contestable set of ontological or metaphysical assumptions..., the most pressing contemporary issues

of politics, psychology and ethics do not require us to make these presumptions explicit objects of reflection.”

As discussed in chapter two, pragmatist arguments correspond well to the arguments previously proposed in favour of pluralism; it was noted earlier that there are problems with ‘pure’ hermeneutic phenomenological enquiry and they relate to the discussion in the previous chapter around the danger of relativism; that they ‘protect’ against *judging* the moral values of others, an extreme example of which could be as with Rorty’s example of ‘dealing with Nazis’. However, it is clear that the emancipation of the postmodern consumer has led to the increasing subjectivity and plurality in moral concerns and choices, particularly in the domain of consumption. Rorty (1982 and 1999) argues that rather than engage in philosophical ontological debates, one should recognise that objectivity and subjectivity are parts of the same culture to help humans make sense of the world around them in the best way possible to improve their lives. Thus, he adopts a slightly different position to the two opposing ‘sides’ as: “...the ‘postmoderns’ are philosophically right though politically silly, and the ‘orthodox’ are philosophically wrong as well as politically dangerous.” (p18). Similar to James, therefore, whilst rejecting a philosophical objective ontology, Rorty does not reject the practices associated with it; he believes science *and* religion, for example, to be useful in human progress, but that claims to truth should be rejected, and philosophers should confine themselves to justification, and: “...the *only* point in contrasting the true with the merely justified is to contrast a possible future with the actual present.” (Rorty, 1999: 39). Bauman (1997) agrees that truth is: “...a certain attitude we take [or]... wish or expect others to take to what is said or believed...” (p112), but argues that truth is only of consequence when in the context of opposition; when trying to assert who is right and who is wrong (with an insinuation that ‘the other side’ must be in the wrong and that the side in the right can speak with the authority to which others must obey).

Of course, any ontological discussion as it relates to this thesis is to arrive at an ontological perspective in which the study can be grounded. There are many parallels to draw between the work of Rorty (1982 and 1999) and the arguments put forward both in the previous chapter and previously in this chapter. The ‘reality’ under investigation here relates to the ethics and conceptions of value of a particular group of people (in this case, consumers of clothing). The case for ethical pluralism was previously advanced, alongside

a corresponding subjective and multi-dimensional conception of value. Rorty's (1999) moral position is essentially pluralist, noting that relativists reject the notion that there are: "...unconditional, transcultural moral obligations rooted in an unchanging, ahistorical human nature." (pxvi). As with previous arguments relating to consumer ethics and value being a matter of trading off or making compromises, Rorty (1999) argues that: "Moral choice is always a matter of compromise between competing goods rather than as a choice between the absolutely right and the absolutely wrong" (pxxvii); hence the consumer adoption of bounded rationality. As a pluralist argument would progress, he argues that nobody's sense of moral responsibility is rational and objective; just a result of how they were brought up. Rorty sees the moral problem as not the prevention of descent into 'evil' as a result of not following moral rules, but a pragmatist problem of finding ways to decrease human suffering and increase human equality, increasing the chances of everyone to start life with an equal chance of achieving happiness. He does not claim to be a moral relativist, however, as he (as all people do) believes his beliefs to be the 'right' ones. Likewise, Bernstein (2010: 62) says of James' pragmatic pluralism that:

Too frequently we are blind and insensitive to what is genuinely different from us, and we are all too quick to scorn and condemn it... We fail to make the effort to see how the world feels and looks from the perspective of those with other life experiences. But we can enlarge our understanding and sympathies to appreciate other points of view... This does *not* mean that when we make a serious effort to understand other points of view we will simply accept them or suspend our critical judgement.

This pragmatic (and pluralistic) approach appears to therefore be an attractive base for the ontological foundation of this research, albeit with relativist origins. The key message of postmodernism, that: "the very search for a single, unifying model of social and cultural life may be inappropriate." (Filmer et al., 1998: 23) means that when examining ethics the ontological assumption must be that it is impossible to treat people as being separate from their social contexts and they cannot be understood without examining the perceptions they have of their own activities (Collis and Hussey, 2003). As Bauman (1993: 245) observes: "The postmodern perspective offers more wisdom; the postmodern setting makes acting on that wisdom more difficult." However, as Rorty (1982) notes, the pragmatist response recognises three key considerations: firstly, that the search for truth is not a language of theory or contemplation, but of practise and action which helps human beings make sense of and improve the world around them. Secondly, that there is

no metaphysical difference between facts and values and that one does not arrive at true belief by applying mechanical procedures: for pragmatists all inquiry (scientific and moral) is centred around consideration of the relative attractions of different outcomes. Thirdly, that there are no constraints on inquiry. The pragmatist: "...wants us to give up the notion that God, or evolution, or some other underwriter... has programmed us as machines..." (p165). Thus, whilst one may adopt a relativist position and accept that the 'ethical consumer' is as much of a 'myth' as the objective moral truths which underpin it, there may be agreement on the need to adopt shared practices which work to achieve societal goals; as Rorty (1982) argues, this is the best hope for society. Whilst the postmodern, hermeneutic or relativist thought may be criticised for lacking a 'moral code' as a result of which society needs to be 'saved', the relativist conception of the futility of a hope for 'something' that will step in to 'save us' (whether this is God, rationality, knowledge or truth) still holds true. As a consequence, pluralism is an attractive argument which recognises there are competing views without imposing strict frames of reference on the subjects of research, and ultimately rejects objectivity in favour of a move towards a sense of human solidarity which respects the message of relativism, but addresses criticisms of its outcomes. As Hobson (2006) argues in relation to environmental responsibility, the challenge in encouraging greater environmental responsibility lies not in: "...moral didacticism" (p294), but by considering what a pragmatic theory of environmental responsibility might 'look like'. Rorty's (1982) focus on the notion of solidarity and phenomenological aspects are also picked up by Sandel (2009), who highlights the narrative conception of humans. That is, that humans live lives as 'narrative quests' and in searching for answers about what one should do, one has to ask which stories one finds oneself a part of. He argues that this is teleological in nature, but this does not mean that the narratives have a fixed purpose or are externally governed (as with the ends in view, which may account for the identity shifts in consumer behaviour discussed previously). Sandel (2009) therefore rejects universal and voluntary categories of moral responsibility in favour of obligations of solidarity; moral responsibilities to those with whom we share a certain history" (p225).

In conclusion, the research objectives of this thesis relate to consumer aspirations for and perceptions of both morality and value in the purchase of clothing. As has been argued, these issues must be considered from a constructionist, subjective ontology with roots in

hermeneutic phenomenology. However, the ontological assumptions underpinning this thesis can be summarised within a framework of '4Ps': postmodernism, phenomenology, plurality and pragmatism: the postmodern addresses the relativist existence of multiple realities, values and morals; phenomenology recognises the importance of lived experience, but countered with pluralism, which recognises the need for the pursuit of certain ends in view which carry societal benefit, whilst recognising that conflicting values exist, as a basis for human solidarity. Pragmatism recognises both of these issues and attempts to arrive at the best course of action to improve human well-being. It is this discussion to which this thesis hopes to contribute. It was noted in the previous chapter that Hinman's (2003) ethical pluralism holds that several moral standards may be relevant depending on the specific situation, sometimes producing the same result and sometimes conflicting. However, the habitus discussed in chapter three (Bourdieu, 1993) would hold that these 'moral standards' are the consumers' embodied practices (which, of course, may be contradictory). The purpose of this research is to interpret the phenomenon (or practice) of valuation and the moral dimension to it in particular consumption episodes. It is recognised that the characteristics of this interpretation will depend on the chosen sample, and the implications of this will be discussed in due course.

Conception of science: epistemology

As previously noted, a conception of science relates to the nature of knowledge, or *epistemological* considerations. Lavery (2003) suggests that epistemology is concerned primarily with the relationship between 'the knower and the known'. Thus, questions of epistemology are important not only for considering how we know the reality of the (social) world, but as highlighted by Charmaz and Bryant (2011), also for critically questioning the influence of the researcher on the research process and the consideration of the existing knowledge of the researcher prior to the research process. As with ontological debates, Hollis (1994) notes that questions related to our knowing of the world fall into two broad debates. Firstly, the 'traditional' or empiricist perspective seeks to define knowledge as establishing facts which are beyond doubt through observation and explanation. The second group questions the nature of the social world, and whether knowledge of human cognition and action is the same as knowledge about 'the world beneath our feet'. This 'rival' interpretivist tradition seeks to understand the social world 'from within', to: "...support the ontological perspective of the belief in existence of not

just one reality, but multiple realities that are constructed and can be altered by the knower.” (Lavery, 2003: 13). As the second element of a ‘theory of science’, ontology cannot be easily separated from issues of epistemology, and the ‘4Ps’ of postmodernism, phenomenology, plurality and pragmatism should be discussed in relation to a theory of knowledge.

Epistemologically it is difficult to separate the ‘4Ps’, as each provide supporting justification for each other. As previously noted, the postmodern view has its roots in the phenomenological tradition, and as Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982) argue, the field of consumption research requires a conceptual shift towards the phenomenological to capture the entire spectrum of experience of consumption. As Lavery (2003) notes, a hermeneutic phenomenology (as put forward by Heidegger) in particular places interpretation as being fundamental to a process of understanding and reconstruction of knowledge through a process of interaction and interpretation between the researcher and the participant. She notes that Heidegger argues that Husserl’s process of ‘bracketing’ to arrive at the central nature of something is inappropriate as a person cannot remove themselves from the experience of one’s own history and social or cultural contextual grounding (that is, the individual and experience are inseparable). Madison (1997) in a postmodern twist of his own argues that hermeneutic phenomenology provides the beginnings of an ‘after-postmodernism’; that it is ‘as postmodern as anything else’, but as previously argued with regard to pluralism, does not lead into the ‘dead end’ of relativism. Thus, as with ontology, the postmodern, phenomenological and plural are inherently intertwined.

Whilst van Manen (2007) suggests that a ‘practical phenomenology’ can bridge the divide between Husserl’s epistemology and Heidegger’s ontology, as previously suggested, Rorty (1982) argues that a pragmatist response should be concerned with practise and action which helps human beings make sense of the world around them, which considers the relative attractions of different outcomes and which places no constraints on inquiry. Under such a pragmatic view of epistemology:

...there is no activity called ‘knowing’ which has a nature to be discovered, and at which natural scientists are particularly skilled. There is simply the process of justifying beliefs to audiences. None of these audiences is closer to nature, or a

better representative of some ahistorical ideal of rationality, than any other. The idea of a subject of study called 'rationality' goes at the same time, and for the same reasons, as the idea of a subject of study called 'knowledge'. (Rorty, 1999: 36)

That is, the empiricist objective conception of reality and its corresponding 'scientific method' are not the 'standard' by which all 'rational' knowledge must be derived, and as Rorty (1982) argues, that there is no 'epistemological or transcendental' explanation of why particular scientific ideals have appeared to work; referring to the success of Galileo's scientific terminology over that of Aristotle, he notes that: "...he [Galileo] didn't pick that terminology because it was... in line with the categories of the pure understanding. He just lucked out." (p193). Thus Rorty (1982) sides with Dewey, who sees language as a mechanism for coping, rather than : "...representations of their intrinsic natures." (p198) and sees the 'arguments' between the objective empiricist view of a 'scientific' social science which is objective, value-free and seeks to *explain*, and the hermeneutic view of a social science which seeks to *understand* are misguided as an argument requires a disagreement about a common goal, but explanation and understanding are not in opposition to each other in terms of trying to accurately predict the outcomes of certain events or decisions. Explanation is the vocabulary that may (but not necessarily) be employed when one wishes to predict and/or control, and understanding is the vocabulary that may (but not necessarily) be employed when one wishes to evaluate human character. However, to argue that there is one vocabulary which is: "...suited to human beings or human societies, that only *that* vocabulary permits us to understand them" (Rorty, 1982: 198) is to believe that a particular language is intrinsic to the nature of things. Rorty argues, however, that hermeneutical enquiry is not therefore concerned with making particular claims about methods, but: "...simply casting about for a vocabulary that might help" (p199). As Hobson (2006) observes, this leads one to reject the notion that any one particular vocabulary is less or more objective or scientific than another, or to reject forms of knowledge which lead to practice rather than examining the practices themselves. As Bernstein (2010) notes, it is impossible to know if there is a world which exists independently of our descriptions of it; pragmatism recognises the plurality of vocabularies and the possibility for inventing new vocabularies.

To summarise using a study in a related field to this thesis, Hobson's (2006) exploration of the possibilities for pragmatism in environmental responsibility concludes that it enables three key benefits to be realised which also relate to the discussion presented to this point; firstly that it enables a reconsideration of meanings, definitions and the ontology of the topic; secondly that it reasserts the role of research as a social practice, rather than an observation, which takes place in an emergent social world. In relation to ethical choices, this recognises that every choice has a moral consequence, although not always traceable in terms of direct cause-effect relationships. However, as with pluralism, a pragmatist approach does not seek to impose moral judgements on the respondents but allows, as Rorty (1999) suggests, possibilities for creating positive social change through dialogue. Finally, the pragmatist approach recognises the role of the researcher as an active participant in the research process which acknowledges ethics through 'dialogic practices' such as interviews. This naturally leads to a discussion of the methods which should be employed to answer the research questions laid out in the previous chapter.

Methodological Procedures

Methods

Phenomenological and pragmatist researchers have argued particular methods for capturing the lived experiences of the subjects of research. For example, Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) suggest personal narratives; stories of how the consumer consumes products to examine how the consumer interprets their consumption experiences. Likewise, Hobson (2006) notes that pragmatist theories emphasise experience, utilising interactionalist methods which attempt to work with everyday practices as they have occurred. Working at the level of personal narratives naturally leads to qualitative techniques; as Myers (2009) notes, qualitative research allows the researcher the opportunity to understand the context within which decisions and actions occur. Given the emphasis on understanding in the research objectives, and the theory of science argued in the preceeding sections, qualitative interviewing would appear to be the most appropriate method. Indeed, as Kvale (1996) argues, interviews can be contextualised in three ways: firstly as a conversational techniques through which knowledge is

constructed. Secondly as a mode of knowing. Here Kvale cites Rorty's emphasis on the constitution of knowledge through a conversation between people rather than each person re-presenting an objective world; knowing does not have an 'essence', and conversation is the context in which knowledge is understood. Thirdly, the foundation of human reality lies in conversation and language; hermeneutic philosophers have argued that humans (and in this case, the 'ethical consumer') constitute themselves and the world through conversational activity. There are therefore understandings of interviews which lie in methodology, epistemology and ontology which are congruent with the theory of science presented previously. That is, as Kvale (1996) observes, in postmodern and hermeneutical philosophy, the emphasis on conversation as a mode of knowing is particularly strong and the research interview in particular seeks to discover knowledge about the subject's lived daily world and his or her relation to it through questioning.

Kvale (1996) notes that such methods are both interpretive and descriptive in nature; the interview aims to obtain descriptions of specific situations (not opinions) in the subject's 'life worlds' and the interviewer records and interprets the meaning of what is said. In particular, Seale (1998) observes that many researchers believe that 'depth', 'unstructured' or 'life history' interviews are more likely to gain more authentic accounts than others. Similarly, Cherrier (2005: 127) recommends the use of 'existential-phenomenological interviewing' in the field of ethical consumption, which: "...is a way to attain a description of everyday experience as it is lived and described...". Typical questions might therefore be: *'Can you tell me about the last time you went shopping? What was going through your mind when you bought that item?'* As with Kvale (1996), Cherrier (2005) notes that the interest lies in the consumer's experience; she argues that the tradition of existentialism is the most appropriate way to investigate ethical consumption due to the inherent link with freedom of choice and the implications of that choice for the individual and society as a whole. This existential approach is congruent with the phenomenological, postmodern and pragmatic, with a focus on the individual and the experience of choice. Woodruffe-Burton (1998) also advocates the technique in her study of compensatory consumption. Kvale (1996: 38-39) highlights how the epistemological aspects of postmodern, hermeneutic and phenomenological positions affect knowledge constructed through interviews:

A postmodern approach focuses on interrelations... on the social construction of reality... and emphasises the narratives constructed by the interview. From a hermeneutical understanding, the interpretation of meaning is the central theme... and there is an emphasis on the interpreter's foreknowledge of a text's subject matter. A phenomenological perspective includes a focus on the life world, an openness to the experiences of subjects... and a search for invariant essential meanings in the descriptions.

It is important to note that, although these philosophies converge conceptually (as the preceeding section has attempted to demonstrate), they have separate aims and nuanced differences in application. As Kvale points out, these differences may involve pragmatic methodologic choices in questioning, interpreting, validating and reporting, and these issues will be addressed where necessary.

A further benefit of interviewing lies in addressing the attitude-behaviour gap as identified in the previous chapter. A number of authors over some years have highlighted the existence of this gap, citing it as a particularly problematic aspect of ethical consumption and its investigation. Carrigan and Attalla (2001) were previously noted to have claimed its existence, and likewise Newholm (2005) saw the debates around it as being 'irresolvable'. Fukukawa and Ennew (2010) have also suggested the existence of discrepancies between beliefs or attitudes and behaviour in the field of consumer ethics. Crane (1999) argues that quantitative methods and survey instruments in particular are ill-equipped to deal with such problems, and likewise Auger and Devinney (2007) present a case for the weaknesses inherent in experimental and survey research designs, particularly those which use ratings scales to gauge consumer beliefs. This weakness, they argue, lead consumers to 'overstate' the importance of ethical issues when asked by researchers, and they therefore call for new approaches (and at the very least mixed-method research) which can address a methodologically complex aspect of human behaviour in a more reliable and valid manner. As noted in chapter three, a number of studies in the field have adopted survey research designs, with qualitative studies only relatively recently emerging. Interactive experiential (or existential) interviews which cause consumers to reflect on events and attitudes or behaviour related to those events may address this problem, and achieve life histories which describe consumers' experiences as they are lived and experienced by those consumers. It was noted in Hiller (2010) that ethnographic approaches such as accompanied shopping may further assist in addressing consumer conflicts between attitudes and behaviour, although a major

problem with this approach is the possible lack of focus on ethical issues and the collection of a large amount of data of limited relevance. However, it remains that the problem of social desirability bias persists. Nancarrow *et al.* (2001) also note that survey designs are problematic in dealing with this issue, but so might qualitative 'self report techniques' (although they note the value of both in accessing 'unobservable' constructs such as attitudes, satisfaction, values, knowledge and personality). To counter these issues they recommend checking what consumers report against individual behaviour, noting 'physiological manifestations of unease', appealing to respondents to be honest and promise confidentiality, and the use of certain questioning techniques. With regard to the latter, they find little evidence of approaches which have been found to work with 'socially desirable' behaviour (such as ethical consumption), and suggest the respondent's impressions of the research situation are key. Depth interviewing can, again, address such issues, and sampling is also likely to play a key role. Further discussion of this will be undertaken in the 'sampling' section shortly.

Whilst interviews may therefore help in addressing these philosophical and methodological considerations in relation to consumer ethical concerns, there remains the issue of making some assessment of value for the customer. Gallarza *et al.* (2011) note that the study of value suffers from a 'multivocal' and 'ambiguous' conceptualisation, with most studies being conceptual in nature. They therefore recommend that any empirical approach to value assessment should be preceded by a 'ground-up' approach. However, they note three key problems which are likely to cause difficulties for researching value: firstly, there are conceptual obstacles resulting from a lack of reliability in conceptualisation, the existence of multiple meanings in relation to its use, and a lack of conceptual delimitation between value and other related concepts. Secondly, there are methodological problems to which these conceptual obstacles lead surrounding the validity of value measures. Thirdly, there are a number of shortcomings in relation to the measurement of value and its reliability resulting from high numbers of 'non real experiences' in survey design, the application of poor scaling procedures and use of limiting unidimensional measures of value, and the lack of consistency of the results of studies which seek to assess value. Regarding measurement, Gallarza *et al.* (2011) cite many studies which have claimed the existence of a gap between research on the concept of value and empirical attempts at measuring value-related experiences, with some

suggesting this reflects the 'immeasurability' of values. They note that whilst many studies have attempted to address this providing indices of value, such studies fail to recognise the 'multidimensional richness' of the concept, and value's individualistic, relativistic and idiosyncratic nature make the achievement of generalisability of measures across populations extremely complicated. Consequently, they propose a more broad understanding of the way value is measured, and in particular note that qualitative approaches in this field are underused. This need for a relativistic and phenomenological approach in the measurement of value support the epistemological arguments put forward earlier, and would also support in particular the use of interviews to understand ethical and value-related experiences.

Depth interviews were therefore employed to address the research objectives laid out in the previous chapter in response to the ontological and epistemological foundations in relation to ethics and value, and also to address more practical concerns such as dealing with the attitude-behaviour gap and the lack of agreement in theory development in relation to the concept of value. The interviews aimed to discover the lived experiences of respondents, with a focus on the individual and their practices. The following section will therefore explore in further detail how the interviews were structured and questions asked to address the research objectives. Such issues fall under Arbnor and Bjerke's (2009) heading of 'methodics'.

Methodics: Interview Structure and Questions

Cherrier (2005: 129) gives broad advice on the 'structuring' of existential-phenomenological interviews:

- At the beginning the researcher explains the parameters of the study, and that the interview will be audio-recorded.
- The interview begins with 'small talk' to help the informant become comfortable.
- The discussion then begins using 'grand-tour' questions (these are general questions which help set the direction of the interview). During the interview the researcher shares their personal thoughts and feelings with the respondent to create a discussion. The respondent is the expert on his/her consumption practices and the role of the researcher is to encourage detailed description. Clavin and Lewis (2005) argue that

consumers inevitably find it difficult to evidence ethical choices, so the discussion should be grounded in specific purchases and respondents will be asked to reflect on recent purchases in advance of the interview.

Such approaches (including reassuring respondents that their attitudes or behaviour are not unusual) will also assist in addressing some of the issues associated with social desirability bias highlighted by Nancarrow *et al.* (2001). Furthermore, Solomon and Buchanan (1991) note the overwhelming support for the notion that consumer values are manifested in patterns of consumption, but point out that a consumption item's meaning to an individual is also affected by the other products and services jointly consumed with it. They propose that 'symbolic complementarity' defines associations between sets of products which are unrelated, but consumed by the 'same' consumers with similar characteristics which provide some context and meaning to social life. Therefore, whilst the focus of this study is on clothing, it should be recognised that other types of products might be relevant or significant in the context of the overall consumption experience, and the interview guide should be flexible enough to allow for discussion of other product types which may be significant.

In relation to the 'grand tour' question, the context for the research was discussed and respondents were first asked about their professional backgrounds, how they came to work in this field and what other contextual factors might be important. Following this, there were three specific areas of questioning related to the four research objectives. The research objectives are repeated below for context:

- To understand the role of moral evaluation in clothing consumption practices.
- To explore the role of values in consumer trade-offs and their relationship to practice.
- To explore the roles of identity and practice in the clothing consumption practices of ethically-motivated consumers, and the implications for value evaluation.
- To investigate how ethically-committed consumers experience value in clothing consumption and to consider the implications for ethical purchasing.

The three areas of questioning therefore related to:

- 1) Firstly, the first and second objectives relates to consumers' sense of morality and those moral issues which are particularly important for them and which may influence their behaviour (their ethical obligation) and their values (self-identity).
- 2) The third objective relates to the role of identity, and how identity and moral evaluation are embodied in consumers' practices.
- 3) Finally, the fourth objective is concerned with discovering how value is evaluated or experienced from specific purchases and to consider the wider implications for ethical purchasing.

Further discussion of these areas will link to prompts in the interview guide as follows:

Attitudes related to morality and values, identity and practices

The aim of the initial phase of the interview was to discover attitudes related to moral evaluation and values (connected to self-identity). In relation to the latter, Barnett *et al.* (2005) argue that ethical consumption should be approached from the perspective of virtue ethics, concerned with the key question of 'what sort of person ought I strive to be', with virtues linked to the character traits or values that lead to 'human flourishing'. These virtues are learned through habits and practices. However, as noted by Schwartz (2007), one of the defining features of values which differentiates them from attitudes is that they transcend specific actions and situations, and the relative importance of values guides actions; the trade-off between competing values is what guides behaviour. Thus, context is relevant only in the sense that values (as ends in view) which are important to an individual guide action. As noted in the previous chapter, Schwartz (2007) argues that much research into values either measures attitudes (that is, many researchers conflate attitudes and values) or does not cover values which transcend specific actions. That is, Schwartz argues that research which places values in a particular context runs the risk of ignoring a person's 'basic' values, that is those values which 'run across' all situations. Furthermore, the postmodern and pluralist position advanced earlier indicated that these habits, practices and virtues may be variable and inconsistent. The research therefore needed to draw on a wide enough range of experiences to uncover the contextual factors which may lead to such inconsistencies, whilst also understanding the 'basic' values that transcend such contexts. Indeed, the differences between such basic values and the influence of context upon them may be an interesting dimension of the research. To

uncover the basic values identified by Schwartz (1994 and 2007), prior to the interviews respondents were asked to complete a short questionnaire based on Schwartz's (2007) *General Portrait Value Questionnaire*, which is based on the ten values identified in the previous chapter. This questionnaire was sent as an attachment by e-mail, which respondents were asked to print and bring as hard copy to the interview or return by e-mail. This questionnaire was used as a comparator in later analysis. As Schwartz (2007) explains, the questionnaire describes a person in terms of what is important to him or her using 18 portrait statements which capture the person's values (without explicitly identifying values as the topic of investigation; the values are inferred from the responses which compare the respondent to the person in the portrait). Respondents were asked 'how much like you is this person?', choosing one of six options from 'very much like me' to 'not like me at all'. In analysis the judgements are converted to a six point numerical scale and the means of the measurement items calculated. This analysis gave an overall picture of the relative importance of each value type for each respondent, primarily for use within rather than across cases, with trends identified where they exist. The tool is intended to reflect value priorities rather than an 'absolute' measure of a person's values. The 21 value statements represent two for each of the ten value types (with three for universalism). Each statement is intended to express a motivation for the same goal, with one statement stressing the importance of the goal, and the other statement representing the respondent's feelings towards the goal. The categories and statements are shown in figure 18. The questionnaire is contained in appendix 2.

Figure 18: Schwartz's General Portrait Values

Values	Portrait statements
Benevolence	It's very important to him to help the people around him. He wants to care for their well-being.
	It is important to him to be loyal to his friends. He wants to devote himself to people close to him.
Universalism	He thinks it is important that every person in the world should be treated equally. He believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life.
	It is important to him to listen to people who are different from him. Even when he disagrees with them, he still wants to understand them.
	He strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to him.
Self-direction	Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to him. He likes to do things in his own original way.
	It is important to him to make his own decisions about what he does. He likes to be free and not depend on others.
Stimulation	He likes surprises and is always looking for new things to do. He thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life.
	He looks for adventures and likes to take risks. He wants to have an exciting life.
Hedonism	Having a good time is important to him. He likes to 'spoil' himself.
	He seeks every chance he can to have fun. It is important to him to do things that give him pleasure.
Achievement	It's important to him to show his abilities. He wants people to admire what he does.
	Being very successful is important to him. He hopes people will recognise his achievements.
Power	It is important to him to be rich. He wants to have a lot of money and expensive things.
	It is important to him to get respect from others. He wants people to do what he says.
Security	It is important to him to live in secure surroundings. He avoids anything that might endanger his safety.
	It is important to him that the government ensures his safety against all threats. He wants the state to be strong so it can defend its citizens.
Conformity	He believes that people should do what they're told. He thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no-one is watching.
	It is important to him always to behave properly. He wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.
Tradition	Tradition is important to him. He tries to follow the customs handed down by his religion or his family.
	It is important to him to be humble and modest. He tries not to draw attention to himself.

Source: Schwartz, 2007: 177-179.

In conclusion, this part of the research consisted of two parts. Firstly, the pre-interview completion of a questionnaire designed to uncover basic values, and secondly the first stage of the interview. This section of the research essentially attempted to uncover what is important to consumers; how they define 'ethical' behaviour and what are their broad

values and ethical values systems, in line with Barnett *et al.*'s (2005) suggestion that an understanding should be developed of what type of person respondents would like to be. The 'placing' of ethical values in relation to other values may be a key issue here in explaining particular behaviours, or in determining the likelihood of an 'attitude-behaviour gap'. Specific questions about how ethics was approached from the perspective of clothing were also asked, although to keep the inductive approach and prevent placing too many tightly defined frames of reference on participants, they were asked how they might consider ethics in buying clothes and what factors in particular they may take into consideration, alongside whether there were any retailers or brands from which they would not buy.

Linked to these factors may be the consumer's sense of emancipation and power as a consumer as suggested by Bauman (1993) and Inglehart and Welzel (2005). There was therefore some discussion around the extent to which consumers feel their purchases 'make a difference', whether in respect of social or environmental problems, rights issues or political issues or policies. Additionally, the 'ethical orientation' identified in the literature review was given due consideration; that is, whether the 'enlightened self interest' identified by Smith (1999) as a consumer value is self-oriented, other-oriented or a mixture of both; so whether respondents felt a sense of responsibility and to whom. Schwartz's (2007) typology of values reflects this to some extent by classifying the 'ten motivational types of value' (specified in the previous chapter) into 'self-transcendence' and 'self enhancement', and these values were uncovered through the initial questionnaire and then through follow-up questioning. The interviews also revealed dimensions of identity and practice through the consumption stories described below.

Uncovering aggregate value

The third area of questioning relates to assessing the contribution of ethical concerns to how value is evaluated. As previously noted, there is an emerging body of discussion around the 'measurement' of value. As suggested by Woodall *et al.* (2011), the notion of 'measurable' construct suggests a 'scientific' approach which necessitates the use of a scaling method which requires the identification of a limited number of factors which can be used to evaluate value reflectively and generalisations made. Whilst the ontological implications of such an approach have been argued against previously, Woodall *et al.*

(2011) further note a number of problems with treating value in this way: firstly, that such approaches do not easily account for the temporal or dynamic nature of value (by 'fixing' it at a point in time); secondly that 'conceptual richness is lost'; and thirdly, that there is no consensus or easily identifiable method of 'computing' the difference between benefits and sacrifices. Thus, the interviews will attempt to adopt an understanding of 'aggregate' value. Adopting the 'value for the customer' framework (Woodall, 2003) allows for the broad conceptualisation of value within the 'trade-off domain' identified in chapter 4), although questioning and analysis must seek to ensure that the respondent has the opportunity to reflect upon the various forms of benefits and sacrifices, although to retain the phenomenological focus, these were specifically identified by the respondent and not addressed through an imposed direct frame of reference, and through reflections on specific purchases a sense of the 'whole' experience was expected to be retained. The Net VC framework was then employed as an analytic device in coding, but countered with a wider hermeneutic analysis to capture the broader sense of 'aggregate VC' and the impact of this on consumers' attitudes and behaviour. Again, the grounding of this was in specific purchases, by asking about recent purchases, favourite items of clothing and least favourite items of clothing with the respondents being encouraged to give a 'life history' of the consumption event and their reflections post-purchase.

Interview guide: summary

Kvale (1996) notes that interview guides can contain a collection of rough topics to be covered or a detailed list of specifically-worded questions depending on the desired structure of the interview. This structure depends on both thematic and dynamic dimensions of the interview. Thematics relate to the extent to which questions relate to the research theme, dynamics relate to the interpersonal relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. Kvale argues that a good interview *question* will contribute to both knowledge production and good interview interactions, but likewise the overall interview *structure* should allow for both these things. Kvale notes that whilst unstructured and spontaneous interviews can result in spontaneous and unexpected results, the interview structure should also ensure that the interview fulfils its thematic purpose. Indeed, the three areas above contain a number of specific aspects of knowledge which are required to be uncovered to address the research objectives, but in order to address the issues around the attitude-behaviour gap and to increase the validity of the

research generally the interviews will require some degree of structuring and will also rely on achieving an open relationship. Indeed, Mishler (1991) notes that the issue of validity can be addressed by a consideration of power relations. He argues that meanings in interview discourse and narrative are contextually grounded, and: "...the interviewee-interviewer relationship is marked by a striking asymmetry of power..." (Mishler, 1991: 117). He proposes that to achieve validity, respondents should be empowered; encouraged to open up through shifting the relationship to 'informant and reporter' (a technique which is often found in ethnographic research). This technique is developed by the use of informal and discursive questioning. As Kvale (1996) therefore notes, a good research question is not necessarily a dynamic interview question, and it is therefore useful to prepare a guide which contains the project's main thematic and dynamic dimensions. Achieving these objectives and answering the research questions therefore required a semi-structured interview. Whilst a pure 'life history' may require a more unstructured approach (as advocated by Cherrier, 2005), the focus here on the realisation of value and values require some degree of structure as highlighted in the preceding sections. Furthermore, as Holstein and Gubrium (2011) note, respondents do not just suddenly begin talking, the role of the interviewer is to provoke responses to interview questions and consideration needs to be given to how an interview generates the information it does. Also, as Silverman (2006) explains, very unstructured approaches can cause problems for respondents in interpreting what is relevant, and that a constructionist view of the interview, according to Denzin, is that of 'focused interaction'; something which is a subject area in itself and that accounts given in interviews are 'part of the world they describe' (this also has implications for analysis which will be discussed later). However, this does not mean that questions need to be asked in a predetermined order with a high degree of structure; the interview should allow for some flexibility to discuss issues which allow respondents to engage in the process and not unnecessarily restrict their responses. The interview guide (presented in appendix 3) therefore contained these main thematic dimensions as discussed above, but was sufficiently flexible to allow for this 'focused interaction' around the main thematic areas. .

Methodics

Sampling strategy and access

As noted by Miles and Huberman (1994), most qualitative samples tend to be purposive, partly because the definition of the universe is more limited (in this case a study of 'ethically committed consumers'), and partly because: "...social processes have a logic and coherence that random sampling can reduce to uninterpretable sawdust." (p27). They note that the key issue is that random sampling a small number of cases can lead to a 'biased hand'; instead, sampling in qualitative research requires the setting of boundaries (selecting examples within the constraints of time and means of the type of people required by the study) and selecting a frame (to help uncover the study's underpinning constructs). With regard to the first action, as discussed in chapters two and five, in order to explore the trade-offs in ethical consumption and the contribution of ethics to consumer value, the study required the identification of people who might be considered to be 'ethically-committed consumers'; that is, those for whom ethical concerns are a significant factor in clothing consumption choices. Engaging this group then also enables the identification of the issues affecting ethical consumption that might be relevant to a wider body of consumers. Also, it was noted previously that the purpose of this is to arrive at a 'moral framework' which may point towards a common set of moral principles, but that this will depend on the sample chosen. Care needed to be taken with the sampling strategy in respect of this outcome, and considered not only those with ethical motivation or attitudes, but also those with a degree of ethical knowledge as identified by Tadjewski and Wagner-Tsukamoto (2006).

This also leads to considerations in respect of the second action, Miles and Huberman (1994) note that qualitative sampling is *theory-driven*; here the researcher finds examples of a theoretical construct and examines it. Taken from the grounded theory approach, theoretical sampling according to Strauss and Corbin (1998: 201) is:

Data gathering driven by concepts derived from the evolving theory and based on the concept of 'making comparisons' whose purpose is to go to places, people of events that will maximise opportunities to discover variations among concepts and to densify categories in terms of their properties and dimensions.

They therefore note that theoretical sampling should follow the process of data analysis; the researcher follows a process of 'open sampling' initially (as concepts have not yet proven theoretical relevance and 'over-structuring' the sample may mislead the researcher). Theoretical sampling is therefore *selective*; subjects needed to gather data are selected to 'saturate' categories. This saturation is central in achieving validity and refers to the gathering of data until no new theory emerges or the categories (or relationships between categories) are well developed, and relies on the sensitivity of the researcher. This is supported by Morse *et al.* (2002), who argue that researcher responsiveness is key in increasing the validity of qualitative research. This responsiveness should allow for purposive samples to be determined in response to ongoing analysis, as well as being willing more generally to relinquish ideas which are poorly supported or challenge previously held assumptions. They suggest that a lack of such responsiveness is the key threat to research validity, and this may come from an overreliance on procedures rather than 'listening' to the research data or following instructions in a rote manner. Therefore, Miles and Huberman (1994) note that this theory-driven approach to sampling occurs both across cases (highlighting the differences between individuals relative to the characteristics of those individuals), and within cases (highlighting, for example, different activities, processes, events or times/locations). In using 'within case sampling', the respondent might therefore be asked to recount different purchase occasions, items or perceptions of value at different points in time. Sampling within and across cases therefore enables the researcher to add depth to theory or concepts, not for clarification or confirmation, but also to find negative instances where patterns do not hold. The sampling strategy will therefore be purposive (Miles and Huberman, 1994, refer to 'stratified purposeful samples' which illustrate subgroups, enabling comparisons to be made across cases), but should also be flexible to allow and respond to the process of theory generation. In order to understand how value might work in ethical consumption the study therefore required the inclusion of relatively committed or 'convinced' ethical consumers; those who 'self-report' that ethics is an important issue in clothing consumption. In particular, the focus on value and the concept of the trade-offs are important, which as previously noted is a recurrent theme in previous research but one which remains underdeveloped. These trade-offs from a moral sense only exist for those who have some moral motivation. As previously noted such purposive samples bear similarities to the theoretical sampling advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1998) in which

cases are selected to provide examples of particular types, or as Huberman and Miles (1998) observe, choosing cases which will extend the theory which is emerging from the study.

Access is therefore a key issue. Harrington (2003) notes that despite the variety of concepts that proliferate in relation to access, it relates to the negotiation of terms of interaction in the field between the researcher and participant(s) necessary for obtaining access to information. This process must be repeated many times throughout the study, and despite Harrington's observation that many social scientists see this as a matter of the interpersonal skills of researchers not worthy of theoretical scrutiny (indeed, there is little examination of access in much of the qualitative research literature, and that which does exist is largely within the study of ethnography) there are both practical and theoretical implications of access which require further exploration. Indeed, Feldman *et al.* (2003) argue that finding individuals to take part in qualitative research can be extremely challenging when the individuals are not connected to a particular organisation connected with the research, and whilst snowball sampling may be employed once the research has started, finding individuals which can facilitate such access initially can be particularly difficult.

Whilst Feldman *et al.* (2003) argue that the fundamental issue in gaining access is the relationship between the researcher and individual informant, Harrington (2003) notes that access is often seen as an issue of 'exchange', although the value of these offerings of exchange often depends on the perceived authenticity of the researcher. That is, the exchange must be undertaken in a relationship based on trust, and issues of access should incorporate these considerations (that is, with clarity about what is being 'exchanged', and the development of trust between researcher and participant). Indeed Feldman *et al.* (2003) also highlight the importance of trust, and the maintenance of confidentiality as a central aspect of the building of trust, in addition to the status of the researcher as an 'insider' (although they note that this insider status is not sufficient on its own). In a study of ethical consumption with ethical consumers, it is extremely likely that the subject will be of interest to those who identify themselves as such. Indeed, as Shaw and Riach (2011) note, ethical consumption is often characterised by a feeling of 'habitus' (or belonging) which exists 'in the margins' of mainstream consumption. Alvesson and

Sköldberg (2000) also relate this notion to the role of the researcher in research, highlighting Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' being generated when a researcher engages with a social field with specific relationships of competition and power conditions. This notion of a *shared* sense of identity corresponds with and develops the importance of self-identity as a key dimension in the decision making of ethical consumers (Hustvedt and Dickson, 2009, Shaw *et al.*, 2000 and Sparks and Shepherd, 1992), and with the notion put forward earlier that moral responsibility may result from obligations of solidarity. Such a shared sense of identity is likely to contribute to both the notion of trust (where a shared 'interest' is likely to strengthen the relationship), and a sense of exchange which develops from this in terms of both the sharing of knowledge and experience, but perhaps also a sense that through the process of the research knowledge about ethical consumption might be advanced. This is supported by Harrington's (2003) examination of symbolic interactionism as a means by which access can be developed. Symbolic interactionism here is founded on the theory that the central task of social life is to forge connections with others through symbolic means. These means might be language, symbols or other categorisations. Here, 'ethical consumption' is a categorisation which (for ethical consumers) will have some shared meaning (although as previously discussed, this may be interpreted in different ways). As Harrington notes, the social identity of the researcher is a key constituent part in symbolic interactionism and the identity of the researcher is therefore a key asset; researchers can use shared identities as a symbolic resource to help them align with potential respondents. Furthermore Feldman *et al.* (2003) note, gaining access can take years of preparation, requiring the researcher to develop a reputation for integrity within the target population. This reputation may also be a significant factor in gaining access.

A further key element of symbolic interactionism (and reputation) is self-presentation. As Harrington (2003: 611) states:

...social identity must be negotiated through the process of self-presentation, and an identity claim must be validated by an audience... Ethnographers' identity claims must be validated by participants in order for researchers to gain access to information.

Thus, it was necessary that the researcher's identity as a 'sympathetic peer' was accepted by the participants in order to gain access to the field, and reputational elements were

employed to gain the trust and acceptance of interviewees by drawing respondents from sustainability-related research networks or groups, in which such consumers were likely to be located - there was an assumption with this group that ethical concerns will be important in purchase outside of their professional lives - and also to which the researcher is connected. As Feldman et al. (2003) highlight, where access is difficult due to respondents not being part of a single organisation, respondents can be linked through more informal groups through which access can be identified and negotiated. Therefore, networks or groups through existing contacts within sustainability research groups and researchers focusing on ethical / sustainable fashion within UK Universities were exploited. Initially this was done through gaining access to lists of sustainability research group members from which e-mails were sent to request participation or to gain wider access to the group or network. Contacts made at conferences and seminars were also exploited. Thus the group comprised academics and graduate students who are also researching in the field. A further benefit was that these individuals possessed the knowledge that it was earlier argued is important in arriving at a moral framework.

Once the purposive sampling strategy had begun, further snowball sampling was employed as necessary throughout the study, and the sampling strategy was continuously evaluated in light of the emerging data as the project progressed.

Sample size

A further key issue is that of sample size. Kvale (1996) observes that the number of interviewees necessary depends on the purpose of the study; if the number is too small it is not possible to make generalisations or highlight differences between groups. If the sample size is too large then it becomes difficult to make detailed interpretations of the research data. In relation to the former criticism, it has already been argued that it is not the purpose of this study to attempt generalisations to entire populations due to the subjectivity of the subject matter; the aim is to develop deep insight into consumer motivations, attitudes and behaviours. Indeed, Kvale notes that in the field of psychology Freud's use of a small number of cases made a huge contribution to general knowledge about personality, and Skinner argued against large statistical samples because of their weakness in uncovering the 'schedules' which control behaviour. In both cases, Kvale notes that the knowledge derived from small scale in-depth research has subsequently

been found to be generalisable to larger populations. He notes that in most interview studies the sample size tends to be around 15 ± 10 , dependent on the time and resources available for the investigation and the 'law of diminishing returns'. Cherrier (2005) notes that in existential-phenomenological interviewing the respondent 'pool' should be between three and twenty, and similarly Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that for a study of high complexity, more than fifteen cases becomes unwieldy, although studies with numbers of cases in the twenties and thirties are not uncommon. This study therefore comprised a sample size of twenty, within the limits recommended by the aforementioned authors. This ensured the breadth of response required for a thesis of this size and scope, and also allowed for a small 'margin of error' should any problems have arisen during analysis stages such as respondents withdrawing or the data becoming unusable for any other reason.

Research Ethics

There are a number of principles which are important to consider to ensure the research is conducted in an ethical manner. This research conformed to the ethical guidelines laid down by the Social Research Association (SRA), 2003. This section will focus particularly on the 'obligations to subjects' highlighted in the guidelines. These aim to ensure the proper use of data, ensure a concern for human rights and minimise personal or social harm. These obligations are (pp50-51):

- Avoiding undue intrusion
- Obtaining informed consent
- Protecting the interests of subjects
- Preventing disclosure of identities
- Enabling participation

Avoiding undue intrusion

The SRA (2003) encourages researchers to consider whether the study is absolutely necessary, and whether the study can be conducted using data which already exists. As the SRA (2003: 27) note:

People can feel wronged without being harmed by research: they may feel they have been treated as objects of measurement without respect for their individual values and sense of privacy. In many of the social enquiries that have caused controversy, the issue has had more to do with intrusion into subjects' private and personal domains, or by overburdening subjects by collecting "too much" information, rather than with whether or not subjects have been harmed.

Whilst it is unlikely that any situations would arise where the researcher or the respondent will be subject to any potential physical or psychological harm, the SRA (2003) note that respondents can perceive injustice through the attitude, demeanour or methodological perspective of the researcher. Such issues can be addressed through a thorough conceptual underpinning to the study, a detailed consideration of methodology and through well-developed interview guides and the interpersonal skills of the researcher. This and the previous chapters have hopefully addressed the former concerns, and in respect of the latter it should be noted that all interviews were carried out by the candidate, and the issues of access previously discussed also comes into play. Respondents were treated with the utmost respect at all times.

Informed consent

The SRA (2003) note that any inquiry involving human subjects must be based (as far as practicably possible) on their freely given informed consent; there must be no impression of obligation to participate, and they should be aware of their entitlement to withdraw themselves or their data at any stage. Sieber (1992) notes that 'informed' means providing information that a reasonable person would want to know before giving consent to participate, and Kvale (1996) adds that this should also include obtaining their voluntary participation and upholding a respondent's right to withdraw at any stage. Therefore this information should include the purpose of the study, what an individual's participation will involve and their rights with regard to non-participation. All participants were given a participant information sheet at the point of recruitment (that is, before completion of the questionnaire and before the interviews took place). This sheet explained the purpose of the study, what their participation would involve and their rights with respect to non-participation and if they subsequently decide not to participate. They were asked to sign a written consent form and their permission was sought to audio record the interviews. No deception or covert observation of the participants was undertaken. Please see appendices 4 and 5 for copies of the participant information sheet and consent form

for this project. Whilst no modifications to informed consent were required, Kvale (1996) notes that it might not be possible to ‘completely’ inform the participants in semi-structured interviews in which it is desirable to follow-up ‘unanticipated leads’. The stressing of principle of ‘right to withdraw’ enabled the respondent to end a particular line of questioning with which they are uncomfortable. It should be noted that the issue of trust was previously highlighted as being essential to access; Miles and Huberman (1994) also cite this as being critical to analysis as respondents who mistrust the researcher will give ambiguous responses. They argue that the principle of informed consent is a key component in the trust relationship.

Protecting the interests of subjects and enabling participation

The interests of subjects were protected by fully informing them about the nature of the study through the participant information sheet (appendix 4), and through protecting their anonymity (see below). It was not expected that any situations would arise where the researcher or the respondent would be subject to any potential physical or psychological harm. Every effort was made to ensure respondents could be included; for example, interview locations were flexible to suit the needs of those with disabilities.

Preventing disclosure of identities

The SRA (2003: 38) states that: “Social researchers should take appropriate measures to prevent their data from being published or otherwise released in a form that would allow any subject’s identity to be disclosed or inferred.” Kvale (1996) notes that confidentiality requires that private data which may identify respondents will not be reported. Bryman (2004) notes that confidentiality can be difficult in qualitative research, so the questions were structured in a way that would not extrapolate personal information through which an individual may be identified. Participants were assigned pseudonyms in analysis and will not be otherwise named or identified in any publication arising from this project. All possible care was exercised in ensuring that participants cannot be identified or inferred by the way the findings are written up. Respondents’ anonymity will be respected at all times. Kvale (1996) notes that legal complications can arise from confidentiality agreements if the researcher has obtained knowledge of illegal behaviour. The nature of

the research was such that no illegal or other 'illicit' activity was revealed, but respondents were informed that confidentiality could not be assured should this information or behaviour be manifest.

In terms of the confidentiality of data, the data files and transcripts of interviews were handled only by the researcher and an appointed transcription agency in line with data protection principles and the approved research protocol. The identity of the respondents was not revealed to the transcription agency. Files were sent to the transcription agency by a secure upload service (128 bit SSL security with encryption), and transcripts were returned via a password-secured file area. Hard copies of research notes were kept in locked filing cabinets, and all other electronic files kept on password protected computers which are not accessible to any other person. On completion of the study all electronic files of interviews were erased.

Ethical approval

In line with University requirements that requires that all projects involving primary research with human beings (or their data) should be reviewed by a research ethics committee, ethical approval was sought (and granted) by the College Research Ethics Committee (CREC) of Business Law and Social Sciences (BLSS) at Nottingham Trent University on 8 October 2012. The application for ethical approval was by the University's standard ethical approval form, and was approved prior to the start of data collection.

Analysis

It is important to reiterate that, as previously noted, related to the research objectives there are three distinct 'sections' to the interviews, each of which required a slightly different approach to the analysis: the first area relates to consumers' sense of morality and those moral issues which are particularly important for them; the second relates to the role of identity, and how identity and moral evaluation are embodied in consumers' practices; and the third is concerned with discovering how value is evaluated or experienced from specific purchases.

As previously noted, a pragmatist response is concerned with practise which helps human beings make sense of the world around them, and which considers the relative attractions of different outcomes and which places no constraints on inquiry. Whilst the phenomenological nature of the research should be emphasised, the third area to the research is rooted in frameworks and methods which may require a slightly different approach. Rorty's (1982) position was noted earlier; that an empiricist 'scientific' social science and a hermeneutic view of social science are not necessarily in opposition of each other; explanation may be employed when one wishes to predict or control, and understanding may be 'employed' when one wishes to evaluate human character; hermeneutical enquiry should not make particular claims about methods, but should assist in the search for a vocabulary which will help the process of research. That is, that pragmatism recognises the plurality of vocabularies. Likewise, Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000) reject dominant 'recipe book' methodological approaches and argue the case for a reflective / reflexive approach to qualitative research data. In doing so they synthesise some of the benefits of data-oriented methods (such as grounded theory), hermeneutics, critical theory and postmodernism, noting that postmodern sociology and critical phenomenology are variants of reflective / reflexive research which: "...constantly assesses knowledge and the ways of doing knowledge" (p5). This necessitates giving consideration to the way in which: "...different kinds of linguistic, social, political and theoretical elements are woven together in the process of knowledge development, during which empirical material is constructed, interpreted and written." (p5).

Therefore, the aims stated above correspond well to these distinctions drawn by Rorty (1982); the first two attempt to understand the nature of 'human character', whereas the fourth attempts to arrive at an understanding of how trade-offs are enacted through the 'conceptual lens' of value. Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000) note that research is fundamentally an interpretive activity (as also previously argued), and thus hermeneutics is an important form of reflection, and that the interpretation of data is not 'neutral', but part of a series of political and ideological conditions. Furthermore, they note that in a postmodern perspective the text is decoupled from the author, and: "...both the researcher's claim to authority and the text's claim to mirror some extrinsic reality are both undermined..." (p8). Thus they recommend 'a fundamental hermeneutic element' throughout the research process, and consequently reject the wholesale adoption of

qualitative data analytical tools which focus on 'data processing' in favour of methods driven by interpretation and reflection.

The approach they advocate is a form of discourse analysis they term 'reflexive interpretation'. Central to this approach is the recognition that describing an 'objective reality' or even a 'socially constructed reality' is an impossibility, and that a focus on creative ideas rather than empirical norms should be the aim. This in itself is a pragmatic and pluralistic recommendation; whilst they note that postmodern approaches could be criticised for advocating the use of ever-changing, inexhaustible analytical perspectives, any research text could be characterised by pluralism in different identities or voices within different individuals or groups. As a consequence, research strategies should contain the active interpretation of texts which is receptive to pluralism. Furthermore, they note that qualitative research material is difficult to survey in its entirety, and that as: "...simple sorting and categorising of data is not exactly encouraged in reflexively ambitious projects, the problem of achieving and maintaining an overview is in some sense greater in reflexive than in mushroom-picking research." (p285). Thus, there is a need to continually interpret the material at various theoretical levels, mixing empirical work, meaningful interpretation, critical reflection and 'linguistic-textual self-reflection'. They recommend a 'quadri-hermeneutic variety' of levels of reflection which sequences interpretation by dividing the project into different phases, concentrating primarily on empirical work and including definite periods at which the project is interpreted in reflective terms, possibly at a later stage in the work by inserting additional sections which indicate alternative ways of reinterpreting what has already been presented. Similarly, Thompson (1997) notes that hermeneutically-oriented analysis in marketing research typically follows a two-stage iterative process; firstly an 'intratext' cycle in which a text is read in its entirety, and secondly an intertextual process in which patterns across texts (or interviews) are identified. Thus an insight may be gleaned from a single text, from which further interviews can be interpreted. The analysis therefore followed an abductive approach, broadly consistent with the type identified by Alvesson and Sköldböck consisting of two primary stages as follows:

Phase 1: Value; determination of benefits and sacrifices

In seeking to understand how consumers make sense of and enact the ‘trade-offs inherent in ethical consumption, it was previously suggested that Woodall’s (2003) ‘Net Value for the Customer’ is the most appropriate means of exploring consumption experiences from the point of view of *how* value is derived, and of which dimensions it consists, although ‘overlain’ by a more interpretive sense of ‘aggregate VC’. Indeed, the ‘4Ps’ framework advanced earlier recognises that these aggregate perceptions of personal advantage are subjective, summary phenomenological evaluations rooted in experiences and potentially inconsistent. Thus the first stage of an abductive analysis of responses relating to value should relate to the first phase of the empirical work identified by Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2000) or the first phase of an intertextual analysis identified by Thompson (1997), which seeks to determine the factors or dimensions of value highlighted as significant for this group. The most appropriate means to do this was through the use of coding responses against each dimension of the net value equation, similar to Overby *et al.*’s (2004) approach to means-end laddering. This coding was at three levels: benefit and sacrifice at the top level, attributes and outcomes and monetary and non-monetary at the second. From this first stage of the abductive analysis, further hermeneutic ‘layers’ was added. The third list is the detailed list of benefits and sacrifices as follows:

Figure 19: Codes for categorising net value

1 Benefits		Sacrifices	
2 Attributes	Outcomes	Monetary	Non-monetary
3 Goods quality	Strategic benefits	Price	Relationship costs
3 Service quality	Personal benefits	Search costs	Psychological costs
3 Core product feats.	Social benefits	Acquisition costs	Time
3 Added service feats.	Practical benefits	Opportunity costs	Effort
3 Customisation	Financial benefits	Distribution costs	
3		Learning costs	
3		Costs of use	
3		Maintenance costs	
3		Disposal costs	

Source: Adapted from Woodall, 2003

As Overby *et al.* (2004) note, coding at the specific dimension level lacks specificity, so inductive categories remain important, but the approach allows comparisons to be made. Inductive codes will also be developed where the above list is incomplete or insufficient.

Whilst this is important in maintaining the integrity of the methodology, Boksberger and Melsen (2011) also note that the investigations of perceived value should interact with other constructs to allow for other significant factors (whether they emanate from other marketing theory or be consumer or context-specific), and that research should seek to identify the dimensions of value that are important to consumers. Coding in this way enabled these dimensions to be identified in this context, as well as allowing for comparisons to be made across the range of consumer attitudes, perceptions and motivations, product attributes and the 'balancing' of these attributes, benefits and sacrifices. In doing so, the analysis encompassed the totality of customer perceptions of aggregate value which attempts to understand the trade-offs involved in the context of particular ends-in-view. This type of coding of the data in its entirety also allowed for key themes and ideas to emerge as a basis for further interpretation and analysis, or to indicate the 'hermeneutic lens' through which the data could be examined. At this first stage of the analysis, diagrams were developed from the codes and memos to demonstrate relationships between the categories, and to produce these value equations.

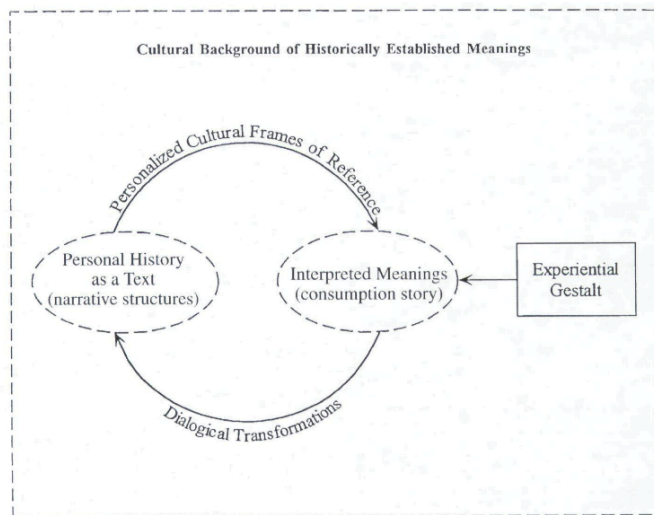
QSR Nvivo software was used to code the data. The use of software carried the benefit of being able to easily store and organise transcripts and reference all of the codes, as well as being able to easily search for or replace codes, or develop multiple codes for the data. There are also benefits in reducing the workload involved in reclassifying and recoding the data (Miles and Huberman, 1994), as well as being able to organise memos and easily attach memos and reflective logs to multiple categories as relationships develop (Strauss and Corbin, 1998), keeping them separate from the data files. Nvivo software carries search, query and visualisation tools which assisted in the coding and analysis processes outlined above.

Phase 2: Hermeneutic Analysis

The second phase of analysis sought to place this understanding of value in the wider context of the research, by developing an interpretation of why the benefits and sacrifices and their balancing are meaningful in the consumers' own perspectives and personal narratives. It was previously argued that a hermeneutic ontology recognises that meaning can only be understood from within life itself (Hollis, 2002), linking with Rorty's (1999) pragmatist argument that a sense of moral responsibility can only be understood from

one's own life history. Correspondingly, a hermeneutic epistemology advances interpretation and interaction as central to the reconstruction of knowledge as a person cannot remove themselves from the experience of one's own history or contextual background (Laverty, 2003).

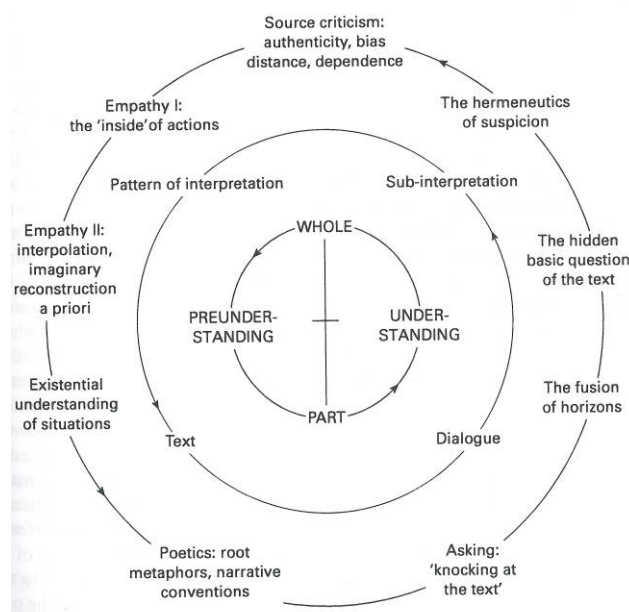
Figure 20: A hermeneutic model of meaning construction (Thompson, 1997: 440)



As previously identified, Thompson (1997) advances an hermeneutic model of meaning construction which seeks to interpret the meanings that consumers place on their consumption experiences; here, as with the process of this research, consumers are seen as ‘self-narrators’ whose stories about their consumption reveals selectively highlighted facets of their individual experiences, formed in a complex series of social and historical relationships. He proposes a hermeneutic framework for interpreting consumers’ stories about their consumption, which relates to consumers’ personal histories and a: “...broader narrative context of historically established cultural meanings.” (p339), which may correspond to the notion of the aggregation of value over time. As he notes (and in support of Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2000), hermeneutic analysis cannot be reduced to the application of a method; interpretation is embedded within a framework of ‘core assumptions’. He proposes a hermeneutic model of meaning construction (see figure 20) based on a consumer’s life history as a text on which life events are contextualised within a narrative of self-identity (previously identified as being key in understanding ethical consumption), which is in turn shaped by a complex series of cultural meanings and belief systems which provide the interpretive frames from which personalised meanings and

self-identity are constructed. Thompson (1997) notes that these personalised cultural frames of reference can take many forms and provide a rich network of opportunities for interpretation. Here consumers' stories provide a personalised meaning through consumption experiences and their link to a broader 'life narrative'. As previously noted, the analysis comprised two key stages (an intra- and inter-textual), along with a third 'stage' or consideration, that the researcher should be open to the possibilities afforded by the text, rather than rooted exclusively in the existing interpretive orientation. The stages are encompassed in Alvesson and Sköldberg's (2000: 99) model of the hermeneutic process (see figure 21), which integrates a number of hermeneutic themes, and proposes that a hermeneutical process should draw on methods from both the objective (with a focus on uncovering meanings and sharp distinction between the 'studying subject' and a 'studied object') and alethic (with a focus on understanding and a dissolution of the boundary between subject and object) schools. By 'integrating' the two perspectives, they argue that the research problem can be examined from a number of existing perspectives which cannot be reduced to 'a' hermeneutic approach, but which are dependent on the discipline and research problem itself. Added to this cannon of perspectives could be a hermeneutical model of consumer meaning construction. In a similar way, the initial coding exercises linked to Net VC can be seen as a form of pragmatic sense-making in action, adding layers and hermeneutic phases to the analysis.

Figure 21: The Hermeneutic Process (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000: 99)



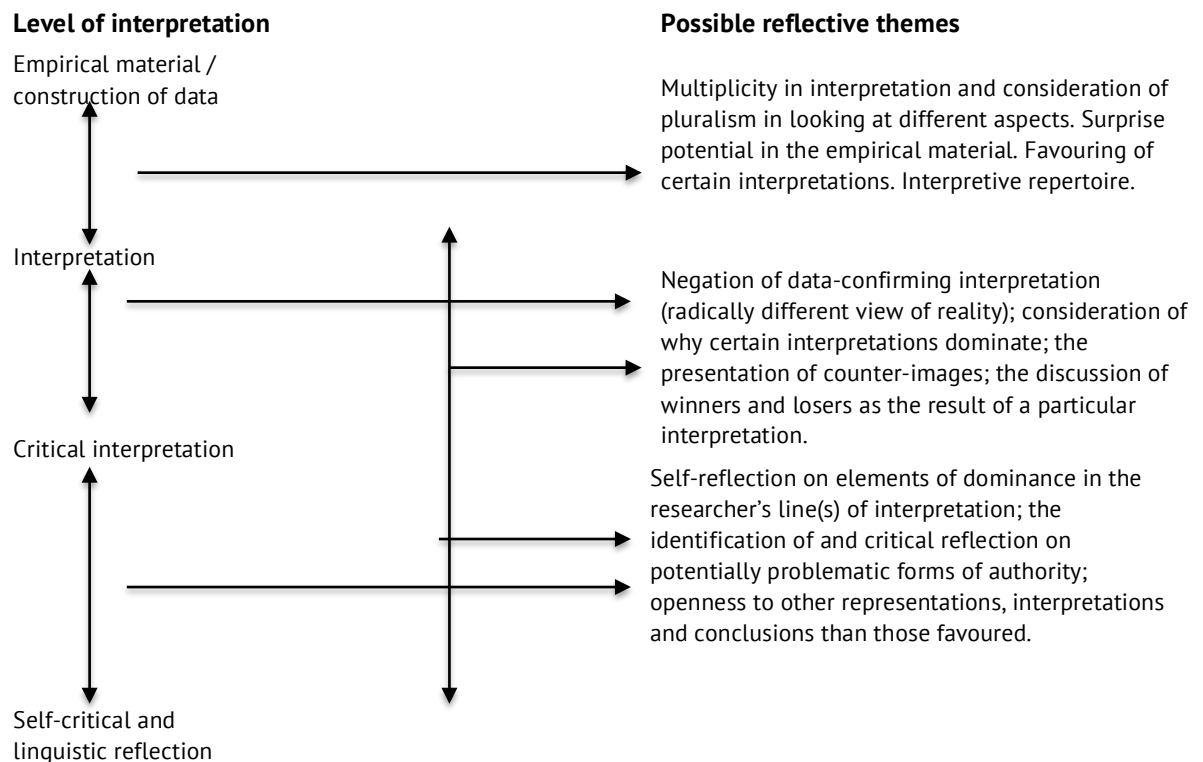
Phase 3: Values

A further consideration is the use of the pre-completion questionnaires which will also require analysis. As previously noted, respondents were asked to complete Schwartz's (2007) *General Portrait Value Questionnaire* prior to the interview. The questionnaire uses 18 portrait statements which capture the person's values by asking: 'how much like you is this person?', choosing one of six options from 'very much like me' to 'not like me at all'. In analysis the judgements are converted to a six point numerical scale and the means of the measurement items calculated (there are two value statements for each of the ten value types, with three for universalism). This analysis will be conducted prior to the interviews to give an overall picture of the relative importance of each value type for each respondent, primarily for use within rather than across cases. That is, the responses to the questionnaires provide one hermeneutic input which allow respondents to reflect themselves to themselves. Drawing on further hermeneutic analyses from the interview may then reveal the different and contradictory values systems at play as they are rooted in different practices.

Analysis: Summary

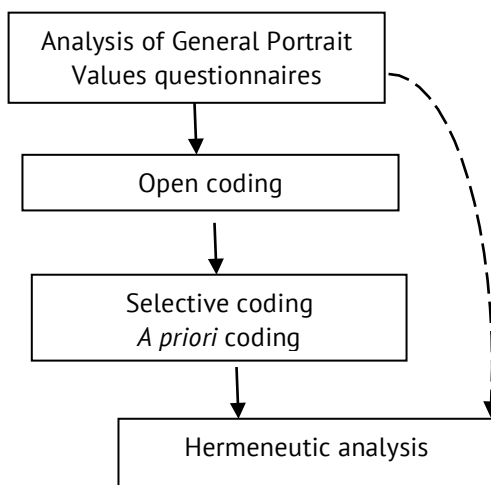
The analysis was characterised by two dominant levels of interpretation; a coding exercise with both deductive and inductive elements, and a hermeneutic analysis drawing on Thompson's (1997) meaning construction and Alvesson and Skoldberg's (2000) model of the hermeutic process. The latter note the importance of reflection in this type of analysis. Levels of reflection promote reflection by the interaction between them and comprise the empirical material itself (which should give rise to metatheories which 'problematise the legitimacy of dominant interpretive patterns which will arrive as a result of the coding exercise), hermeneutic interpretation of the data, critical scrutiny of the interpretations and rhetorical self-analysis which highlights ambiguities in the subject matter and indicates limitations. Thus the data presentation and analysis will comprise two chapters; an initial presentation and reflection of the results, and then a deeper level of analysis. The final chapter will also include a personal reflection on the process. The movement between the levels can go in various directions depending on the knowledge of the researcher, the variations given in different accounts or the amount of variety demanded by the texts. The levels and their relationships are represented in figure 22.

Figure 22: Interaction between different levels of interpretation (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000: 255)



Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) do not provide a series of procedures for handling the analysis; they argue that knowledge acquisition occurs through interpretation of the research material which is regarded as a construction of the empirical conditions rather than 'raw data'. The approach to it is therefore more unstructured, with emphasis placed on reflection rather than procedure. This process is demonstrated in figure 23:

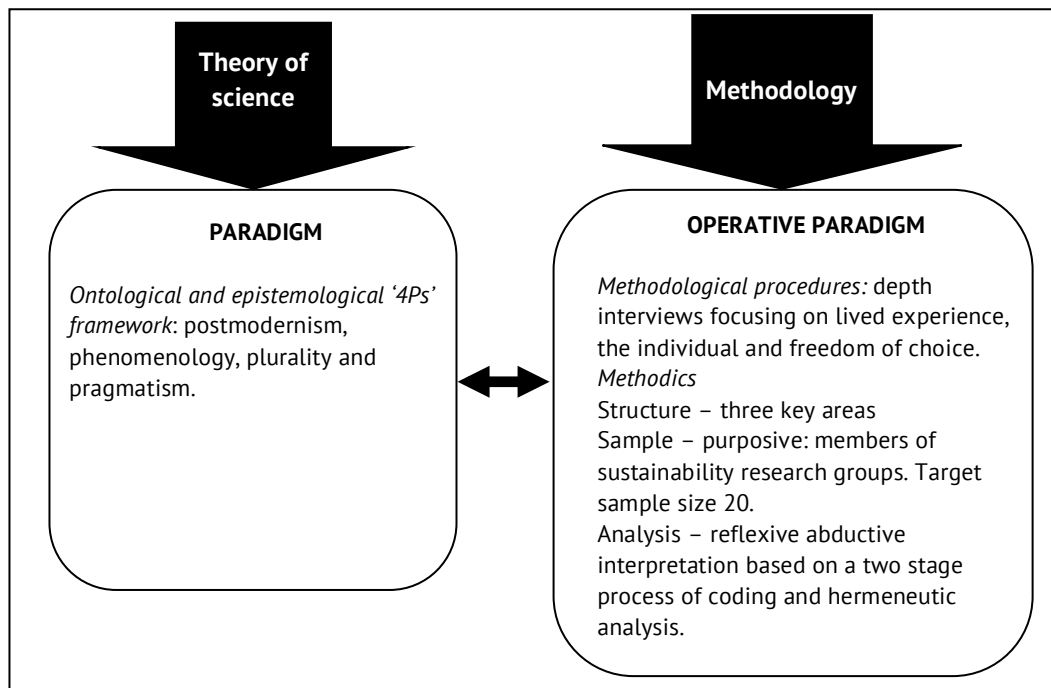
Figure 23: Process of analysis



Summary

Arbnor and Bjerke's (2009) research paradigm was presented at the beginning of this chapter; this framework will be revisited to summarise the chapter. The earlier discussion noted the importance of establishing a paradigm and operative paradigm for the research. The key elements of both these paradigms are summarised in figure 24:

Figure 24: Summary of research methodology (adapted from Arbnor and Bjerke, 2009)



Results and Analysis

[illegible]

Through the use of personal networks and snowballing as described in the previous chapter, twenty interviews were conducted in total over the period May 2013 to February 2015, with transcription and coding being undertaken over the same time period. The time expended allowed for time for 'immersion' in the transcripts to develop coding and identify initial themes. Each interview lasted on average around one hour to an hour and fifteen minutes. Transcription was completed either by the researcher or by an agency. Where an agency was used for transcription, each audio file was checked in detail against the transcript for veracity and to gain familiarity with the transcripts. The full transcripts

can be found in appendix 6. Each respondent was active in a sustainability-related research group at one of a number of Universities across the East Midlands of the United Kingdom, although the respondents were drawn from a wide variety of academic disciplines (some, perhaps naturally given the nature of sustainability issues, considered themselves to be cross-disciplinary). In line with the strategy of theoretical sampling which was noted in the previous chapter, a mixture of nationalities were included in the sample to explore some of the culturally-bound rationalisations of ethical choices (Eckhardt *et al.*, 2010) and cross-cultural dimensions of consumer ethics introduced in chapter two. PhD students were also included in addition to 'tenured' staff. The implications of this diversity in the sample will be explored further in due course. However, it was clear by the twentieth interview that 'theoretical saturation' had occurred; no new codes were emerging, further 'weight' was being given to the central themes, and central categories were becoming saturated (Strauss and Corbin, 1998); consequently an adequate absolute threshold had been reached, certainly in line with many recommendations about minimum sample sizes for qualitative interviewing (Cherrier, 2005, Kvale, 1996, Miles and Huberman, 1994).

The next stage of data immersion and analysis was to write up a brief profile of each informant; in hermeneutic terms, this enabled an early understanding of the 'part' of the hermeneutic circle - to provide a brief descriptive context of each respondent so that the data and analysis could be understood as a 'whole' from each part. As discussed in chapter six informants were also asked to complete a questionnaire with the aim of developing a profile based on Schwartz's (2007) General Portrait Values. These profiles are presented below, with the coding 'intra-case' being used to explain the themes and issues that are important for that particular individual; in line with the phenomenological approach, this is presented as a profile of the 'actors' in this particular story rather than a tabular list of each respondent's socio-demographic characteristics, with the aim of building a rich summary description of each individual as background for the reader to gain a sense of each 'part'. Each respondent has been assigned a pseudonym and any information which might enable the respondent to be identified (such as institution of study or work, locations or family names) has been removed. Reference is made to the values the respondents rated as being most or least 'like them' in the Schwartz General Value portraits. A full analysis here is given in the following section.

Informant Profiles

Case 1 – Susan

Susan is in her early 40s and worked in the fashion industry before entering higher education. She is married with two children. She is active in researching sustainability in fashion and has a strong knowledge of and interest in the fashion industry as a result of her industry and academic work. Consequently, style is extremely important to Susan; she identifies strongly with her role as a fashion 'expert', as she states:

...I've defined myself by that [an interest in fashion]. Because I've been studying, teaching or working in that starting in 1982. So I feel that's part of me to define me, and it's sort of shorthand that somebody who is in that sort of area will know who you are, will recognise you...

However, environmental sustainability is also extremely important to Susan and she uses her technical knowledge of materials and production / supply chain issues to arrive at what she believes are sustainable buying decisions, whilst still being able to maintain regular shopping habits. Benevolence and security scored highly in Susan's values, whereas hedonism was the least important value.

Case 2 – Steve

Steve is in his early 40s with a background in both environmental studies and business. Steve had a brief spell in the Army before entering higher education and developing his career specifically in the field of sustainability. He is married with two children. Function, longevity and price are all important to Steve in terms of purchasing clothes; function because he enjoys walking and cycling in the outdoors and longevity and price due to a desire to spend money on the family whilst upholding his ethical beliefs.

I seem to remember writing something in my personal statement [for my degree] about an affinity with the outdoors. So it... in some ways kind of feeds through into my dress sense and the functionality aspect of it. Yeah, so it's about getting outside and going for a walk... cycling.... So that's where if you're out there in the environment doing stuff, then you can enjoy it.

Consequently he often buys from companies positioned as being 'ethical' retailers, and often from web sites rather than the high street, although clothes and clothes shopping are not sources of enjoyment for him. Benevolence was the highest ranked value for Steve, with conformity and power the least important.

Case 3 – Chris

Chris is in his mid-30s and married with one child, a toddler. Chris works in a business school and has a keen interest in sustainability both professionally and in his personal life, and is currently undertaking a sustainable building project. His description of his wedding perhaps best summarises Chris' outlook:

When we got married, we were really clear... we tried to get everything local, organic, sustainable... the wedding rings were Fair Trade gold... we got local musicians who are friends of ours to play... it was purposely an expression, 'This is the value of who we are and who we want to be in our marriage'... And we wrote in our little wedding booklet that we made, 'This is who we are and this is what we stand for.'

Whilst Chris often spends time researching purchasing decisions and buying from niche, independent retailers, clothing is not a particular area of enjoyment or interest and purchases will often come from the high street. Self-direction is the value Chris placed maximum emphasis upon, with least on security.

Case 4 – Isabella

Isabella is an Italian student in her mid-20s studying for a PhD related to waste prevention in a School of Design. She is one of the youngest respondents in the sample. Isabella had some interest in sustainability due a master's focused on product-service systems, but entered the field primarily because a project was available. As she says of the reasons behind her selection of research topic:

Well, it's not that I'm not interested, but not because I was a convinced ethical consumer. So it's also interesting for me to see how slightly my... I'm not sure if my values are changing now because of what I'm doing... but I would not consider myself an ethical consumer.

Isabella enjoys shopping and tends to buy her clothes from the high street, both in the UK and in Italy. She is motivated by quality and likes to buy things which will last. Isabella placed relatively high emphasis on all of the value statements in the Schwartz general portrait values, with maximum emphasis given to self-direction.

Case 5 – Vivian

Vivian is in her mid-fifties, married, with two grown-up children who have left home. She entered academia following a professional career and has an MA in the field of social environmental accounting. Vivian's interest in sustainability issues stems from a trekking trip to India when she was younger.

Her buying preferences are to buy local wherever possible, but she often shops for clothes on the high street. She cares about what she wears, and enjoys shopping to some degree, although this is moderated:

I mean, I think my own weakness probably would be that I spend a bit of money on clothes for myself. But again, I wouldn't have said my budget's huge when I sometimes get an insight into...I mean, you don't know what other people spend... but I imagine it's actually what I think I spend lots on clothes probably isn't very much at all.

Durability is the other key concern for Vivian – she likes things to last and will shop with retailers who she perceives provide good quality products. The values with highest prominence for Vivian were benevolence and conformity, with stimulation conformity and hedonism given very little emphasis.

Case 6 – Marie

Marie is in her early thirties and works as a research officer within a sustainability research unit. She is divorced, with two children. Marie's shopping habits are best summarised by two words; charity shops. Most of her clothes shopping is done in charity shops, although occasional specific items come from the high street. On talking about how long she has been an avid charity shop shopper she says:

All my life. Because my family did as well - they have always been the shopping experience... My parents are quite sort of 'make do and mend' - they've got all the same stuff in the house that they had when they married forty years ago or whatever... I'm pleased I had that... it helps my own situation as well as in life...you know? Why do you wanna get something new when the other thing isn't broken yet?

She has a strong awareness of and motivation towards social and environmental sustainability, although there is some degree of 'happy coincidence' between this and her charity shopping habits.

Marie's value profile was very different to the other respondents in that it was more clearly 'polarised'; she placed maximum emphasis on a number of values: benevolence, universalism, self-direction, stimulation and hedonism. She was the only respondent, with Isabella, to rate hedonism above an average of 5/6. Power was given the lowest rating.

Case 7 – Liz

Liz is in her mid-fifties and is married with three children. She lectures and researches in environmental health and public health. Prior to entering academia she had careers in occupational health and environmental health practice. Liz's environmental awareness stems from her rural upbringing:

I think it was just growing up in the environment I did... to survive you all had to be very dependent on each other... It sounds odd, but we all had to work together because slight changes could make a difference. So a supermarket coming in nearby suddenly changed people's way of living... There was strong community, and I think it's from that. Plus, my village was a location for a lot of communes and the communes had been disbanded a little bit and you had a lot of people in the locality whose views were about thinking about the environment.

Consequently Liz places a large emphasis on locally produced goods, as well as natural fibres. In addition to shopping with small independent manufacturers and specialist web-based retailers, convenience is also important for Liz so she still shops on the high street. Benevolence was Liz's highest ranked value, with power and security the least highly ranked.

Case 8 – Doug

Doug is married, an 'empty nester' in his early sixties and had a career in the textiles industry before entering academia to teach product and materials design. His interest in sustainability and sustainable materials stems from an austere upbringing surrounded by nature:

Well, originally I think just a recognition being brought up with an involvement with and an understanding of nature... I suspect these days far more people... don't really see nature, they don't see where stuff - food comes from... That was just the way people are brought up in my era and I don't see it so much now.

Doug sums up his attitude to shopping as:

I shop very rarely. I would say probably like most men probably, at least as much as bought for me as I buy myself... I find the quickest and simplest way to buy stuff is to go to Marks & Spencer and if you can't find it in 10 minutes, forget it and try again next week or next month. So, I'm a very occasional shopper. Occasionally on impulse, but not really a huge mainstream clothing shopper.

Tradition and self-direction were the most important values for Doug. Hedonism was his least important, but in contrast to the rest of the respondents, benevolence was also lowly rated.

Case 9 – Paula

Paula, in her early twenties, is originally from Thailand and is studying for a PhD in sustainable fashion having an interest in fashion and also in issues of ethics and recently having completed a Master's in International Banking. She is the youngest respondent in the sample and lives with her boyfriend. Paula is a self-confessed shopaholic, although she has recently attempted to moderate her behaviour in light of her new role:

So before I was doing this it was still quite new to me, but as I'm getting into it, it gives me more ideas, but it takes a long time to get to know about sustainability... Like fast fashion and everything. Because, like, I am a consumer – I love shopping... you can't take that away from me! But I'm kind of doing it responsibly now. Because, before, my background – my culture... Primark is a small problem compared to how we shop in Thailand.

However, she is a long-standing boycotter of the plastic bag, and charitable giving is also important to her. So, whereas fashion and style are important to Paula, materials and price are also paramount, with each purchase being the subject of a projected 'cost per wear'.

Paula placed maximum emphasis on benevolence, with stimulation being the least important value.

Case 10 – Matias

Matias is in his late thirties and single. He is both a part-time PhD student and research fellow in sustainable design, with a specific interest in product design and lighting. Matias was born and educated in Spain, and also worked there as a product designer before entering academia in the UK. Despite having a strong awareness of 'eco' principles and labels, Matias is perhaps one of the least ethically-motivated consumers in the sample:

But the problem is I'm very aware of... eco labels and everything, and I still have problems to choose the most sustainable option... there is such an amount of labels today and claims about things... So what I do is I buy the one I like! But I have a big problem with that – this is not a standard you can compare.

He very much operates to a principle of 'buy for need' and convenience and cost are primary concerns for him, although if sustainable options exist he is predisposed towards them.

Matias gave equal importance to benevolence, universalism and self-direction, with achievement, power and conformity being the least highly rated.

Case 11 – Helen

Helen, in her early forties, is married with two children. She has a degree in Environmental Sustainability and teaches the same subject at University. Helen previously worked in the energy sector and community regeneration. Ethical issues are an important motivator for Helen, but having once been a keen charity shopper, style and durability are now important considerations for Helen. She summarises her attitudes to clothes shopping as follows:

The environmental side is important but also the ethical side and if we talk about fashion I'd be concerned about where things are coming from and the impact on people's lives... I do like nice clothes and I buy fewer and more expensive clothes than I used to because I think they last longer and I'm probably not as fashion trend following as I perhaps used to be... I'd rather have something that's nice and would last. In my mind if it's a decent company, hopefully they're a bit slightly more ethical in... where they're getting the material from and the impacts further down the chain.

Helen therefore tends to shop from a small number of high street retailers. She placed maximum emphasis on self-direction values, with little consideration given to tradition.

Case 12 – Nick

Nick is originally from Canada and married with one young child. He has an eclectic academic background, but has a special research interest in the effects of chemicals used in plastics on reproductive systems. Consequently his interest in sustainability is motivated very much by health concerns and his knowledge of the effects of chemicals on humans. Food is therefore an important area of consumer concern for Nick, although as he explains clothing is not an area of interest for him:

I don't think you have to look too hard to realise that I don't worry too much about it! ... I'm aware of the situation with, you know, cheap clothing... but the other aspects of my life where I do make very deliberate decisions don't seem to extend so much to the clothing as it would for food, because I know that what we eat goes into our body whereas with clothing it's not probably such a direct link and concern. And my wife buys most of the clothes!

Most of Nick's clothes are therefore bought for him, and he tends to have little knowledge (and arguably interest) in them or where they come from. Nick placed most emphasis on benevolence and self-direction, and, perhaps surprisingly, least on security.

Case 13 – James

James is in his early forties and is married with no children. After a career in industry in environmental management he now works in an Institute for Sustainable Development. He has a degree in Theology, an MBA and a PhD which focused on recycling behaviours. James has a high level of knowledge of and a number of contacts within the 'ethical fashion' industry. He is sustainably-motivated, but also style and quality conscious. As he notes:

A lot of people I meet in the environmental world seem to care nothing for design or beauty or art or creativity... that's the challenge with clothing or other ethical decisions is that, first and foremost, it should be a good quality product.

His approach is generally one of 'buy good quality and less', but even then his knowledge calls some of his decisions into question. On discussing a friend who is a buyer, he relays her observation that her 'low end' products are made in the same factories as 'high end' branded products: *"So that's where all the lines get blurred and you think "what am I paying for?"*.

James placed maximum emphasis on benevolence, with power being the least important area of concern for him.

Case 14 – Naomi

Naomi is in her early thirties and lives with her boyfriend. They don't have children. She has a background in environmental biology and lectures in Ecology and Environmental Science. She has always been interested in being environmentally conscious, and this extends into her clothing purchase behaviour, or perhaps more accurately a lack of as she enacts her values through buying less:

I would find it very difficult to buy a new item of clothing. So, if I needed a new shirt for work, I would have to really need it today to want to go to a new shop and buy a new shirt, rather than looking in charity shops. Or, maybe just waiting for people to give me clothes eventually... it just seems terribly wasteful.

Whereas a large proportion of Naomi's clothes come from charity shops, car boots and 'hand-me-downs', and she might be considered to be 'anti-fashion' in many ways, she still acknowledges that she can be a slightly fussy shopper and has preferred high street retailers for particular items.

Naomi did not rate any of the values particularly highly, except for achievement. Her lowest ratings were for hedonism and security.

Case 15 – Keith

Keith is in his late fifties and married with no children. He lectures in international relations and conducts research into environmental and indigenous issues in island communities. A self-confessed 'ex-hippy', he has a strong political background and is a committed vegetarian. He defines his clothing purchase behaviour as infrequent and based on a perceived functional need (something wearing out or an occasion which requires an item). As he states:

I'm not a big consumer but I guess that's a decision in itself. You know, I mean I would rather recycle. I don't really like to throw stuff out and I don't like the idea of built-in obsolescence or, as you can probably tell, I'm not a follower of fashion particularly... I'm not very self aware in terms of how I look particularly.

Despite this, clothing does help him to convey his identity, so certain items of clothing are important to him from that point of view. When Keith does shop he occasionally likes to buy from small independents, but also buys from larger high-street retailers depending on the specific item. Keith most closely matched values were benevolence, universalism and achievement, with power rated only 1/6.

Case 16 – Sarah

Sarah is in her late forties and married with one child. She is undertaking a PhD after completing a Master's in Climate Change and Sustainable Development. Sarah entered graduate education relatively late, following an earlier career as an information professional and then a serious illness. Sarah's attitude to clothes is primarily governed by colour:

I love colour and I hate black and white. And you do notice the difference. And you know right from an early age I've had people say, 'Oh, that colour really suits you. That's you, that colour.' And you do notice the difference. I feel it really makes a difference... to how you feel, because certain colours look so much better than others... So, yeah, certain colours make a difference, they do.

However, Sarah is also motivated by product quality and durability as well as ethical concerns, and she has a small number of high street retailers where she will do her shopping. More recently she has found a supplier of end-of-line clothes which have formed the basis of her wardrobe.

Sarah was one of four respondents to rate universalism most highly, with her lowest rating going to tradition.

Case 17 – Elisabeth

Elisabeth is in her forties and is married with two children. Originally from Germany she has a background in moral philosophy and business (both academically and as a practitioner). Environmental sustainability is important to Elisabeth, and she attempts to address environmental concerns in all aspects of her consumption, where constraints allow her to do so.

Her clothing consumption is characterised by fit and colour and, despite enjoying clothes shopping, two main sources of clothing; second-hand clothes passed down from family members, and shopping at two German stores (one of which is overtly 'ethical'). She often finds she has to make ethical compromises to live in accordance with her values.

Sometimes, when I buy for the kids for example... I make these trade-offs... [There is] a specific little ethical company which has a focus on shoes for kids and.... And, we get one pair from there, and the other pair we get from Lidl, and I find this compromise not very good. But I have to think I can't afford two of these really expensive shoes because they are £50-£60 or so each and that they'll only use three months or so until they grow out of them. So the second one is one for £10 or £5 from Lidl!

Elisabeth scored highly on benevolence, universalism and self-direction, and lowly on security, conformity and tradition.

Case 18 – Daphne

Daphne is in her thirties, married with no children, and originally from Mexico. With a background and interest in sustainable design and consumption, she currently works in sustainable design. She grew up with a strong sense of social justice and an environmental awareness, and these issues have permeated her daily routines.

Daphne is passionate about quality and likes to buy clothes that will last. Her favourite brands are Spanish which she likes for their style and quality. She realises that they may uphold questionable workers' rights, and this causes her some guilt, but she perceives there to be little other choice in the market:

I think clothes were made better in the past, now they break really easily. I don't...it's very difficult to buy clothes in general nowadays I think. I don't shop in Primark that's an ethical... you know?... But I do shop in other stores like Zara especially Spanish brands. I do like a lot of Spanish brands and I know that they're not ethical or whatever, they still you know, use people in Bangladesh or whatever to do their clothes but at the end of the day, it's what's in the market.

Daphne does try to buy less and make clothes last longer, and is happy to wear second-hand clothes, but only those passed down through family and close friends. She scored reasonably highly against each of the values, but with 6.0 for both benevolence and universalism.

Case 19 – Meryl

Meryl is in her 50s, with one daughter. She entered academia after a career in the fashion and textiles industry and now teaches fashion knitwear. As a direct result of her experience and knowledge, the key word that characterises clothing consumption for Meryl is quality:

I have a strong interest in good quality clothing. I have always had a strong interest in good quality clothing and it's sort of merged into sustainable clothing. I've seen many changes over those years in terms of fast fashion being introduced and that's sort of really my interest level there.

Her interest in sustainability and fast fashion therefore stems from her early experiences, and she feels a very personal impact of the 'lost' UK textiles industry. Consequently, Meryl is a very careful shopper, buying fewer clothes which will last, although she feels some professional pressure to wear new and different clothes. She tends to shop in the same two or three retailers which she knows and likes.

Meryl scored herself 'full marks' against benevolence, universalism, self-direction and stimulation, although none of the values were at less than 4 ('a little like me').

Case 20 – Kate

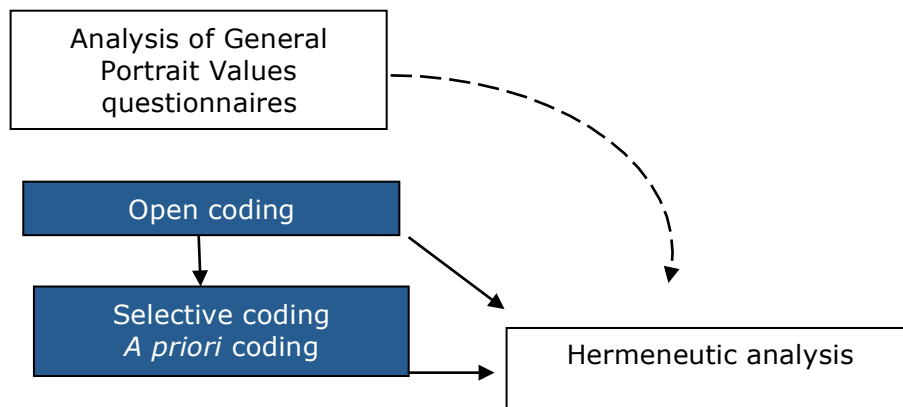
Kate is in her early 30s, married, with a background in sustainable tourism which she now teaches and researches. Whilst Kate brings ethics into every sphere of her travel consumption, this does not feature in other parts of her consumption activity:

I care a lot about the people very, very close to me and I care about what's going on in the world but I'm being very hypocritical because I do very little about it... Because if I really care that much, I wouldn't just look after sort of me and my own... I campaign for certain causes, exploitation in terms of development, human rights issues, etc but there's a lot more I'm sure I could do... and it's a poor excuse to say I haven't got time. I think there's a desire to do more but not the action. I make conscious choices in respect to travel to be more sustainable and to maximise benefits that I would give as a tourist... but my other purchases I don't believe I'm that sustainable.

Kate's clothing choices are driven very much by cost and style (but not 'fashion'), with Primark, H&M, Peacocks and Tesco being her stated preferred retailers.

In terms of values, Kate scored highly on benevolence, universalism and self-direction, with a very low assessment of power and hedonism values.

Coding



As previously discussed, the first stage of the analysis consisted of a coding exercise for key themes and ideas to emerge as a basis for further interpretation and analysis, or to indicate the 'hermeneutic lens' through which the data can be examined. As Thompson (1997) notes, in a hermeneutic approach to marketing research, a two-stage 'part to whole' iterative procedure should be followed; the first consisting of an 'intratext cycle' in which the transcript is read and re-read to develop an understanding of the consumption meanings conveyed by it. The second is 'intertextual', in which patterns and differences across interviews are identified. The intention was that a process of coding (both deductively through the 'lens' of value, and also inductively) would enable this first step; to give some structure to the consumption meanings through which an hermeneutic model could be applied. Furthermore, Arnold and Fischer (1994) note that the emphasis on pre-understanding in hermeneutics recognises that both the interpreter and the interpreted are linked by a 'context of tradition' that precede any interpretation or analysis of a text. This provides a starting point (or 'prejudice') for analysis and comparison. This 'prejudice' enables the interpreter to make sense of the narratives or objects observed. Thus, a methodological process of coding can help to establish a model which provides this 'window'. Clearly, the theories of 'values' and 'value' are two such windows which are the primary context of this thesis; 'root metaphors' of pre-understanding (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000) that underlie this particular discourse. Without such prejudices, there could be no pre-understanding on which to base an initiating frame of reference on which the hermeneutic circle can be based (Thompson, 1997). It was previously noted that Rorty (1982) does not necessarily view the objectives

of explanation and understanding as being at odds with one another; in this means of combining coding with hermeneutics the two aims can actually support one another, the process of coding supporting the hermeneutic analysis. Indeed, Thompson and Haytko (1997) use a similar process to identify meaning categories in their hermeneutic analysis of consumers' fashion discourses. The use of coding also carried a practical benefit of assisting in the organisation and retrieval of the data; as previously noted, they became the 'notes in the margins' of the transcripts .

A two-stage process to coding was adopted in which the deductive codes were applied alongside an initial process of open coding. A second stage then refined these codes (grouping similar themes and codes, clarifying codes and recoding where appropriate) to produce a final set of codes; Strauss and Corbin (2007) define this process as 'axial coding'. Charmaz (2005) recommends this type of two-stage approach, but especially where the process was intended to identify core themes and categories for the basis of further hermeneutic analysis, a detailed three-stage process was not required.

Coding of the transcripts was undertaken in QSR Nvivo software; this assisted the iterative process of code development as it enabled coding structures to be quickly established and rearranged as 'parent and child' relationships emerged, and also allowed items to be easily recoded as themes and axial codes were refined. Use of the Nivivo software also allows for quick retrieval of the data, and an extra benefit of coding by paragraph as a first stage of a hermeneutic process is that relevant parts of the consumers' narratives can be quickly retrieved and analysed. It also enables relatively easy comparisons of different narratives during the 'part to whole' analysis.

The first stage ('open coding') was iterative in nature, with coding being undertaken by paragraph rather than line by line; the intention here is to identify the major (macro) ideas and themes in the respondents' consumption stories, rather than a micro identification of the precise meanings attributed to specific words or phrases in order to facilitate a further hermeneutic analysis. As Strauss and Corbin (1998) note, coding is a dynamic and fluid process, with concepts often grouped into categories as the analysis of the transcripts progressed, and the grouping of categories (axial coding) being undertaken as themes and concepts emerged. This occurred to some degree before coding had even begun with the

application of the pre-determined 'Net value for the customer' codes already being highly structured, along with Schwartz *et al*'s (2012) values. The codes that were developed and their initial relationships can be seen in figures 26 and 27. The first shows the codes developed under the Net VC framework, whilst the second shows the codes related to other dimensions which were inductively developed:

Figure 26: Codes Resulting from A-Priori / Open Coding: Net Value for the Customer

1	Benefits		Sacrifices	
2	Attributes	Outcomes	Monetary	Non-monetary
3	Goods quality	Financial benefits	Price	Time
3	Service quality	Social benefits	Acquisition costs	Effort
4	Returns and repair	Impact	-	Learning new skills
4	Personal service	Projecting self-image	-	Search
4	-	Validation / approval	-	-
3	Core product feats.	Personal benefits	Costs of use	Psychological costs
4	Colour	Belonging	-	Dissatisfaction
4	Durability	Ethical concerns	-	Dissonance
4	Fair Trade	Feeling good	-	-
4	Fit	Health	-	-
4	Function	Satisfaction	-	-
4	Local	-	-	-
4	Location of manufacture	-	-	-
4	Material	-	-	-
4	Organic	-	-	-
4	Recycled	-	-	-
4	Style	-	-	-
3	Added service feats.	Practical benefits	-	Relationship costs
4	-	-	-	Family
4	-	-	-	Subjective norms

As can be seen, an extra level of coding has been added from the table shown in the previous chapter to reflect specific issues of concern (these are items shown at 'level four'). Items removed with no references related mainly to costs, especially disposal costs, distribution costs, maintenance costs, opportunity costs and learning costs. However, under benefits/attributes, there were no direct references to customisation (although the broader themes of individuality or differentiation were significant). In benefits / outcomes, there were no references to strategic benefits.

The other codes developed through the first stage of open coding can be broadly clustered under five themes; buying practices, context, ethical concerns, power and values. Codes displayed in the header row below were structured as ‘parent’ codes to those underneath.

Figure 27: Inductive codes

Buying practices	Context	Ethical concerns	Power	Values
Attitude to clothes shopping	Austerity	Animal rights	Influencing company behaviour	Self-direction
Decision process	Children	Bounded rationality	Influencing others	Stimulation
Cognition	Differentiator	Charity	Lack of power	Hedonism
Habit	Difference	Lack of ethical motivator	Responsibility	Achievement
Availability	Education	Local	-	Power
Awareness	Family	Mainstreaming ethics	-	Security
Knowledge	Friends - peers	Obligation	-	Conformity
Labelling	Life change	Sustainability	-	Tradition
Publicity	Self-identity	Buying less	-	Benevolence
Charity shops	Shared values	Economic sustainability	-	Universalism
Context	Upbringing	Environmental sustainability	-	-
Disposal	Work role	Social sustainability	-	-
Repair	- Work-based motivation	Waste	-	-
Emotion - mood	-	Lack of consideration of ethics	-	-
Retailer examples	-	Scepticism	-	-
Trade-offs	-		-	-

This iterative process of open and axial coding began to immediately raise questions and theoretical directions and insights. As can be seen above in both tables, some natural groupings and linkages started to take shape; certainly there were elements in the ‘value equation’ as it is currently understood in the literature at play, with clear discussion emerging in relation to key dimensions and how they impact purchasing decisions and are ‘traded off’. Whilst a full list of codes under each of the ‘Net VC’ categories was

available as discussed in the previous chapter, many of the dimensions were not referred to by respondents, so the above codes only show those which arose (the full list can be found in appendix 7). In addition to the pre-existing categories, other forms of benefit and sacrifice arose so these lists were inductively added to as coding progressed. Certainly core product features were extremely significant, with style, function, material, durability and goods quality referenced numerous times, along with social benefits (and projecting self-image in particular). Price and psychological costs also appeared to be significant elements of value, along with effort to a slightly lesser degree.

However, larger issues arose around some wider concerns; should everything be classified under the Net VC framework? Certainly there were elements of proposed benefit and sacrifice which were emerging under other codes; the issue of 'self-identity', for example, is a key contextual factor, but could be either benefit or sacrifice depending on how this 'played out' with specific purchases. Likewise, ethical concerns could be classified as potential benefit (if they were to be realised), and there were a plethora of incidences related to trade-offs which clearly align closely with the notion of Net VC. For the purposes of the coding exercise to be not too restrictive, this categorisation was left open, and items were coded under Net VC when talking about specific purchases, and under other codes if respondents were talking more generally about experiences, thoughts and feelings which tended to 'cut across' value evaluations. However, many of the issues could have been classified under the 'value for the customer' framework. Secondly, it was not always clear whether a factor should be considered a benefit or a sacrifice. For example, something which required effort could be seen as a sacrifice, but similarly respondents talked about convenience as a benefit and whilst a principle of minimisation as benefit and maximisation as sacrifice seems intuitively a sensible state of affairs, it highlights tensions between 'tight' definitions and categorisations which is worthy of further exploration.

Secondly, some clear themes emerge. Certainly the notion of 'context' (related to the notion of personal narratives) including self-identity, upbringing and life changes were oft-recurring themes which appear to be extremely significant, as do the categories of habit and (perhaps unsurprisingly) trade-offs. It was at this stage of the open coding where no new codes were emerging and further weight was being given to those which

were emerging as being significant. Strauss and Corbin (1997) note that this point of category development (theoretical saturation) is the point at which categories are integrated and refined to develop theory. This is where, typically, data collection stops and central categories and relationships between categories are identified. The next stage of the coding is therefore to refine these themes, with the aim of producing a hermeneutic model through which a deeper level of analysis can occur. The aim is not to produce a definitive central category and theoretical scheme, but to identify the consumption meanings conveyed by the texts as an aid to an intertextual process of identifying hermeneutic themes to explore patterns and differences across the interviews. Essentially, the codes acted as the 'notes in the margins' of the transcripts, following which the 'part-whole' movement was therefore continued in the analysis by re-reading the texts in light of the emerging issues to identify new insights.

Hermeneutic Themes

Whilst there are no methodological procedures which can be applied to the hermeneutic method (Arnold and Fischer, 1994), as previously noted, Thompson's (1997: 440-441) model of consumer meaning construction will be used as an initial hermeneutic device. The model (see figure 20 on p131) consists of six structural elements as follows:

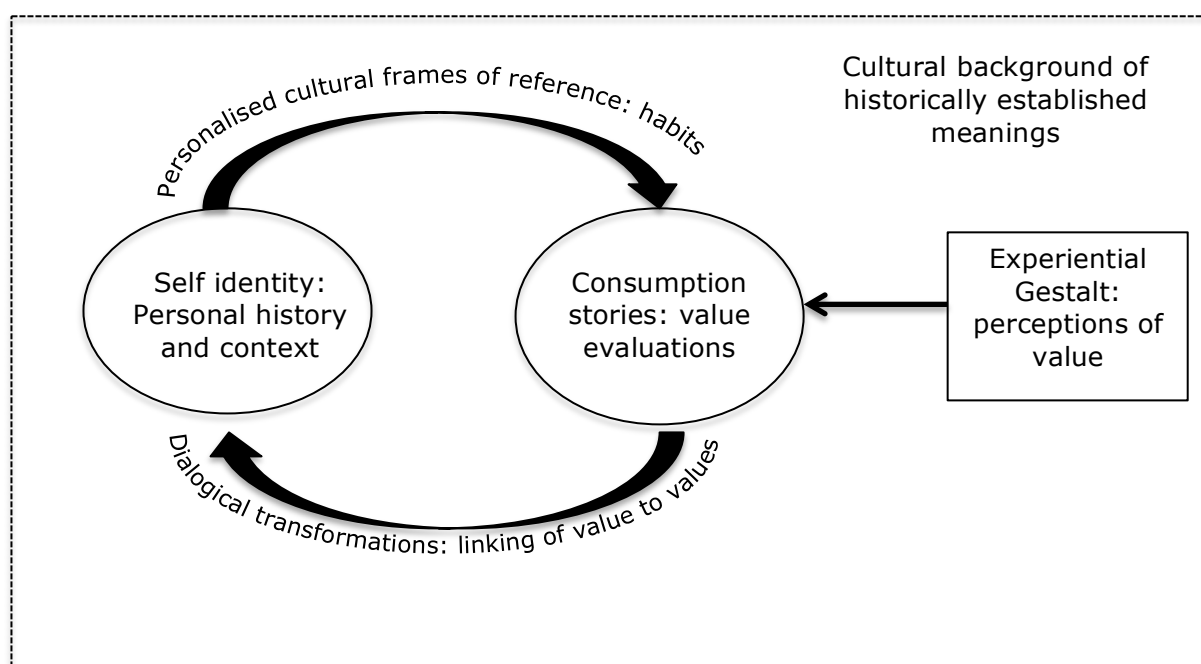
1. *Personal history as a text.* A broader narrative of self-identity contextualises this perspective to give meaning to life events. Certainly the initial coding process revealed self-identity (and its communication) to be a central thematic category (as did the literature explored in Chapter 2), giving weight to this element of the model. Connected to this, values, upbringing and life changes were also significant themes resulting from the first stage.
2. *A cultural background of historically established meanings* provide the context for these personal history narratives. This provides the social categories, folk knowledge and interpretive frames of reference from which self-identity is constructed. Aspects of upbringing may further be relevant here, along with other cultural and social references. The coding developed under 'context' would support this perspective as being key.
3. *Personalised cultural frames of reference* include the many relational forms through

which a consumer's cultural background and the personal meanings they give rise to are constructed. This network offers numerous interpretive positions for personalised transformations of established cultural meanings. However, it appears at least that purchasing habits is a salient category of 'cultural knowledge' which characterise consumer meanings and behaviour in this study. These result in...

4. *Interpreted meanings (consumption stories)*, which express a dialectical relationship between the social conditions mentioned above and identity issues salient to the consumer. These are played out through the consumption stories described in the interviews, and the coding under Net VC reveal how identity issues manifest themselves in value evaluations.
5. *Experiential Gestalt* directly influences the interpreted meanings above; with the consumers' perceptions of their experiences framing their sense-making. Again, the language of value and 'trading off' to maximise experiences may characterise much of this framing.
6. *Dialogical transformations*; the model positions consumers as self-narrators who selectively highlight particular dimensions of the consumption events they experience, the stories about which impose a meaningful historical order onto their life events. Thus: "...the reciprocal movement in this hermeneutic model occurs when a specific consumer narrative or story is derived from a consumption experience and then is incorporated into the interpreting consumer's broader life narrative." (Thompson, 1997: 441). This is where the concept of value and its linking to higher order values comes into play; the notion of value for the customer is less about a reflection on a particular purchase and whether was satisfied or dissatisfied, but about the broader life narrative to which these consumption experience contribute. It is here that the lines between benefit and sacrifice and value and values may become blurred. However, value is clearly an overriding theme here.

Thus, the model can be adapted for this context as follows:

Figure 28: A hermeneutic model of value meaning construction (adapted from Thompson, 1997: 440)



A Hermeneutic Analysis of Value Meaning Construction

The analysis presented below takes the above model as its analytical framework. Each heading will relate to the different dimensions of the model, although it is recognised that there will be areas of overlap – each structural attribute does not exist independently of the others. However, dealing with the interpretation of the data in this way will provide some structure and form to the analysis. An early-established objective for this research was to understand the aspirations for morality for this group, and this first analysis will aim to explore this in more detail.

Cultural background of historically established meanings

Values

As Thompson (1997) explains, the cultural background of historically established meanings provides the context for the respondents' personal history narratives; the social categories, folk knowledge and interpretive frames of reference from which self-identity is constructed. Aspects of upbringing may further be relevant here, along with other cultural and social references. The values analysis using Schwartz's General Portrait Values will be

presented as a first stage of this analysis of how self-identity may be constructed. Whilst this analysis lies outside of a hermeneutic approach, as with the coding, the intention is to provide a frame of reference as an element of the part-to-whole movement around which the hermeneutic analysis may be based.

As noted in Chapters three and four, *values* may provide the link between an individual's ethics and behaviour, and that the role of values is essential in understanding a positive purchasing behaviour which is rooted in the achievement of individual goals. This is also particularly relevant under a consideration of a cultural background of historically established meanings, as it was noted that, as Joyner and Payne (2002) argue, values are shaped by an individual's culture, and that these values are passed down from generation to generation. Figure 29 shows a summary values profile of the respondent pool.

Figure 29: Summary General Portrait Values Profile of the respondents

Values	Conceptual definition	Mean	Standard Deviation
Benevolence	Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is frequent personal contact.	5.3	0.69
Universalism	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature.	5.2	0.70
Self-direction	Independent thought and action – choosing, creating, exploring.	5.2	0.80
Stimulation	Excitement, novelty and challenge in life.	4.2	1.15
Achievement	Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards.	4.1	1.12
Hedonism	Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself.	3.6	1.16
Tradition	Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide.	3.5	1.08
Conformity	Restraint of actions, inclinations and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms.	3.2	1.17
Security	Safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships and of self.	3.2	1.22
Power	Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources.	2.9	1.12

Source: Adapted from Schwartz et al. (1994/2012)

As the questionnaire in appendix 2 demonstrates, respondents were presented with a series of character traits (or 'portrait statements') and asked to rate how much like them they believed the person described in the portrait statement to be, on a six-point scale

from 'very much like me' (coded '6') to 'not like me at all' (coded '1'). The combined statements for each value were weighted for each respondent, and then the mean and standard deviation calculated for each value across the respondents. The intention here is not to provide a detailed statistical analysis (the sample size is not sufficient for statistical validity in any case), but rather to give an overall picture of importance placed upon values by the group.

As can be seen, benevolence, universalism and self-direction are the three highest-ranking values, each with a low standard deviation demonstrating the importance placed on them by all respondents. Benevolence was the highest ranked; as Schwartz *et al.* (2012) note, there is a strong *caring* dimension to this value, but loyalty to friends (dependability) may also play a part. Universalism contains three potential subtypes; societal concern and protecting nature, and less significantly, tolerance. It might perhaps be reasonably expected that this would figure highly for this group, therefore. However, it was not the highest ranked of the values, and there may be conflicts with others. Self-direction contains autonomy of both thought and action, perhaps supporting the assertions made in chapter three around the emancipation of individuals. However, this also relates to using one's own intellectual competence and pursuing one's own chosen goals. This may not be particularly surprising given the intellectually autonomous roles these individuals occupy.

Figure 30: Circular Motivational Continuum of Values (Schwartz, 2012: 7)



Significantly, Schwartz (1994) ordered his values around a circle (see figure 30) to indicate how compatible or conflicting they may be. Importance placed upon two conflicting values at 'opposite' sides of the circle is therefore likely to elicit complex trade-offs when

applied to consumption decisions. However, these three particular values occupy the top part of the circle next to each other, suggesting that they are, to some degree at least, complementary. Furthermore, Schwartz *et al.* (2012) note that values in this part of the circle express growth and self-expansion, and motivate people who are free from anxiety. However, they possess different focuses; social (benevolence and universalism) and personal (self-direction). The remaining values did not follow a particular ‘pattern’ (as highlighted by the larger standard deviations), but clearly different values are at play. How all of these particular values are negotiated would therefore benefit from further exploration throughout the analysis.

Coding was applied for each of the values when respondents discussed an area of importance or personality which related to Schwartz *et al.*'s (2012) definitions of each of the values. For example, if an informant was discussing the importance to them of protecting the environment, this segment of conversation would be coded ‘universalism’. Figure 31 shows a screenshot from *Nvivo* of the coding of the values as a matrix, demonstrating not only the frequencies with which each code occurs, but also where the discussion had been coded with multiple values, indicating overlaps (or possibly conflicts) between values.

Figure 31: Node Matrix of Values

Name	Sources	Refere...	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
▼ Values	21	72	27 Aug 2013 10:08	AJH	Yesterday, 14:14	AJH
● Conformity	0	0	11 Jun 2015 09:59	AJH	11 Jun 2015 10:00	AJH
● Power	0	0	11 Jun 2015 09:58	AJH	11 Jun 2015 09:58	AJH
● Hedonism	1	3	11 Jun 2015 09:58	AJH	11 Jun 2015 22:32	AJH
● Self-direction	1	2	11 Jun 2015 09:56	AJH	11 Jun 2015 11:53	AJH
● Stimulation	1	1	11 Jun 2015 09:57	AJH	11 Jun 2015 11:53	AJH
● Achievement	2	2	11 Jun 2015 09:58	AJH	Yesterday, 14:14	AJH
● Security	4	4	11 Jun 2015 09:58	AJH	11 Jun 2015 22:26	AJH
● Tradition	6	6	11 Jun 2015 10:00	AJH	11 Jun 2015 22:35	AJH
● Benevolence	10	13	11 Jun 2015 10:00	AJH	Yesterday, 14:09	AJH
● Universalism	18	38	11 Jun 2015 10:00	AJH	Yesterday, 14:10	AJH

Values matrix	A : Achievement	B : Benevolence	C : Conformity	D : Hedonism	E : Power	F : Security	G : Self-direction	H : Stimulation	I : Tradition	J : Universalism
1 : Achievement	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 : Benevolence	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4
3 : Conformity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 : Hedonism	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1
5 : Power	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 : Security	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
7 : Self-direction	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0
8 : Stimulation	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
9 : Tradition	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	2
10 : Universalism	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	38

As can be seen, the coding revealed universalism to be the most frequently occurring and most-cited of the values with only Isabella and Matias not discussing some element of the value of universalism being relevant for them. Universalist values were reflected in both environmental protection; in a global or ‘macro’ sense, and also in terms of protecting

nature in local environments, and social justice or protecting society and empathy with others (“*putting yourself in others’ shoes*”) as described by Helen, or wanting to eradicate poverty or inequality.

These factors were often referred to by respondents as ‘sustainability’ (although Naomi and Meryl discussed issues of animal cruelty, and there were also references to vegetarianism), and there were large numbers of references to these types of issues. These will be discussed in more detail in the following section in relation to areas of ethical concern.

Benevolence was the second most frequently occurring code which was referred to by half of the respondents. Benevolence was coded wherever informants directly discussed caring for their ‘in-group’ members (typically this was family), but also (and more commonly) where ‘frugality’ was discussed; the value of ‘being careful with money’. Whilst this was often referred to in terms of looking after children, for example, this was often more implicit, with a general sense that ‘my parents taught me to be careful with money’. Because of this implicit sense of care (rather than earning a lot, for example), these instances were coded as ‘benevolence’.

Tradition was cited by six of the respondents, where values were discussed directly in relation to maintaining beliefs rooted in local or family traditions. For Isabella, this meant that she tried to continue her mother’s and grandmother’s care of money and products, although she recognised this was becoming increasingly difficult. Liz discussed her childhood experiences growing up in a rural coalmining community, and the cultural pull to support the local community (although this is also imbued with elements of security):

I’m actually from a farming / coal mining background in rural Wales, so a lot of my ideas and issues come from there... Even to the point where, when I was a teenager I wouldn’t buy biscuits, chocolate, tea, coffee, anything unless it had been produced locally. I couldn’t understand why people would buy things that had been transported all around the world, or manufactured in one place, stored in another and then distributed somewhere else. It just didn’t make sense – all the packaging and everything... I’ve moderated perhaps my extreme views that I had as a teenager going into my twenties, but I still feel quite strongly about purchasing.

The notion of care with money often also ‘spilled over’ into security, which was

highlighted by four of the respondents; that there was an element of 'being careful' which related to personal and family security. Nick also discussed the health implications of chemicals and plastics, and there were also references of social security; global conflicts over resources (Chris), for example, or protecting the economic stability of local communities (Liz). Again, there are strong links to benevolence and tradition throughout these examples. Other values revealed through the coding, but in isolated instances, were achievement, or wanting to demonstrate competence at work through communicating a particular identity, and single cases of stimulation, hedonism and self-direction. This, whilst benevolence and universalism are revealed as central values in both interviews and the questionnaires, the roles of tradition and self-direction were reversed in each. Whilst clearly the nature of the questioning may have had some impact, it is interesting to note how these values are differently represented specifically in the act of purchasing clothing.

Areas of ethical concern and values

My aim, I don't know if I've achieved this, is to buy less but buy quality that lasts... (Chris)

Following from the identification of values in a wider sense, a large part of the discussions focused specifically around informants' specific ethical concerns. This quote from Chris perhaps best summarises the approach to ethics taken by the respondents; all respondents expressed an approach to purchasing (or at least a desire for consumption) centred around buying less and buying clothes which would last, rather than what was defined in chapter two as 'positive purchasing'. That is, there was very little evidence of purchasing from retailers or manufacturers directly as a result of ethical policies or standards, apart from reasonably infrequent incidents. Susan, for example, discussed her purchasing from People Tree (an online 'ethical' retailer), along with others. Where such behaviour had been routinely evident (James and Steve made reference to their purchases from an organic retailer, Howies, for example), this had now lapsed, mainly due to changes in the style of their clothes (Steve) or in response to life changes and a perception that their 'younger' style was no longer appropriate (James). There was more widespread evidence of the desire to avoid particular high street retailers due to perceived 'moral transgressions', however. In particular, the shadow of Primark loomed large over these discussions. This will be explored further in due course. Helen, Elisabeth and Marie also referred to having used ethical consumer magazine's company ratings to

make choices, but again this appeared to be inconsistent or rooted in practices which had now lapsed.

The desire to buy less was usually from a motivation to avoid waste to 'promote' environmental sustainability. As Doug stated:

You try and make sure that you... avoid waste wherever possible... just around the house and in normal consumption. That may well be outlined to a natural Northern meanness but I... [Laughter] irrespective of that. It was still, I think that's a moral imperative that all of us should try and be as responsible as we can with the planet, with waste, with whatever.

Again, this was largely manifest in the value of universalism (carrying a *social* focus), specifically in relation to protecting nature and the environment; Marie referred to how we are 'ruining the earth', for example. The concept of environmental sustainability was frequently referred to (as may be expected within this group), far outweighing any other ethical concerns:

Yeah, because it just seems so hugely important... the future really - I mean I know there's the social issues of now in what's happening to people, but we can never know the detail of that - we don't get all the transparent information about the social side of it. Whereas, you can be a bit more explicit - you can have some more tangible green or greenER products, so I think the green issue is bigger for me if I step away from the fashion thing and think about other things that I may be more concerned about possibly.

It was worth noting that whereas this concern was for many respondents a result of an 'expert' knowledge of environmental sustainability and climate change, for others it was in response to a more 'observable' basis for action, as with Susan above, or purely in response to anecdotal or personal observation, again often linked to a particular personal historical narrative. For example, Sarah recalled her childhood in vivid detail:

Things like climate change, I believe it is happening because... I don't look at scientific evidence. I'm not a trained scientist, so I wouldn't know the arguments. It's just my own observations over time. For example, summers... how I remember summers in my youth as a child are very different to how they are now... They were more stable... to me, there was definite memories of weather being more predictable, weather being more seasonal and just seeming more stable. You know, summers were summers. They were warm... But you didn't need sun cream, for example... Sun cream was only something you used when you went to France on holiday... And I know that's not

climate change but it's an awareness that things have changed, something has changed, something to do with the environment.

However, 'social sustainability' was also important for many of the respondents, although as Susan notes, the issues here were not always clear, and there was a 'blurring' of the lines between the environmental and the social, however. For instance, many of the respondents expressed a desire to prioritise buying 'local' wherever possible; not only was this perceived to carry environmental benefits, it also carries the (perceived) benefits of transparency in the supply chain, supporting the local economy, and rewarding governance structures not dominated by 'distant' or 'uncaring' shareholders. Thus, the elements of societal concern and protecting nature within the value of universalism not only correspond, but also interact.

Doug's earlier joke about a cultural stereotype (a 'Northern meanness') reveals two important further dimensions of values. Firstly that environmental attitudes and practices were more culturally ingrained than a one-dimensional desire to be more 'environmental', and secondly that the practice of buying less was also acknowledged to carry financial (as well as environmental) benefits. Each of these will be discussed briefly in turn.

With respect to the former, a cultural practice of avoiding waste or 'being careful with money' was a value that had been passed to many via their parents and rooted in childhood experiences. Often this was perceived to be a generational trait in parents rather than having experienced any kind of austerity or poverty. Various respondents acknowledged this. For example:

And I have been brought up by my parents to be quite thrifty. I think it's generational for them and also I think my father is like that anyway. (Laughter). I know my grandfather was the same - you couldn't get money out of either of them - I tried several times! (Sarah)

I would have been doing things that my parents were not particularly interested in. But, I suppose they were very much of the school of 'make do and mend'. They were born during the war and so, they were quite frugal, even though they're perfectly well off. They were very anti-waste and also anti-"spending money just for the hell of it". (Naomi)

But I think it started off as a sense of what I was brought up with which was that you didn't just...you know, you made things last, things were durable. And I suppose that comes from the way I was you know, brought up in my own parents who didn't have a lot of money... (Vivian)

Absolutely, because my parents came from the generation that were brought up in the Depression and times were generally hard and so they were brought up to, you know, you scrape every little bit from the butter tub or jam jar before you throw it out, etc. And you try and you take the bottles back if you can. So, all of those sorts of habits that were normal in that age died out a bit as we came to be a throw-away society and hopefully they are going to come back again. It was obvious you didn't throw things away and you've worn the hand-me-downs from elder siblings and that was just the way the world was. (Doug)

Here, the values of benevolence (being responsible towards 'in-groups') and personal security (through avoiding indebtedness) appear to be expressed. This did not appear to be limited to those with parents of a particular age; the values were passed down from generation to generation, although there was a general sense of nostalgia for the age of 'make do and mend' which had now been lost. Isabella, one of the youngest in the sample, for example, discussed how her mother had been influenced by her grandmother to preserve resources who in turn had influenced her. Whilst the following section will also explore the theme of family and a social web of influence in more detail, it is important to note the possible connection with a value of tradition (in respect of the preservation of customs) and to re-emphasise the generational passing down of values. There is therefore a strong sense that these values are established as 'historically established meanings', and that there was also an attempt also to pass these values down to the next generation. For example, Helen described how her niece received what she perceived to be too many clothes, which Helen then received as hand-me-downs for her children. Whilst Helen clearly benefits from her sister's 'over consumption', she was uncomfortable with the values and practices that are being passed down to her niece, and expresses a desire that her own values will be more clearly communicated to her own children through her opinion and practice. Likewise, Susan expressed worry about encouraging her children to adopt her values, and Liz talked about how she had successfully done so:

I do have that longer term worry constantly in the back of my mind that our children are not going to live on a manageable planet. So I have to try and give them those values, so sometimes I'll do things that they don't want to do in the short term, but it's longer term to try and get them to think about how they behave. (Susan)

We used to talk a lot about things like environmental pollution, various issues like how... we even had a game that we made up about the environment and how you engaged with it and everything. And three years old, we were going along in the car one day and my son suddenly points to this lorry coming in front of us and goes 'that's environmental pollution – it must stop!' So we knew we were influencing them. (Liz)

In the following passage, Elisabeth describes how she feels an innate sense of respect for nature and the environment being passed through the generations:

I do believe that every single action contributes to something... I can't really stand it when anything...when the environment gets destroyed. For example, there was a time when you could see the dying of the forest very strongly... I just don't want it... I feel sorry when my kids... So if by accident they step on a ladybird, I would feel sorry for the ladybird. And I think they feel sorry for the ladybird also as well. I think it's something you pass on very, very early... it's just something that's inside you rather than.... Yeah... when I see my kids, this is one of the strongest things they have already. I think it's one of the very few things which are really strong there...I never lectured them or anything. I didn't do anything, any specific effort to pass this on or so. It just is there, kind of, I think by the way I talk about animals or how we watch things in the garden and whatever. I think it's very strong.

Often these values were not just expressed in terms a concern for the environment in itself, but also as a response to a desire to preserve the world for future generations.

Often this universalism could therefore also be expressed in terms of security. It should be noted, however, that sometimes these values had been formed later in life as a response to life change. For example, James described his need to consciously uphold his 'new' values formed since finding faith, having been brought up with familial values more closely aligned to hedonism and achievement. As he explained:

For me and my family, really trying to resist over consumption and waste from an environmental point of view is really important; making things last longer... I mean it's a battle because I'm not instinctively a deep green person. For me it is that... a deliberate commitment. Many people that I work with, it seems very instinctive and natural and they've been brought up... you know my values, growing up, my family were relatively materialistic... I remember at 13/14 saying 'I wanna get a job and earn lots of money and buy a Porsche!' you know that was sort of some of the background I had and I think through my education and faith I've really learnt that that's a wrong approach but those instincts are still there sometimes...

For others, life changes had 'reawakened' or at least reinvigorated latent environmental concern. For example, for Daphne, time spent studying overseas had developed her already-keen sense of social justice into a wider concern for the environment and nature, and for Sarah, a serious health scare had caused her to develop her knowledge of organic and fair trade produce, which then reinvigorated her childhood love of nature which further developed into concern about global environmental issues.

With respect to the latter issue highlighted by Doug's joke, that the practice of buying less

was acknowledged to carry financial benefits, such benefits were often manifest in the value of benevolence, especially saving money (or time) as a dimension of caring for in-group members such as responsible parenting in the case of those that had children. However, whilst this value of benevolence was sometimes complementary with a universally-based environmental consciousness, this did sometimes result in conflicts and compromises. For example, the time taken in caring for children, or a lack of information or availability of ethical choices in children's clothes often led to conflicts:

We try to buy stuff from our local ethical workers' co-op. But, you know, sometimes, you just got to go down to Sainsburys and fill your trolley with stuff and all of that, and we do both... sometimes, you've actually got, 'I'm not going to get home today till 8 o'clock at night, my wife has got to look after the children, etc.'... So, it takes a lot more effort. (Chris)

It's that I haven't actually gone deep enough into it. Therefore you know, it's like I'm saying buy clothes for the children or buy things for the children - I possibly...I would compromise on that. (Steve)

The issue of caring for children and the value of security also came through more infrequently through the perspective of health, linked to values of benevolence and security. Where a carefulness with money had been passed down, there were also links to tradition. Vivian succinctly demonstrated how these values may overlap:

And we weren't desperately hard up. But we weren't rolling in money. So, choices had to be made. And I think that's how kind of I am now in my own life. It's like, oh, if I spend it on that, I can't spend it on this. So, I think my buying...but I think as I become more aware of sustainability, or you know, issues on sustainability. I do think "Can I justify it?"

It has been suggested that the growth in organic foodstuffs has been largely driven by health concerns, but only Nick and Sarah were motivated by this concern. For Nick, it was through his knowledge of the effects of chemicals on reproductive systems that he wished to avoid non-natural fibres and packaging which may contain harmful chemicals, as well as a broader desire to avoid plastics, although he acknowledged stopping the 'constant stream of plastic packaging and toys' was difficult. Nick's feelings of powerlessness here therefore lead him to make compromises on some of these health aspects which are important to him. For Sarah, it was significant life-changes in terms of children and health:

I had children and I think you sort of start thinking of things about, for example, organic food. I really started getting into organic food once I had children because I started to think about what am I putting in my body, what am I giving to my children, to babies? And you start thinking about life a little bit differently. And then I had a big health crisis and treatment took a whole year; it was quite a significant health crisis.

Issues of social justice were also significant, again sometimes overlapping with other values. For example, Daphne discusses how she was brought up with universalist values, but also how this overlaps with the value of achievement (being a hard worker).

There is a lot of disparity between rich and poor and you see that every day. Some people in Mexico who have a good life and have money and are rich and things like that, they treat people awfully sometimes... like the working class people and I really hate that. It's something I always fought for when I was a kid because every time my family is... my family, I could say we are high middle class. Basically since my grandparents...we came from the bottom basically so they teach my mum especially to be a hard worker and then my mum taught me to be a hard worker as well and not to take things for granted.

For Kate, whilst the primary area of interest was social, this was tied up in the environmental and also resulting from her self-direction values related to exploration and her work in sustainable tourism:

There's no separation between the tourists and what the tourists are doing, the late night parties, the excessive alcohol consumption, skimpy sunbathing etc, all of that and then the local people... So, I find that area more interesting because I'm more interested in people and all that sort of stuff rather than the environmentalist perspective, but nevertheless it was still important because the reason why people go initially is because of its aesthetic beauty... so that's the basis of the tourism appeal but how it then developed was starting to degrade and erode that touristic appeal...

There were many references to worker conditions, although this was usually accompanied by recognition of a lack of knowledge or transparency in supply chains. Even for Meryl, who had many years of experience of working in the industry, this was problematic:

But also ethically in terms of the way the manufacturing has gone from the UK and how garments are manufactured is quite -- well, I find it confusing because one, I've come from this environment of working in the UK... and it was whole families that had been there generations, and then suddenly there were people miles away making clothes who we don't know, who will probably make them in appalling conditions, and there were just people exploiting them I think... I did work for a company when there was the turn from UK to overseas manufacturing... and we bought from Bangladesh

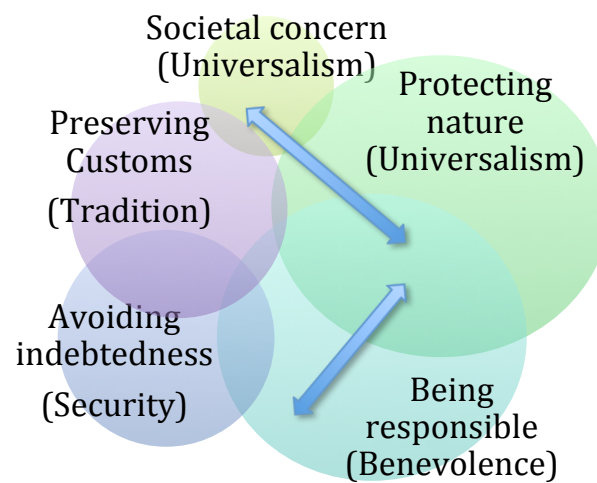
and there was obviously a shiny front person that we spoke to but I'm sure deep in the back there were factories making these garments where there were quite appalling conditions.

Consequently, there appeared to be little significant impact of social issues on positive buying practices. Although not stated in these terms, there appears to be some resignation on the part on the informants that a lack of transparency makes it difficult to assess one retailer over another, even when information had been sought. As later analysis will demonstrate, there was some scepticism of fair trade, or lack of knowledge about where to buy fair trade clothes; very few of the respondents owned any fair trade clothing (with the exceptions of Susan, Steve and James). There was, however, an overall stated desire to consume less, and some evidence of 'cheap clothing' retailer avoidance in relation to supply chain issues. There was also some evidence of informants' bounded rationality coming into play; this will be discussed further in due course. Universalism was therefore mainly manifest in relation to environmental protection.

Ethical Concern and Values: Summary

What can be seen, therefore, is a series of relationships in relation to the values identified by Schwartz and manifested in the personal histories and narratives of these consumers. Universalism (both in terms of human and environmental issues) and benevolence were the most prominent values, but security and tradition were also acknowledged to be important, although not through the questionnaires, and the values expressed appeared to be heavily context-dependent. That is, that these are the values most readily identified when discussing consumption. As discussed, there was some correspondence or overlap between universalism and benevolence and tradition, with benevolence and tradition also overlapping with security. There were tensions or uncertainties between social and environmental concern, and also benevolence, security and universalism. The values profile for the group that emerges might therefore be best represented by a Venn diagram of interlocking circles of varying importance, but also recognising that tensions between the values may exist. This is proposed and represented in figure 32.

Figure 32: Emergent respondent values profile



Strongly connected to these values is the concept of self-identity, and this is the next analytical theme which will be explored.

Self-identity; personal history and context

Self-identity

I suppose if I'm honest, then I will say it's also important to me about what it says about me. So the consumption activities that I'm involved in - the things I actually buy, the things that I wear are an important part of what people...who they see. From then they will infer what they can about me as a result of it... I don't brand myself as an environmental kind of person. I don't sort of consciously do it, but I am aware that the sorts of things that I buy will say certain things about me. (Steve)

The quote from Steve above highlights that the concept of clothing as a key communicator of self-identity is something that was recognised by the respondents in these interviews. Chris also described the conspicuous nature of clothing and how this could communicate a particular set of ethical values:

The clothing that you buy and intend to buy at sort of places represents a certain...it is a definite lifestyle thing and you can see people, you know, who...it's obvious, isn't it? Some of that side of clothing.

However, the discussions revealed that this sense of identity was often fragmented and multi-faceted. Firstly, the notion of a virtuous identity is not something that is always desirable, however; this perception of virtue and how it communicates identity to the outside world is often associated with negative perceptions of identity. For example, Liz's desire to engage in 'voluntary downshifting' had led to perceived negative impacts at work, which in turn had led in her into what she perceived to be increased 'unethical' purchasing behavior:

I made a decision to have a frugal lifestyle. So to see what I needed and what I didn't need, and I've come out of it – actually it's really interesting because I've had to engage with things like turning up in meetings and [other people] going 'well, I can't believe you've turned up looking like that!' So I think these values are influencing how I perceive myself and I how I think I should present myself, so I've been engaging a lot more in purchasing. Clothes especially.

As Liz explains, her engagement in 'downshifting' had led her to be perceived as being unprofessional in appearance, and that this communication of a professional identity can only be achieved through engaging in more consumption and being forced to renegotiate these different values. The implications of identity and clothing consumption from a professional or work perspective will be further explored in due course, but this reveals the emergence of tensions between multiple dimensions of the self and how this fragmented sense of identity might, in itself, be considered a sacrifice.

Often the communication of identity was problematic outside of the tensions with professional life, however. The sustainability dimensions of identity and clothing were issues for James, for example, in that they communicate an identity that he does not want to associate with:

The whole eco labels... the clothes are awful... a lot of people I meet in the environmental word seem to care nothing for design or beauty or art or creativity and y' know, wear the same thing for 10 years and don't give a stuff about what it looks like or anything. And whilst I'm not a huge follower of fashion or anything, I do have some sense of...with the clothes that I buy or a product for the house or something, that it's still... you would go to church conference or church halls and there would be cheap Traidcraft stuff that was Fair Trade, or y' know this....Indian clothing... sort of almost like the festival chic type look. And that's what was associated with green and eco.

This lack of congruence with aesthetic values is also perhaps something to be traded off, therefore. Indeed there was a general perception that 'identifiably' ethical clothing carries

a certain style with which people did not want to associate, nor which fitted with particular identities. A variety of negative language was used to describe this:

...you know it's from a fair trade shop, let's just say, because there's a certain style, isn't there? If you're buying that sort of thing for work, it's not necessarily always going to be appropriate.

(Chris)

It [an "ethnic" top] would say something about the person wearing it, about their ideals, that they were environmentally aware but in a green and 'waffy' kind of a way. There's definitely a distinction between certain kinds of green people. And then I would judge those people. (Laughter) And so, yes, I would try to avoid wearing clothes that fall into that ethnic-y category, which I definitely wore those sorts of clothes when I was about 13. But not now.

(Naomi)

I think the biggest problem is in the more sustainable and fair trade clothing because the styles they go for seem to be very different.... The thing is the problem with fair trade clothing, it does have a sort of hippy image. And to be perfectly honest, if you look at the styles and think, 'I would look like a hippy and I don't really want to.' You know, patchwork trousers is a classic example. They have patchwork trousers. And I just thought, 'Who wears patchwork trousers?'

(Sarah)

For some respondents, an identity rooted in values relating to ethical consumption was perceived to be at odds with their 'true' sense of self. For Kate, her distaste of paying for 'branded goods' if equivalent quality and style could be bought for cheaper, even though it was recognised as being counter to her values in relation to perceived human rights issues was seen as being a core part of 'who I am'. The implication here is that 'ethical' goods are more expensive, and this does not fit with a particular identity.

I shop in quite cheap shops, and that's not now because I can't afford it, I'm very value conscious in that respect of I would... I don't sort of go after brands and I wouldn't spend more to get a particular brand if something just as good or the same - it's more about the style, what I feel comfortable in and the price really, which sort of goes against maybe my own values in respect to sort of shopping at Primark, et cetera. But yeah, that's how I am.

At the extreme of this, for Paula the 'identity' of an ethical consumer was contrary to her own perception of herself as somebody whose identity cannot exist without clothes. In many ways she positions herself, at least at some stages in her life, as a 'shopaholic', and she sees this as being mutually exclusive from ethical clothing consumption. This 'need' for clothing consumption is illustrated through her analogy of 'starving':

Well, the thing is, I'm not actually an example [of an ethical consumer] ... if you actually see someone who 'does' sustainable clothing you probably see someone who does organic, undyed clothes or whatever... but for me, I kind of love clothes – I have clothes for living... if you stop me buying clothes it's like stopping someone who loves food going to a restaurant. It's pretty much the same thing – I could starve myself!

Respondents were therefore aware of their need to establish and communicate their identity, often as upholding a particular set of values, but not through an overt identity as being 'green' which was perceived to be associated with a lack of style, authority or maybe even professionalism, something that is clearly perceived to be at odds with the identities of this particular group. For others, ethical consumption was seen to be related to particular identity that should be communicated at particular times, although this was often an identity of 'avoidance' (of particular retailers or over-consumption), rather than what might be termed 'positive purchasing' as noted previously.

The rejection of the 'ethical consumer' identity also corresponded to the rejection of the identity of 'clothes shopper' to some degree. This appeared to work in two ways. Firstly, there was some evidence of a form of bounded rationality which rejected clothing as a dimension of identity. As Chris explained:

I think how we live is an expression of the values in which we try to embody. So, the clothing interestingly for me doesn't represent my identity that clearly. So, I don't feel that connection as I would do to my house, for instance, or maybe how I spend my leisure time or other things like that. Clothing is a bit of an anomaly on a personal basis actually. I...they're functional in a sense. They're not that expressive in that way.

This was manifest in similar ways: Matias also described his lack of fashion-consciousness in terms of his identity of being 'trend-proof'; Keith described his lack of self-awareness and lack of interest in clothes, and Nick recognised that his ethical interest did not extend into his purchase of clothes because clothing was something he didn't 'worry about', to the extent that his wife buys all of his clothes. This lack of interest in the product therefore leads to a lack of investment which in turn appears to lead to a lack of consideration of the ethical dimensions of the purchase. This has wider implications for ethics, in which consumers will only consider ethical impacts if there is some investment in the thing being bought.

Whilst it would be easy to conclude that this was a 'male' phenomenon, there were exceptions; Naomi demonstrated a disregard for fashion and lack of interest in clothing throughout her interview, James conversely was very design-conscious, and whilst Doug described how he shopped rarely and had a lot of clothes bought for him, he demonstrated an appreciation of clothes which went beyond a complete lack of interest:

One of my sons was wondering about a birthday present and I said, well I haven't got a hat and something like a... I don't want a baseball cap, but something like a proper cloth cap would be good, and he got me one of these, and it's beautiful, a Barbour tweed, wool cap which was great.

Linked to this was the notion of clothing choice as a differentiator (that is, a more deliberate 'anti-fashion' statement rather than a lack of interest in clothing), and this will be explored in the following section. The second way that informants rejected an identity based on an interest in clothing was through the act (or practice) of shopping. Many of the respondents expressed a dislike of shopping; it was often perceived to be a necessary but ultimately unpleasant act. Liz, Matias, Helen, Nick Kate, Steve, Chris, Naomi, Vivian and Daphne all expressed an active dislike of shopping; usually this was due to disliking crowds, or having a lack of time, but often emotive language was used to describe this. Helen described shopping as a leisure activity as 'alien' to her, Liz described it as 'painful', and Kate and Naomi described themselves as not being like 'typical' women in this regard. Again, this notion of 'difference' comes into play, and will now be explored in more detail.

'Them' and 'me':

As Thompson and Haytko (1997) note, identity through fashion is often achieved through contrasting between the self and others and is something which is: "...negotiated in a dynamic field of social relations" (p21). This was also seen to be at play with the respondents in this study, with the act of differentiating oneself from others seeming to be considered as a 'social benefit', although personal history and context were inextricably linked to this benefit. For example, for Susan being virtuous is clearly a differentiating factor and this is connected to her sense of fashion:

But I think that I must have had an innate sense of doing good and being interested in that, and I think getting praised for doing well, and we used to get Smarties if you got an 'A'... so, I always got praised and noticed so - I was a middle one of four children, so classically you don't get noticed if you're in the middle. So I could wear unusual clothes and things like

that... and the thing that got me noticed was if I did well at school... So doing well and doing the right thing seemed to be something that formed part of my identity from being in primary school. So I think that's a part of it. Because then you have to think that, well, the whole family grew up in the same circumstances and none of them have this particular interest, so I think I was defined... if we were all together then I would always try and be the virtuous one. I would always want to do things right and probably felt comfortable with rules and following the rules, and being quite disdainful of those that weren't, like my brothers and sister!

For others, this difference was established in less subtle ways through a desire to be seen as less 'mainstream'. For example, Helen made several references to this

Interviewer: *Was fashion something that was quite important to you when you were younger?*

Helen: *Yeah. There was a lot of desire to be different, and alternative probably wasn't what everyone else would call alternative,... Yeah. so, I was quite conscious. I wanted to...I have lots of different things. I'm probably a lot more mainstream now.*

Later in the interview, although Helen perceives herself to be more 'mainstream' now, this difference was still an important principle in differentiating herself from others, with *Next* being perceived as a mainstream brand which 'everyone else' will be wearing (although it should notice the other brands mentioned are also widely available on the high street in major retailers).

Interviewer: *So do you have quite a small number of retailers that you just go to?*

Helen: *Yeah, yeah. I'd probably go to Monsoon, Phase Eight, Next maybe, but, it's a bit too mainstream. I don't like wearing stuff that I think everyone is going to wear.*

For Helen, this 'mainstream' identity is clearly associated with 'labels', and her desire to disassociate from this is clear:

That reminds me of when I was younger, I was really anti-labels. I didn't want to wear anything with a label on. And probably I still don't... I didn't like being like everyone else and thinking that if you got a label on, it makes it better.

However, Vivian also discussed how during her time at University in the 1980s she had developed a sense of feeling 'at odds' with her course mates' politics (specifically their support for the Falklands War), and how she was further distanced by their ridicule of her being a vegetarian, and discussed how she had always felt to be an 'outsider' in some way. Steve also discussed how his 'positive purchasing' (in this case Howies) were both an alternative to, and adopted different business practices from, the mainstream, and

specifically large labels such as Levis which gave the brand an impression of being different.

The concept of difference clearly manifested itself in conspicuous ways through buying clothes which offered different styles or clothes which would not be seen being worn by others. For Chris this difference was a clear contributor to value. In discussing a shirt he bought from a bespoke store for much more money than he would normally spend, this cost was clearly offset by positive feelings of owning and being able to wear something that felt more authentic in some way, and that he knew was not owned by others. Indeed, a number of respondents in talking about favourite items of clothing referred to the fact that they are 'a bit different' in some way, and this appears to be a key product attribute which carries huge personal and social benefits in enabling this group to stand out in some way, whether against what is perceived to be 'the mainstream' or against defined social groups, and thus contributing to social identity.

Me, myself and us: Self-identity and the social self

The notion of social identity was clearly expressed; respondents rarely discussed their identities in relation to themselves only. Two significant 'other' social identities emerge here, highlighted by Steve who observed a 'congruence' between his values-based notion of his 'self' and his work role; that his teaching and research stemmed from his environmental awareness and further reinforced the need to communicate his identity through his clothing choices. However, Steve also related these values to much of his childhood and connections to family memories. These two dimensions of social identity, family (and especially upbringing) and work, will be explored in more detail.

Family and Upbringing

As noted above, Steve related his values to much of his upbringing, during which he spent time with family members in the outdoors:

I suppose in many ways it [an environmental awareness] did influence the sort of degree I took - I seem to remember writing something in my personal statement about... an affinity with the outdoors. So it's that...and I suppose in some ways kind of feeds through into my dress sense and the functionality aspect of it. Yeah, so it's about getting outside and going... walking in the countryside that kind of thing. So that's where, you know, if you're out there in the environment doing stuff, then you can enjoy it and you want to do

something to help it... I definitely remember...when we did those sorts of things, that's the sort of time I liked, I enjoyed. So we used to go walking quite a lot with my Grandad and did quite a lot of...fell running and things like that with my Dad, things like that.

Steve's recall of these times that made him feel happy as a child with his father and grandfather shares a direct relationship with his perception of himself and his desire to communicate one of his core values (an affinity with the outdoors), both as a student and now in his professional life, and as a consequence this is clearly connected to Steve's clothing purchases; he discusses preferred brands (in particular Howies and Finisterre) which are known not only for their ethical principles, but also for their associations with the outdoors and sports (especially cycling and surfing respectively).

For Matias, clothes shopping is embedded within a practice so ingrained into his relationship with his family (and his mother in particular since leaving his native country), that he refers to the 'ritual' of shopping which has brought them closer together as he has got older through enabling them to spend time together.

No, er, the way I would buy is... when I go to Spain for holidays and have time, I say OK, let's say I have to spend time with my mother, so I say, OK – let's go shopping, so she can go shopping and we can have a day together... it's cheaper than here. And also because I have more time when I'm there because I have holidays. And I want to spend time with my parents so I say OK, let's go shopping – it's like, er, it's like a ritual thing. We go out, we have dinner together, we spend the whole day together and then we will do some shopping.

This was also evident for Elisabeth (who is originally from Germany); shopping for her is a family practice which enables her to spend time with her children and her mother:

And normally, I go shopping every time [visiting Germany] I think, clothes shopping... I nearly go always there normally with my mum... My kids come, they have a play area there. So my mum is normally watching and entertains the kids, and I'll try things onto which is also easy way of doing it because here, first, I would have to do it as I ask someone else to look after the kids or to carry my husband who's not interested at all. [Laughter]. And he would have to watch the kids. So I think it's...my mum likes it as well. So therefore, it's kind of something we do as a family then, without my husband.

Naomi's interest in sustainability also perhaps relates (at least in part) to her upbringing, but she also describes how many of the practices she revealed she now engages in (voluntary simplicity, buying in charity shops or wearing clothes which have been given to her and so on) were also perhaps shaped by childhood experiences:

But, I suppose [my parents] were very much of the school of make do and mend. They were born during the war, so they were quite frugal, even though they were perfectly well off... I think...it was my upbringing. My dad was a bank manager. I had a savings account when I was four... Yes, even though they were very well off, we would always go to charity shops. That was like a fun thing to do because you could see what you would find. So, there were lots of benefits So, I think that...because some people, I guess, would consider charity shops to be dirty or that there was something unpleasant about buying clothes that have already been worn by someone else. And, just the way I was brought up made me think that that was ridiculous... So, that was...it's just part of my upbringing. That being frugal, not spending money unless you needed to.

Thus, whilst her parents may not have directly shaped her attitudes to sustainability and the environment, in the passage above Naomi reveals her shopping habits are clearly rooted in the practices of charity shopping and reducing consumption she 'learned' as a child, and it is perhaps either 'happy coincidence' that these are also how Naomi lives out her values through consumption, or that her values were implicitly shaped through this practice. Naomi and Marie were the two respondents whose clothes shopping was extensively undertaken in charity shops, and Marie had also discussed how this was something that was done by her parents, again not primarily for reasons of sustainability, but because their attitude was "make do and mend", and because they liked the idea that their money would be going to a charitable cause.

Communication of the self to others and a link to childhood were also prevalent themes for Susan. As previously noted, her memories about her childhood and time at school revealed that her virtue was a salient differentiating factor for her. In addition to this reason for being virtuous or living the 'good life', self- (and work-) identity, connection to childhood and being noticed are also innately linked to fashion. In this sense, self image and the social benefits arise again; Susan's acknowledgement of her multiple selves and perhaps, therefore a rejection of the 'consumer' identity, is important here. Throughout this discourse she refers to her roles as educator, fashion professional, parent and sibling, and this raises questions around the scope of purely consumer-driven constructs (such as value) to adequately reflect this network of identities and concerns:

I've defined myself by that (fashion). Because I've been studying, teaching or working in that starting in 1982. So I feel that's part of me to define me, and it's sort of shorthand that somebody who is in that sort of area will know who you are, will recognise you, so it's, um, conforming to that peer group – even if those people aren't there. I mean I can come in here and not see anyone who understands anything about any message I'm putting over

or... So I've got an All Saints jumper on today and anyone who goes into All Saints will know that this is their style, so to me All Saints is a brand that I really love.

Other respondents often referred to childhood experiences and connections to family practices which had in some way shaped their approaches to consumption; as previously noted in relation to benevolence, often this was based in austerity, thrift, or just 'being careful with money'.

Professional Identities

As the quotation from Susan above also demonstrates, in addition to childhood experiences and family-related identities, work-based or professional identities were therefore also significant. As with Susan, Chris is also acutely aware of the role that consumption plays in reflecting his identity (or his own perception of it at least), but also the role that his work plays in reflecting that identity and how these networks of identities of the self reinforce each other:

I think personally I perceive that, as a consumer, one of the things that we have the potential to do... What we buy and how try to live, it's a lifestyle project in that sense. So, it's...it's a reflection of your identity in a sense I think. So, you're trying to buy something because it's what you want to perceive yourself to be and the type of impact you want to have in the world and part of, as an academic here, then I've given lectures talking about corporate social responsibility, fair trade, and other things like that. So, then of course you reflect your own life when you engage in those sorts of processes as well.

Work role was often clearly associated with values (in that informants' values had influenced the direction their careers had taken). This was often aligned with a sense of responsibility to educate others. As Nick explained:

As an academic, if you've got those 12 or 15 people in your class, and you're that sort of gate keeper of knowledge or whatever it is and we all – I mean I look back at the influence that lecturers had on me... I think that's a key role really and that's one of the reasons for me wanting to come into the University is to influence on that level.

This sense of responsibility was also highlighted by Doug, who further saw his role as being critical in equipping students with 'genuine' information, rather than what he termed the 'greenwash' they may be exposed to elsewhere. However, the expression of these values at work through clothing choice was often problematic, and a number of

tensions were at play. Firstly, was a tension between the identity reflected by 'ethical' clothing choices, and a professional identity. Generally it was felt that clothing choice was a means through which particular values could be communicated as an educator, as demonstrated by Chris above.

However, it was previously noted that, for Liz, an identity associated with 'frugality' (or voluntary simplicity) conflicted with her professional identity. This was also true to some degree for Naomi, who recognised that a pair of old trainers she had been wearing for work are 'inappropriate' (although this had not prevented her from wearing them). For Keith, as well, his 'guilt' over consuming clothes was in some ways caused by his perception to appear a certain way in his professional role, but also assuaged by the knowledge that he 'had' to buy the items for work. The following passage related to Keith's recollection of a visit to a retail park which carried the strapline 'the home of guilt-free shopping'. He had found satire in his interpretation ('guilt-free' meant that the goods would be ethically produced) from the 'real' meaning, that one can consume as much as one likes due to the low prices. When asked if he bought anything there, he replied:

Did I buy anything? I did actually, yeah. I did. But not as guilty as much as perhaps I should have done because it's stuff which... I got it very much for a purpose because I have now, a starting to wear a bit of a jacket and a tie look when I'm 'customer facing at work'. Ah...but I've only got one basically, you know, and that's it. And I've had that for probably three or four years now. It's the only time I wear it. And I get home and I get back into the jeans and t-shirt.

Here the 'work' identity and associated garments are the source of Keith's guilt, but the 'real' identity as revealed at home is altogether a more comfortable prospect. These identities are clearly distinct for Keith, but no guilt appears to enter the purchase of his jeans and t-shirt, which have been bought for purposes and from retailers comfortable for him. However, clothing he felt was being imposed on him and which forced him to break his normal routines did carry ethical issues and induce feelings of guilt. For Nick, however, the 'blurring' of these identities was in part a dimension of age (and not wanting to look like an 'embarrassing dad' by dressing too young for his age), but also a strategy to resolve various conflicts around aspects of his identity, in which he liked to maintain a 'fluidity' and a 'merging' between his 'formal' work and more 'casual' social life, and many of his clothing choices were designed to enable him to achieve this aim.

A second tension around the identity of 'sustainability academic' and preferred clothing style was also evident for younger members of the sample in particular. Here, it was felt there was often pressure to conform to the 'ethical consumer' identity when attending conferences and engaging with other networks. Paula summarised this dilemma in the following story:

*I remembered I actually had a Primark skirt on and I went to a conference at London College of Fashion and this girl was like 'oh my god, your skirt is beautiful' and I didn't want to tell her where I got it from! I really should have lied! And these people listened to my talk and all this stuff, and after they came up and she was like 'oh my God, I love your skirt it's beautifully made, it's impeccably so pretty' and she was touching it and everything, and she was asking me where it was from, and I was like 'oh no, this was a bad choice of skirt for me!' And I didn't want to lie, so I did say it was from Primark, like five years ago, which it was, and she did this: 'Ugh', and she stopped talking to me after that. And I was like, I should have lied – I should have said it was from Thailand or something like that, but that's just the way it is; because she was actually complementing it, like the way it was made and everything. And she was like [pulls face]. Seriously, next time I will **lie**!*

Paula's love of clothes and her decision to wear Primark therefore leaves her at risk of being ostracised by the community she is working to be a part of, and as a consequence she feels she will be compelled to lie about her clothing. Paula's emphasis on the word 'lie' in recounting this story clearly demonstrate the emphasis she places on this; what was implicit was that the act of lying would be a moral transgression for her. These social influences were also evident for Isabella, who revealed feeling an 'outsider' to her research community, to the extent that she sees them as being not 'normal'; 'certain types' of people and activists. In both these cases, a new identity (but not necessarily a new set of practices) is emerging for Paula and Isabella, which is aligned to the communities of practice with which they are engaged, but which may also be counter to their previously perceived identities. Clearly there is a social identity which has to be negotiated. This was also clearly articulated by Susan:

I've got a skirt from People Tree, so I made sure that I wore that when I went to this sustainable fashion exhibition. I did refer to it with a couple of them, because I said I've already done a case study on People Tree before, and this skirt for example... and somebody said 'ooh, yeah, that's really cute that skirt' or something like that, and then I was proud that I'd said it was environmentally friendly but they also liked the way it looked, so for me that's really important to me, being a 'fashiony type'.

Meryl (also working on fashion-related courses and research) also felt this pressure:

I do sometimes think, if I didn't come to work, would I need as many clothes to change my clothes as often? But there is an element of how respectable you look in your clothes, to me anyway in terms of maybe that's part of the industry that I work in and part of the department that I'm in because obviously everyone's looking in the industry of – at new clothes all the time and changing. So maybe there's an element of that but I'm not quite so conscious of that now perhaps. But I think it's more when they're starting to look shabby now that I think, "Oh I really ought to" -- like my coat, I really needed a new coat. I've not had one for four years and perhaps it's time for a new one.

Professional identity therefore provided a social 'pull' to act (or be seen to be acting) in particular ways. As might be expected, this was especially acute for those connected with Schools of Art and Design and fashion departments in particular, but was not always perceived to be possible; as previously stated 'ethical' clothes often carried negative perceptions. Susan highlighted this dilemma well:

Last year I bought some stuff from People Tree and saw a dress that I liked. And it's not the sort of thing at all that you would expect to be in a sustainable range – it was quite a formal sort of business dress – it's got stitching on it – I like anything that's got quite big sort of saddle stitching on it, when it's like a decorative feature – not just to hold it together, it's almost like a bit of embroidery. But to me that seems very 'fashiony', do you know what I mean? It's indicative of being interested in stitching and I've got a lot of these things.

Therefore, the need to appear to be 'smart' or 'professional' more generally also exerted an influence to act in ways that were not always entirely comfortable for the informants. A further (although isolated) tension was illustrated by Matias, where there was a further conflict between his own values and the nature of his previous work role (as a product designer) in which he felt pressure to design 'planned obsolescence' into products to ensure continued demand.

Thompson's (1997) model links self-identity to consumption stories through the personalised frames of reference, or in this case habits. Indeed, many of the dimensions of self-identity discussed above were evidently rooted in buying habits and practices.

Habits and Practice

In relation to practices, the first thing to note is that in describing shopping experiences, the vast majority of respondents referred to a small 'repertoire' of retailers in which habits were engrained. Indeed, for most respondents, recall of frequented retailers was typically between three and six. For some, this related to associations between brands and items of clothing which were extremely enduring. For example, Nick was clear in what buying jeans has meant throughout his life:

Growing up it was Levi's and it's not even probably a decision because they're Levi's.

This acknowledgement that jeans *are* Levi's is clearly rooted in practices developed in his childhood and there is a clear connection here to the personal histories also connected with identity. In addition, the acknowledgement of the proposition that adopting certain practices removes the need to have to *think* about the purchase was often seen as a benefit. As Liz stated:

*Marks and Spencers because I've just grown up with it and it provides me with my basics, sort of thing... My idea of shopping is, and I'm really bad because I'll often go to Marks and Spencers because you can walk right through it and within ten minutes have purchased everything that you need without any real thought sometimes about it – **that's** my idea of shopping.*

Likewise, for example, Helen discusses her shopping at Monsoon, Phase Eight, Next and John Lewis as 'minimising the need to go to lots of shops'; James discusses his preferred retailers as being 'limiting'; Marie talked about one specific charity shop near her work which she frequented for clothes; Kate described the lack of change in her shopping habits over time as 'strange', and Keith stated that work clothes come from Debenhams or John Lewis (and 'casual clothes from independents or charity shops), again highlighting the connection between practices and identities.

These habits were often developed through a process of learning, and the learning over time serves to minimise the need to spend time engaged in continuous cognitive evaluations. Naomi described her need to buy a shirt (again, due to starting a new job):

Right, I need a shirt for work. I believe Gap to be my most likely chance of getting a plain shirt. And therefore, I'm going to go to Gap and buy the best shirt in Gap... It's... knowledge that has gradually built up over a couple of decades. That's because, with

family, with friends, other people who typically like shopping. And so, on those occasions, then I would've been in those shops.

This learning is therefore passed on from other close communities of practice; in this case friends and relatives whose identity is in opposition to Naomi's in being 'someone who likes shopping'. Similarly, Sarah discussed at length a friend who sells end of line clothes (mainly from Marks and Spencer) door-to-door, and from whom Sarah now buys the vast majority of her clothes. This behaviour has replaced her previous practice of visiting factory shops, which she liked because of the importance she places on colour and everything is sorted by colour, thus making it easy. However, the added benefit of somebody else 'doing' the learning is clear, and she described how good her friend was at finding clothes for her she likes.

This process of developing habits through a process of learning over time that operated almost at a subconscious level was evident for most of the respondents. Typical comments include:

I sort of identified certain shops that I know I liked to shop at because I feel that the garments will last. It's really about lasting for me and they've got to fit as well. I don't consciously go to a shop; I tend to shop at high street shops, Marks & Spencers, COS is a favourite one, Hobbs that sort of store
(Meryl)

I probably buy the vast majority of my clothes from websites... Because the places I actually, historically have bought clothes from don't tend to be on the high street... if I've missed the bus, I will go to TK Maxx. It's one of the few places I'll go into and actually just have a quick look in there, in the 15-minute...between the bus coming... [but] certainly since the early '90s, it's pretty much stayed constant. (Laughter)
(Steve)

I know certain brands, if you like, that kind of fit all right that are kind of not too expensive but will last. I do shop in John Lewis for things like that... And it's easy. It's one shop. They've made a lot of the choices for you, and they're very reliable... I know Monsoons fits me. And I know that they have some sort of ethical policies but how valid, actually how valid they are, I don't know. John Lewis, because I feel they are reliable and they've got a good choice of things. And it's quite convenient. And I want to go and try it on. And you know, and buy it. I don't want to really spend hours looking on computer at things and find they're not right. But I think what I think it's about...because I was thinking about answering questions around this because I think I do things because they're habits... I don't really look to change that habit very actively.
(Vivian)

Changing practice

Practices were not always enduring over lifetimes, however, although habits were engrained to some degree. For example, often practices were changed in response to some life event or change of perspective which carries some corresponding fragmentation of identity. Certainly for the people in the sample who had moved to the UK from overseas, significant life changes were at play. However, changes in practice still had connections to previous habits. For Elisabeth, there was very little change; earlier it was discussed how she did her clothes shopping in the two or three times per year she visited Germany (and then predominantly to the same retailer, *Ulla Poppen*), thus sustaining habits even in the face of significant life changes and enabling her to maintain family ties and relationships. Indeed, she was only able to recall one clothes shopping experience in the last ten years which did not conform to this practice. Again, this was partly convenience, partly due to the family ties, but also partly because her preferred retailer offers her preferred colours, sizes and has a socially responsible sourcing policy.

As previously discussed, Matias also waited until he returned home to do most of his clothes shopping with his family. Isabella, Paula and Daphne had also all moved to the UK from another country at different times and life stages, and all discussed changed habits, but those with some connection to their 'previous lives'. Whilst the change in climate or the availability of stores had forced practical changes (such as the establishment of 'winter' and 'summer' wardrobes), these habits were carried across national boundaries, enabled in part by the globalisation of the industry and the international availability of particular brands. This was especially strong for Daphne (originally from Mexico), who explained:

I do shop in other stores like Zara especially Spanish brands. I do like a lot of Spanish brands... especially Zara, Pull and Bear and Bershka and all those stores... All of them belong to the same [group – Inditex] and I know them because they are very big in Mexico. Normally when I buy clothes...in the UK, where I buy clothes that's another thing, I buy clothes either in Mexico and then you can import it. In the UK, normally stores I like to go to are Benetton because it's good quality and Banana Republic which is an American store which is also good quality - I avoid Topshop. I avoid Primark; I don't like those stores

as at all - and Zara. In the UK, I buy it in those stores and Esprit which is I think is a German brand. And Benetton is Italian so actually I don't buy UK brands (laughter). In Portugal and Mexico, we have mostly the same stores which are the ones I told you.

For Isabella, buying practices changed when she moved from her home town (a small village) to Milan where she started to buy from H&M and Zara, but these habits then stayed with her when she moved to the UK. However, the largest changes occurred for Paula, and although her practices still reflected her previous experiences in Thailand, she perceived the retail environment between the two countries to be very different.

Because in Thailand... they [clothes] come in flatpack – you point, point, point, point and put them in the bag and go. And in the building there will be, like, 300-400 shops, so fast fashion... I took my friend to Thailand last summer and I said to him if I take you shopping you will literally faint at how we shop! Because Primark is nothing compared to this!... That's how I shopped when I was younger. But then when I came over here, because the price is more expensive in terms of, even Primark as well, but over here with the quality extras and retail policies and everything – because over there you can't return anything, you can't try anything on – so you get what it is. But over here you get to return it, you have to make sure it lasts – that you can wash it at least two or three times. So this is a better policy than I used to buy, so I'm kind of training up as I go along without even realising, and then getting into this, I'm not even completely banning Primark because everybody's actually doing that.

Even when practices ran contrary to changed values, they still tended to endure. As Paula went on to describe:

If you're into sustainability in clothing, if you shop at Primark that's a no-no, but for me certain things I still buy from Primark – I still pop in there from time to time, because for me it's about practice – it's about my behaviour.

Practices often changed in relation to other life changes, whether these were physical (that is, changes in size: Meryl), job-related, where insights from working in the industry had led to changes in practice (Susa, Meryl, James, Steve), or changes in perceptions of the self; getting older, or adopting more senior roles at work that necessitated a more mature 'style', for example (Steve, Liz, James, Keith), or professional peer groups exerted perceived pressure to appear to be more 'ethical' (Susan, Isabella and Paula). For others, experiences related to travel and led to a shift in values and perspectives (this transformative nature of travel was especially true for Vivian, Kate and Daphne). In all of these cases, buying habits and practices shifted, whether it was the frequency or place of

purchase. For Sarah, even the relatively mundane occasion of having work done to the house signalled a change in attitudes and behaviours.

I'm not buying clothes so much at the moment because we've had an extension at the house and moving stuff around. And I've got so many clothes and that's one of those jobs that really got stood out. So, I'm not buying clothes...that many clothes at the moment... You just think, 'Why did I buy all this stuff in the first place? Perhaps if I didn't buy it I wouldn't be sorting it out and cleaning the house.

Given the nature of the sample, one might expect education to be a key dimension in shaping people's identities, associated values and practices. Certainly this was true when discussing attitudes, and was perhaps more prevalent for those early in their academic careers (and Paula and Isabella in particular). As Paula noted in relation to her comments previously about shopping in Thailand, her research was changing her practice and she was now buying things to last, rather than to wear once or twice. There were other examples of how education had shaped beliefs. This was at a deep, spiritual level for some (James and Elisabeth), or for others about establishing a more 'practical' ethics. For example, although she already had a strong interest in social sustainability, Daphne's exchange in Finland was transformative in many ways:

I had an opportunity to go to Finland as an exchange student. Basically that experience changed my life... in terms of why I got interested in sustainability was basically because I saw how Finland as a society works and one of my first interests in going to Finland was to study how as a country that is very based on crafts as Mexico is in a way, we have a very rich culture, could transform their crafts, culture into an industry as well... Being in Finland kind of opened my eyes to other perspectives as well about caring for the environment, and about caring for the society and their wellbeing and things like that.

However, it should be noted that the endurance of consumption habits did not appear to be particularly affected for any of the respondents, perhaps other than attempts to buy less and / or better quality, although these were often rooted in values, traits and practices which already existed and which served to strengthen their justification. For example, Keith's previous political engagement led him to an MA in International Studies, Elisabeth and James' degrees in Theology arose out of a prior interest in that field, Steve's environmental interest led him to a degree in Business and Environmental Studies, likewise for Vivian's MA in Values and the Environment. This notion of justification is something that was prevalent throughout much of the discussion, and was summarised

best perhaps in a statement made by Naomi, about her cycling habit and aversion to driving. Here, she makes explicit the various factors which make up her decision to not have a car, one of which is environmental, but predominantly which relate to other issues.

I can drive but it's one of those things that it's very difficult for me to disentangle the multiple reasons why I don't have a car. There's health. Because I don't have a car, I walk and cycle everywhere. And, I'd be worried if I had a car, I'd become less fit and healthy. And, there's money. I very much enjoy not spending hundreds and hundreds of pounds on owning and running a car. And then, ah yes, as a cyclist.... And so, I do hate car culture. And, um, yeah, I do. I get an immense joy from cycling past traffic jams. (Laughter) And so, it's partly environmental but, there are probably more...I imagine, if a car cost nothing and had health benefits, then, I might overlook it. But, because there are many interacting factors, one of which is the environmental concerns, then that makes it a very easy choice not to get a car.

Naomi generally noted how issues 'aligned' for her when shopping at charity shops, and she used this to justify some of her moral culpability. However, this was behaviour that was already deeply ingrained, going back to her childhood.

Therefore, clothing purchase habits tend to be relatively enduring with some with origins in childhood experiences, but tending to emerge in relation to learning about individual preferences, often at what appeared to be a subconscious level. That is, there was little evidence that informants had fundamentally changed practices in terms of the preferred retailers in relation to cognitive evaluations in one way or another, and further little evidence that affect plays a significant role (with the exception of a very small number of one-off purchases). Where ethical issues were discussed, these were often justifications of already-adopted practices after the fact, but were more related to 'quality' arguments rather than any form of positive purchasing, or avoidance of retailers (especially Primark) which never featured in informants' practices anyway. This discourse and its relationship to actual practices will be explored further in the following section, which will examine more closely value evaluations in the context of informants' consumption stories.

Consumption Stories: Aggregations of Value

It was questioned in the earlier chapters of this thesis whether the evaluation of value was a rational, utilitarian, cognitive process. Having examined the roles of values, identity and practice, this section will focus on the consumption stories offered by the informants

to explore more fully the how and the why of the trade-offs consumers make. The 'value for the customer' model was proposed as a framework to understand in particular the role of the sacrifices in consumer choices, with this and its associated coding used as a starting point for such analysis.

Generally, the analysis reveals three important dimensions of value which will be explored here. Firstly, there emerged issues around decision processes and how value is evaluated; secondly, and from this, around the dimensions which make up value for this group; and thirdly, the role of sacrifices. This section will take each of these three issues in turn.

Decision processes and the evaluation of value

There was some evidence that purchasing decisions were the result of some process of utilitarian decision making, although this was limited. This was expressed in terms of wider social benefits, or personal benefits. In terms of the former, Marie stated:

And I think like for me, when I buy anything most of the time, a question in my mind is that which of these products is the best thing for my family and other families. I tend to try and personalise it like that. So which generally means if I can afford something organic, fair trade, I will get that. I think if it's something particular and because that seems the best for everyone even if it's a bit more pricey sometimes, sometimes. That's how I approach it.

However, there was little further evidence of this in terms of specific purchases for Marie, where the majority came from charity shops (she estimates 80%-90% of her wardrobe to do so) or high street retailers. She discussed buying a fair trade t-shirt from Tesco (although she recognised in calling Tesco 'Tescopoly' that this wasn't necessarily comfortable for her), and fair trade school clothes from a company which had since gone out of business. Otherwise, purchases were made in Monsoon, TK Maxx or Next, all because of price and the availability of 'petite' ranges, and the latter of which due a recalled previous positive rating in *Ethical Consumer* magazine, and the style. For Marie a fairly 'messy' or inconsistent picture therefore emerges.

Paula perhaps took the most 'extreme' approach to utilitarian thinking, as the following passage demonstrates:

Paula - For me, cost per wear is the most important thing, besides the fact that I like the dress or the clothes a lot – cost per wear is the second most important thing.

Interviewer - Is there a number in your head?! What is a good cost per wear?

Paula - Yes, 25p-50p. Yeah, roughly something like that. It used to be that, like £10 – if I bought a £10 dress and I know I would wear it once, I'd be like 'yeah, it's not that bad', but now I'm not doing that. Cost per wear is like 50p. If I can make it 25p I'd feel like I was breaking even!

However, other respondents did appear to engage in some cognitive decision-making approaches to their purchases. For Susan this was out of a desire to ensure she got the best 'deal', but this was framed as 'safety' and 'comfort'; a kind of mental equilibrium that avoided anxiety:

Susan - I very rarely go; 'ooh, I'll just pick that up'! Um, I would have in depth... I would probably go through that extensive decision making process for something that's much cheaper than other people would bother with it for, so I'll go back and I'll see... so I knew they were in Zara and in Mango so I went and tried them on before deciding.

Interviewer - Why do you think you do that? Why do you think that's different to other people?

Susan - Just... safety. Definite safety. And comfort. Because I'd feel really guilty if I just got it on impulse and I found out it was cheaper or better somewhere.

Interviewer - So when you say 'safety and comfort', what do you mean by that?

Susan - Well, I mean mentally comfortable. Just kind of, more relaxed about it!

Later Susan referred again to her decision making over buying a coat, and the indecision and attempt to achieve numerous goals plays out in her dialogue. As previously noted, this was also in service, ultimately, to wanting to 'please mum' through astute consumer choices:

My decision making is terrible, actually! I bought two coats because I was going to the till and then I saw another one that might do and then I didn't have time and I had to get the children home and everything, so actually bought both knowing I was going to take one back, so I could try them on at home and also ask my family's opinion on them... I suppose, it's not the thought of getting ripped off, um, if I could have got a better bargain. It seems to me an important thing to get the best value for money that you can. So when that goes alongside buying something that's not sustainable... This is why I mentioned about the sales because my experience tells me that sales are better, so if I can win on both counts I'm very proud of myself! And if I can say to my mum: 'ooh I got that and it's... the boots were supposed to be... oh, I can't remember now... £180 and they were £85 instead' or

something like that, then I'd be really proud to tell somebody that. I'd never want to say 'oooh my boots cost £180', I'd always want to say 'I saved all this money'!

Similarly, Daphne discussed how her search for a winter coat had so far taken her two months and to over twenty stores, and Meryl's search for quality led to her 'care' in purchasing; that she would carefully assess the quality of garments, and never buy on impulse.

Helen also discussed her use of buyers' guides and other research to help her find ethical products and services, but for her the role of affect revealed itself to be significant; two of her most recent recalled purchases were bought under more 'impulse' decisions:

Well, this other dress was for my friend's 40th last Saturday... I'd gone to Cambridge with my sister to meet up for the weekend and happened to be passing by the shop, which is where I usually do my shopping and as we were passing by it caught my eye, just a really nice little silk dress and it was all down to the way it looked, so... and then, it was 20% off online, so I did buy that online... I'm very black and white when I go shopping... it's those kind of things that I see and go; 'I've got to have that'. My favourite thing is a coat I got in Camden Market in February. I'm quite into coats and it was...it probably does go against my principles because it's probably mass-produced in the Philippines. It was from a stall in Camden Market, but that was...as I went around Camden, there was quite a few selling the same coats, which, it was quite cheap, nice. Some things I'm just like, I have to have that.

Kate also tended to agonise less over her purchasing:

Say once every couple of months -- because I get very little time to actually go out and go shopping -- and then I'll come back with a big bag from Primark like I did on Saturday, only spent about £60 but got about five or six different outfits, and that's how it seems to be with me.

However, for most respondents purchasing was more considered, largely from the learned set of preferred retailers as discussed previously. Where practice veered away from this, there was often regret; Keith discussed how he 'learned his lesson' after impulse buying a t-shirt at a concert which did not fit properly.

Dimensions of Value

In relation to applying the Net Value for the Customer framework, there were a range of both benefits and sacrifices discussed (the nature of the 'trade-off' will be discussed in

more detail in due course). Figure 26 (p150, with a full list in appendix 7) shows the dimensions of the Net VC framework that were revealed through the coding processes. As can be seen, areas of significance in terms of benefits appeared to be personal and social benefits, but the vast majority of the discussion centred around product attributes. In terms of sacrifices, there appears to be much less focus or discussion, but here psychological costs, effort and price all appear to be significant areas of concern. Indeed, in the previous section, much of the discussion often revolved around price. These issues will be explored in more detail in their role in contributing to consumers' evaluations of value, before consideration of their role in trade-offs.

Benefits

In terms of benefits, informants did refer to some of the personal benefits that might arise from acting in what were perceived to be virtuous ways, although this was limited. This was occasionally directly in relation to feeling good after buying something overtly 'ethical'. For example, Susan described feeling 'virtuous' after buying a hemp top, despite its hefty price tag, and others discussed items of clothing that were fair trade or organic that had potential to make them feel good in some way. As Chris explained, this was framed partly from the enlightened self-interest discussed earlier and partly from a sense of responsibility:

And obviously, what you're doing is just becoming... feeling good about yourself and not necessarily changing the world...there's this thing about wider structures versus personal responsibility. I think I gear more towards personal responsibility, towards hopefully part of that then you can say to other people, 'look you can do things'.

However, personal benefits were far more likely to arise from connecting purchases with some aspect of identity; whether this was making statements about 'who you are' (Chris), the way that clothes (and new clothes in particular) might make one feel, or personal memories that might be held by clothes (Keith, for example, despite never wearing it identified one of his favourite items being his Led Zeppelin Knebworth event t-shirt, because of how special that event was for him). Similarly, social benefits might arise in relation to the role of clothing in improving relationships (again, Susan's desire to please her mother and this being validated through achieving a 'good deal'), or even creating relationships; Keith discussed how clothing might identify him as possessing a particular

identity or set of interests to others. Significantly, however, and as discussed previously, the largest social benefits arising related to the role of clothing to project self-image and the personal and professional implications of particular clothing choices; avoiding vilification within communities by avoiding certain brands, or gaining professional approval by being seen to be 'on trend', for example. This was also clearly culturally-bound; Paula described the social benefits arising from dressing in a particular way and how this differs depending on where she is and with whom:

Well, in Thailand it is – everyone is crazy about what's branded head to toe, but here, yeah – I really don't care. It rains all the time - I can't use nice things... So it's kind of different culture, different social status, just like a guy needs to drive an expensive car, a girl needs to have expensive handbags... Oh [in Thailand], it has to look nice. It has to really look nice. It doesn't matter whether it's comfortable or not, shoes whatever, it has to look nice.

Thus the identity issues discussed previously were often seen as social benefits in this way. However, benefits were discussed far more widely in terms of product attributes. In line with the ethical stance taken by many of the informants (buying less and buying clothes which last for longer), quality and durability were mentioned by all of those as being things that were immutable, and quality-related problems were often cited as being reasons for dissatisfaction with purchases or for avoiding particular brands. For those with industry experience and knowledge this was often done from a professional evaluation. For example, Meryl discussed her quality-consciousness and checking whether clothes would last, and recalled her reaction to the quality of the clothes she witnessed on her first trip to Primark. Aligned to the desire for good quality clothing was a high expectation expressed by many of the respondents that there was a relationship between higher cost clothes and quality / durability, with many examples given of perceived poor quality (for example, Primark was highlighted by several informants), high quality (for example All Saints), and garments which it was felt should have been good quality, but were not (Paul Smith).

In many of the examples given, , 'purely ethical' reasons do not predominate, but are perhaps 'incidental' to value associated with quality (that is, that 'quality' garments would also be more ethically produced). Also linked with this, however, was that 'ethical' clothing (whether it be fair trade, organic or otherwise made under ethical conditions)

would also be more expensive and therefore of higher quality. Sarah and Chris demonstrated this connection:

What do I identify as ethical? Actually, I think, to be perfectly honest, there's a bit of self-interest there. I tend to think that if you got fair trade sugar, even if it's not organic, it's bound to be a better product because if they're treating people fairly, the likelihood is they're been – how can I say – been more honest with the product, if that makes sense. It's bound to be a better product. If they're not cutting corners with people, perhaps they're not cutting corners with the actual product. (Sarah)

Basically, what's cheap in the sales and then there's the opposite line of "Okay, where does independent or fair trade, and then basically": OK, I'm prepared to pay £50 on a shirt occasionally because it will last and it's... and I know I'm not buying lots of things. (Chris)

However, more important still were style and function. Indeed, with the exceptions of Doug, Chris, and Matias, style was the overriding concern for many of the participants, whether this was for those for whom there was a clear interest or even passion for clothing (Susan, Helen, James, Sarah, Elisabeth, Daphne, Meryl, Isabella, Marie, Paula), where style was acknowledged as being important in terms of 'my style', or 'fitting' a wardrobe (Steve, Vivian), or whether an 'anti-style' was being adopted (that is, an avoidance of wanting to appear to be 'fashionable' (Naomi) or conforming to a particular fashion-related identity / in opposition to 'mainstream identities (Keith). Style was revealed to be particularly important (and often problematic) in addressing identity-issues such as age, size, or professional identity. For Helen, the lack of availability of stylish clothes was a barrier to the adoption of fair trade or organic clothing, and the negative connotations of 'ethical' clothing in terms of style were discussed previously.

Issues of function (including comfort, and clothing being appropriate for particular activities or occasions) and fit were also significant. Fit was often recalled as being a reason for items of clothing that were particularly valued, or the main reason why clothes were not valued. It is also a limiting factor in terms of what people felt they were able to buy. For example, Naomi argued that her size 'legitimised' her shopping at Next. Likewise, Elisabeth made reference to frequenting retailers who she knew fitted her well where she may otherwise struggle. She described how this caused her some emotional discomfort; that as she found it difficult to find clothes that fit, shopping was a dissatisfying

experience that reinforced her own negative perceptions of her body image, and she described how she always wanted to diet after shopping.

Steve also made reference to having undertaken some research to identify more sustainable footwear, but ultimately had gone with a different brand due to fit:

It's difficult when it comes to shoes because I've started to try and look at Puma stuff because of what they're trying to do... trying to look at the overall impact of what their operations is and become more responsible and also look at recyclability of the products... So these were probably more recent purchases. But... they're not [Puma]. They're Saucony, and that's because these fit and they're...they're actually running shoes for me are kind of like...There's a lot of different factors that comes into running shoes. And to function, they have to work because I get sore hips and knees or whatever if they don't fit properly.

Similarly, Isabella discussed how clothes had to *be* or *'sit'* on herself – her use of the word *'be'* and the examples above indicate perhaps that *'fit'* and identity are interlinked in terms of how the clothes and the body *'come together'*. Similarly practices are framed around understanding which brands *'fit'*, and there were many other comparable references as above and similar to Vivian's assertion that: *"Monsoon fits me."* Similarly, colours were often referred to in the same way, and both Sarah and Elisabeth emphasised their love of particular colours and recounted how they had received colour consultations; assessments of *'their'* colours which form the basis of many of their clothing choices.

References to material tended to occupy the middle space between ethical concerns, fit, style and function. That is, there was (as previously noted) some discussion of organic cotton (although it was not widely purchased), locally-produced materials such as wool, natural fibres (both from health and *'sustainable'* perspectives), leather (in relation to animal rights) and recycled or recyclable cotton. Whilst there was some potential for such ethical dimensions to material to add to value, discussion here was disjointed and not rooted in any identifiably consistent practices. What was clear was that where ethical concerns were relevant to materials, other factors also came into play. Material sometimes played a role in fit – where some materials were perceived to not *'hang'* correctly, and similarly some materials were not perceived to be stylish. Finally, function also related to materials. Where overlaps did occur, function or durability tended to *'win'*. For example, leather was considered to be problematic by vegetarians and vegans, but

canvas shoes were considered to be impractical and with a short lifespan. Thus, choices were often made to buy leather, even if it contradicted ethical principles.

It is worth noting here that many references were made under this dimension to both organic and fair trade. Whilst there was a good awareness and generally positive perceptions of these standards generally (and there was a good deal of evidence of fair trade and organic purchases in groceries), this was much more complex in relation to clothing, and few of the informants had bought fair trade or organic clothing.

With regard to fair trade, only Steve, Elisabeth and Marie had actively purchased fair trade garments. However, this was not routine, due to a lack of availability or because it was not a priority issue. There were issues around awareness; some respondents did not know that fair trade clothing was available, or where to purchase it, and for others (such as Nick) the awareness was there but it was something that never crossed respondents' minds in relation to clothing due to a lack of 'interest' in clothing and the entrenchment of habits which had evolved to make clothing purchase as simple as possible (in Nick's case this lack of interest had extended to somebody else doing the purchasing for him). For others, the picture was more complex, with some being sceptical of the fair trade standard, and others recognising the trade-offs. For example, James was fully aware of the trade-offs in relation to the salient factors as discussed previously:

I'm broadly speaking very positive about the fair trade thing. I am aware there are some issues... But still I guess, sadly for me if there was a fair trade t-shirt but it was really ill-fitting and poorly designed versus the non fair trade t-shirt, that fitted perfectly – I would probably go for the non-fair trade one. But if all things were equal, the tipping point would definitely be there. So with coffee for example, it's just unthinkable to not buy fair trade coffee for example, cause y'know, the quality is there – there's no excuse... I think that's the challenge with clothing for example – if it's as good.

Chris also recognised a trade-off of a different kind, environmental versus social, in laundering his (only) fair trade shirt:

I should have worn my Fair Trade shirt today (laughter).... It takes me about half an hour to iron, because while it's Fair Trade, it's cotton and also I'm intrigued by it. If you look at the overall life cycle, it probably takes more energy if we're talking about energy, actually... I don't have all that many items clothing wise that would be Fair Trade. I'd like to. The challenge is just the price just seems significantly higher on that and with a sort of new child and things like that, and budgets become much more squeezed.

However, this hypothetical trade-off only reveals Chris' speculation about the 'goodness' of fair trade, and the real trade-off is in relation to the perceived (higher) price. Others also raised doubts about its efficacy and whether companies could be 'trusted' over fair trade. For others, fair trade was seen to correspond to the negative image associated with ethical clothing discussed previously; as Keith noted, to buy them you would have to go to "those sorts of shops" and it was not a 'world' he felt he engaged with.

Whilst some informants were more inclined to purchase organic cotton (and had done so, including Steve, Elisabeth, Susan and Marie), a similar picture emerged for organic cotton; issues with awareness, availability, price and style or function all being perceived problems. For example, Susan summarised these issues and the compromises to be made:

I mean if there was a major store that's got a more environmentally friendly range then I would do that, so I would get an organic t-shirt rather than an ordinary one, but then, you know, organic's got its problems as well, so... er again there's this compromise isn't there, that whatever you get is probably going to do some harm and you can't be carbon neutral. So, just buy less really.

James also described the life-stage identity / practice issues discussed earlier, and also the problems that an increased knowledge brought about:

I've gone through cycles in my life for the last, probably, we're talking twenty years now really... I've gone through stages of just buying fair trade, or ten years ago, I came across this company called Howies that was very into alternative, organic stuff. So for about three years I only would buy from there. Then started to, y'know, the whole issues around are you just being marketed to, is this just another marketing decision? And people I worked with... I got to know some of the people in art and design who were quite critical of organic cotton for example. Where actually, there was far more water involved... I was feeling utterly confused, I thought I was doing the right thing, buying organic cotton, and apparently I'm not.

James' admission that this episode had left him 'utterly confused' had clearly impacted his subsequent buying behaviour, where aesthetic style, function and price were primarily driving his choices. Daphne had also bought from H&M's organic cotton range, but was also aware of the potential problems regarding water usage, and Paula had similar concerns. Doug was perhaps the most informed and sceptical, and submitted that there

was little point in worrying when he felt he couldn't know all of the information he would need to make an informed choice:

But at least two-thirds of the world's cotton is grown from GM seed. So everything, that shirt which I presume is polycotton, will have GM cotton in it. And if you like at a spinning mill, you'll find that one of the ways they get uniform quality here in cotton yarn is they mix batches of cotton that have come from all of the planet so you get some sort of averaging and consistency. The chances of having a cotton mill setup specifically that is only going to spin organic cotton is a bit dubious. It might be true, I don't know, but why worry about it?

Likewise, Doug also demonstrated the same level of scepticism of recycled fabrics and the level of marketing involved, raising doubts about the travel involved in manufacturing Patagonia's recycled fleeces and noted that: "...it's very difficult to get a good, clear, honest, unadulterated picture of the sustainability of product in the shops."

Sacrifices: Monetary

As may be expected, discussions around sacrifices were often dominated by price, with perceptions around 'ethical' clothing and more durable clothes and high price already identified. It was also previously discussed that issues around price, thrift and caring for the family came into play. However, price did not always manifest itself in terms of something to be 'given up'. This worked in a number of ways, perhaps most frequently with sale items or items otherwise perceived to be a 'bargain' often framed in positive ways. However, price could be seen as a charitable donation to companies which fund social projects. For example, Susan described her purchase of a People Tree dress:

When I bought that, my instinct was to think 'shall I buy this now?', because it was quite expensive – about £80 – 'shall I buy that, or shall I wait for the sale?', 'cause if I hang on – this is how I usually sort of hedge my bets – I'll get that for half price if I wait for another few weeks. This was just before Christmas, and then I thought 'hang on, no, think of it completely differently because if you buy that you're giving People Tree more money, and they fund schools', and I felt like it was sort of making a charitable donation, but I get something out of it as well... So that changed my behaviour – if that hadn't been a socially sustainable company then I would have thought 'well, I'll just hang on until January', but I felt like I could donate by doing that. So, yeah, so I use the term 'donate' rather than just 'buy' because it is quite a different thing.

Here Susan's justification for not waiting until the sale was clearly couched in the language of having made a charitable donation, which mitigated veering from her 'usual' behaviour. Thus, when buying from 'ethical' companies, she views this as donating rather

than buying. This notion of justification was also raised by others, and it was not necessarily linked to relative disposable income:

We've talked about music quite a lot. And you may be aware that recently the Rolling Stones got back together. Okay? And you couldn't see them for less than a hundred pounds. Now I've got more than a hundred pounds. I still couldn't bring myself, even though I wanted to see them, I thought that's just too much... So...you know, that's the sort of consumer choice in a way. There's nothing to do with sustainability and stuff, but it isn't a question of like, well you've got an amount of money... disposable income. Now I could've easily have afforded it but I couldn't justify it to myself. Well, that's just wrong. And you could probably apply that to all sorts of purchases. (Keith)

Perhaps linked to the values related to care with money discussed earlier, items perceived as being expensive were often described in these terms; that there was an act of justification to oneself, or others, that enabled or prevented purchases at a particular price level. That is not to say that the informants were not willing to spend money, however; as previously discussed it was acknowledged that quality items would cost more, and that very cheap items would not last long. Price therefore carried implications of benefit and sacrifice; for many, low prices were seen as a sacrifice because of a perceived relationship to poor quality, but it had to be 'justified' at the higher end. Elisabeth gave an account of how she deals with this by compromising a little on ethical standards, but still purchasing a lower 'level', especially in wanting to buy fair trade or organic clothing for her children:

For example, if you buy everything especially when they are small loads of stuff, everything ethical is quite expensive. So I would sometimes go for, yeah, like underwear or something which has a...it's a German kind of...that it's tested for harmful substances. It's a kind of lower environmental symbol but they are cheaper and I don't go for really expensive organic as well but I know that actually the standards are higher. So I kind of go down because it would get too much if I would go buy everything in this way. So it's kind of trying to get something of it but I can't afford to be the most ethical person, kind of.

In relation to Susan's use of the term 'donating', Marie and Naomi made similar parallels when discussing their charity shopping. As Naomi stated, her behaviour is far from consistent, but shopping for clothes at charity shops enables these issues to 'align' for her, as well as avoiding potential controversy or mistrust in companies:

I think the price issue does come into play, even though I've no financial concerns. I have enough money to spend three times as much on an Ecover product than a Basics product.

And, but then...so sometimes...I'm not by no means saying that I always buy the green product. And, if the green product is three times more expensive, then sometimes I buy it, sometimes I won't...just depending on a flippant decision on that day. So yeah, when the economic and the ethical issues align, as in clothes shopping, then it's a very easy decision. When they contradict one another and to buy a more ethical product you have to spend a lot more money, then the decision could go one way or the other, especially Ecover. Isn't there...didn't they have some controversy a couple of years ago where...are they now owned by some huge corporation or something. I remember veering away from them for some reason.

Sacrifices: Non-Monetary

For all informants, clothing purchases were often mitigated by the 'safety net' of store returns policies, and respondents often referred to this. This led to clothing purchase almost universally being seen as a 'low risk' endeavour (in a personal sense at least), although two key factors came into play in terms of categorisations of 'sacrifices' under the Net VC framework's broad headings of effort and psychological costs.

Effort was referred to in multifaceted terms, but related to the effort of shopping as a practice, and secondly the effort involved in developing an ethical awareness of company practices in the clothing industry. In relation to the first, again there are links with the habits and practices discussed earlier; that a key goal for many informants, regardless of their attitude to clothes and shopping, was to reduce the effort required to find clothing that would be acceptable. Sometimes key dimensions of this related to convenience and store location, others to retail environments. Time was often cited as a pressure and one of the largest sacrifices here, but also an avoidance of doing something unpleasant was relevant for some. The effort and knowledge required to adopt more positive buying practices was also highlighted by many. Vivian summed this up when she said:

I wouldn't say I've given up. But I think I've sat back a bit and thought, there's a limit to how one can live one's life and...encaptured by all the other things, the children, your work, the day-to-day things. And I do feel it's quite hard to...maybe I'm just not prepared to inconvenience myself enough to really make a difference. And I feel a bit frustrated that...I think there's a lot of good research goes on, obviously in the academic world. But I never really found a way of channelling those things into something practical which is obviously the sort of thing perhaps you're trying to do.

Chris also related these perspectives of effort and habits, and recognised that there was a transition (or perhaps life project) to continuously engage and reengage in the issues.

The high street is easy. You just walk by... and they're easy to go into, aren't they?... But I think if you want to buy something that's a bit better quality, you've actually got to think about it a bit more, I've got to engage with it more as well. And then, we wanted to try to [buy more ethically]...it's a purposeful decision. So I think it's that shifting...we live in a highly consumer society, don't we, which then - things are very disposable... So, it's actually...yeah, it's making yourself decide that's how you want to do. And then, you've got to transition to get yourself into that habit. It's a process really.

Psychological costs also appeared to be significant for some of the informants. Whereas dissatisfaction with purchases only ever related to quality problems, some respondents referred to negative emotions or states of mind brought about by ethical issues related to their clothing (it should also be noted that some also referred to how particular acts and practices could have positive effects). Negative emotions related mainly to guilt in relation to various ethical issues. For example:

I feel terrible that they're sitting there and they're not going to be worn. (Susan)

You feel guilty sometimes about [supply chain issues]- I don't know, it's what is there in the market. It's not a justification but it is there. (Daphne)

No, I do. I do [try to live in accordance with particular values]. But probably now, I'm just wracked with guilt... I feel guilty, like yesterday I did some online shopping and I'd love to have the time to go to local shops and buy what we wanted, but I did an online Tesco shop. (Helen)

Oh, it does. It does. I mean I was shopping in John Lewis once and I found something in organic cotton and I was sort of debating, should I buy it or not. I go, 'Oh, it's organic cotton. Yes! (Laughter) I'll buy it.' That's tipped it over the edge. But I think.... It is on my mind. It definitely is on my mind. And it is something I feel quite bad about, particularly when I'm talking to other people about it. And I'm perfectly aware that I'm not practising what I preach. So, I do feel bad about it. (Sarah)

Susan explained how she attempts to 'cope' with these emotions, through trying not to worry, assuring herself she has done 'enough', but at the same time experiencing a level of discomfort:

No, I generally find it more difficult to do that [buy clothes that are in accordance with values]... and I just have to make the best of what's out there really... But I do have that longer term worry constantly in the back of my mind that our children are not going to live on a manageable planet. So I have to try and give them those values, so sometimes I'll do things that they don't want to do in the short term, but it's longer term to try and get them

to think about how they behave. So, for example, my son went to a new school and they had to have red jumpers instead of blue and... my husband bought three red polo shirts. Now, they have to use t-shirts for PE, not polo shirts so he couldn't use them at all and I feel very uncomfortable that he never got around to taking them back. And they're still there, and the money doesn't matter at all but I feel terrible that they're sitting there and they're not going to be worn.

Whilst Susan had assured herself she has done all she can, a sense of disequilibrium from not knowing the best course of action was highlighted by other informants, with many expressing uncertainty about which brands and choices were 'best'. This often led to frustration, especially given the informants were self-aware of their work roles and 'experts' in this field. However, these kinds of issues were relatively infrequently recalled and appeared to have little overall substantial impact on practices.

Trade-offs

A complex picture therefore emerges from the trade-offs that the informants are engaging with in their consumption practices, relating to a host of identity, knowledge, affective, cognitive, practical and practice-based factors. In attempting to understand the multiple dimensions which constitute value for this group, the Net VC framework discussed above therefore provided a useful framework on which to 'hang' some of the salient issues, but it is also in some ways limiting in dealing with the myriad of concerns, habits, and identities rooted in individuals' evaluations as a basis for practice. There is, indeed, limited evidence that informants take an exclusively rational, cognitive approach to value evaluation, although there were isolated incidents of this type of approach. Even where there was some rational, cognitive 'niceness / price' evaluation, as in the example of Helen's coat purchase earlier, the role of affect and hedonism ('I have to have it') was also evident. Similarly, Paula's 'cost per wear' valuations were also overlain by a hedonistic enjoyment of shopping. However, there are issues revealed by the analysis in relation to the application of the model.

Firstly, the distinction between benefit and sacrifice was not always so clear cut. The issues related to social benefits and identity discussed above, for example, could be benefit or sacrifice – benefit in terms of being accepted by peers for dressing a particular way, or potential sacrifice if not doing so. Even price, which might be considered to be

one of the most immutable sacrifices, could operate as a benefit, either in positive perceptions related to quality, or in terms of making 'donations'. Similarly, whilst ethically produced clothes had the potential to provide benefit for the informants engaged in positive purchasing, questions around initiatives such as fair trade or problems with style and identity could be viewed as sacrifices. Similarly, in the same way informants' avoidance of particular brands could be seen as sacrifice, it could also be seen as a personal and/or social benefit in terms of the avoidance of guilt or projecting a particular image to others.

Secondly, there is a question of whether 'personal benefits' adequately account for the complex identities and personal histories at stake. As noted by Susan in this passage, despite a key identity issue of normally being a 'careful' shopper and one of the most-sustainability-motivated informants in the sample, sometimes there was not actually much 'trading off' in a rational, utilitarian sense to be done, but an acknowledgement that sometimes identity provided the greatest 'pull':

Sometimes I'll actively go out and think I'm going to look for something that's more sustainable. Perhaps that's a contradiction in terms! Anyway - when I do that, erm OK, the sustainability might be my priority in what I buy, but I will still of course only buy it if it's something that I feel fits in with my own self-image that I want to project. So, it does... it varies, but I will also buy things at times that, if I, say really loved something - whatever price it was; whether it was really cheap or really expensive, as long as I had that money available then I would go for it. So sometimes things would go out of the window sustainability-wise.

However, what emerges is that the behaviours are highly context-specific, and often contradictory. This does not validate the existence of an 'attitude-behaviour' gap *per se*, but a complex series of rationalisations for engaging in particular acts. Susan went on to say:

I would get an organic t-shirt rather than an ordinary one, but then, you know, organic's got its problems as well, so... er again there's this compromise isn't there, that whatever you get is probably going to do some harm and you can't be carbon neutral. So, just buy less really... But what I will do is I'll sometimes buy more expensive clothes... so a lot of these things that actually sound like terrible things that women would do, like going to the sales and buying really expensive stuff, are actually, in disguise - these kinds of sustainability in disguise things! This is all what I tell my husband anyway!

This (stated) behaviour of reducing the amount of consumption but increasing spend is justified as sustainable behaviour; there is no 'gap' between saying or thinking 'x' and doing 'y'. Sarah adopted a similar strategy, again for a hedonic impulse purchase of a Barbour jacket, albeit one which had its roots in a deeper personal history from a time they lived in Wales and she remembered seeing them. Elisabeth also discussed how she attempted to address some of her ethical concerns in buying clothes for the children, but in this case the dissonance that arises from purchases perceived to be less ethical is justified by the acknowledgement by the boycott of another retailer.

So for example, I buy sweaters for the kids there [Lidl] because they have some from recycled bottles which they turn into sweaters. So I think they have tried a little bit. But I find it so unpleasant to also shop somehow because I don't feel fully comfortable with what is on offer. And then I feel like I'm neglecting all my values because I already have problems to find something which fits me. And then I don't feel so comfortable I am neglecting all my other values which I really would normally find important... And I try to really, as I say, not behaving – not yet in clothes - but for example, I boycott Tesco already since a long time because I don't think they...I think they're exploiting suppliers and so on. So, out of principle, I don't shop with Tesco's.

Thirdly, the framework as demonstrated above enables some distinction to be drawn between cognitive and affective aspects of consumers' decision making, with post-purchase rationalisations often lying behind more affective or hedonistic buying decisions. However, the previous analysis around habits revealed conative aspects to also be significant, and within this whether purchases were purposive or intuitive. Informants described issues around trade-offs when speaking hypothetically about their attitudes, preferences and behaviours, but examples given of purchases in the consumption stories often carried much less detail. The final section of this chapter will turn to some of those consumption stories:

Consumption Stories

Each of the informants was asked about the last item of clothing they had purchased. A brief synopsis follows:

For Susan, it was a coat, bought for a work trip overseas to a cold country.

It was probably the coat that I got to go away, but it wasn't in any way sustainable – I purely bought it because I knew I was going somewhere freezing... It was prompted by seeing them in the shops. I'd been to the shops and noticed there were lots of these sort of puffer coats around that weren't just like the old puffer coats but actually looked relatively stylish, as far as I thought, in comparison, so that just triggered off making me think: 'oh, well, actually, I should maybe get one of those'... I knew they were in Zara and in Mango so I went and tried them on before deciding... I also looked it up online, so I did all the research that I could to make the best decision....

Here the function and style are clearly the most important issues for her, but she went on to describe how buying two (as discussed earlier) made her feel that she had received the best value for money, with the involvement (and approval) of her family. Here those values of security and benevolence are coming to the fore (she described getting best value directly as making her feel 'secure'), but the sustainability aspects had 'gone out of the window'. Liz had also bought an item for a similar purpose, also from her 'usual' retailer with her daughter:

The tunic I'm wearing! It was from M&S. It cost £21.99, and it was bought because I was going out to Bahrain for work... I had to be reasonably well covered up and it was going to be warm, but there was air conditioning being used, and I could wear it over a pair of trousers, so... It fitted a brief!... I was with my daughter – I said 'I've got to go to Bahrain – I'll need some things. Half an hour – let's see what we can get!' What influenced was, it's linen – again, there could have been a lot of other things that I could have picked up but I didn't – it's fabrics again. And I bought a silk top, this and a pair of trousers... I would like not to have bought things. I thought I was buying it for a purpose, and my whole issue was 'do I really need this'? My daughter even watched me start with a pile of things, going 'I don't need this, I don't need that...' And I was left with three things and I said 'I think that's enough for a week's work' and she said 'I don't think it is'!... I was happy that I'd got something. It just made me feel that I'd had to buy things for an unjustified reason in some ways. It's a very odd feeling – just about the 'I have to go and buy something, and could I not just manage with what was in my wardrobe?' But as my family said, 'there's no way you're wearing those clothes – those are five years old!'

Elisabeth also required some shoes for a work function. Although she was keen to stress this was not 'normal' behaviour for her and that she would normally shop at a shop with better ethical credentials, the requirement for the work function meant she had to suspend some of her usual behaviours, although the routines involved are clear; 'on the way to the station', 'usual shop closed on Sundays', 'Clarks for the Children':

I was invited to a special event in Manchester and I didn't have a proper shoe to go with my dress so I had to buy a shoe. And as the focus was actually trying to find shoes for my son and I saw these shoes only as a side effect. I said, 'I really need these shoes... It was really

a very fast decision because they did fit. They're were comfortable and I just went for it. Maybe if I take another, this was really because I didn't have time, they were closing in like 10 minutes. I didn't know any of any other shoes that fit. So there was no consideration beside that I liked it... It was from this shop on the way to the train station because they have Clark shoes and I wanted a Clark shoe for my son.... [And] the shop near my house is always closed on a Sunday, that's why we went to Clarks. And then as a side effect, I saw my shoe and I just bought it on the spot. So (laughter) but the one before I went to ECCO actually... because I know that ECCO has quite good credentials.

In discussing one of his favourite items of clothing, James described a jacket he had recently bought:

I do like my ... John Smedley jumpers, but I did actually buy – and again ethically I have no idea where it came from, but I had wanted a black jacket for a year or two and I'd seen one in Reiss and it was... silly money and when the sales came out I waited and I waited and eventually it was half price and so I bought that and I do love that. And again I...that fulfils those classic requirements – and I was debating whether I should buy a suit or not and I don't really have the need for a suit I have a one that just about functions for job interviews or a graduation tomorrow that I've got to go to but actually ... y'know, buying the suit I thought "when will I wear it?" whereas the jacket, I can wear it socially with a pair of jeans, going out for a meal... but actually then I can wear it to work if I need to and I can raise or lower various things, you can wear it with a shirt and tie or wear it with jeans and t-shirt; so yeah, that's my, that's my favourite.

The ability to 'repurpose' the jacket (which came from one of two of James' preferred retailers) and his purchase of it for half price were clearly the things that created the most 'value' for James (and there was no consideration of the ethical dimensions).

Steve struggled to remember his last purchase, but recalled the running shoes mentioned earlier in this chapter. Here he discussed how he had been interested in Puma's approaches to making products more sustainable, but in the end was unable to buy Puma as previously discussed. He added:

I proactively looked for Puma ones or...and I looked at New Balance ones as well because they...some of them are made in the UK. But it's difficult to know which ones are made in UK, which ones are not made in UK and all that sort of stuff, so. Yeah. I couldn't actually find any in my size in the sort of style that I wanted both in.... I don't like white running shoes because they get...dirty all the time. But though a lot of it's about the sort of the...whether they're positive or neutral... I kind of got quite neutral shoes but some of it you know, with a reasonable amount of cushion. And I can't spend too much on them because I tend to wear them out quickly.... it did feel like a compromise. Yeah, I felt like I got what I wanted but it felt like a compromise in terms

of this isn't necessarily a perfect purchase or you know, what seems to be an ideal purchase. But I'm not 100% sure what more I could do.

Again, a number of different factors are invoked here; function, fit, comfort and price are clearly important, although Steve tries to invoke his sustainability concerns by recalling the other brands he considered and also relating his purchase to an ethically produced t-shirt. However, Steve here is resigned to feeling that, although unsuccessful, he tried to find the 'perfect' purchase which would also have addressed his sustainability concerns.

As with Steve, Vivian also offered a similar experience in buying equipment for a particular (sporting) purpose, although her search for a more sustainable alternative is more 'retrospective'.

And the latest thing I did before Christmas was went to John Lewis and I bought a Ron Hill [running] top which cost £35 which I thought was really expensive, but it's great. (Laughter) So...but again, it's more about the clothes that work for what I want to do than the fact that.... But no, I didn't think about sustainability when I bought it. I just thought, you know, what is...am I going to feel, like, okay? And I can throw it in the washing machine sort of thing. So, I suppose it's that category as well of walking boots, you know. It's just things that will perform that are comfortable. I am aware Patagonia is a very good company. And this has spurred me to think well, actually, I'll look on their website next time I try and get something for that reason.

Doug also bought clothing for a particular function, although for him, it was a very intuitive purchase (with function and material, of course, being important):

I've... probably hiking socks. I was looking for something that was going to be wool-rich, thick enough so that I wouldn't two pairs in my boots, and that's what I did... It was probably while I was in town a quick trip to M&S, look at their socks, see which ones are the best, the thickest, with traditional wool-rich cotton, and it probably took about 5 minutes.

Helen also displayed similar characteristics in describing the purchase of the dress discussed earlier. Although the item was required for a special occasion, it was an impulse purchase, with similar emotions attached to the coat mentioned earlier. However, again, it was bought in what she referred to as the 'usual' place, suggesting aspects of intuitive or habitual purchasing.

Although he struggled to remember the specifics (Burton and Next were name-checked as brands which he frequents and are perceived to be reasonable quality which will last), Chris' last purchases were on the high street in:

...the January sales basically, that I go through, quick, get those three shirts there 40 quid now because they're massively... It's got 70% off sort of thing. I mean, the last...if you look at buying things then, the last sort of...two things I bought are last January, I went out in the sales and bought things.

Here the purchasing is intuitive (to the extent) that Chris cannot remember the details, although he then went on to discuss the purchases before that – a 'smart' shirt and jacket for a work-related purpose which he bought from local independent stores. Likewise, Isabella's most recent purchase was much more straight-forward, although not from her preferred retailers, H&M and Zara), but from TK Maxx – a 'nice dress' which was good quality and cheap.

Meryl's purchase of a coat was planned, although the search and purchase were limited to her most-frequented retailer, Marks and Spencer:

So, I knew I needed a new coat and I knew I needed a few new items. So, the first thing I did, I went to [an out of town shopping centre]. So I went to the Marks & Spencer there and the new ranges were in, so I thought, "Right, I'll have a look if they've got a coat." Did I see it there? I can't remember. I might have just glanced, that's it, as I was looking around, I can't remember... Then I think I looked at it on the internet and started to think about it, and then I planned a shopping trip to Birmingham with my daughter and we planned to go and have a look at this coat and if it was right, I would -- the intention was I'd buy it that day. So, it was predetermined that I was going to go out and buy a coat that day.

Sarah's last purchase was a cardigan, from the friend who brings 'seconds' to her house. There was no stated function here; just an item which Sarah liked due to the colour:

Oh, god. Last thing I bought. It must've been from Cilla... She just turns up on my doorstep with a bag. 'I've got a bag for you.' And there was this.... One of the last things I bought was this cardigan, really...and it's got some of my favourite colours in it, autumnal colours again, all woven in, autumnal colours, yeah. Quite a loose cardigan, yeah. I think it's Mark and Spencer's, yeah, yeah. I think it was. Yeah, so that's one of the last purchases... it was a gold cardigan as well, another autumnal colour.

Both Marie and Naomi also offered similar experiences in buying things from their 'regular' charity shops; Marie some jeans and Naomi a dress:

I think jeans. Yeah. Some trousers, yeah. And the ones I bought from a charity shop but they weren't fair trade or organic... I went straight to the charity shop that time... [it's easy to find what you want] If you're not too... you know, if you don't mind the colour or that sort of thing. If you're not too specific in what you want. And yeah, I suppose I would do that rather than say look online for something. I tend to just to go straight to the shop... And this is a really good one on Barchester Road. It's really near my office as well so that's like the location of it and they have got quite good stuff. (Marie)

*I went to a wedding in March. And so, I needed an outfit for the wedding. And East Chippingham has got reams of charity shops, probably about 6 or 7 at least. And, I was like: Right, if I don't have a dress...if you don't buy something for the wedding from one of these shops, then you've to go to **town** to go to a **proper** shop. (Laughter) Okay. And so, it was...and so I...I was like: Right, I need a top and a skirt, or probably a dress. And, I got a dress from a charity shop. (Naomi)*

Naomi's stress on 'town' and 'proper' signified her dislike not only of shopping, but also perhaps conforming to what everybody else would be perceived to be doing. However, the purchase itself appears to be unproblematic for the both of them, signifying the ease and convenience that arises from a more intuitive approach to purchasing. For Paula, recall itself (even though the most recent shopping occasion was relatively recent) was particularly problematic, and she wasn't able to recall her last shopping trip, although it was 'probably a month ago'.

Matias had bought a recycled PET coat, although he revealed, again, this was purchased through a regular habit, and it was only after the fact he discovered it was recycled PET. As with Vivian, there is some motivation to buy a more 'ethical' option (again, Patagonia is mentioned), although for Matias the cost is prohibitive:

You see this coat – I have another one, but it's recycled PET. But I didn't go to a specific shop to buy it, I didn't go on purpose to buy a fully 100% recycled one – I didn't. I went to a shop [TK Maxx] and I got this one because it was cheaper and I liked it... So I saw it, and then later on, because it didn't have any information about that... And I found out that this brand, who is based in London, is well known for its recycled PET... Probably also because, if you look at Patagonia. I mean I want to buy a coat from Patagonia, but the one I bought in TK Maxx is much cheaper!

Daphne experienced a struggle of a different kind, in that after two months she was still attempting to buy the coat described previously. Here a range of factors and issues are at play, including function, style, usage, quality, and family approval (this will be explored further in chapter eight). Conversely, Nick's was perhaps the most straight-forward, and perhaps fairly typical of 'his' habitual purchasing behaviour, as his last stated purchase was:

A shirt last weekend... the short version is my wife arrived home from shopping and said, "I bought you a shirt [laughter]. ...and I think, "Thank you very much." I didn't thank her enough obviously because I don't appreciate that she does that which is exceptional but that was it really. She was just in the shop, saw a shirt, thought I'd like it, and brought it home to me... I think it's part of, she buys a few things for herself and thinks I'd better buy him something as well [laughter]. But you know, if she is at a shop and sees something, she'll grab it.

Kate's last shopping trip was, on the face of it at least, also uncomplicated, with what appeared to be a well-rehearsed procedure, albeit in search of different styles:

I was down in London for the weekend and I was at a loose end and I pretty much spent about three hours in Primark and a couple of hours in H&M, so very limited range of shops and I looked New Look and I don't really tend to sort of go into the other shops because I generally feel that I'll get what I need in a limited range of shops, so I sort of went over Oxford Street; Primark is the biggest Primark in the country I think. So yeah, I spent a good deal of time in there and pretty much got everything I needed including shoes, handbags, jewellery, et cetera... And then I'll seem to adopt a slightly different style that next year but I stick with the same sort of colours and stick with the same shops... This year it's more about sort of a more ethnic style and baggier clothing, greys and blacks.

Summary and conclusions:

The coding, general portrait values and the application of Thompson's (1997) model of hermeneutic meaning construction enabled the predominant themes resulting from the interviews to be identified. These relate to the values of the informants and the areas of ethical concern for the respondents and how these manifest themselves in their practices. Here, stated concerns are often to buy better quality and to buy less, largely from environmental perspectives in terms of wanting to preserve the world for future generations, but also because of values and habits fixed in parental values, childhood experiences, geographical or cultural 'norms', concern for the family and work-related

experiences and motivations. Additionally, consumption appears to be relatively fixed in a series of habits learned through lived experience drawing on a wide range of contextual factors. Elements of value identified through the Net VC framework such as style, quality, durability and price are clearly significant, although the balance of benefit and sacrifice is more nuanced than a simple cognitive trade-off between competing factors. Indeed, there is little evidence of purely rational, utilitarian decision making, but also neither is there significant evidence of purely emotional, irrational decision making. For each of the informants, identity and personal history (including values), practices and value evaluations are all inherently intertwined in a series of habits and personal justifications for those habits, which are sometimes variable and sometimes inconsistent.

The part-to-whole movement of the hermeneutic analysis should therefore move back to the 'intratext' cycle identified by Thompson (1997) to enable a different level of reflection and interpretation of the data as identified by Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000). Having considered here both the initial intratextual and intertextual analyses, the next chapter will complete the final level of analysis, relating back to the intratextual analysis and the lived experience of the informants, and reflecting on the empirical data in relation to previous studies in the field to answer the objectives set out in chapter five and to highlight the contribution of this thesis to the wider body of knowledge.

This analysis will explore further some of the dominant themes which have emerged from this chapter. Significantly, this should consider the nature of the trade-offs that exist for this group of consumers, and what a pluralist approach to value implies; certainly, on the evidence above, perceptions to or expectations of value appear to operate at a more subconscious or intuitive level. Related to this appears to be a process of justification for the things that are 'going on' in these consumers' practices, with fluid trade-offs existing also in this process of rationalisation.

Chapter 8

Discussion

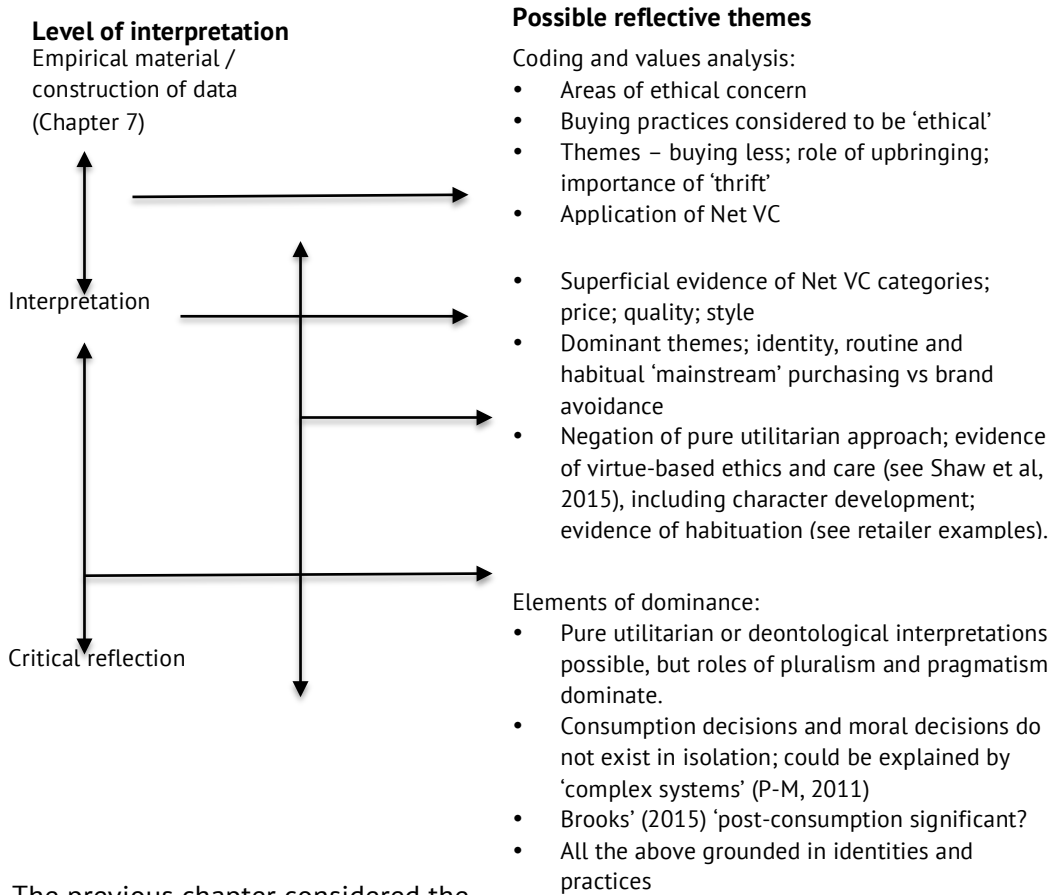
Moral obligation does not have a nature, or a source, different from tradition, habit and custom. Morality is simply a new and controversial custom. Our sense that prudence is unheroic and morality heroic is merely the recognition that testing out the relatively untried is more dangerous, more risky, than doing what comes naturally.

Rorty (1999: 76)

This chapter aims to provide an additional level of hermeneutic reflection to the results presented in the previous chapter as previously discussed, and in doing so will attempt to directly address the research objectives outlined in chapter five. The discussion will be structured by the objectives to reflect on the analysis in the previous chapter and scrutinise the dominant interpretive patterns revealed in the data so far. Building on the earlier coding work and general portrait values, the hermeneutic interpretations represent each area of discussion and analysis in line with Alvesson and Sköldbberg's (2000: 255) 'interaction between different levels of interpretation'. The three levels of hermeneutic interpretation relate to the process of analysis as follows; firstly, the construction and organisation of data was completed by using the codes and coding structures to reveal initial insights. Next, Thompson's (1997) hermeneutic model of value meaning construction, following from the conceptual framework presented in chapter five was employed to organise and analyse the major themes and initial insights, discussed in the previous chapter. Finally, this chapter presents the final level of critical reflection in service of answering the research objectives, also set out in chapter five. Here, as Alvesson and Sköldbberg's (2000) suggest, the intention is to critically reflect on the findings presented in chapter seven by reflecting on the lines of dominance emerging from the previous chapter, and challenging the previous interpretations placed on the data by revisiting the texts and the relevant fields of literature. From this, conclusions can be drawn in the next chapter.

Objective 1: To understand the role of moral evaluation in clothing consumption practices.

Figure 33: Objective 1: Interpretation between different levels of interaction



The previous chapter considered the areas of 'ethical concern' of the respondents. As previously stated, this is a group of highly knowledgeable people who demonstrate a motivation to consume 'ethically' in at least some parts of their lives; all of the respondents claimed that ethics played some role in their consumption activities, and were able to give examples across different product types of where this occurred; groceries most commonly, but also cleaning products, transport, travel, furniture, building materials and, of course, clothing.

Much of the discussion around ethical consumption in fashion relates to an identifiable 'eco fashion' or identifiable ethical labels such as organic (Hustvedt and Dickson, 2009) or fair trade (Shaw et al., 2007), which has spread from alternative groups into the mainstream and which satisfies individuals' needs for action on ethical issues by providing commodities with particular use values (Brooks, 2015), and characterised by a particular design philosophy and a number of identifiable brands. However, despite

having strong ethical motivations and awareness, few of the respondents in the study readily fit into this narrow view of an ‘eco consumer’, at least as far as clothing is concerned. Whilst it is recognised that there may be groups for whom ‘eco fashion’ may be a key dimension of identity (Black, 2011), many of the respondents in this study demonstrated strong ethical purchasing behaviours and more overt ‘eco-consumption’ practices in other product groups, whereas patterns of clothing consumption were considered in relation to other personal conventions, values and habits. The overriding desire was to consume more ‘responsibly’, but principally through a strong environmental motivation through which attempts were made to consume less, buy better quality and to avoid the brands perceived to be the worst ‘culprits’ in relation to supply chain issues and promoting ‘fast fashion’ through low cost clothing. However, for some respondents, clothing lacked importance in their lives which led to a lack of focus and effort in buying clothes. This was perhaps most marked for Chris, who frequented a local workers’ cooperative for groceries and was deeply engaged in a sustainable building home improvement project, and despite owning a few items of fair trade clothing, rarely consciously considered ethics in clothing purchases:

Clothing wise, I've got a few items of clothing that are specifically Fair Trade, but not that many. Interestingly, if you looked at across the board of things that we purchase which we purchased with an ethical mind set, clothing is probably rarer.... the clothing interestingly for me doesn't represent my identity that clearly. So, I don't feel that connection as I would do to my house, for instance, or maybe how I spend my leisure time or other things like that. Clothing is a bit of an anomaly on a personal basis actually. They're functional in a sense. They're not that expressive in that way.

Of course, this does not mean that ‘unethical’ purchasing results; often a dislike of fashion and shopping led to lower levels of consumption which aligned with individuals’ other life goals. There is a connection here to the underlying principle of pragmatism outlined by James (in Bernstein, 1995: 56); that: “Beliefs, in short, are really rules for action; and the whole function of thinking is but one short step in the production of habits of action...”. He notes that the ‘test’ of a belief (or truth) is the behaviour it invokes, and argues it invokes such behaviours because it is rooted in our experiences.

A number of other strategies were evident to reduce the (primarily environmental sustainability-related) impacts of consumption; shopping at charity shops (or shopping from ethical retailers which could be seen as a charitable act), shopping in sales or

'seconds', buying from independent outlets and making your own were all cited examples of this. For many of the informants this was deeply rooted in family histories and inherited values around the avoidance of waste, but also in the ethics of benevolence and care highlighted by Shaw *et al.*, (2015) and Miller (2012). Hence, as suggested in chapter two, the personal dimension of consumer ethics is an integrating set of concerns which cuts across a range of ethical issues.

The findings would *superficially* appear to support those of other authors in the field, especially those of Cailleba and Casteran (2010); Valor (2008); Iwanow *et al.* (2005) and Carrigan and Attalla (2001), that ethical concerns play little part in decision making and quality, style and price appear to emerge as key consumer concerns, albeit located within a broader context of wishing to improve environmental and social sustainability. Further, through the application of the Net VC 'lens', the consumption stories discussed in the previous chapter provide some evidence of utilitarian evaluation taking place for this group, especially in relation to these three factors (alongside others in particular situations), with price being a moderating factor for many. Some consumption stories revealed at a micro-level the 'personal advantages' arising from particular products, and the cognitive utilitarian trade-offs undertaken, often in relation to price or convenience against quality, style or function. Sometimes where ethical considerations were taken into account, these factors 'overrode' the ethical concerns due to prohibitive cost or availability.

However, many of these evaluations were given 'after the fact' to rationalise behaviour (to themselves, and perhaps also, to the interviewer). As Dewey (in Gouinlock, 1994) observes, behaviour and experiences are characterised by 'drift'; things happen but in a continuous merging of experiences, and that 'theoretical formulations' (not conclusions) are only reached of experiences at the end of a 'consummating movement', such as in discourses *about* experiences. Thus, it may be that the utilitarian evaluation is not necessarily driving behaviour, but being employed to justify behaviour. Secondly, as Shaw *et al.* (2015) suggest, this explanation would be an overly-simplistic reading of the teleological moral view that there is an identifiable 'best' way to live a moral life, and the ultimate end goal to which all other forms of moral authority subsumes is human happiness; indeed, Elisabeth's identification of a 'big thing' to which individual acts all contribute was

perhaps the most typical characterisation of an 'end' which was unknown and unknowable, with a responsibility identified which was consequently 'messy'. All of the respondents unanimously felt a keen sense of responsibility driven by concerns of an uncertain and unknown future, both as consumers in the choices they make, and also as educators, although they also recognised the roles of industry and governments. There was little to suggest, however, that Taylor's (1991) concerns about the negative implications of a loss of sense of a 'higher purpose' were evident for this group, because a deontological ethics was also sometimes observable, if not consistently acted upon.

In relation to this deontological ethics, values and self-identity issues demonstrated in the previous chapter (and expanded further in subsequent sections) also revealed the existence of a 'virtuous self'. As Garcia-Ruiz and Rodriguez-Lluesma (2014) explain, virtues act as principles and enable individuals to achieve their values and establish identity within their communities. Consequently virtue ethics can not only account for deontological questions about the right thing to do, and consequentialist perspectives on considering the outcomes of actions, but also significantly, questions about how to lead the good life and 'the type of person I want to be'. This perhaps best primarily relates to the implications of an act for the agent themselves, rather than any external agent, and that this is an act of continuous character development as members of a community. There were a number of examples of this, perhaps best encapsulated by James when he stated:

For me and my family, really trying to resist over consumption and waste from an environmental point of view is really important; making things last longer... I mean it's a battle because I'm not instinctively a deep green person. For me it is that... a deliberate commitment.

Similarly Doug spoke of a 'moral imperative', and many of the other informants made similar statements. Marie expressed her belief that "we are all connected and we're all like a human family". However, whilst virtue development in community emerged as important, this often did not override more pragmatic ends. Thus the pursuit of ends was often in solidarity with or relation to others, which leads to more episodic commitments.

Also, the notion of a consistent and unified 'virtuous self' is called into question by the postmodernist and pragmatist identity perspectives.

The notion of character development was made explicit also; Susan observed how one "can't have responsibility without knowledge", and for Isabella and Anna, the youngest informants, found themselves undertaking funded research into sustainability, but whose senses of self were beginning to develop and they were considering the types of people they aspire to be. As Isabella explained, completing the values profile questionnaire had caused her to reflect on how she felt she didn't care so much about people not in her 'in' group, but that this was something that was changing as she 'grew up' as a person.

There are similarities, therefore between Black and Cherrier's (2010) notion of sustainability as a virtue which is pursued by engaging in 'sustainable' practices. Indeed, as previously discussed, the practice or habit which informs valuation was also significant (this will be explored further in due course). However, there were also elements of the care beyond self interest identified by Shaw et al. (2015); both caring 'about' through an intrinsic set of concerns, and caring 'for' rooted in acts.

So, for some respondents such as Susan, Steve, Liz, Doug, Naomi, Daphne, Nick and Meryl, ethical concern was deeply rooted in a personal history and identity, albeit perhaps overlain by a concern for the future. Sometimes this manifested itself in a set of strong guiding principles as with Helen, other times there was a more utilitarian approach. For example, Naomi's interest in 'being' more sustainable was "more because it was the sensible thing to do... Yeah, things cost more and so, you were less wasteful. But, yes, there wasn't particularly the thought of the environment or environment issues that were there." For Chris, Vivian, Marie, Helen, James, Keith, and Elisabeth there was a virtue or set of principles at play, characterised by a conscious life project which impacted on many aspects of their lives. However, even where virtues were at play, bounded thinking such as belonging to a family with those responsibilities led, for example, to the purchase of one 'sustainable' pair of shoes and one cheap pair. For others, such as Isabella, Matias, Sarah, Kate and Paula, there was a shifting sense of virtue in response to their changing lives and knowledge, albeit arguably within defined boundaries of concern. As Hinman (2003) notes, a pluralist approach to virtue ethics would recognise that happiness can be

achieved pluralistically, both located in the social realm and also individually or 'contemplatively'. It should be noted, however, that there exists a tension between virtue ethics and the pragmatist / pluralist notion of collective belonging or solidarity within groups; as MacIntyre (1999) argues, social structures can threaten moral agency by exerting pressures on individuals to act out of duty to those structures only.

Thus, the study would support to some degree Shaw et al.'s (2015) assertion that deontological evaluations characterise broader beliefs and intentions in which there is evidence of a gap between beliefs and actions, whereas teleological evaluations are more context-specific and tend to vary across different decisions. This does reveal a tension, however, between the character-based approach and the utilitarian trade-off approach to purchasing, although pragmatism helps resolve these tensions in recognising the shifting of 'competing goods' as they enacted in practice. Previous studies have largely examined two discrete consumption practices in relation to clothing (see for example Harrison et al., 2005), where it is often seen that one consumes 'positively' through overtly ethical brands and labels, or 'opts out' of consumption through voluntary simplicity or other anti-consumption practices such as boycotts. Indeed, two things characterised the consumption activities of this group, which highlight the complexities involved.

Firstly, in relation to the former, and as previously noted, there was very little evidence of an 'eco-fashion' consciousness, characterised by shopping with niche retailers. Whilst there were examples, for example, of purchases made at People Tree, Howies or other independent stores from Steve, Susan, Helen, James and Vivian, these were largely isolated and sporadic, with the exception of Steve who does most of his shopping from independent online retailers. In the main, however, each of the informants was engaged in routinised and fundamentally 'mainstream' consumption activities. Figure 34 shows the retailers recalled to be frequented by the informants:

Figure 34: Retailer examples revealed in consumption stories

Informant	Retailers / brands described in consumption stories as current or recent customer
Chris	River Island, Burton, independent
Daphne	Zara, Pull and Bear, Bershka, Benetton, Banana Republic, Desigual, H&M
Doug	Marks and Spencer, Asda
Elisabeth	Ulla Poppen, Lidl, Clarks, Debenhams, Primark, John Lewis, Marks and Spencer, Waschbaer
Helen	White Stuff, Phase Eight, Monsoon, Next, Marks and Spencer, Boots, John Lewis, Camden Market
Isabella	H&M, Zara, Primark, TK Maxx
James	Reiss, John Smedley, Paul Smith, John Lewis, Howies, Zara
Kate	Primark, New Look, H&M, Jones, Tesco, Peacocks
Keith	Debenhams, John Lewis, Baklash (independent), Converse, Craghoppers, McArthur Glen (outlet store)
Liz	Marks and Spencer, Sea Salt, Boden, White Stuff, East, Hobbes, John Lewis
Marie	Charity shops, Next, Marks and Spencer, Primark
Matias	Zara, Camper, TK Maxx
Meryl	Marks and Spencer, Hobbes, COS, Topshop
Naomi	Topshop, Gap, Next, charity shops
Nick	Levi, Tesco
Paula	Primark, H&M, Puma, Nike
Sarah	Marks and Spencer, Monsoon, Barbour, John Lewis
Steve	Howies, Finisterre, TK Maxx, Puma, Marks and Spencer, Wiggle (online).
Susan	All Saints, People Tree, Zara, Mango, Jones
Vivian	Sainsbury, John Lewis, Monsoon, TK Maxx, Ecco, Marks and Spencer

As can be seen, the majority of the brands are high street stores, with many of the brands featuring a number of times; Marks and Spencer, John Lewis, H&M, TK Maxx, Zara, Topshop and even Primark were mentioned on numerous occasions. Whilst Next, H&M, Marks and Spencer, Ulla Poppen and Monsoon were all highlighted as being to be perceived by individuals as having some kind of ethical supply chain policies, there was little evidence that a 'positive purchasing' drove behaviour. As Garcia-Ruiz and Rodriguez-Lluesma (2014) note, ethical consumption may not be limited to a subset of goods defined as 'ethical'; it can be embedded into all practices if those practices are ingrained in the individual's search for a morally good life. Indeed, informants identified a relatively small 'repertoire' of preferred retailers which were negotiated over the years and engrained in custom and practice. Where the retailer 'set' had changed, this was often in response to some life change. For example, James and Steve both described how their perceived progress into 'maturity' had necessitated changes to the styles and brands of clothes they wore, and this was common for many respondents who referred to 'younger' selves. However, these shifts were infrequent, and even for people originally from

different countries, the habits persisted; Elisabeth's frequency of her favourite German brand, Matias and Daphne's preference for Spanish retailers, and Isabella's preference for brands she knew from home. This notion of the practices will be explored further in due course, although it is worth noting that Ethical Consumer magazine's (2014) latest clothing ratings rate all the 'own label' clothing ranges of Primark, TK Maxx, John Lewis, Tesco, and Asda at 4.5 out of a possible 20 or below on its Ethiscore ratings. Of the high street chains, Marks and Spencer (10.5/9.5), Zara (9.5) and H&M (8.5) score the highest. As a comparator, the lowest scored 'alternative' shop (Lowie) scores 11.5 and the highest (People Tree) 15/16. Whilst this could be subject to some debate, it serves to highlight that the high street brands have some way to go in catching up with some of the independents.

Secondly, in relation to the latter, whilst previous studies have examined the issue of sweatshop avoidance (Shaw et al., 2007) and how consumers act on information related to labour abuses in clothing supply chains (Valor, 2008), the principle of consuming less bears some further analysis, as this appears to be a substantial dimension of ethical consumption not often encountered. Consuming less, however, might be conceptualised as a form of boycott behaviour, and is therefore worthy of further exploration.

Boycotts are identified by Klein et al. (2004) as a form of prosocial behaviour designed to benefit others (that is, with a clear desired outcome), often rooted in virtue ethics and motivated by a drive for moral self-realisation (Kozinets and Handelman, 1998) and influenced by moral self-expression, individuation, differentiation and 'cleansing' from guilt Klein et al. (2004). Boycotts are defined by Klein et al. (2004) as situations in which one or more parties attempt to achieve certain objectives by urging others to refrain from making particular purchases. That is, it is a collective act which can be differentiated from an individual act of 'complaint,' which Klein et al. (2004) define as 'exit' driven by prosocial motivations. As Sen *et al.* (2001) note, boycotts are 'qualitatively different' from an individual decision to withhold purchase due to their organised and collective nature. The lack of a collectively-driven act, or clearly defined objectives (or even retailers) expressed by the informants characterise this behaviour more as the 'moral brand avoidance' highlighted by Lee et al. (2009a/b). That is, respondents developed a sense of the 'type' of retailers they would not frequent based on perceptions of a relationship

between price and supply chain conditions, but often based on subjective opinions, and 'fuzzy' knowledge. Also, the possibility for purchasing was always left, characterised in many cases by a sense that 'I would tend to avoid those types of retailers'.

It is therefore recommended that 'brand avoidance' is included in addition to boycotts in future definitions and typologies of ethical consumption. Whilst many informants discussed purchases made at Primark, this particular retailer was mentioned by a number of respondents as a brand which should be avoided (except for Kate, a Primark devotee, and Isabella who confessed she would still shop there (despite being aware of the stigma attached to it). However, boycotting and avoidance was not consistently practised, indicating that virtue is not necessarily the best explanation. Also, problems of knowledge, awareness and contradiction arise: whilst Primark has received perhaps the most media criticism, there is little evidence that they perform much worse than many other high street chains, including other retailers revealed as preferred brands by the informants, as the previous discussion of Ethical Consumer's (2014) ratings demonstrates.

Therefore, in pulling these areas of moral evaluation together, whilst there was evidence of tensions between deontological (including virtue ethics) and utilitarian evaluation, there was also strong evidence in relation to purchasing behaviour of a deeply rooted set of habitual practices, with brand avoidance playing a larger role than positive purchasing; indeed, in chapter two this difference between an active and a reactive ethics was proposed. However, as Painter-Morland (2011) observes, individuals exist in a continuously evolving complex system which makes categorising 'ethical' principles from 'other' principles or life concerns impossible. Within this complex 'system', different normative orientations which may seem contradictory are all employed as individual judgement responds to ever-changing situations, contexts and life stages. This notion of the complex system was clearly evident for these consumers.

Herein also lie a set of pragmatic consumer concerns, which correspond to some degree to Brooks' (2015) suggested solution of 'post-consumption' to the problems faced in the sector; post-consumption recognises that individuals cannot stop consuming, but demands firstly that labour abuses in supply chains should be publicised followed by a debate led by a 'concerned citizenry' designed to bring about political change. Secondly, it

calls for the 'de-fetishization' of consumption, through a rigorous analysis of the material culture around clothing provision and the drivers of motivators to consume. The informants were to some degree engaged with these types of post-consumption activities, responding to well publicised cases, and examining their own consumption. However, this was often done with imperfect knowledge (despite holding a far more advanced knowledge than most) and a grounding in their own practices and identities. As such the pragmatist philosophy previously explored does appear to be at work here; in drawing upon Rorty's 'moral truth', Painter-Morland (2011) highlights that this is constructed to fit social purposes; a 'good' moral decision need not be significantly different to a 'good' consumption decision; there is no hierarchy of values. Further, as Luedicke et al. (2010) note, moralistic consumption does not necessarily equate with a 'market-mediated' anti-consumerist ideology. Sarah saw this as a potential tension, but although revealing particular virtues through her existing practices (such as buying UK made items, or garments which she perceived would last a long time), did not necessarily view these herself as an 'ideal' morality:

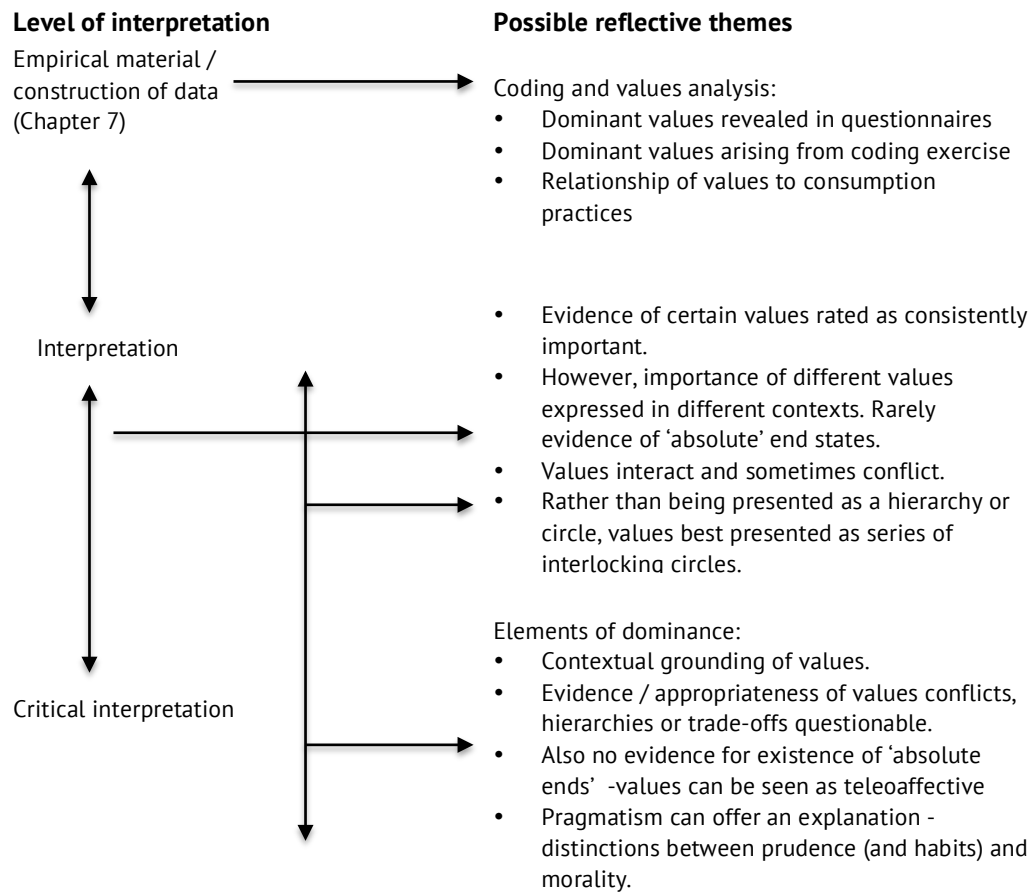
So, I do feel a responsibility to do something and make a difference. And actually this is an interesting one. I really should.... And it is a hard one because I know I feel guilty... There's a fair trade shop in town, I should be going there and buying clothes there, I really should. But sometimes I do go there. I look at the clothes and I think, 'Oh, no, they're just too flowery.' Or they seem to be...like the patchwork trousers, there are styles that you just wouldn't really wear. They're sort of dowdy. Dowdy. They seem to be made for someone who really doesn't care what they look like.

However, only Sarah and Kate (who referred to herself as a 'hypocrite') made this disconnect from their moral aspirations and their practices. For others, there was a comfort and a rationalisation for their actions tied to strong sense of moral responsibility which is deeply engrained in a personal, family and social history and which had manifested itself in practices negotiated over time and entrenched in habits. That is, there is an iterative developmental process and a pluralism at play, with no coherently integrated sense of self or rigorously planned and consistent approach to moral decision making. Rather than being seen necessarily by the informants as having to make 'trade-offs', this perspective accounts for the contradiction inherent in their attitudes and practice; there were no 'ideal' intrinsic values, and consistent with a pluralistic approach and the pragmatist concept of ends in view, very few of the informants saw uncertainty about making the 'right' choices as necessarily problematic, although as Connolly and

Prothero (2008) find, respondents often questioned what was the 'right' choice. As Bauman (1993) concludes, moral responsiveness and obligation is not a matter of relying on codes and rules, and this may explain why individual responses as discussed in the previous chapter and above are varied. However, questions and uncertainty about what is the 'right' choice were often expressed, so whilst a moral responsiveness is attempted to be enacted, a sense of obligation about the 'right' thing to do was perhaps less observable.

Objective 2: To explore the role of values in consumer trade-offs and their relationship to practice.

Figure 35: Objective 2: Interpretation between different levels of interaction



It was noted in chapter three that values are considered an important determinant of behaviour, both in relation to the achievement of 'end states' of being (Schwartz, 1994) and the value that is correspondingly not only derived from products and services which facilitate achievement of those end states (Gutman, 1982), but also in relation to their contribution to the achievement of identity goals (Arnould and Thompson, 2005) and therefore character and virtues (Garcia-Ruiz and Rodriguez-Lluesma, 2014; Shaw *et al.*, 2000). As would perhaps be expected, and as with Shaw *et al.* (2005), this element of the research initially finds (through the general portrait values profiles) universalism, benevolence and self-direction to be the most important values, whereas power, security and conformity were the least important. Universalism was also revealed to be particularly important in the interviews. However, as with pluralist (Hinman, 2003) and postmodern (Bauman, 1993) perspectives, the interviews revealed that in discussing particular purchases different value orientations appear to be important, they interact and

sometimes contradict, although the notion of values *conflicts* was infrequently expressed. It would therefore appear that Schwartz's (1994) approach to identifying values through the use of the questionnaire provided a poor fit with the epistemological orientation developed in this study, and the pragmatist and pluralist approach provides a more useful account of the relational and contextual dimensions of values. As noted in chapter two, pluralism holds that individuals may have many standards of value which may conflict (Hinman, 2003), and as Dewey (in Gouinlock, 1994) argues, the notion of a hierarchical ranking of values towards an 'absolute end' is an inherently unrealistic situation which will inevitably lead to: "...inarticulate sensation and overwhelming passion." (p68). Instead, a focus on changing ends-in-view is a more likely representation of the changing and contradictory nature of values.

Furthermore, the interviews revealed three key dimensions of values as they relate to ethical consumption; the historical establishment of values, the 'ordering' and prioritisation or 'trading off' of values, and thirdly the role of values in achieving various end states. Firstly, it was noted that values were often expressed as having been passed through family. As Grønhøj and Thøgersen (2009) find, there are significant relationships between parents and children across all of Schwartz's value domains. They find this is especially true of pro-environmental attitudes, and conclude that for those with a significant pro-environmental orientation, family socialisation is a key determinant of this. Whilst this study would support the intergenerational influence of values, this was never explicitly expressed in terms of pro-environmental behaviours. Rather, universal values linked to sustainability were more often couched in a broader history of a love of the outdoors and nature, which often invoked 'romanticised' stories of childhood, or even more in security-driven values of having been brought up in households that were careful with money, and the 'avoidance of waste' was a key determinant of behaviour (which was ultimately pro-environmental).

Secondly, as suggested in the previous chapter, just as values do not appear to be 'ordered' in hierarchical form as suggested by Jägel *et al.* (2012), they neither appear to be 'traded off' in the sense that one value must be compromised in favour of another as suggested by Devinney *et al.* (2010) and Auger *et al.* (2003). In line with the discussion in the previous section, informants rarely spoke of value conflicts, except in relation to the

very contextually-specific utilitarian decision making at the micro-level within the narrow areas of concern previously highlighted. Indeed, whilst feelings of guilt were occasionally confessed post-rationalisation when pressed through questioning, there persisted a level of ease and comfort generally that each individual's values were 'upheld' through their clothing purchases. In explaining this, it is perhaps worth returning to the pragmatist philosophy discussed previously, and in particular two dimensions of values and valuation. Firstly, in challenging the notion of an 'ordering' of values as espoused in much of the consumption literature (Jägel *et al.*, 2012; Paul *et al.*, 2009; Kahle and Kennedy, 1988), and secondly, their contribution to the achievement of a variety of 'end states'.

In relation to the former, Rorty (1999) advocates the relational view of moral values, and also acknowledges the roles of parentage and relational family ties in developing a moral sense by what comes naturally. He rejects the idea as previously noted that happiness is only simply about the accumulation of pleasures, but also includes the notion of a 'moral obligation' as being the point where self-interest stops. He argues that, as Dewey observed: "...the boundaries of the self are fuzzy and flexible" (p80), and other philosophers deal with that 'fuzziness' by arguing that the boundaries are fixed by viewing the self as being constituted by preference rankings. Moral obligation is then contrasted with preferences. This notion of 'preference ranking' could be likened to the ordering of values discussed previously, whereas the pragmatist view would question the sense in a person acting against their own preferences, and instead recognises that the boundaries of the self are flexible. As Painter-Morland (2011) notes, moral development is a process of constant renegotiation of the self in relation to a changing network of people, relationships and things. Therefore, the concept of 'trading off', 'balancing' (Jägel *et al.*, 2012) or ordering values becomes redundant; values are the result of relationships developed over time, and which emerge, despite also having a history (Painter-Morland, 2011). Rorty's (1999) analogy is that moral values development resembles the sewing together of a large, complex polychromatic quilt; the characterisation of values as a Venn diagram fits with this metaphor if one imagines the Venn diagram consistently being added to over time, the edges of the patches making up the quilt overlapping as they are stitched together. In the context of this study, this would explain the informants' failure to express complications arising from having to prioritise one moral value over another,

or conflicts arising in purchasing from having compromised values; as the pragmatists suggest, values are just not seen in this way.

With regard to the role of values in achieving 'end states' and therefore contributing to value, as noted above and in the previous chapter, whilst the values which guide action were expressed in particular ways there was little evidence of their role as consistently guiding individuals to 'absolute' ends. It was suggested previously by Devinney *et al.* (2010) a view of values which sees them as immutable would require in changing consumer behaviour 'a religious conversion of sorts'. However, as previously discussed, a pragmatist view of values *would* see them as changing and changeable (Tiles, 1990), and whilst they are connected to 'ends', the ends do not subconsciously guide action; as Painter-Morland (2011) argues, Dewey's pragmatism allows for the construction of ends with individuals' personal and contextual circumstances, similar to the reciprocal determination of ends which are entrenched in habits (Anderson, 2014). Similar to Schatzki's (1997) conception of teleoaffectivity (the idea that actions are governed by orientations towards ends, with the affective dimension recognising there is no 'single' end), he therefore refers to 'ends in view' rather than 'absolute' end states, but for pragmatists, as Anderson's (2014) reading of Dewey's work on means and ends suggests, means and ends are 'reciprocally determined'. That is, the 'end' cannot be completely conceived until one understands what it is that one must do to arrive at it; judgements of the 'value' of an end cannot be divorced from a judgement of what is required to achieve it. Thus, practical judgement is creative and transformative in continuously reshaping new ends. In examining this in the context of some of the consumption stories revealed in this study, it will be worth examining Rorty's (1999) explanation of Dewey's distinction between prudence and morality.

According to Rorty (1999), 'prudence' is related to concepts such as 'habit' and 'custom'; routine behaviours which require little thought and are for the most part instinctive and action is guided by 'what comes naturally', as identified by many of the practice theorists (such as Hargreaves, 2011, and Warde, 2005). Morality comes into play when one is unable to do what comes naturally; when routine is no longer good enough. As previously noted, as there is no distinction between what is good (teleological principles) and what is right (deontological principles); the distinction between prudence and morality is a

question of the degree of need for conscious deliberation, and when these value judgements are enacted, they are tested in practice and re-evaluated (Anderson, 2014).

This pragmatist view of ends and evaluation appears to be at work in this study. For example, take three examples of purchases of coats; Sarah's Barbour jacket, Daphne's (attempted) purchase of a winter coat and Meryl's coat from Marks and Spencer:

Well, I knew that I've seen this one in Marks & Spencer so I went back to the Mark & Spencer in Birmingham. I didn't really look at any other coats. I just liked a particular coat maybe that I'd seen. (Meryl)

Here, Meryl's routine (prudence) is clearly at work. Her historical purchasing at Marks and Spencer, desire for quality (linked to what could be classified as a combination of security, universalism and tradition values) is instinctive, requiring little conscious deliberation. Her values are embedded in long-standing and routine habit. Indeed, this characterised much of Meryl's purchasing, along with many others in the sample. The act of evaluating the coat here for Meryl cannot really be undertaken until she knows how the coat will function as a means in the future in relation to specific circumstances, at which point the desired 'ends' may have changed and habits may have changed accordingly. Whether the ends sought are intrinsic or instrumental is only a function of how an individual regards something at the time. (Anderson, 2014). Contrast this with Daphne's search for a coat:

I think yeah, it's time to replace my winter jacket but I have been going to stores and trying to find a good winter jacket that could last longer than 5 years actually. I take time to make that decision - two months now - Mainly in London, probably about 20 stores but I do go back because you know, especially in some stores like Benetton that I know I could find a good winter jacket, they normally bring more jackets towards December and January... I know it's very difficult to get one that is completely water proof [but] I saw one that was really, really nice in this store called Geox which is I think an Italian store, I don't know but it was like about £300 and I said well, it's very nice, it's a proper winter jacket but it's not really a jacket that in the UK we will be using that often because that winter jacket is for minus 10 degrees. I said I should buy something more for the weather for the UK. What I'm trying to find is something that the material could kind of repel the water, has a hoody, and a kind that I could use for informal and formal events, so something that I could use for everything. The things I have been finding are nice looking and I could use for formal and informal things but the quality is not really good like Zara, several times I always had problems with zippers. I tried to zip it up and the zipper was not good enough or it was already kind of broken and I go with my husband and he started telling me, "You have to buy something with this quality, that is good looking..." blah, blah, so he was just like this constant fighting so I just tend not to buy anything.

Here there is a clear cognitive dimension to Daphne's (as yet still to be undertaken) purchase. As Anderson (2014: [online]) explains, the appraisal of something is: "...to judge it in relation to the means required to attain it, and as a means or cause of further consequences. Appraisal, then, is fundamentally about means." However, as Daphne explains here, the cost of *acquiring* the thing she really wants is too high, and her evaluation of the brand she valued previously (Zara) in relation to its perceived quality problems has led to her valuing it less. She also makes a number of projections about the length of time she expects it to last (important in relation to her stated ethical principles), and the weather conditions under which the coat will be needed. Further, the purchase has led to the causation of arguments with her husband, so her appraisal of the jacket as a means and the relational dimension to this has further influenced her devaluing it as an end to the extent that she decides not to buy it at all. Here the procrastination could be seen as habitual, with the reasons for non-purchase a rationalisation of this habitual prudence, where 'prudence' is a routine way of responding to circumstance (Rorty, 1999). Further, the act of evaluating the coat here for Daphne cannot really be undertaken until she knows *how* the coat will function as a means in the future in relation to specific circumstances; particular weather conditions, the actual durability of the coat and so on, at which point the desired 'ends' may have changed and her habits may have changed accordingly. Finally, Sarah discussed her purchase of a coat, which was not strictly habitual but also required less conscious deliberation, and reveals another dimension of this view of valuation:

I bought a Barbour a couple of years ago, and I thought, 'this makes sense to me on so many levels. This is going to be a garment for life.' It does the job. It's built for rainy days, that's the whole purpose of it. They can repair it. You can re-wax it. I have re-waxed it myself – I didn't do it very well, but... So that appeals to me on several grounds, not just ethical grounds, because they're made in UK, aren't they? I think. I'm fairly sure they are.... Ah! I don't know. I'm fairly sure.... Anyway, that appeals to me - it is made in UK... this is a garment for life. You'd spend a lot of money on it. But it's lovely thinking that's it, and it's a lovely coat. It does the job. And I like the colour, it's dark green. And therefore it's.... It was just this is going to last me a lifetime and that really appealed to me.

As before, Sarah's evaluation of the coat cannot be undertaken until she enacts its use; she may discover they are not made in the UK, her tastes in colour may change, she may not want it to last forever; the job of rewaxing may become too expensive or time-

consuming... at which point the desired 'ends' may have changed and her habits may have changed accordingly. However, the passage above takes on a different meaning when contextualised against something Sarah revealed later in the interview:

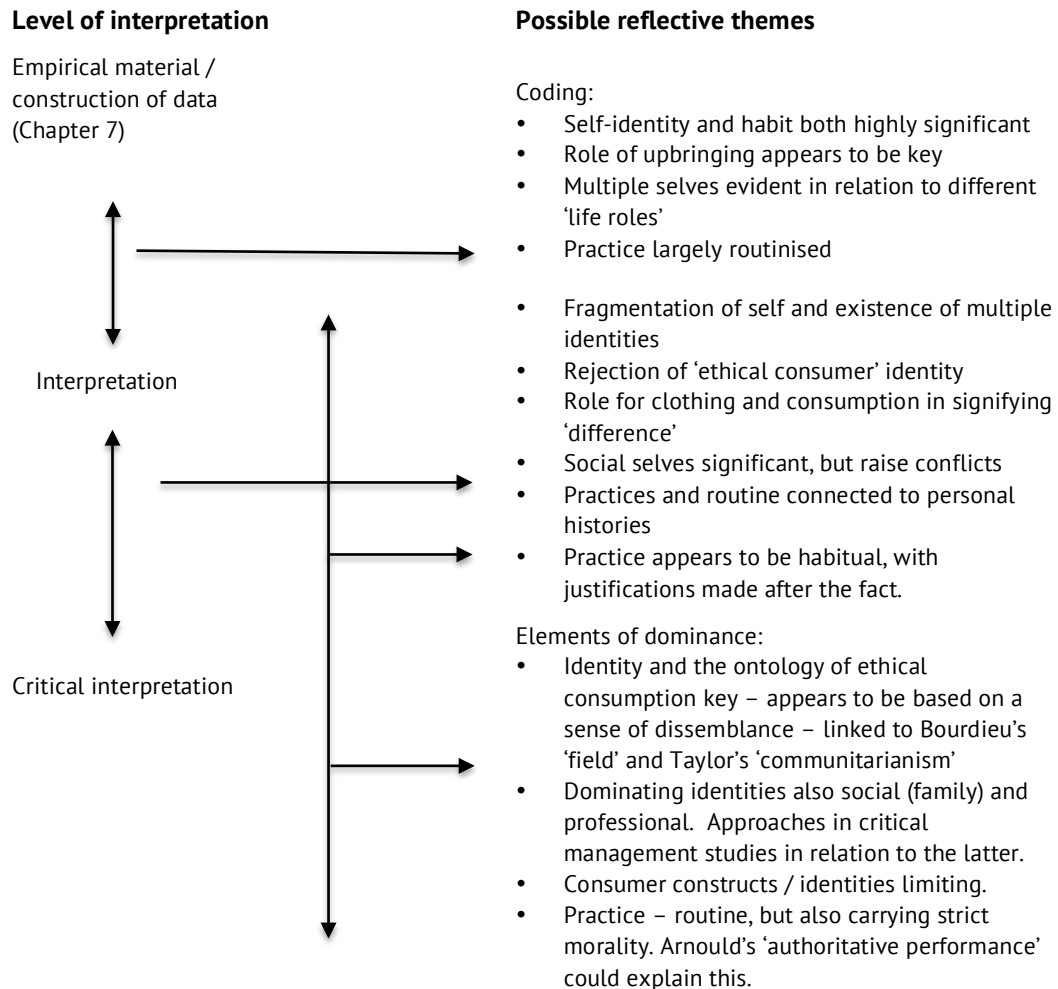
It's actually an impulse buy (laughter). We were just...my husband and I were in John Lewis one day and I said, 'Oh, look, a Barbour.' And I sort of at the back of my mind always wanted one because I knew someone years ago who had one and we lived in Wales so it was continuously chucking it down with rain. And they had Barbour coats and I remember thinking, 'I really want to have one, they look good.' And I saw a Barbour, 'Oh, they really look nice.' And I tried one on. And my husband says, 'Well, that really suits you.' I said, 'It does. I like this.' (Laughter) And I knew a bit about the brand, anyway, Barbour, the fact that it is meant to be for life; it is a lifetime garment, and it really appealed to me. I just thought, 'Great.'

This further passage reveals the roles of both routinised behaviour (shopping in John Lewis), the roles of relational others and history in shaping the self ('them' in Wales) and the justification of the stated values to be enacted (made in the UK, last a lifetime, looks good) after the fact.

Thus, as Dewey (In Anderson, 2014) suggests, ethical evaluation is not against the 'end' or some supreme principle as in much of the means-end theory (Jägel *et al.*, 2012; Gutman, 1982), but in identifying a method for improving or explaining value judgements, especially when actions seem 'out of place' or are questioned. Seeing the role of values in driving ethical consumption in this way reveals it to be less of case of having a particular state of being as an end goal or a 'thing' with a set of associated principles which drive behaviour which is then evaluated as 'successful' or 'unsuccessful'. Instead, as Giddens (1991) has argued in relation to identity, it should be seen as a 'life project' which can be seen in the justification of habits and constantly re-evaluated, renegotiated and rehabitualised as individuals engage in practice.

Objective 3: To explore the roles of identity and practice in ethical clothing consumption and the implications for value evaluation

Figure 36: Objective 3: Interpretation between different levels of interaction



Self-identity

A key aim of this research was to explore the role of self-identity in consumers' evaluations of value. Indeed, as previously argued a number of authors have noted its importance in the field of ethical consumption (see for example Cherrier, 2007, Valor, 2007 and Shaw *et al.*, 2000). Newholm and Shaw (2007) note in particular the emergence of a body of literature which has sought to understand how consumer identities are formed through a discourse of ethical consumption, which may be positioned as 'oppositional' or a changed identity. Its importance in the study of consumer behaviour more generally is significant, and is predicated on the notion that consumption is a (or even perhaps *the*) central function in human life and that consumers use products, services and brands as 'props' to self identity (Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Belk, 1988).

However, as discussed earlier, there appeared to be different factors at play in relation to different product groups, and this is something that may be worthy of further investigation; clothing is clearly an extremely conspicuous product in relation to, for example, detergent.

Also, as Shaw and Riach (2011) identify, the act of 'ethical consumption' should be distinguished from the ontological position of 'being' an ethical consumer, but whereas they identify a 'collective habitus' of belonging to an ethical consumption movement, this was not particularly widely felt by the participants in this study, demonstrating that as far as clothing choices are concerned, a collective consumer identity was not upheld, or was perhaps fragmented at best. So, whilst 'identity' emerges as a central theme in explaining (at least in part) consumption in this context (as Cherrier, 2007 identifies), there is a clear emergence of a reluctance to adopt the overt identity of 'ethical consumer' due to tensions between some perception of ethical fashion as stereotypically 'hippy', and the function of clothing as a conspicuous symbol of personal identity, with the aim of communicating particular identities at particular times (Arnould and Thompson, 2005), such as being 'fashionable' or 'outdoorsy', or in meeting particular styles or colours which have an inherent connection to identities. This lack of a 'collective habitus' could be driven by the purposive sample itself, but also perhaps more likely through the context of clothing, through which this study has demonstrated the negative associations and the difficulty of 'practicing ethical consumption'. It should be recognised that for a different product group such as food or cleaning products, this shared identity may have been stronger.

In many ways, therefore, this therefore contrasts with the 'ethical consumption identity' identified by Shaw and Riach (2007), and also identity of 'moral protagonist' suggested by Luedicke *et al.* (2009) in their study of anti-consumption activists. However, Luedicke *et al.* (2009) note that the 'moral protagonist myth' does provide consumers with a 'rhetorical means' to connect consumption, identity and a 'shared moral project' which provides protection and perhaps *continuity* against the insecurity of fluid postmodern society. Likewise, the 'habitus' identified by Shaw and Riach (2007) may not necessarily explain a conspicuous identity, but rather a shared set of values where consuming ethically is part of a wider reluctance to engage with dominant market discourses or ideals.

Correspondingly for the consumers in this study, a similar 'shared' identity based on 'dissemblance' was attempted to be established for many of the respondents, although there were few other of the unifying characteristics that would enable their identification as part of a consumption subculture or consumer tribe (Canniford, 2011); the dissemblance also extends to the shared consumer identity, at least for this product group (again, it is recognised that a shared identity may have been stronger in relation to food, for example).

'Them' and 'me'

As previously noted, identity through fashion is often achieved through contrasting between the self and others (Thompson and Haytko, 1997). Similarly, Szmigin and Carrigan (2006) observe the role of ethical consumption in 'distinction'; that ethically consuming is a marker of taste and social status. This was also seen to be at play to some degree with the respondents in this study, and although this was in a less 'conspicuous' manner than indicated by Szmigin and Carrigan (2006), for some being seen as fashionable, or not being seen as 'heavy' consumers or 'mainstream' was significant. In terms of value the act of differentiating oneself from others could be considered as a 'social benefit' through setting oneself apart, but also personal history and context were inextricably linked to these benefits. Similar to Bourdieu's (1993) notion of 'field', the concept of dissemblance is relational in situating the individuals against other points of reference in meanings and practices. For example, Helen discussed her aversion to labels', Vivian asserted that she always felt like an 'outsider' at college, Naomi made references to 'other people', Keith and Kate talked about alternatives and mainstream (both identifying themselves in different ways as being 'hippies', but with the sense that there is an oppositionality at work). Other informants discussed the desire to appropriate clothing which is 'individual' and not like 'everybody else' is wearing. In each case, the 'outsider' identities being asserted are being shaped by a perception of a 'mainstream' group. Thus, as with Bourdieu's (1993) 'field', and as Thompson and Haytko (1997) note, the perceived identities are clearly located in reference to a number of other 'field positions'. Bourdieu notes that a problem with this from the perspective of understanding, is that the situation of the field is often perceived as being self-evident; 'unmentioned or unremarked'.

Similarly, Taylor's (1991) communitarian perspective of identity acknowledges that it is defined: "...always in dialogue with, but sometimes in struggle against, the identities our significant others want to recognise in us." (p33), and that some of the most highly valued things in life are available only in relation to those closest to us. As with the pragmatists' view of values and end states expressed previously, identity is therefore in constant dialogue throughout life; reshaped and redefined in response to the changing background of 'things that matter'. Thus Taylor (1991) argues that the 'contemporary culture of authenticity (the adoption of ideals which lead individuals to their conception of a better life) has at its heart ideas of *difference* and diversity. Whilst recognition that consumption is embedded in social relations is not new (Connolly and Prothero, 2008), this further underscores the importance of understanding the social context of consumers and ethical consumption, and may provide future avenues for research in terms of deepening understanding of the significance of 'dissemblance' and how ethical consumers shape this identity in relation or opposition to significant others.

Therefore, whilst ethical consumers are often seen as sharing a collective identity which may be 'oppositional' as depicted in the segmentation models discussed in chapter three, there is evidence here of an oppositional identity, but not one which is shared amongst the members. Herein lie challenges and opportunities to marketers and for 'mainstreaming' ethical consumption. Whilst others such as Low and Davenport (2005) have seen the problem as being one of increasing consumer scepticism through accusations of 'cleanwashing' in mainstreaming fair trade, for example, attempts to 'mainstream' ethical products and services may lead to their rejection due to the importance placed on an 'anti-mainstream' (but not necessarily anti-consumption) sentiment. However, the wider availability of clothing perceived to be more ethical which offers greater choice may provide opportunities. As previously observed, very few of the respondents bought what might be readily identified as being 'ethical' clothing (that is, those labelled organic, fair trade, 'no sweat' and so on), but many did shop at the popular high street stores mentioned earlier in this chapter. With the exception of Steve, earlier in James' life and in aspects of Susan and Liz's consumption, there was no evidence of an 'eco-clothing' (as opposed to eco-fashion) identity.

Social (family) self

This identity not only with the 'self' but also a social (or family) self is something that is recognised as being not only an important dimension of the 'self-concept' (Mittal, 2006), but also as previously explored, a wider recognition that the notion of an individual act of ethical consumption is too limiting; rather, social contexts and impacts are at play (Cherrier, 2007). As noted in the previous chapter, family ties and upbringing were significant areas of discussion. The link to childhood experiences is perhaps not entirely surprising; as James (2007) notes, the vast majority of human psychology and day-to-day experiences reflect childhood experiences which tend to be repeated. Thus, as it is claimed values are formed in early childhood (Massey, 1979), behaviours and habits are likely to be grounded in childhood and repeated in adult life. Other respondents often referred to childhood experiences which had in some way shaped their approaches to consumption; often this was based in austerity, thrift, or just 'being careful with money' as previously noted.

A deeper reading invokes the communitarian perspective of Taylor (1991) discussed previously; that identity is negotiated with significant others, and in the 'ideal of authenticity' relationships are therefore not instrumental to fulfilment – they are intrinsic to it (although this also recognises that the demands of family may be incompatible with other principles or life developments). This supports the view presented earlier that evaluation in the context of identity cannot merely be about 'happiness'. He argues that developing these 'commonalities of value' is therefore significant in addressing moral issues. Indeed, as Cherrier (2007) notes, ethical consumption practices emerge through the 'interplay' between individual and collective identity. However, whereas Cherrier relates this phenomenon to a particular 'social movement' (voluntary simplicity), for the participants in this study their practices reflect the negotiation of many different social roles and identities; most notably child, parent, 'sustainability professional' and academic. As previously highlighted, Susan's desire to be 'different' to attract the attention of her parents is a clear example of how this family identity has shaped her choices and behaviours much later into her life. This clearly manifests itself in consumption habits which are deeply ingrained in Susan's life, traditions and her search for 'the good life', rather than in principles or utilitarian evaluation. As Appiah (2006) argues, human judgments are rarely formed in response to an evaluation of evidence. Rather, choices are

intuitive and largely based on what is familiar or habitual to the individual, and justifications of behaviour are typically rationalisations of intuitive behavior made after the event. It should be noted that as MacIntyre (1999) argues, a potential problem with the influence of these social structures is that as they are formed in habits which begin to operate at the level of the subconscious, and one cannot be a moral agent without questioning the morality of one's everyday practice, yet this is only possible if an individual engages in roles which offer critical perspectives on their other roles (for example, family roles may put professional roles in different perspectives).

Professional identities

As highlighted in the previous chapter, professional identities also played a prominent role in perceptions of value and consumption decisions. As with the consumption literature, the critical management studies literature has also highlighted the central importance of identity in organisational involvement and expectation (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). For example, Watson (2008) argues that professionals (in this case managers) negotiate personal 'self-identities' and discursive 'social-identities', of which 'managerial identities' play a role. As he explains, at work (and especially in managerial positions) individuals are expected to adopt particular 'corporate personas' that may differ and conflict with the identities adopted in other parts of their lives. Furthermore, they may be expected to change these personas as corporate cultures and objectives change. Similarly Alvesson and Willmott (2002) note how employees are expected to develop self-identities which are congruent with objectives defined by management. However, they also argue that, drawing on the work of Giddens, and as with the pragmatist view of identity discussed earlier, identity is derived from involvement in competing discourses, and organisational identities are discursive; they respond to the multiplicity of perspectives and changing managerially-defined objectives. Thus, professions are characterised by a particular set of virtues, and organisational cultures put pressure on individuals to demonstrate competence and performance. Consequently, the production of an appropriate image is essential (Alvesson, 2001). This was widely expressed, both in the need to dress 'up' (Liz, Chris and Naomi), dress 'down' from a previous City career (Helen), or just to communicate a particular identity, whether this was 'ethical' (Paula) or fashion-led (Susan and Meryl).

For some of the informants in this study, this resulted in split identities which manifested themselves in ‘separate’ consumption activities that may seem to lead to a loss of the authenticity in particular roles as discussed earlier, although a pragmatist reading may, as Painter-Morland and Deslandes (2015) note, orient this authenticity against something that stands beyond an individual’s own aspirations. This was particularly true for Keith and Liz, but also for James and Steve who discussed a ‘maturing’, a central element of which was their developing work roles. This was characterised by both a demarcation and a fluidity, however; whereas Keith’s prior explanation of his purchase of a suit from what he believed to be an ‘unethical’ retailer revealed a clear separation between his work and ‘real’ selves, for James there is a fluidity between these dimensions:

I got more of a management role at work and I felt like ... at times, that whole awkward smart casual... do you just go for wearing suits – suits are a bit formal but then there’s times when you are going for meetings and it just felt like you wanted something, but I didn’t want to have something just for work actually... I like to have a sense of fluidity between when I work and my social life. I don’t view my job there and my social life here – so there’s a sense of a merging and a blending. I guess the fact that your clothes reflect that. So there’s not that “Here’s my really formal work wear and then here’s my really casual social wear. I like the fact that it merges a bit.

However, in all examples these pressures had led to changes in consumption habits which for both was at odds with previously declared principles, whether this was buying more clothes than wanted, or having to buy from retailers not in the preferred ‘set’. For others, and particularly those earlier in their academic careers (Isabella and Paula especially), identities were shifting in relation to the new professional identities that they were forging for themselves. The respondents in the study also expressed a clear sense of their positions as role models to their students, which not only carried a responsibility to educate about sustainability-related issues, but also required a particular conspicuous identity to be demonstrated through clothing. Again, there are potential future avenues for research in exploring in more detail the effect of professional identities on (ethical) clothing consumption, where there is an organisational and cultural ‘pull’ to demonstrate competence and a particular set of values through clothing choices. Similarly, the broader concept of multiple identities could apply in different ways for other groups.

The interplay between these different facets of identity, whether individual, professional, parent, child, educator and so on, linked with the rejection of an overt ‘ethical consumer’

identity further perhaps renders the scope of 'consumer' constructs too narrow to sufficiently account for the myriad of identity factors at play, and this will further be considered in examining further the concept of value.

Practices

The roles of habituation or practice have, as expected, emerged as a dominant theme in the analysis conducted so far in this chapter. It has been argued that for these consumers there appears to be a deeply rooted set of habitual purchasing practices, characterised by a complex system rooted in a pragmatism which implies no hierarchical difference between 'ethical' principles and 'other' principles or life concerns, and in which morality is constructed to fit social purposes. Indeed, as Miller (2012) argues, most shopping is mundane (rather than hedonistic, for example), governed by an overarching morality of thrift and love or duty to the family, and there were numerous examples of where this was enacted in clothing. Further, he suggests that consumption is driven by the goal of 'being ordinary'. Parallels can be drawn here with the pragmatist notion of prudence; routine, familiar and uncontroversial ways in which individuals adapt to circumstance (Rorty, 1999; Dewey, in Gouinlock, 1994). Similarly, Arnould and Price (2003) identify 'authenticating acts' and 'authoritative performances' as being key drivers of consumption. The former are geared towards revealing the 'true self', whereas the latter are aimed at upholding and refashioning cultural traditions, motivated by stabilising time and/or spaces. This effect also seems to be relevant; whereas the dissemblance in positioning oneself against others in the 'field' was very much in evidence as discussed earlier, there also seems to be a sense of wishing to preserve order. For example, Elisabeth referred to the maintenance of her style 'her oranges, green and blacks' which she had got used to merging.

Even for Kate, who frequently replenished her wardrobe to keep up with different fashions, there was still an underpinning sense of wanting to maintain a sense of familiarity and constancy with the 'few' shops she has selected to avoid future problems with size or style or wasted time: Susan explicitly referred to this as 'safety'; that she was afforded by following her established habits and avoiding buying on impulses.

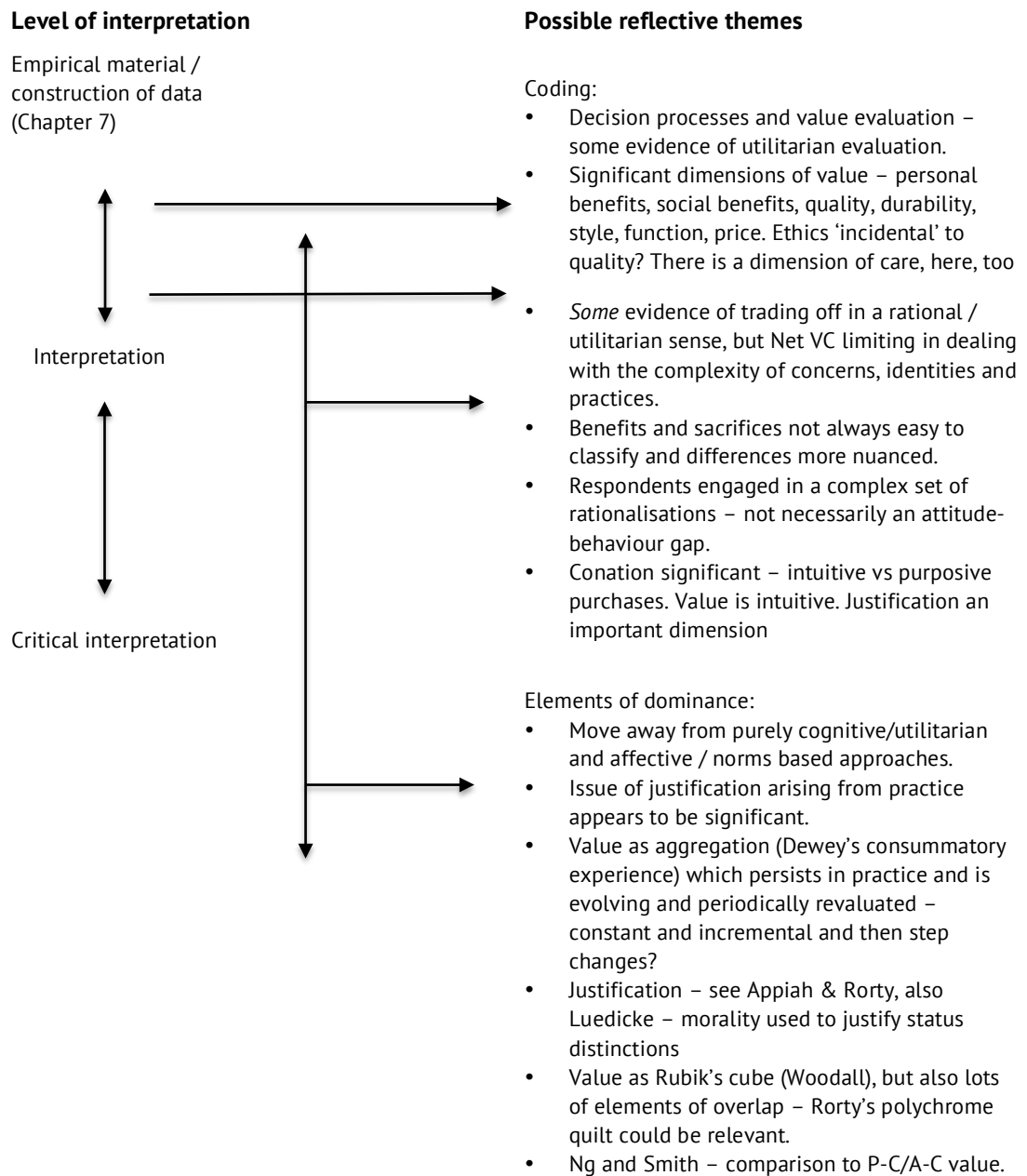
Further, it has been argued that many behaviours are rooted in habit or custom which

requires little thought and guided by 'what comes naturally'; morality is a value judgement which is enacted when deliberation or justification over and above custom is required, and which is then tested in practice and re-evaluated. Finally, it was suggested that consumption habits are deeply ingrained in multiple identities emerging from a rich life history, and that the role of habit and its origins are more powerful in understanding individual consumption behaviour than a simplistic reading of virtues or utilitarian evaluation. Indeed, as Bourdieu (1992) asserts, the habitus is a 'product of history', and as previously argued, from a pragmatist position, Dewey (in Anderson, 2014) argued that habits are passed on through socialisation processes and become routinised and subconscious. Accordingly, they persist even after the rationale for their adoption has been forgotten, they self-perpetuate and can therefore be difficult to break as people form attachments to them. In this regard, it could be said that habits become a part of an individual's identity; what you do is a part of what you are.

As Warde (2005) notes (and as discussed in chapter three), consumption is not in itself a practice. Rather, a practice is either a coordinated entity (or integrated practice) such as industrial and recreational practices or a performance (or dispersed practice) – routinised ways of understanding, knowing how and desiring. He argues that all integrative practices require consumption. There was evidence that much of the consumption behaviour displayed by the participants could be seen as practice; as explored earlier, in 'industrial' (or professional) practices, for example, the clothing appropriate for work tasks was often framed very differently to those for recreational practices. It should also be recognised, however, that for many of the respondents (with the exceptions of Susan, Paula, Marie and Helen), clothes shopping is not an activity that is enjoyed, nor one which informants felt they had time for, unless it was integrated into other practices (such as spending time with family). Much of the routinised practice could therefore also carry not only a benefit of security as mentioned above, but also expediency for a group who are time-poor. However, as the opening quotation in this chapter makes clear: "moral obligation does not have a nature, or a source, different from tradition, habit and custom" (Rorty, 1999: 76).

Objective 4: To investigate how consumers evaluate value in ethical clothing consumption and to consider the implications for ethical consumption

Figure 37: Objective 4: Interpretation between different levels of interaction



It was argued in chapter four that the overall perception of value is more likely to be represented by an aggregation (Woodall, 2003), deriving from and governing practices based on tacit knowledge and lacking in conscious reflection (Helkkula *et al.*, 2012), and delivering phenomenological value (Ng and Smith, 2012). This aggregate perspective of value (suggested as a form of 'personal advantage') takes into account all of the factors relevant at any particular time. In doing so, it draws on the past and sees ahead into the future and recognises the balance of benefits and sacrifices (whether cognitive, affective

or intuitive), and which may occur at different levels of action, practice and experience. This perspective recognises the phenomenological and plural perspectives, the subjectivity of the consumer and the fluid nature of value enacted in practice (Dewey, in Gouinlock, 1994). The earlier discussion under objective two also notes the overriding importance of habits; Vargo and Lusch (2012) also recognise the centrality of practice, arguing that structures (social networks in which value is co-created between actors) are both the medium and outcome of human practices, and this perhaps to some degree supports Holbrook's (1994) conception of value as an *experience*.

The data presented in chapter seven supports the plural and fluid nature of value, and it was highlighted that although there is evidence of utilitarian and cognitive decision-making at the micro-level, the notion of a trade-off is perhaps more fluid and ambiguous than a clearly demarcated set of benefits and sacrifices. Additionally, valuation tends to be more subconscious or intuitive ante-post, with justifications made for behaviours ex-post. However, there is no 'absolute truth' in the form of a value to be realised. In searching for an explanation of the factors that are at play in this phenomenon, it is worth revisiting the pragmatist responses discussed earlier in relation to Rorty's (1999) perspectives on truth and justification.

As Rorty (1999) argues there is no connection between justification and truth; any member of a community will be able to provide a justification of his or her beliefs to that community, but it does not mean that the beliefs he or she is best able to justify are those that are 'true', nor least able to justify those that are false. Justification and inquiry are activities people engage in, but there does not need to be a goal of 'truth'; individuals are predisposed to justifying their beliefs to one another, not set by an objective agenda of 'truth', but set by subjective phenomenological motivations: "...the *only* point in contrasting the true with the merely justified is to contrast a possible future with the actual present." (Rorty, 1999: 38-39). Likewise, there is no objective standard of a 'good' ethical consumption expressed by these informants, nor, indeed is there any agreement on what this might look like. Even those things which are often treated as 'objective' ethical standards such as organic and fair trade were called into question as part of justifications for their absence in consumption patterns, nor is it likely that any members of a community would be able to agree on what an ideal level of consumption would be,

despite the attempts by the majority of the informants to reduce their own. This process of justification may then involve the critical reworking and co-creation of commercial meanings to serve an individual's identity goals (Thompson *et al.*, 2013).

Similarly, there is no best 'value' to which such ethical concerns might contribute. The myriad of identity concerns, values, habits, benefits, sacrifices and the 'fuzziness' between them appears to be aggregated into an overall sense of 'personal advantage' which is developed over time as a result of lived experience and entrenched in habits, for which justification is then offered (to oneself or the community with which one is engaged) after the fact. Indeed, as Luedicke *et al.* (2010: 1030) argue, moral narratives can be employed to justify particular status distinctions, regardless of the perceived 'authenticity' of the moral claim.

Appiah (2006) also supports this view, arguing that justifications of our acts are typically made after what has been intuitively decided, and that intuition is a product of upbringing and lived experience, and engaging in justifications (or reasoning) only happens in thinking about change:

And when it comes to change, what moves people is often not an argument from a principle, not a long discussion about values, but just a gradually acquired new way of seeing things. (Appiah, 2006: 73)

There is convincing evidence in this study that the same is also true in consumption. That is, individuals are engaged in clothing consumption practices that emerge from a lifetime of learning, experience and identity pressures, and which change in relation to life changes, whether these are 'concrete' (such as moving to a new country or acquiring a new job), or self-perceived (such as an individually-held perception that one is 'maturing' or physically changing). Thus, the 'repertoire' of retailers frequented by the respondents was relatively stable, and only changed when new 'styles' or brand identities were required in response to life changes.

Ng and Smith (2012) note that although value is phenomenologically experienced at the point of consumption, little is understood about how value could be conceptualised at the point of choice. They propose that the level of subconscious (which they term P-C value; a

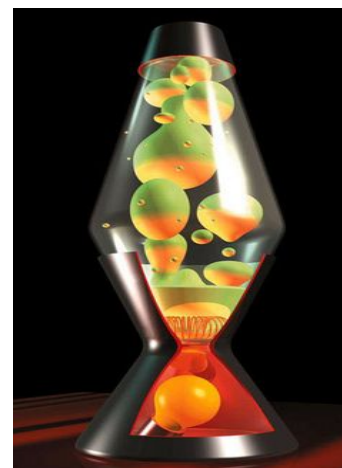
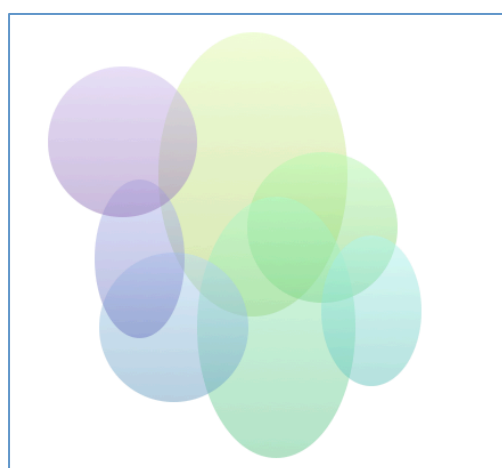
'phenomenological consciousness of value, as discussed in chapter four) is significant in evaluating use value, whereas A-C value is a perception of 'goodness' that drives choice ex ante and valuation ex post. However, whilst this study would support their findings to some degree, it is suggested that the roles of these types of value in driving use value and exchange value is too limiting. Rather, this 'point of choice' can be seen as value derived at a macro level embedded in routines (and therefore largely subconsciously evaluated) which also drives value perceptions (or choice) ex-ante and valuation ex-post. For example, retailer reputations (part of the gradually acquired new way of seeing things) did effect some changes to behaviour, but even then sometimes practices could 'linger' as with the informants who continue to buy from Primark, despite holding reservations about their ethics. More 'utilitarian' value / A-C value evaluations were then undertaken at the micro level, in comparing and contrasting individual garments and purchases at the point of exchange, as they suggest.

Woodall (2003) further asks the question of how, in a hypothetical consumption situation, an individual would reflect ex-post upon the experience, and which aspect of value would dominate; the evidence presented here is in accordance with Woodall's proposal for an aggregate form of value for the customer (expressed rationally or intuitively), which also takes into account past experiences with the supplier. Woodall represents this as a Rubik's cube, with the positions of the different colours (forms of value) around the cube representing their importance in different time frames. Certainly this corresponds well with Rorty's (1999) conception of the polychrome quilt discussed earlier, and the notion of moral choice being about 'competing goods' (rather than an objective 'right' and 'wrong'). Within this, it is proposed that benefits and sacrifices are seen as not opposing ends of a continuum or equation, but in a way that they cannot be seen as being independent from each other, borrowing from Quantum Theory, they are 'entangled'. That is, the dimension can be seen as both benefit or sacrifice, depending on who is undertaking the evaluation and when.

However, a Rubik's cube can be manipulated in a sequence to arrive at a definite answer, and although a polychrome quilt can be enlarged and continuously added to, once it is sewn it becomes a fixed object. Due to the 'fuzziness', fluidity and pluralistic and overlapping nature of the dimensions that make up the cube or quilt, and the

'entanglement' of benefit and sacrifice, the is best represented as a series of overlapping shapes, perhaps as can be seen in a Venn diagram, which in its totality at any particular moment in time represents a form of 'aggregated personal advantage' which exists as a justification of behaviour and which can be called into question in considering change. However, a Venn diagram is also relatively static and can only represent a limited number of intersections between its elements. As Bourdieu (1992) argues, thoughts and actions are governed by a small number of 'generative principles' which are polysemic; both closely interrelated and constituted into a practically-oriented whole which is dichotomously characterised not only by a coherence, but also a 'fuzziness'. To this, the notion of fluidity and constantly shifting priorities and influencing factors could be added. Thus, value would not resemble a static diagram, but a series of constantly shifting and morphing shapes as in a psychedelic animation or a lava lamp. Lava lamps are characterised by a series of rising and sinking 'globules', or shapes, which give an effect of continuously shifting patterns. Each shape in the lava lamp represents the different forms and dimensions of value derived, with the relative size demonstrating their relative importance. There is no distinction between benefit and sacrifice, although both of those notions exist. Likewise, there is no distinction between 'moral' value and overall value; they are inherently morphed together and from each other and synchronous within the overall decision. A price which represents 'good value' should not be seen as a sacrifice, for example. Likewise, if the working conditions of the factory workers who made the garment are important, this would be included as a part of the formation inside the lamp, the size of the 'bubble' conveying its importance if ex-ante, or its evaluation ex-post. The lava inside the lamp would continuously shift, acknowledging the emergence of 'endless ends', and reflecting the myriad of concerns and issues.

Figure 38: Aggregate Personal Advantage as Venn Diagram and Lava Lamp



This study therefore adds two further dimensions to the debate on ethical consumption. Firstly it is argued that value is an appropriate means to explain the 'trade-offs' that are claimed to exist in ethical consumption in demonstrating how different forms and dimensions of value come together in an aggregated value evaluation. Secondly, rather than conceptualising these trade-offs as much of the literature suggests as rational, cognitive and utilitarian evaluations, it is suggested they emerge in practice as a form of aggregate personal advantage which, significantly, is framed largely as justification after the fact. It is this which is the central contribution of this thesis; that value and ethics as a dimension of it cannot be seen in cause and effect relationships, or rational, cognitive trade-offs; rather, a pragmatist reading highlights the complexity of the *emergence* of aggregate value, with its influences in personal histories, habituation and, to some degree, peer pressure which push individuals towards ends in view. The notion of an 'emergent moral value for the individual' is perhaps what characterises this best.

However, the implications for 'ethical consumption' are that even for this extremely informed group of consumers, there does still appear to be support for some of the problems identified in chapter three as follows. Firstly, as identified by Devinney *et al.* (2010), multiple values are brought into the consumption domain, and the role of context certainly is significant as discussed. Secondly, this study does not dispute the assertions of, for example, Hassan *et al.*, 2013 and Connolly and Shaw, 2006, that ethical consumption requires a good deal of knowledge. Even for these knowledgeable consumers, there was some uncertainty about the 'ethicality' of various products and brands or their availability. For example, H&M was a brand cited as both 'good' and 'bad' by different respondents, and there were generally low levels of awareness of, for example, where to buy fair trade or organic clothing. Likewise, most high street retailers frequented by the informants could be criticised on some moral dimension. As a consequence the study would also support Bray *et al.*'s (2011) finding that an avoidance of the recipients of negative press was more prevalent than a more 'active' form of engagement. Consequently, there does appear to be the persistence to some degree of an attitude-behaviour gap as discussed in chapter three. However, this does not appear to be due to the cognitive trade-offs between obligation and want as identified by Valor (2007);

rather, due to the central importance of habitual behaviour as identified by Moraes *et al.* (2012), and linked issues but perhaps to a lesser degree, inertia (Bray *et al.*, 2011) and effort (Johnstone and Tan, 2014).

Just as the attitude-behaviour gap cannot be explained by a cognitive disequilibrium, there was also little evidence of negative emotions or dissonant behaviour (Chatzidakis, 2015; Hassan *et al.*, 2013), nor was there significant evidence for emotions overriding other factors as suggested by Gregory-Smith *et al.* (2013). However, the respondents still identified with ethical consumption, with the evident habituation driven by a pragmatic complexity which cannot be reduced to cognitive trade-offs or cause-effect relationships. Reflections on (moral) value reflected an *emergence* which arose from personal histories and habituation, and although knowledge of products and availability in some senses was low, very high levels of knowledge had led to scepticism of the very overt 'ethical' options such as fair trade, recycled and organic. This scepticism aligned with habits and personal contexts had resulted in the strategy of 'buy better / buy less' (with some brand avoidance), and although purchasing was in many ways 'mainstream', it cannot be concluded that 'ethical purchasing' was a myth; each informant had strong moral justifications for their own behaviour (with some admitted transgressions).

Chapter 9

Conclusions

In the neoliberal logic, all responsibility must... be shared within a society of economically rational actors whose moral quality is based on the fact that they rationally assess the costs and benefits of a certain act as opposed to other alternative acts. As the choice for action is, or so the neo-liberal notion of rationality would have it, the expression of free will on the basis of a self-determined decision, the consequences of the action are borne by the subject alone, who is also solely responsible for them.

Giesler and Veresiu (2014: 842)

Summary

It was proposed at the start of this thesis that much of the rhetoric around ethical consumption lies around the notion of trade-offs, despite few attempts to engage with a meaning of what those trade-offs are and how they are enacted in practice. The quotation above perhaps embodies how those trade-offs are implicitly framed; as cognitive, rational and largely utilitarian approaches to (moral) decision making. It is also characteristic of many approaches, not only to the responsibilities it is claimed are faced by consumers as Giesler and Veresiu (2014) note, but also the nature of the evaluation it is claimed consumers undertake as explored in chapters three and four. The extant literature discussed in chapter three has attempted to engage within a rationalisation for those trade-offs, but there remains a discomfort in the field which is manifest in, for example, the attitude-behaviour gap (Hassan *et al.*, 2014; Johnstone and Tan, 2014; Carrington *et al.*, 2010) and the proclaimed 'myth' of the ethical consumer (Devinney *et al.*, 2010; Carrigan and Attalla, 2001). This study has attempted to adopt a deeper philosophical perspective on the nature of the trade-offs it is claimed exist in ethical consumption in order to attempt to address this discomfort. As Devinney *et al.* (2010) argue, in changing behaviours it is necessary to understand the complexity of individuals' *rationalisations* of what they do and why they do it. Similarly, in pragmatist terms there is no rationality or

objective knowledge: “There is simply the process of justifying beliefs to audiences” (Rorty, 1999: 36).

This study has adopted a small number of theoretical frameworks and philosophical perspectives in service of this aim. Principally, the concept of value, as explained in chapter four, was applied to explain the concept of the ‘trade-off’. Despite its prominence in marketing thought, no studies to date have adopted a value perspective to the study of ethical consumption. Building on Woodall’s (2003) work and emerging from the primary data, a pragmatist response (with its links to pluralism, postmodernism and phenomenology) to many of the issues raised has emerged. This pragmatist view accounts for the evidence of plurality in standards of value and contradiction in decision making, and is concerned with a philosophy which is socially and politically useful in arriving at a shared understanding of how to promote human development and reduce human suffering. Rorty’s (1982/1999) pragmatism allows for the moral plurality, fluidity of values, ‘competing goods’ and the importance of lived experience and practice in enacting life choices which were evident in this study. As with the postmodern perspective that morality is relational to the particular context at a particular time (Bauman, 1993), Dewey (in Gouinlock, 1994) argues that morality is not a fixed and guiding set of principles which are always followed, but characterised by ‘endless ends’ or ‘ends in view’ as new experiences and habits come into perspective, and this study finds that shifting views of value were indeed evident in relation to habituation and experience. The concept of ‘endless ends’ can also be applied to the plurality value in this context, where a form of *emergent* ethical value (for the individual) might be identified.

Indeed, as Szmigin and Carrigan (2006) and Luedicke et al. (2010) suggest, this study finds that consumers’ moral evaluation is integrated with a myriad of forms of cultural meanings and identities which extend far past the boundaries of the conventional views of ethical consumption outlined in chapter two, and which chimes with much of the marketing literature embedded within ‘consumer culture theory’ on identity work discussed in chapter three. However, this study finds that the ‘consumer’ construct is limiting in the context of these intertwining of identities and an emergent value as described above, and it is proposed that a form of ‘emergent value for the individual’ is more representative of the way that value is enacted in this context.

The study further finds that, contrary to much of the literature on ethical consumption, that whilst there is some evidence of 'brand avoidance' for those organisations who are perceived to have the worst supply chain reputations, morality for this group (as might be expected given their professional roles) is largely embedded not within an 'anti-consumption', but within a less radical desire to consume less through buying less and buying better quality, with strong connections to upbringing and family influence (although not based in an overt ethics or environmentalism), and morality was framed in terms of 'ends in view' rather than a perspective rooted in non-contradiction. Shaw and Riach (2011) recognise this in their location of ethical consumption 'in the margins' of the 'field' of ethical consumption, constructed in opposition to and within marketplace encounters. However this study would go further and suggest the notion of an 'ethical consumption' as distinct from 'other' consumption is spurious; rather than an integrated and planned approach or sense of self, pluralist and often contradictory decision making in responding to changing circumstances was evident, but one which was fully justifiable by the informants. However, there is some scepticism of labels such as organic and fair trade, and a widespread rejection of the 'ethical consumer' identity, largely due to the negative image associated with ethical clothing.

The role of values has been highlighted in much of the literature, but is also downplayed in the ethical consumption literature (by, for example Devinney *et al*, 2010). Contrary to their findings, this research does find values to be an important constituent of identity and behaviour. However, rather than acting as 'absolute' end states, values serve teleoaffectively as 'ends in view', which do not guide behaviour, but rather habitually draw individuals towards them, again as suggested within a pragmatist view. Thus, as Dewey (in Anderson, 2014) suggests, ethical evaluation is not against a final 'end' or some supreme principle, but in identifying a method for improving the process of making value judgements. Seeing the role of values in driving ethical consumption in this way reveals it to be less of case of having a particular state of being as an absolute end goal or a 'thing' with a set of associated principles which drive behaviour which is then evaluated as 'successful' or 'unsuccessful'. Instead, as Giddens (1991) has argued in relation to identity, it should be seen as a 'life project' which can be seen in the justification of habits and constantly re-evaluated, renegotiated and rehabitualised as individuals engage in practice. Here, similar to Dewey's (in Gouinlock, 1994) conception of prudence and ends in

view, values do not 'guide' or 'drive' behaviour; rather they push individuals forward. However, as like a magnetic field, these forces are not seen; as Bourdieu (1992) argues, they act at the subconscious and habitual level, or are a form of inconspicuous consumption (Hargreaves, 2011).

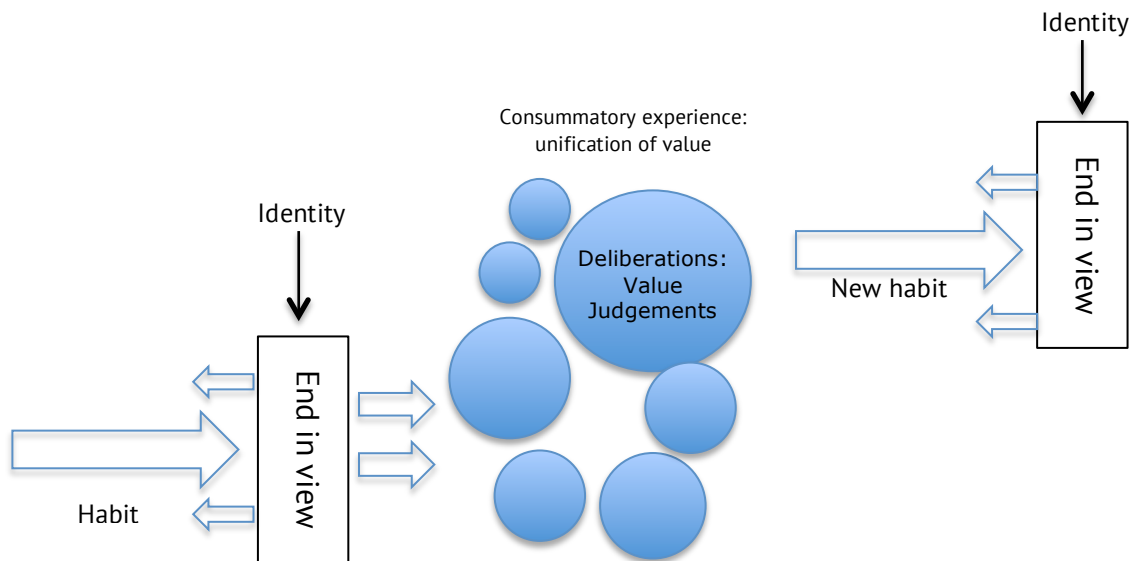
The notion of an unseen magnetic field corresponds with the finding that these meanings and identities are embedded within habitual practices which seek to: "...reproduce and justify status distinctions and social hierarchies." (Luedicke *et al.*, 2010: 1030). The pragmatist view again offers an explanation of the acts of justification in which consumers are engaged in response to their practices. This study finds that the dominating driver of consumption behaviour for this group of overtly ethically-conscious consumers is not an overarching deontology or utilitarian evaluation, but habit, which for the most part requires little thought and is guided by 'what comes naturally' (Warde, 2005) with value judgements enacted when deliberation about a practice is required (or justifying beliefs to audiences), and which is then tested in practice and re-evaluated.

As Bourdieu (1992) has suggested, these habits were found to be deeply ingrained in identities emerging from a rich life history, often grounded in upbringing and significant life events, but also based on a developing knowledge and skill set (Røpke, 2009). Similarly, a communitarian perspective of morality (Taylor, 1991), for example, recognises the emergence of identity through dialogue with others. Again, the pragmatist view explored assists in recognising that moral obligation is firmly rooted in these habits, traditions and customs. One reading of this is that 'increasing' ethical consumption is imbued with challenges; if this group of consumers find it problematic, then those without such backgrounds and experiences are far less likely to favour ethical or sustainable consumption behaviours. However, this also presents opportunities for those wishing to encourage more ethical or sustainable consumption behaviours in developing insight into how to influence habits at a deeper and more meaningful level, for example by engaging with those life experiences which shape habits for particular groups. A love of nature, the generational passing down of the importance of thrift and being noticed by 'doing good' were all examples from the study, for example.

In terms of the act of valuation, the study finds that as Woodall (2003) suggests, perception of value is represented by an overall form of aggregate personal advantage, which lacks conscious reflection and delivers a phenomenological form of value rooted in the habits described above. This study supports this view for ethical consumers, and whilst benefits and sacrifices are considered in the process of arriving at this evaluation, the study finds no evidence that this 'trading off' is a rational, cognitive process as much of the literature highlighted in the first two sections of chapter three suggests. Rather, pragmatist thought is employed again in the form of Rorty's (1999) conception of values as a polychrome quilt to suggest that this aggregate personal advantage works in a similar way; although it is argued that the 'psychedelic' effect within a lava lamp better represents Bourdieu's (1992) conception of a number of dimensions which are polysemic; both closely interrelated and constituted into a practically-oriented whole which is characterised by both a coherence and a 'fuzziness', and also overlain by a fluidity. This sense of value pushes individuals towards macro behaviours and evaluations (both *ex ante* and *ex post*), with utilitarian and affective decisions often made sporadically at the micro level *ex ante*. In all cases, these *ex post* evaluations appear to be justifications after the fact, rather than the drivers of behaviour it has been claimed. This characterisation reflects Dewey's representation of unified value as 'consummatory experience'; "...a single quality that pervades [an] entire experience in spite of the variation of its constituent parts." (Dewey, in Gouinlock, 1994: 76). This takes place in the context of ends in view which emerge through experience and are contextual.

These relationships can be seen in figure 39, in which fluid forms of value exist within the 'consummation', which emerges as individuals practice habitual behaviours pulled towards ends in view which are shaped by identity, and as a result of which habits may change as individuals engage in arriving at value judgements or in response to new ends in view. The cycle is then repeated as individuals engage in practice, call value judgements into question (in response to evaluations of value, in response to life changes or in justifying beliefs to audiences) and reengage in practice.

Figure 39: Consumption as consummatory experience



Contribution to knowledge

As the discussion above highlights, this group of ethical consumers are not involved in deliberative rational trade-offs in the pursuit of a limited set of values. However, neither is ethical consumption a 'myth'. Rather, they are involved in constantly morphing practices and life stories which contain within them complex, but repetitive patterns (rising and falling, as within a lava lamp), of preferences, morals, values, desires, identities and relationships which change in response to life changes and 'ends in view'. This study therefore moves the discussion around ethical consumption on from a negatively framed narrative of trading off, sacrificing and inefficiency which subscribes to a scientific epistemology of non-contradiction, to one of practicing, prioritising competing goods, and justifying behaviours. Its central contribution is to frame the role of morality in consumption as a constituent dimension of aggregate value (or personal advantage), and a pragmatist response to this in the form of consumption as consummatory experience; a unification of value that takes place in the context of an end in view, and which continuously merges flows of experiences and habituation.

Further, as morality has been considered as a practice to be negotiated between agents who are continuously learning (Bauman, 1993) and complex/dynamic and related to an

individual's existential condition (Caruana, 2007), Bauman (1993) calls for the reawakening of moral conscience, which is based on *impulse*. This study finds that the role of habit is significant, and that moral decisions are often framed within the small set of retailers frequented by individuals, and that this negotiation and impulse are entwined within the consumption *habits* of individuals, with moral evaluation embedded within the pragmatist notion of prudence (Rorty, 1995) in making value judgements. That is, it finds that although the consumption of this group appears to be relatively 'mainstream', consumption decisions are not without morality despite superficial appearances, and moral choice is what is enacted when habit (or prudence) is not longer sufficient.

In respect of both cases above, few studies have sought to explore (ethical) consumption from value perspectives or through a pragmatist lens, with the exception of Hobson's (2006) study of possibilities for pragmatism in environmental responsibility. However, this study finds that this is a theoretical oversight as the pragmatist orientation allows for a conversation between different groups to take place, and the blend of ethical consumption, value and a pragmatist response to both is a blend that hasn't been considered elsewhere.

Finally, the study finds that there are significant image problems with 'ethical fashion' within this group, with the belief held by many of the respondents that ethical clothing is visually and stylistically unappealing, expensive and carries a set of negative associations and meanings. Whilst other studies have found ethical consumption to be perceived to be associated with 'losing out or giving up' in terms of choice or comfort (Connolly and Prothero, 2003), in this case the negative impact is entirely identity-based.

Limitations of the study

As with any study of this kind, there are limitations to be borne in mind. Firstly, the nature of the purposive sample means that the respondents will naturally be more informed and possibly more politicised than the general population. Whilst this knowledge was necessary to elicit the depth of information that was required to investigate the trade-offs that consumers may make in purchasing, it is recognised that findings may not be transferable to other groups (and the 'general' consumer in particular, and that findings in

relation to, for example, the lack of fit with a 'narrow' view of ethical consumption or professional identities also may not be relevant to other groups. Secondly, the focus on clothing also means that the findings in relation to this very specific product group and purchase type may not be applicable across others other purchases. Finally, the time over which the study was conducted did provide some advantage in allowing an emergent approach to be adopted and in facilitating a deep exploration of issues of agency. However, the project was conducted over a relatively significant timeframe and it is recognised that the body of knowledge in this area is developing quickly.

Chapter 10

Recommendations

Whilst it was stated at the start of this thesis that its primary objective was to provide a descriptive account of how moral obligations are enacted for this particular group, in line with the pragmatist tradition that has emerged throughout this study, it would be remiss to not draw some conclusions about how this understanding can be employed to consider the impact on 'ethical consumption' for those concerned with increasing it, in order to bring about positive change to some of the problems discussed in the first chapter. There are also implications for future research into morality and consumption.

Recommendations for Practice

The integrative nature of the 'moral' and the 'consumption' discussed has a number of implications. Firstly, a pessimistic reading may conclude ethical consumption is indeed a 'myth'; if these knowledgeable and principled consumers find it difficult, reject 'ethical consumer' identities and are sceptical about ethical claims and labels, there is little hope for anybody else. However, there is some 'reflective intelligence' (Anderson, 2014) at work where value judgements are put into practice and reflected upon in changing behaviour, and the integration of morality, consumption practices and habits is also significant. Thus calls to 'repoliticise' ethical consumption (see for example Low and Davenport, 2007) are likely to be unsuccessful unless they are rooted in the habits and histories of the groups for whom a behaviour change is sought. Indeed, other studies focussing on pro-environmental behaviour change (for example Yeow *et al.*, 2014) have found that 'political' messages are ineffective, and 'personal economic or utility benefits' should be emphasised. However, as Daub and Ergenziger (2005) have suggested, appeals to a limited 'consumer' identity may also be unsuccessful, and identities have to be considered holistically. Activity which seeks to increase pro-environmental behaviours should

therefore focus on the holistic benefits which could extend to the wider family and personal networks.

The integration of moral evaluation with the complex identities discussed earlier as identified by Szmigin and Carrigan (2006) and Luedicke et al. (2010) further creates tensions in itself, and the conflicts often expressed between 'personal' and 'professional' identities are themselves part of the 'trade-offs' explored in the study; the question of 'what should a sustainability academic wear?' was something with which many of the respondents were negotiating. This, combined with the connection between clothing and identity, therefore require clothing to be treated differently in how different forms of consumer identities are constructed. Also, whilst much of this identity is 'oppositional', as Mikkonen et al. (2014) have identified, there is a unifying aspect of an oppositional ideology in fashion consumption which represents a form of 'negative self-identity' (Bannister and Hogg, 2001). Thus, these dimensions of consumer identity could be exploited by either marketers within this category or those attempting to effect behaviour change to better align their offers with the identity goals of potential consumer groups.

Following this, the research reveals significant problems with the perceived image of 'ethical clothing', which carries potentially negative positioning implications for brands attempting to inhabit the 'ethical' space and grow their markets. The belief by many of the respondents in the study that ethical clothing is poorly designed, lacking in fashion credentials and expensive is reminiscent of Connolly and Prothero's (2003) identification of a 'colder, darker place' (p282); the negative associations of a sustainable future with giving up or losing out on choice or comfort. Clearly ethical clothing has an image problem which marketers within that market need to address in developing a broader market appeal. In recognising that individuals do not engage in trade-offs where one thing is sacrificed over another requires organisations of 'ethical' products to focus on these perceptions and focus on more visceral solutions. For example, if 'fair trade cotton' is perceived to be 'unfashionable', then the designers and retailers have to address this perception.

The study reveals that changing habits is central to changing behaviours. What was bought by the respondents and the sustainability of those choices was determined by the small sets of retailers frequented by and ingrained within the habits of each respondent. Thus, whilst, as Brooks (2015) and Carrigan *et al.* (2013) suggest, raising awareness of supply chain abuses is necessary in driving brand avoidance, more significant behaviour change requires deeper approaches by understanding the practices that underpin the required change within its target recipients, and finding ways to make that change easy. The study has shown that inertia and ease may be significant drivers of habits, but also that they are rooted in complex individual histories and particular ends in view. Thus, marketing communications designed to encourage switching behaviour, for example, may be incorrectly targeted and with poor return on investment if it is not directed at appropriate points at which the habits of its target groups may be susceptible to change. The issue of habits has further pedagogic implications, where opportunities for shaping individual and group habits should be sought through experiential learning, rather than through a principled education or 'fixed' curriculum around principles of right and wrong.

Recommendations for Research

As individuals need to be considered more holistically, so too the concept of 'ethical consumption' needs to be understood from a wider perspective than 'affirmative purchasing' (Carrigan *et al.*, 2004) such as purchasing organic or fair trade, as Soper (2004) has argued. For the respondents in this study, a concern with reducing consumption and the promotion of global justice as contributing a sense of a 'good life' was evident, whereas a scepticism of more widely recognised forms of ethical consumption was equally prevalent. Indeed, Heath and Potter (2006) argue that buying organic, local or from independent companies is not ethical consumption; there are bad and good practices associated with both organic and non-organic agriculture, some local produce can have hugely negative environmental impacts, and there is nothing intrinsically wrong with big companies (and small companies will become big companies once everybody starts to buy from them).

The centrality of changing habits to changing behaviours, and in particular the role of groups in forming habits in terms of the pragmatic notion of justifying oneself to a

community of others provides opportunities for further research to develop a greater understanding of the role of communities in shaping ethical consumption decisions. Further, the location of the habits described in the thesis were often in childhood experiences, which suggests that nostalgia may also have a role to play. Further research could also consider the role of nostalgia in messaging to affect behaviour change.

It is clear from this study and the wider literature that there is a widely held concern about levels of consumption, rooted in fast fashion, which is driving a range of social and environmental problems. However, as has been shown in this research, social pressures exist which can drive consumption levels and consumption practices beyond what might be comfortable for individuals. Professional identity in particular was revealed as being one which challenged many habits and senses of self. It is recommended that further research explores this relationship in more detail to understand how organisational values and individual consumption might be linked. Similarly, further research might consider how the broader concept of multiple identities could apply in different ways for other groups.

In relation to the previous point about the widening of 'ethical consumption', studies often treat ethical consumption in one of two ways. Firstly, as either being an all-encompassing term which applies to an individual's practices across all purchases or behaviours. For example, it is assumed (either explicitly or implicitly) that a predisposition towards fair trade will be enacted across different product groups (Ma *et al.*, 2012; White *et al.*, 2012; Low and Davenport, 2005); voluntary simplifiers will adopt these practices across all of their consumption activities (Cherrier, 2007), or that ethical / green consumption will be consistently enacted across all product choices (Lu *et al.*, 2015; Connolly and Prothero, 2008). The pragmatist view proposed in this thesis would call this view into question, and further research might seek to adopt a more integrative or holistic perspective across wider consumption behaviours.

Alternatively, (as in the case of this study) other research focuses on particular product types and groups (for example Lim *et al.*, 2014; Davies *et al.*, 2012; Ha-Brookshire and Norum, 2011; Cailleba and Casteran, 2010). Whilst Memery *et al.* (2005) note that retailer and product groups are important determinants of ethical buying behaviour, a range of factors appeared to be at play for this group of consumers, with their 'ethical consumer identity' seemingly being enacted in different ways across different product groups (for

example, detergent, groceries, travel, clothing, home improvement and so on). As with Szmigin and Carrigan's (2006) application of Holt's typology of consumption practices, future research might therefore consider the identity implications and entirety of consumers' practices in relation to different purchases and how a pluralist decision making in the context of identity concerns and habits is acted upon and justified by ethically concerned consumers. Similarly, an apparent lack of interest in the product type therefore leads to a lack of investment which in turn appeared to lead to a lack of consideration of the ethical dimensions of the purchase. It was noted in chapter seven that this has wider implications for ethics, in which consumers will only consider ethical impacts if there is some investment in the thing being bought. Certainly clothing as a category needs to be treated differently, and further research might again consider how this is enacted across different product groups.

In terms of the implications for value research, this study finds support for the phenomenological perspectives espoused, for example, by Ng and Smith (2012), practice perspectives (Holtttinen, 2010) and pluralist conceptions of value as promoted by Woodall (2003), but would further call for value to be seen as a shifting and integrative (Brown 1999; Smith 1999) aggregate concept, and not a static and utilitarian construct. Here, there are possible contradictions in value as an aggregate result of consummation which might be classified as a unidimensional construct (Sanchez *et al.*, 2009), but which is paradoxically infinitely multi-dimensional in both its forms and the integration of benefit and sacrifice. Rather than viewing value as forms which compete (Holbrook, 1994), further research might also consider how this integration is manifest at the point at which the consummation of experience occurs and how this converts into value; either as a judgement against future consumption practices or a consummation which occurs only 'in the moment'. Likewise, there may be opportunities for the role of other fields such as neuroscience in exploring the existence of (but not distinction between) benefit and sacrifice in arriving at consummations. Finally the notion of emergent value warrants further research into how personal histories and practices push consumers towards ends in view, rather than values acting as a pull towards absolute ends.

Finally, as this suggests, there are potential impacts upon and connections with other emerging related fields of research. Certainly the broadening of consumption and a focus

on consuming less connects well with the growing interest in repair cultures and sustainable design. Further, the roles of 'prudence' and habituation in consumer decisions may have potential links with emerging knowledge in complexity theory and neuroscience in terms of developing greater understanding of the points at which 'aggregations' of value take place, especially at the points at which habits or practices change or are called into question.

It is certainly clear that the epistemological contribution of this thesis challenges and finds support for a scientific epistemology of non-contradiction in relation to values and value, and whilst the inclusivity of a pragmatist approach is acknowledged, a quantitative ranking and assessment of values in pursuit of 'absolute' consumer goals is a limiting means of understanding (moral) consumption. The pragmatist orientation proposed in this thesis offers a more valid account of consumer behaviour because it can be read through a pluralist epistemology which provides better insight into the multifaceted nature of identities and habits which are rooted in a phenomenological account of experience. Further studies might therefore adopt pragmatist philosophies in their account of moral consumption and the role of value in consumption.

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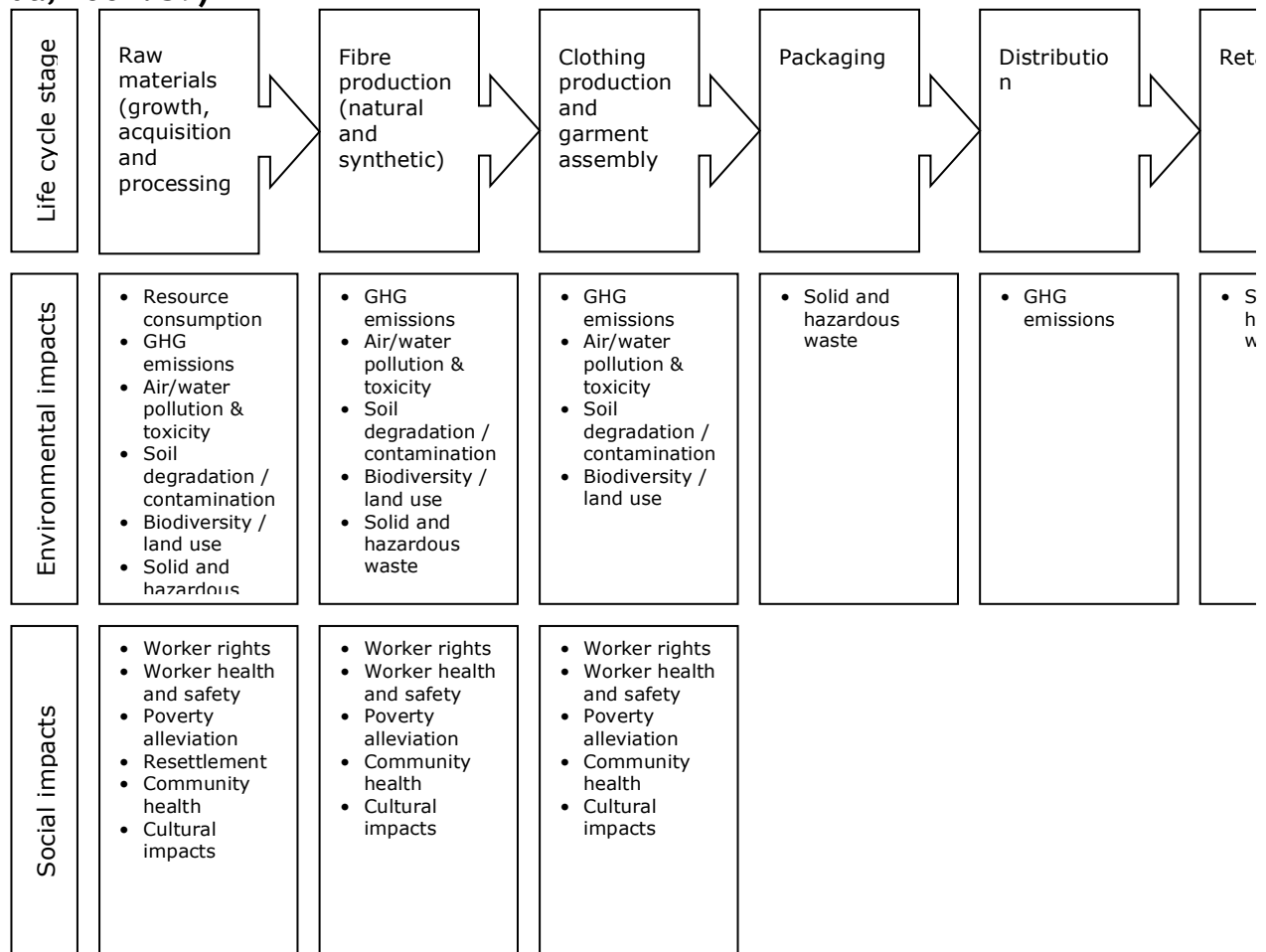
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Appendices



Appendix 1

Summary of relationships between clothing life cycle stages and impacts (Madsen et al., 2007: 39)



Appendix 2 – Pre-interview questionnaire

Here we briefly describe some people. Please read each description and think about how much each person is or is not like you. For each statement please place an 'X' in the box which you feel most closely describes: "How much like you is this person?"

	Very much like	Like me	Somewhat like	A little like me	Not like me	Not like me at all
It's very important to him/her to help the people around him/her. S/he wants to care for their well-being						
It is important to him/her to be loyal to his friends. S/he wants to devote him/herself to people close to him/her.						
S/he thinks it is important that every person in the world should be treated equally. S/he believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life.						
It is important to him to listen to people who are different from him/her. Even when s/he disagrees with them, s/he still wants to understand them.						
S/he strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to him/her.						
Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to him/her. S/he likes to do things in his/her own original way.						
It is important to him/her to make his/her own decisions about what s/he does. S/he likes to be free and not depend on others.						
S/he likes surprises and is always looking for new things to do. S/he thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life.						
S/he looks for adventures and likes to take risks. S/he wants to have an exciting life.						
Having a good time is important to him/her. S/he likes to 'spoil' him/herself.						
S/he seeks every chance he can to have fun. It is important to him/her to do things that give him/her pleasure.						
It's important to him/her to show his abilities. S/he wants people to admire what s/he does.						
Being very successful is important to him/her. He hopes people will recognise his achievements.						
It is important to him/her to be rich. S/he wants to have a lot of money and expensive things.						
It is important to him/her to get respect from others. S/he wants people to do what s/he says.						
It is important to him/her to live in secure surroundings. He avoids anything that might endanger his safety.						
It is important to him/her that the government ensures his/her safety against all threats. S/he wants the state to be strong so it can defend its citizens.						
S/he believes that people should do what they're told. S/he thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no-one is watching.						
It is important to him/her always to behave properly. S/he wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.						
Tradition is important to him/her. S/he tries to follow the customs handed down by his/her religion or his family.						
It is important to him/her to be humble and modest. S/he tries not to draw attention to him/herself.						

Appendix 3 – Interview Guide

Interview questions

(Prior to the interview respondents will be asked to complete a short questionnaire based on Schwartz's (1994) *General Portrait Value Questionnaire*)

Background – information on role and how respondent entered professional field.

Follow-up any areas of interest highlighted above – where areas of interest came from.

Whether the ethical/sustainability issues described above affect their consumption generally.

How would they would describe their clothes shopping?

Do they believe the ethical/sustainability issues described above affect their consumption generally?

How much of a difference do respondents think their purchasing behaviours make? Do they feel a sense of responsibility for buying ethically? Who is that responsibility to?

Tell me about specific purchases: include the last item of clothing bought / recently purchased items / items of clothing which are special to you (or favourite / least favourite):

- Describe the item and take me through the purchase.
 - When, where, why did you buy it?
 - What were you looking for?
 - Were you able to get what you wanted?
 - How 'easy' was the purchase?
 - What sacrifices do you feel you had to make in order to make your purchase?
 - Which aspects were you happy with? What made you satisfied?
 - Were there any aspects you were not happy with? What made you dissatisfied?
 - How did you feel after purchasing the item?
 - How do you feel about it now?
-

Appendix 4: Participant Information Sheet

The contribution of ethical concerns to value in clothing purchases

Thank you for agreeing to consider participating in this research project. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important that you understand the reason why this research is being carried out and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following carefully and discuss it with other people if you wish. Please feel free to contact us if anything is unclear.

What is the purpose of the study?

The study is being undertaken as part of a PhD thesis. It arises from the growing interest in issues of ethics and sustainability in the clothing market. The main purpose is to discover how ethical concerns contribute to consumer perceptions of value from the clothes they buy. By value we mean a consumer's assessment of all of the factors that lead to positive or negative thoughts and feelings about the purchase which are often influenced by an individual's personal values. The investigation will therefore explore the following topics:

- The ethical issues that are important to consumers
- Attitudes towards ethical issues
- Individuals' values
- Reflections on ethical purchases and the process of buying.

The main method of gathering information will be by interview. Around thirty interviews with people for whom ethics is an important issue in buying clothing will be conducted in total. Participants will also be asked to complete a short questionnaire about their values prior to the interview.

Who is running and supervising the study?

The project is being run entirely by Alex Hiller, a PhD candidate and member of staff at Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University (NTU). The supervisory team are Professor Paul Whysall and Doctor Tony Woodall, both also at Nottingham Business School.

Why have I been chosen to take part?

You have been asked to participate as we believe you may be somebody for whom ethical considerations are an important factor in the purchase of clothing. If this is not the case, then please let us know and we will not ask for your participation. You will be one of around thirty people being interviewed.

Do I have to take part?

Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep, and you will also be asked to sign a consent form. You will still be free to withdraw at any time, including the right to withdraw your interview from the study up to four weeks after it has taken place. If you decide not to take part, or to withdraw at any stage, you will not be asked to give us any reasons.

What do you want me to do?

We would like you to take part in an interview lasting approximately one hour. It will take place at a mutually agreed location and time convenient to you. The topics to be covered are set out above. The interview will be carried out by Alex Hiller around a pre-determined series of issues. Your permission will be sought to tape the interview to ensure the information you give is accurately recorded. Before the interview you will be asked to complete a short self-evaluation questionnaire around the things in life that are important to you.

What will happen to the information I give?

The tape of your interview will be transcribed. This transcription will be analysed and fed into the results. At the end of the study the transcriptions and interview recordings will be deleted / destroyed. The results will be written up and submitted as part of the PhD thesis. Aspects of the work may also be published.

How will you protect my confidentiality and anonymity?

Data files and transcripts of interviews will be handled only by me and an appointed transcription agency in line with data protection principles and the approved research protocol. Your identity will not be revealed to the transcription agency, and care will be taken to not refer to your name or any information which might identify you on the tape. Data files will be sent to the transcription agency by a secure upload service (128 bit SSL security with encryption). Where this is not available, files will be sent on locked USB by special delivery which will be required to be returned after transcription. Transcripts will be returned via a password-secured file area, or by a password-protected file sent on USB or by e-mail. Hard copies of research notes will be kept in locked filing cabinets, and all other electronic files will be kept on password protected computers which are not accessible to any other person.

You will be assigned a pseudonym and will not be otherwise named or identified in any publication arising from this project. All possible care will be exercised in ensuring that you cannot be identified by the way I write up my findings.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks in taking part?

The main cost to you will be the time needed to conduct the interview. We are confident that the arrangements described above will prevent your information being shared with anyone else. For this reason we think the risk of detriment is very low.

What are the possible advantages of taking part?

We hope that you will find the interview interesting, and will take satisfaction from helping to both develop knowledge of this topic and contribute to a PhD thesis. A summary of the results can be shared with you at your request.

Has anyone reviewed the study?

The study has been approved by the NTU Research Degrees Committee and is subject to ongoing review by the supervisory team and an independent assessor. The project has received ethical clearance from the NTU Research Ethics Committee.

Who is responsible if anything goes wrong?

Nottingham Trent University is responsible for the conduct of the project.

Contact for further information:

Researcher:

Alex Hiller, Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University, Burton Street,
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Appendix 5: Declaration of informed consent

By signing this form I confirm the statements below and give my informed consent to participate in the study of Alex Hiller.

I consent to the publication of the results of the study provided the information is anonymous and disguised so that my data cannot be identified with me personally by any reader. I do, however, understand that I have been informed of, and reserve the right to, withdraw myself or my data from the study at any time without penalty until the point of publication.

I understand that all data collected will be identified by a pseudonym and this pseudonym will be tied to my name on a document kept separate from the data itself which will only be consulted for the purposes of identifying my data should I choose to withdraw it.

I have been informed that my participation in this study will involve me discussing my purchasing and evaluation of clothing during a one-to-one interview, and in particular the role of ethical concerns in my attitudes and buying practices. I have been informed that I will also be asked to complete a self-completion questionnaire which aims to provide insight into my values. I have been informed that the aim of the study is to gain insight into the role that ethics plays in the value that I derive from my clothing purchases.

I have been advised that there are no 'disguised' procedures or unnecessary deception in this study.

I have been assured that the researcher will answer any questions I have regarding the procedures of this study at any time. I have been informed that any concerns I may have may be referred to the researcher's Director of Studies, Professor Paul Whysall, at Nottingham Business School on 0115 8482412.

Signed:

_____ Name of respondent	_____ Date	_____ Signature
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_____ Name of researcher	_____ Date	_____ Signature
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PROJECT ADDRESS:

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Appendix 6

Interview Transcripts

Interview 1 – Susan

So we have confirmed that ethics, however that might be defined, is a consideration for you in buying clothes, so what would you say are the most important things to you when you're buying clothes – what do you tend to look for?

Style would definitely be number one. I know that would be generally what people say, but that would be number one. But if I was looking for something specifically that was going to be sustainable; sometimes I do – sometimes I'll actively go out and think I'm going to look for something that's more sustainable (perhaps that's a contradiction in terms! Anyway...), when I do that, erm OK, the sustainability might be my priority in what I buy, but I will still of course only buy it if it's something that I feel fits in with my own self-image that I want to project. So, it does... it varies, but I will also buy things at times that, if I, say really loved something – whatever price it was; whether it was really cheap or really expensive, as long as I had that money available then I would go for it. So sometimes things would go out of the window sustainability-wise.

So a couple of things, then. So when you say 'sustainable', are there particular issues or factors that you would want to take into consideration?

I would be interested in picking up on anything that is either socially or environmentally sustainable. I wouldn't expect both, but I do have a couple of People Tree things which, of course, do cover both of those areas.

Would you say one of those is more important than the other?

(Pauses). I'd really, really struggle to decide on that. I'd find that difficult - I mean, because it's more often that you get things that are more environmentally sustainable in clothing, that's kind of easiest. I've got a top that's partially made out of hemp, for example, and it's that whole kind of story on it, so I felt quite virtuous when I was getting that! Although I didn't, because it was... I think it was about sixty or seventy pounds which is more than I would spend on a top... that's... I'd pay that for a car! So I would say that's OK, but I think the social side is important, but my bigger concern in life in general is about the environmental side so I've bought as environmentally friendly car as I can manage to get, for example, so...

When you say 'as you can manage to get', what...

Within what's actually out there, available, so for example I wanted to get a Polo, but there were no Polos out there of the type that I wanted that were as new as I wanted them to be because I had a certain budget to spend so I got a Golf and snapped it up because there's not many that are out there of that particular type. But if I'd have bought it brand new I would have gone for the Polo which was more, er... more fuel efficient and so I've just got.. when you buy second hand you've just got to go with what you can get, really. Whereas with clothes at least I can choose what it is I want or buy second hand because that's more... sustainable. But, erm, I think maybe if anything the green issues...

So the environmental issues are more important? Why do you think that is?

Yeah, because it just seems so hugely important... the future really - I mean I know there's the social issues of now in what's happening to people, but we can never know the detail of that - we don't get all the transparent information about the social side of it. Whereas, you can be a bit more explicit - you can have some more tangible green or greenER products, so I think the green issue is bigger for me if I step away from the fashion thing and think about other things that I may be more concerned about possibly.

So you obviously research in the field, although not in the technical product-side of stuff, do you feel that you have quite a lot of awareness about the environmental impact of particular production and distribution methods?

Yeah, I certainly feel that I've got more insight than your average person would have and obviously the research that we did showed that people don't really know - and let's hope that they know more than at that time now, but, erm, even so there are difficulties with, say, wool for

example, that was at the top of the sustainable textiles list, and then from talking to somebody else who works within the business, she was talking about how because there is now that issue of... I can't remember what they call it... with the sheep where they... sheared them and it's painful and hurt them. And so suddenly wool has toppled from the top of the list because that happened. But the sustainability's actually better in a sense because there are just so many factors that, even if you search into it you can't possibly know. We need to have some kind of diagram - some kind of grid - about what the trade-offs are and which... how many points it would come at with some kind of ... multivariate... multivariable analysis or something like that!

Because I would have thought that wool would need more washing and would use more water in production than...

Wool would need less washing because you have to hand wash it!... Oh, you mean when it's actually produced? Well, you don't take the whole fleece off... But yes, you've got to have the land. I think the things you wouldn't expect, like fossil fuels, are the types of things that are environmentally friendly, so, you know, you've got things like polyester that takes the minimal amount of washing and that's long-lasting and performs well. And at least you're not using the land for that - it's just coming out of the ground so you're not changing things there, but...it's just too complicated [laughs]! To do the best thing and then... you're going to disappoint someone somewhere along the way. You can't do perfect thing, you have to do the best thing that you can when you buy things I think.

So when you say 'the best thing you can', do you... bearing in mind that this whole thing is a bit of a minefield... do you feel that your purchasing is making some kind of difference somewhere?

Erm, I feel like it's making a minimal amount of difference, but some, yes. As much as I reasonably can without having a whole load of upheaval in my life, then yeah.

OK, so I suppose it goes back to why you think it's important. Do you see the responsibility being with individuals...

Yes. Yes, because the individuals make up the masses that make the difference, so if we all, erm, chip in at least a bit I think that's where you can win, really. And, er, I also try to get other people to do things. Not in a kind of bossy way, I hope [laughs], but I'll tell them about things and I'll help them or I'll give them a sort of reusable bag, or I'll try and let them know information that they might not have known otherwise have known, because I'm in a privileged position to have more information than others, and I've certainly done it with students, but through sustainability modules.

Do you feel an extra responsibility because of that?

[Pauses] Because what? Because I'm a lecturer?

Yeah, well... because you feel that you have more knowledge than, you know, the person in the street, and because you're in a position to be able to communicate that?

Yes. I could share that and I could encourage them because I feel I'm in a privileged position. I don't just feel like that's a burden, but then that's a privilege that I can have access to hundreds of people whose behaviour I could help to change for the better...

Alright. So, when you think about the whole supply chain, would you instinctively feel that the responsibility lies primarily with the consumer, then, or... whose responsibility would you think it is to influence some of these issues?

You can't have responsibility without knowledge, and the supply chain and the retailers are not offering us that knowledge for the most part, so maybe 0.1% of the suppliers will actually let you know what all the details are. Because I've worked in the business I've seen all the many, many opportunities there are to not behave sustainably and they would never come to light! So it lies with the consumer, but not solely with the consumer because I know that the retailers and the suppliers can do way, way more. Even if the consumer did nothing different as far as they're concerned, suppliers and retailers could completely turn that on its head by choice editing what

they were offering. Consumers could not know any different except that they would probably be paying more money, but they're already paying more money at the moment because VAT went up, cotton process have gone up, wages have gone up (in some cases!).

So what you're saying is that organisations could act more unsustainably and get away with it...

And they are. And always have! I do think they can take responsibility, though... they're moving towards it - it's completely standard practice for everyone to have a CSR policy, whether they're put into practice I doubt... everyone's just following that as a trend initially, but I think (and I hope that it's moving that way) that there is some change in direction by some significant people, whether they're small companies who are very committed to that or big companies who have made that a component of what they do, so I think it's moving in that way. My concern is that it's not doing it to the extent or the speed that it could.

What do you think is holding that progress up?

Um, recession has been a big part of it, because we could see that by the fact the figures sort of plateaued when it went crazy, when they were increasing by about, what, 80 to 90% every year for sustainable clothing, and the suddenly [in] 2008 it all went and plateaued. So, then just merely staying in business - making business sustainable in a basic financial sense was a problem, so I think that was part of it. However, the clothing business has generally been very buoyant and you've got some companies that do astoundingly well, so Primark continues to do that, with Asos and that kind of company. So I don't think it will stop them doing it, but they just want to get the maximum profit they can and that's always been, as far as I can tell in my experience, it's always been the guiding route of the fashion business - just to make as much as you can as quickly as you can. And they're starting to rethink it... a little bit... but not enough. Too little too late [laughs]!

So where do you feel the ... maybe pressure is the wrong word... but you've got this sense of responsibility - do you think it's your position that gives you that sense of responsibility...

No.

...or do you think you've got that sense of responsibility and your position is a good opportunity to use that to influence others...

Yes! Yes, exactly.

So where do you think that sense of responsibility comes from? Are you able to identify if there was a point at which you saw there was a different way of doing things, or if...

I think it had always been there in embryonic form. So, I remember things from school where... I didn't go to a C of E school, but I do remember, sort of, the things that they would say about putting yourself in other people's shoes and thinking about that sort of thing. So, I think I grew up with a very moral ethic from school.

Was that from a religious sense, or...?

Yeah, probably from a religious sense from assemblies and RE and that sort of thing. I didn't believe in any of the faith at all, and I didn't learn any morals from [inaudible] or whatever, but from School that was part of it. But I think that I must have had an innate sense of doing good and being interested in that, and I think getting praised for doing well, and we used to get Smarties if you got an 'A', and luckily for me I got a lot of Smarties! Perhaps we should do that with students! But, yes - so, I always got praised and noticed so... I was a middle one of four children, so classically you don't get noticed if you're in the middle. So I could wear unusual clothes and things like that... I only found this out later and I was like, 'yes, that's right!'... and the thing that got me noticed was if I did well at school. Embarrassing though it was having my family showing reports to shopkeepers and things like that, or sketchbooks and things like that, so yes, my art and my grades got me noticed. So doing well and doing the right thing seemed to be something that formed part of my identity from being in primary school. So I think that's a part of it. Because then you have to think that, well, the whole family grew up in the same circumstances and none of them have this particular interest, so I think I was defined... if we were all [inaudible] then I would always try and

be the virtuous one. I would always want to do things right and probably felt comfortable with rules and following the rules, and being quite disdainful of those that weren't, like my brothers and sister!

Do any of your brothers or sisters now share any of that same outlook on the world?

No, none of them have any morals whatsoever [laughs]! Yeah, actually things that I would certainly consider to be immoral that I would never get involved in... it sounds like they're doing something terrible and illegal which they're not, but... things that... it sets me apart from them. It's almost a way of standing out by doing the *right* thing.

So what I want to do is think about some specific instances where you've bought items of clothing that might be a favourite item of clothing, or maybe the last thing you bought or something like that. You said at the start that sometimes you take sustainability issues into account. How often... could you quantify that in terms of... and when would you take sustainability into account?

OK. I would say that I always... I would always consider it. It would always be there in my mind, but other factors might mean that that's ignored. So it's always there, erm... and one of the things that I will do – it's almost the opposite of that because I'll try to buy less than I used to, and therefore I'm being more sustainable when I'm not shopping, of course. So when I'm shopping I'll try and take things into account. So, for example... I didn't intentionally do this, but this is the last thing that I bought, which was these boots. Now, I bought them in the sale. Obviously that's good to me. That's another thing – if you tell your Mum that you saved such and such amount when actually you spent loads of money that's a good thing [laughs]! So, I wanted these... I needed them for practical purposes – this was for a trip overseas, so I wanted something that was going to look fashionable, but I knew actually that it was probably going to be snowing. As it was it turns out it was far worse weather here than it was there! So, I bought these in the sale. I looked around quite a few. I even bought some elsewhere and realised when I put them on they weren't quite right so this was a really long, considered decision – I knew it was something that I needed. Um, if you buy things in the sale I reckon that's being sustainable in disguise, because... if... if it's in the sale they're not going to make more of that, they're going to get rid of it. So this is from my knowledge of how the business works, so it's a mark-down – they're going to get rid of it. If it's full price and people buy it, they'll order more of it. So you can be more sustainable by buying stuff in the sale which would otherwise likely go to landfill. So you're rescuing it from landfill.

Would that happen normally?

Yeah, yeah it would. Some send them to charity. George sent a lot of stuff to charity. Again, this is something – I mean, probably very few people who would have all this knowledge about how all the things work together, and I don't know whether or not any one would know any more – probably very few people would know more than me, but a tiny percentage of the population would know that. So if you get things in sales, that's better – it's not going to be chucked away. And some stuff does go into landfill sadly. Um, some people have given things to charities that do things for children especially. George did a big thing with coats and I think about five other companies did that. So, they were in the sale and that was sustainable in itself, and, um, they're leather, which might be seen as immoral by some but which is obviously more sustainable than using up fossil fuels. And when I got them they offered me a spray for them, and they also had a new machine – this is in Jones – and they said 'if you put it in this machine, it's carbon neutral, and they'll proof them for ten weeks of wear', like if you wore them every day for ten weeks in the snow, then they will last.

I know nothing about Jones! Is it well known for being a sustainably-aware company?

No. No, it's just very traditional. But they were selling it on the basis that it was carbon neutral. It cost me £3.50 to have them proofed, and I knew I was going to go into some snow, so it's going to make them last longer – obviously I try to make things last longer so that was an influence. I asked her about the spray. Now, the spray cost twice as much, but obviously this was just a one-off at £3.50 to get these done, so financially it would have been better to get the spray because I would have kept that for few years, but I made that decision about having them proofed on the

basis that it was carbon-neutral. And I asked her about the spray and she didn't know. I'd never seen it [the machine] before, so I didn't make the decision to go into Jones knowing about that – it all just happened there and then. But my thinking was both I advance, and then on the spot in terms of sustainability.

Had you set out to buy something was sustainable in some way? Like, do you have a list of companies that you perceive to be 'ethical' and you would always go there first?

Yes, yeah – so I would look at People Tree, erm, I've been to [inaudible] but that was when I was just passing in Manchester so I didn't massively seek that out because I knew that a new branch had opened, and I knew about that because I read it the fashion press. Erm, but that's it mainly. I would look, I mean if there was a major store that's got a more environmentally friendly range then I would do that, so I would get an organic t-shirt rather than an ordinary one, but then, you know, organic's got its problems as well, so... er again there's this compromise isn't there, that whatever you get is probably going to do some harm and you can't be carbon neutral. So, just buy less really. But I have bought less – I wouldn't actively go on as many shopping trips, and yet I've got more money than I've ever had, but I'm not buying more clothes. But what I will do is I'll sometimes buy more expensive clothes... so a lot of these things that actually sound like terrible things that *women* would do, like going to the sales and buying really expensive stuff, are actually, in disguise – these kinds of sustainability in disguise things! This is all what I tell my husband anyway!

So some of those smaller, niche companies – like with the pair of boots... did you try to look for those in any of those niche retailers?

No, because there isn't a shop, and for boots – I definitely wanted to try them on and see what they would be like. So, yeah, with something heavy like that I wouldn't buy it online.

And you don't think there is anywhere on the high street that that you would identify as being 'sustainable' for shoes?

No, it was hard enough to find any that met, kind of, the style and practical criteria, erm... without it also being a sustainable one, so that limited availability – that classic thing that causes the problem, really.

With the boots, if you took out the sale issue, although there was an 'advantageous side effect' of the proofing being carbon neutral, would you have perceived there to be any sustainability benefits in those at all?

Erm, well, with the fact that they're leather, what I do now, especially with the children, is to make sure that they've all got leather shoes otherwise they get scuffed and you have to chuck them away and they go to landfill and so on, whereas at least leather can break down and hasn't released any fossil fuels, so that can come into it. So that's a key thing. Erm, I'll try to not even let them have fabric shoes and that kind of thing, so – yeah, it's very frustrating for my daughter! Especially as they're all wearing fabric shoes now, which sounds rubbish doesn't it?! But obviously a lot of this is influenced by the work I've been involved with around longer lasting products.

Do your children have that – do you think you have passed it on to them a little bit?

Yes, yes I do get them to think... because, my daughter – she will repeat the arguments that she's learned verbatim from me [laughs]! 'Oh, we can't do that...', or it might extend beyond that because: 'oh, we shouldn't go there because we'll have to use petrol to get there'...

So it's not a point of tension that they can't have those shoes – they understand why to some degree?

To some degree, yes, but I'll discourage her from buying too much stuff, but she does want expensive stuff anyway, so she'll want everything from Jack Wills, for example, and so I'll say 'ok you can get that', and she'll get it in the sale. And I let her make decisions about clothes – I let her have a set amount of money so she can decide. So, yes, I think she's got some of it, but obviously at that age the style and the fit is absolutely essential to her – it's the number one thing in her life.

If we take the boots as an example again, would you say that you felt satisfied with what you had come away with at the end, or was there anything that you didn't feel you were too happy about?

No, I'm really pleased with them. It would have been nice to also know something about the manufacture, but on footwear apart from terra Plana I don't think I've come across anything where there's any mention of it [sustainability]. It seems to be lagging behind the clothing side of it. The clothing side is racing ahead, but with footwear it seems entirely absent.

Do you find that generally when you're buying clothes? Do you tend to find that you can get what you want?

Um, style-wise, usually, yeah. I don't think fashion's very exciting at the moment – I've seen it all before. I've bought some things that I used to have in the 80s! I got a burgundy jumper and I thought, I wore that when I was 17 – it's the same thing. Not the actual same one, although I do have a Vivienne Westwood top I bought in the 80s, so I do keep expensive things! So, yeah, I would say... I did used to wear second-hand stuff all the time in the 80s, but that wasn't... we didn't know anything about sustainability, it was just everything that my group would do. We didn't used to go to shops – we would get everything from markets or flea markets or... shops were not a regular thing to go to at all. So I have kept some things or I may give them to my daughter. She's interested in buying second hand things as well – she's just discovered [vintage shop] here so she'll go and choose from there and online. Um, but that isn't because of sustainability that she's chosen that and it isn't why I used to do it either. So, I think really it's difficult to match everything together because of this limited availability of more sustainable things. I think a lot of companies could push a lot of different aspects of sustainability, but of course they're all holding back – they're all wary because of the accusations of greenwash, presumably, or because they haven't thought of it or they're not promoting themselves. I don't know, but I... I don't think there's still anywhere near enough information being given out to consumers. Obviously there's one or two books that handle it in are journalistic style...

Whose responsibility would you see that as being?

I think Government should do more. Um, and the media could do more about it. It could be a story that they could pick up on. Maybe, you know, ideally the Guardian could pick up on that. I know they do to a certain extent, but they could do more of that. They could have it... you know, how they have campaigns in the media. This could be something that's a campaign. It would be good if the tabloids did it as well instead of complaining about things like immigration. It is dabbled with. You know, the Times will mention it every now and again, but... So, I think in general the media could change that, but it could be fuelled by the Government press releases that they offer from Defra and so on, so I think the media and Government are key because consumers can only do so much, acting on the knowledge they have available to them. Erm I mean obviously they can actively seek it out, but they wouldn't know to seek it out, so it's this... sort of... vicious cycle.

So, going back to some specific purchases, apart from the boots because there are some specific issues with shoes that we have talked about, what was the last piece of clothing that you bought?

Um, it was probably the coat that I got to go away, but it wasn't in any way sustainable – I purely bought it because I knew I was going somewhere freezing. And I can't believe the difference, actually, because in the winter I would just stay at home and I'm not going to go anywhere or do anything [laughs], and yet I found myself walking about quite comfortably – I walked for miles in about minus seven and was absolutely fine. So, yeah I didn't take that [sustainability] into account at all because it was such an extreme condition that I was going to?

Did you try? Was that something from the outset that you thought... What was the reason...

It was prompted by seeing them in the shops. I'd been to the shops and noticed there were lots of these sort of puffer coats around that weren't just like the old puffer coats but actually looked relatively stylish, as far as I thought, in comparison., so that just triggered off making me think: 'oh, well, actually, I should maybe get one of those.

Was it an impulse?

It was an impulse in the sense that it was triggered by seeing it in the shop. I very rarely go; 'ooh, I'll just pick that up!' Um, I would have in depth... I would probably go through that extensive decision making process for something that's much cheaper than other people would bother with it for, so I'll go back and I'll see... so I knew they were in Zara and in Mango so I went and tried them on before deciding.

Why do you think you do that? Why do you think that's different to other people?

Just... safety. Definite safety. And comfort. Because I'd feel really guilty if I just got it on impulse and I found out it was cheaper or better somewhere.

So when you say 'safety and comfort', what do you mean by that?

Well, I mean mentally comfortable. Just kind of, more relaxed about it!

That you felt you were being ripped off, or the sense that you hadn't got the best deal...?

Not ripped off, but that I was missing out on something somehow, so if... um... if I could have got a coat that was warmer or warmer and cheaper or that sort of thing, so, um... I often don't try things on, so that 28 day rule that has come in in recent years means that that removes some of the risk for me, so that... because if I'm in town I just want to be looking around the shops – I don't want to be looking around the changing rooms! But coats I think I tried on just in the shop. Yeah, um, so that's why. Yeah, and also, thinking about it, I also looked it up online, so I did all the research that I could to make the best decision.

So what were the things that you thought you felt particularly satisfied with?

Well..., um... oh... I actually... gosh, yes – my decision making is terrible, actually! I bought two coats because I was going to the till and then I saw another one that might do and then I didn't have time and I had to get the children home and everything, so actually bought both knowing I was going to take one back, so I could try them on at home and also ask my family's opinion on them. So, I'd forgotten about that, yeah – I took one back and kept the one that I had thought about for longer. Erm, yes, I suppose, it's not the thought of getting ripped off, um, if I could have got a better bargain. It seems to me an important thing to get the best value for money that you can. So when that goes alongside buying something that's not sustainable... This is why I mentioned about the sales because my experience tells me that sales are better, so if I can win on both counts I'm very proud of myself! And if I can say to my mum: 'ooh I got that and it's... the boots were supposed to be... oh, I can't remember now... £180 and they were £85 instead' or something like that, then I'd be really proud to tell somebody that. I'd never want to say 'oooh my boots cost £180', I'd always want to say 'I saved all this money'!

Would you ever find that acting in a way that was really sustainable would give you the same sense of pride in telling someone else about?

Yes, I would, but there's less opportunity for you to say that. Like if that... I would tell friends that. Like if I mention something I've worn recently rather than something I've bought recently, I've got a skirt from People Tree, so I made sure that I wore that when I went to this sustainable fashion exhibition. I did refer to it with a couple of them, because I said I've already done a case study on People Tree before, and this skirt for example... and somebody said 'ooh, yeah, that's really cute that skirt' or something like that, and then I was proud that I'd said it was environmentally friendly but they also lied the way it looked, so for me that's really important to me, being a 'fashiony type'.

You ought to get them to give you free stuff in return for endorsing them at conferences!

Yeah, that would be good! There is one thing that I want to mention to you about buying sustainably – this thing that I said about sales. So I'm saying that's a good thing because it helps people to dispose of stock effectively, but last year I bought some stuff from People Tree and saw a dress that I liked. And it's not the sort of thing at all that you would expect to be in a sustainable range – it was quite a formal sort of business dress – it's got stitching on it – I like anything that's got quite big sort of saddle stitching on it, when it's like a decorative feature – not just to hold it together, it's almost like a bit of embroidery. But to me that seems very 'fashiony', do you know what I mean? It's indicative of being interested in stitching and I've got a lot of these things.

Why do you think that it's important that you communicate that you're interested in fashion?

Because I've defined myself by that. Because I've been studying, teaching or working in that starting in 1982. So I feel that's part of me to define me, and it's sort of shorthand that somebody who is in that sort of area will know who you are, will recognise you, so it's, um, conforming to that peer group – even if those people aren't there. I mean I can come in here and not see anyone who understands anything about any message I'm putting over or... So I've got an All Saints jumper on today and anyone who goes into All Saints will know that this is their style, so to me All Saints is a brand that I really love. It's not 'sustainable', but it is if you look at that context of, it's more expensive so you'll buy less stuff. It's, um, wool or it's wool content, it's better quality, you can keep it for a while, it's quite classic in a way, because it's not 'high fashion', um, and you can wear it for quite a few years, so I'd be quite interested in that brand. But going back to the People Tree dress, what I was going to say about that was, when I bought that, my instinct was to think 'shall I buy this now?', because it was quite expensive – about £80 – 'shall I buy that, or shall I wait for the sale?', 'cause if I hang on – this is how I usually sort of hedge my bets – I'll get that for half price if I wait for another few weeks. This was just before Christmas in 2011, and then I thought 'hang on, no, think of it completely differently because if you buy that you're giving People Tree more money, and they fund schools', and I felt like it was sort of making a charitable donation, but I get something out of it as well. So I thought 'don't worry about it', and I think I did notice that it was in the sale, but I was happy with that in that I'd given them some more money to do what they do. So that changed my behaviour – if that hadn't been a socially sustainable company then I would have thought 'well, I'll just hang on until January', but I felt like I could donate by doing that. So, yeah, so I use the term 'donate' rather than just 'buy' because it is quite a different thing.

So you felt that premium was worth paying...

Yeah, yeah. I could afford to get it – it's never actually a question of whether I can afford it – another value I have had instilled... from home, really, not from school but from home – is that you must be really careful with your money.

So if you take those two companies – People Tree and All Saints – as examples of shops you shop at a lot, what would you see as being the big difference between their values? The values and methods that they put into their production – do you see them very differently?

Erm, yes, I do see them differently. I'm wondering whether I'd ever put them together – I don't think that... They don't happen to... to match in terms of the looks that you get from them...

And what about from a sustainability perspective?

Yeah, yeah, I think they're almost entirely different. I mean, People Tree go and... they know about the people they work with and they let you know about them. I've no idea about where any of the stuff from All Saints comes from. I can only assume.

Have you ever tried to find out?

I do buy from the web site as well and there isn't anything that I've ever found on the web site, whereas on People Tree, you click on the item and there would be a bit straight through to where the factory was, so they make it easy for you to do that.

Would you ever use buyers' ratings guides or anything like that to try and find out?

[Pauses] I haven't done, no. It wouldn't even occur to me that that would be a possibility, really. I haven't had time to read anything so I haven't subscribed to anything, even the sort of fashion press or whatever that would be particularly important for me, or Retail Week, so the subscription is definitely a barrier.

So where would you say your knowledge of sustainability issues came from generally?

It would be experience in the industry.

So when you shop at All Saints, for example, do you feel like you're having to make any sacrifices on the values that might make you shop at People Tree?

Er, yes, partly, but not as much as if I had bought it at Primark. Because when I first learned about all this my biggest influence was the ABCSI conference in 2006 or 2007 and I learned all these things from scratch when Plan A had just been launched and people were talking about various things, and this was all new to me, and one of the things they said was just to buy less often and to buy more expensive, quality things, so that isn't an approach I had really taken before. Erm, so I realised that it didn't just have to be overtly 'sustainable'.

OK, so what percentage of the money that you spend on clothes is spent at the 'niche' companies like People Tree?

A small percentage because I enjoy shopping in shops and being able to go round, and maybe that comes from never having had any clothes from shops when I was younger whatsoever, erm, and so that still seems like a wonderful luxury to me to be able to do that, so, erm, yeah, I do mostly get it from shops and there just isn't the offer in shops because they're mainly online really. So, er, yeah, very little of it. If there was a shop in town that actually was filled with sustainable clothing that would be fine, or if I go to Sainsburys they only sell, erm... is it.. Fair...Trade, or... organic? I think it's just Fair Trade t-shirts so I would... yeah, I would go for that option over and above an ordinary t-shirt. But, if an ordinary t-shirt was a fantastic colour or something, or it was a really good price, and I could get the latest colour for £3 or something, then I would still go for it.

Are there any companies you definitely wouldn't buy from? You mentioned Primark...

I didn't say I *wouldn't* buy from Primark – I just said I didn't feel good about them! [laughs]. But it also feels good – it balances it out, it neutralises it because it's cheap, and er, that's the only shop I've ever gone into and it, I've thought 'oh I like that t-shirt but I can't decide which colour – oh, I'll just have both of them'. I certainly don't do that all the time – I've done it for a t-shirt and cardigan about five years ago or something, but um, yeah – I would still go in there, erm, because I don't particularly think they're any worse than anyone else. Erm... any high street shop could do those things.

But you might feel bad afterwards?!

Yes, I would feel particularly bad if I was meeting some sustainability lecturers or something and they said 'oh, where did you get that?' and I said it was from Primark! Because there is that assumption – it's just become synonymous with bad practice, but I don't personally feel that it's as bad as it's made out to be, and I think a lot of other brands are worse than they are made out to be. Er, it's just all behind the scenes. I've seen it all happen, I've been to factories, I've seen the side that people on the street just don't have, and pretty much all of the fashion business behaves in the same way, to be honest, apart from these exceptional companies like People Tree.

So based on that experience do you feel that you can't really know what companies' practices are?

Yeah. We can... the companies can, but they're not... it's not possible at the moment to do that and let them know. Not possible for consumers to know...

Does it bother you that you don't know?

I've got too many other things to worry about in my life to have time to worry about that bothering me. The amount of time and effort it would take to find it out and I probably wouldn't get to the bottom of it at all. I mean, even if you're working for a company you can't necessarily find out yourself – I know they put a display on for you when you go out and look at it. The only way you could do that is for all the retailers to own their own factories and it's just not a sustainable financial model for it to work out like that. So, erm, no – I don't think it's realistic. But they could choose – they could tell us more – they could be honest, but we'd all be sceptical about it anyway.

Have you got any items you bought where you felt really guilty, on any level really.

Erm [pauses]... I don't like to get anything that's got plastic in in particular, but I don't think I've got anything in... um... I don't think there's any individual thing that's terrible. I feel bad because my

daughter wanted a prom dress and we spent months looking for them, bearing in mind they finish school twice in our community so they have two proms, and she ended up getting three dresses so that she could choose from them so that seemed to me... I felt uncomfortable about that, because I can manage my own behaviour, and I can wear things... if I only wore something once or twice I can always give it to somebody – I give my things to other people on a sort of sliding scale of who's more valuable – I'll give them more valuable clothes!

As a final question, do you find it easy to get the things you want in accordance with your values?

No, I generally find it more difficult to do that because if it was just values I'd buy everything from People Tree – it doesn't cost a fortune, it's more expensive than the high street and so on, but it's a limited range on offer and if I find someone else it's normally either Fair Trade or organic, um... so no, it's difficult to do that and I just have to make the best of what's out there really. But I don't lose any sleep over it – I just have to do the best that I can manage to do. So knowing that I've done my best is worthwhile because you can't do any better than that, can you? So, no, I'm not worried about what I've done within the confines that I'm in. But I do have that longer term worry constantly in the back of my mind that our children are not going to live on a manageable planet. So I have to try and give them those values, so sometimes I'll do things that they don't want to do in the short term, but it's longer term to try and get them to think about how they behave. So, for example, my son went to a new school and they had to have red jumpers instead of blue and so I felt awful about these wasted jumpers, even though they were only, like, £3 from George. The money didn't matter at all, but then my husband bought three red polo shirts. Now, they have to use t-shirts for PE, not polo shirts so he couldn't use them at all and I feel very uncomfortable that he never got around to taking them back. And they're still there, and the money doesn't matter at all but I feel terrible that they're sitting there and they're not going to be worn. So it's not usually about me, it's those decisions – bearing in mind that women tend to make most decisions for the family...

Interview 2 – Steve

So, what do you find important when you're buying clothes?

Function, I think. Yeah, that's pretty important.

With a particular purpose in mind or...?

Umm.... I'm trying to think, yeah. I would say my gut responses function...as in it has to do the job that it's intended to do, and it needs to do it well. And then there's an aspect there also that there needs to...I like...where there's some thought that's been put into what's actually come out at the end of it. And therefore...so for example, you know, I'll give you an example of a coat that I bought. So a coat that I bought, have got obviously function, a basic function: it keeps the rain off. But it's quite clever in terms of the way it was designed and, you know, the pockets...how they actually are useful as in they're not too small, that you get things in them. You know; so it's actually been thought through. It's not...you know, I've had problems in the past where you buy something. You think, "Well, that looks all right," and actually it's not. So I suppose there's different aspects of function and....

So how would you assess that before or at the point of purchase? So, like, do you tend to buy...does that kind of stop you buying stuff from websites, for example?

No, no. I mean I probably buy the vast majority of my clothes from websites, (Laughter) or the....

For a particular reason?

Because the places I actually, historically have bought clothes from don't tend to be on the high street. So, you know, I just haven't.... Because they don't have a high street store, then you have to go online. But then you could also have that aspect of looking at the information that's available and evaluating and collecting the information about them if necessary.

So how did you...so if you take that coat as an example, the pocket size, how did you know...or did you buy that online?

Yep, bought online. And they have a bit of a useful video about how it's actually...this functionality, what it actually has. And they talk about a lot of the actual features in there. So you can then start to work out, "Oh, that's going to be really, really useful."

So does that...you know, that sort of suggests that maybe you've got a small number of companies that you always tend to buy from? Would that be fair?

Yeah, but I tend not to buy a huge amount...I don't buy a lot of clothes, and I suppose that's the other thing about the functional side of things. The clothes that I buy, they kind of tend to last quite a long time. And, you know, another pair, another thing that I bought, for example, in terms of functionality and longevity, I bought a pair of jeans a number of years ago, which I thought was one of the things, that they had great...I thought it was a great idea. It had like a...had an extra little bit of material in the back, because my jeans always used to wear away at the back before they wore away anywhere else, because to get the size, the length right is not always that easy. And they had a bit there that you could actually replace. So...and again, that goes back to the people that made the coat, that you actually send it back to them and they actually fix it, repair it for you.

Is it Patagonia any chance?

No, no. Finisterre. In Cornwall. But then there's also an aspect of that where they kind of have quite a clear position they take about where they source things from, and their sort of design principles.

So when you said you have this...the companies you traditionally bought things from don't tend to be on the high street. Are they all of a similar ilk? They're all probably quite overtly...sustainability, or sustainably-focused in some way or another?

Yeah. And it is not that it will...you know, that it will be a particular brand or.... So, a little while back I was trying to find a new pair of jeans. The first search term is...that I used would've been organic cotton jeans, or organic jeans, and then go from that point there to then trying to find out who stocks them. So they might well be stocked by...well, I don't know. I couldn't even remember the company that I actually got a pair from in the end. But...and I get annoyed then that I'm on their mailing list then and they send me stuff that I don't really want! But so, it was...the starting point was the material sort of aspect of it. And then...but I didn't want just any pair of organic jeans; I wanted ones that were actually quite useful, you know what I mean?

Yeah, okay. I got you, yeah. So you said that the durability aspect was quite important. So why is that aspect in particular something that you would be concerned about?

Probably because of the resources aspect of it, but because I don't want to keep having to go out and buy more clothes. I don't want lots of clothes, so. The ones that I do buy, I want them to last quite a long time.

Why is that?

I suppose that, yeah, the environmental aspect of it...but it's also the fact that I don't feel like I have a lot of money to spend on clothes if it's clothes for me. I mean if it's clothes for the children, then it's a little bit more tricky as to what I would maybe prioritise there. Do you know what I mean?

Would you adopt a similar sort of process for the kids? You know, would you try to buy for them in accordance with your values?

Yes, yeah, yeah. And a lot was using donated clothes for them which is quite useful and cost-effective. Yeah, so when we buy things for them I try and...try to have the same sorts of values. But with them, the longevity thing isn't necessarily going to be as important, although there is this thing about you know, you could pass it on to somebody else if they do last longer. I certainly don't feel financially able to buy...buy them you know, x, y, and z from whichever organisation.

But it doesn't...well, I mean I think what I'm getting at is, it doesn't come out as an inherent dislike of shopping, and going to shops and having to buy things which, I think, is certainly my motivation for buying a lot of clothes!

I've never really been into shopping, no. You know, I'm a real...for example, if I've missed the bus, I will go to TK Maxx. It's one of the few places I'll go into and actually just have a quick look in there, in the 15-minute...between the bus coming. And I have bought, you know, a few things in there, primarily because they're cheap. But again, but not just because they're cheap but because they actually fit the sort of role that I'm looking for them to play.

In which respect?

It's mostly jeans. Well, more from that point of view on the functionality side of things. So there is.... They're like I kind of like...I sort of trade some of the environmental values, probably because of the price. Yeah, so there is the definite trade-off there.

I know lots of people saying in particular sale items and places like TK Maxx, that actually, there's something quite inherently virtuous about that because it's all end-of-the-line stuff that would go to landfill; otherwise...you know.

Maybe. Mine is probably more basic as to the fact that they are cheap. I've got...you know, I've got a good enough pair of jeans, supposedly reduced from £110 to ten quid, so.

Right, okay. Is that...how often do you find yourself having to make those trade-offs?

I probably...a few...well, as I say, separate from buying things for the children. Buying things for me, probably a handful or so times in a year. That's the maximum amount I would have thought, yeah.

And does it...? Do you find that quite difficult when you have to do that? Is there something that you would've kind of agonised about, or...?

I do probably...yeah, a little bit of agonising about I have to think, "Oh that...have I really kind of...am I really, actually representing the sorts of things I believe in and most of the principles that I have by doing that?" But I suppose I explained to myself, related to the...well, I can't afford to always go out and buy x, y, and z each time. And I suppose it's different with different clothing as well, I suppose, because with things like underwear, I'm probably more inclined to make...to have a trade-off with those.

Why would you say that in particular?

Although I do go for Fairtrade Cotton underwear rather than...and I would go...I buy that, basically from the supermarket.

Okay. Why would you say with items like that there's a particular trade-off that you've got to make? What's different about underwear?

I seem to wear them out quicker. (Laughter)

Right, okay. All right, fair enough. Well, I'd say yeah, in terms of durability?

Yeah, they don't last as long, so...you know. Because...yeah. I don't know, if I'm sort of going to reflect, I'd probably say, well there is also the fact there that it's not seen, you know, I might.... I don't know. I'd still buy, I still would go for, you know, Fairtrade Cotton underwear, and that's.... I suppose predominantly, primarily, because a lot of the other places I would go don't really sell underwear and I actually, with that, specifically want to know what it actually is like, and I can get it and send it back. But I'm probably more...I'm happier sending a pair of jeans back if I didn't like them rather than sending an item that's not cost as much. You know what I mean?

So you mentioned that you would normally...so say if you're buying a pair of jeans, the first thing that you'd try...you'd search for would be organic cotton. Would that be true of most things that you'd buy? Or does that just apply to jeans?

I think that's probably...yeah, jeans sort of....

Put pants to one side?!

Pants to one side, yeah!

(Laughter) But, you know, jeans, t-shirts, shirts....

Yeah. Those sorts of things.... And I actually...I have to say that I'm not.... I kind of prioritise it, but I haven't really...I sort of agonise about that, because I don't necessarily know for definite whether that is better than not going for non-organic, because the whole sort of process of crop-growing and et cetera, et cetera. But in some ways, I try and rationalise it by saying it's much more likely to be able to be used at the end of its life if necessary, but I hope it will also for me, hopefully, last longer because there's an aspect of, if somebody's bothered to make it out of this material, they probably thought about how to make it, you know, and therefore how long it's going to last, and those sort of things.

So what are the sustainability aspects of organic cotton that you're concerned about particularly?

The potential...I mean I've been trying to look at a few studies, but just trying to look at what the overall environmental burden of growing organic crops is versus going non-organic, and obviously the intensity of one is greater than the other. And depending on which life-cycle analysis you look at, you know, the water use is greater, the yields are, you know, up or down, where it's grown, and therefore, the transportation cost, and those sorts of things as well. You know, I think that most of...not always clear where the cotton comes from as well, because obviously they tell you where it's manufactured, but they won't necessarily tell you where the actual raw materials come from, or.... So, you know, it might be processed in European Union, and made in the European Union, but it's not necessarily grown in the European Union.

So would you say that it's the environmental...sustainability or the environmental aspects that you think are the most...you would say are the most important to you? So you prioritise organic over Fairtrade, normally?

If it was a label, if it was...you know, this is, you know, organic cotton certified, so whatever governmental standard, that is.... There's a clothing standard, isn't there, you know, versus Fairtrade label, something that I would prioritise, the organic label there, because I don't necessarily believe in the labelling of it, you know, the assurance that the Fairtrade has actually given me.

Why not?

Because it seems to me not as rigorous a process to get the certification as the sort of organic side of things. You know, there isn't...it isn't necessarily that clear always as to what is meant by, you know, "Fairtrade," "fairly traded," "fair Trade," capital F, capital "T" you know, and which standards are actually being applied and how and.... Which is why, you know, with one of the companies I buy stuff from, you know, they appear to be much more open [compared] to other similar companies about where their stuff's coming from, and almost sort of showing that line from all the way from where it's produced, all the way through processing to the manufacture to you, as well as the process for remanufacture as well, so that's... So in that case, I'm willing to bear a little bit more for it.

Do you find it easy to find the things that you want to buy that are organic?

No, not really. (Laughter) That's why I had a problem with the jeans, because the couple that I did.... Howies, I used to buy jeans from Howies. But they now have gone to very bland styles, you know. And so I suppose they're not...yeah, just like, I'm sort of thinking as well what I said about function thing. I'm thinking I might have.... There's a functional aspect, but then it's the function it provides for me as well, you know. So it's not the fact that I need a pair of jeans to actually cover my legs. (Laughter) But there's a function, as in it fits into my wardrobe as such as well. As in, that's the sort of style that I like. And I'm not a skinny-legged jeans kind of person, (Laughter) which seems to be the popular thing, and.... And then, I think certain people don't look great in skinny-leg jeans, and therefore I do look for a...you know, a particular style, probably - a little bit more roomy, maybe, not so fitted.

So do you feel like your wardrobe has been fairly consistent over the major parts of your life?

Pretty much, yeah. I would say that I'd probably...certainly since the early '90s, it's pretty much stayed constant. (Laughter)

What changed in the early '90s?

I think it's just the availability of, you know. I think it became available, certainly from back in the 1990s. You know, and it very much was I started buying into stuff from Howies, you know. I kind of like...I liked the notion that they were a small organisation as well. They weren't, you know, Levi's or whatever. They were kind of a bit niche, and they also seemed to kind of be trying to do stuff a little bit different.

Did you stop buying so much or feel upset when they sold out to Timberland?

I haven't actually bought much from them since, no. So, you know, I....

Because they're independent again now as well, you know. They've bought the company back from Timberland.

Yeah, it was when they...but primarily, it wasn't because of being bought out by Timberland; it was primarily as a result of that it seemed to be the Timberland name that drove the design. It's...pretty prior to that, they seemed to be...they were...they tried a lot of different things. And therefore, they...you know. That was quite good. They had...it wasn't just a standard, as I say, standard jeans kind of thing. It was, they had a range of different things that they were offering. Whereas now it seems to be some pretty standard styles, and that's it. You don't get anything different, so.

Yeah, okay. And buying in an environmentally sustainable way, has that been fairly consistent throughout your life, or, you know, are you able to identify a point at which that became important?

It certainly was early '90s, definitely early '90s, because I had more control over it. And that was because up until that point, up until when I came to university, I was in the army. And I had my meals provided for me, so I had no say over what the, you know, what went into it. I got provided my uniform, so.

But would you say you still have the sort of those ideals, that environmental awareness?

Yeah.

Where did that come from, do you think? Is that...is there...?

I think mainly from...and I suppose in many ways it did influence the sort of degree I took. I seem to remember writing something in my personal statement about that, you know, an affinity with the outdoors. So it's the...and I suppose in some ways kind of feeds through into my dress sense (Laughter) and the functionality aspect of it. Yeah, so it's about getting outside and going for a walk...you know, go walking in the countryside that kind of thing, you know... ..cycling, or that sort of stuff. So that's where, you know, if you're out there in the environment doing stuff, then you can enjoy it. You feel like you ought to...or you want to do something that helps to (Overlapping Conversation) so it continues to be fair and...you know.

Is that something you always did as a kid? Was it you're always kind of...so you have that kind of outdoors-y lifestyle, or...?

Yeah, I definitely remember, you know...those were sorts of stuff.... Certainly with that...when we did those sorts of things, that's the sort of time I liked, I enjoyed. So we used to go walking quite a lot with my granddad and did quite a lot of...fell running and things like that with my dad, things like that. That sort of thing was...yeah. More so than just, you know, playing football or going shopping.

Yeah, well, you can play football on a pitch in the middle of an industrial estate, and you don't really feel like you're outdoors, do you?!

Yeah, and to think of the aspect of, you know, getting out the space...yeah. That's something that has definitely got a.... And I suppose, as I say, from the functionality, maybe that's the kind of thing that you'd kind of...you know, that provide, you know, provide a purpose for more people...more than one purpose, yeah.

Yeah, okay. And do you feel that you're able to make any kind of a difference through the way that you purchase?

I think I hope to... I hope it makes a difference, you know, as well as providing employment to people in small companies, often in, you know, parts of the country that aren't necessarily booming, and when it comes to (Overlapping Conversation). And I suppose, you know, you would hope, yeah, you make a difference, like, as I say, down the supply chain as well, to the places they are getting materials from and actually getting, from a fair trade point of view, that is actually happening there and getting a fair price for the products that they were actually producing.

So obviously, that's the sense that you hope that you're making some kind of difference, you know.... I suppose within that there's a sense of responsibility, perhaps, tied up in that? Would that be fair to say?
Yeah.

Who would you say in the main that sense of responsibility was to?

I think that it's, you know, it's a kind of dual responsibility, to the sort of people that are involved, and....

So in what way do you mean in terms of people that are involved?

Well, it's...I would hope that if I do a job, I get a reasonable wage for what I do, so I hope that they get a reasonable wage for what they do as well. You know, it enables them to do the things that they want to do in their lives rather than being, you know, tied to work because they never earn enough or educate themselves and that sort of stuff. But then, there's also the wider responsibility to the environment, you know. To exploit the environment seems like a bit of a silly thing to do, really.

Yeah, okay. So wrapped up in that is the idea that the sort of smaller independent companies would tend to have fairer working practices and all that kind of stuff?

Yeah, I suppose so, yeah. I would hope, yeah, (Laughter) that they do. They certainly seem to say that they do. It's not always easy to find that information from them. But they all tend to be different, and actually you tend to be able to have a much better relationship. You can actually pick the phone up and speak to someone, and actually speak....

Have you done that?

Yeah, yeah.

Is that something you do fairly regularly?

No.

How many times have you done that?

I've tried and never succeeded with Howies, but I've always succeeded when I wanted to speak with somebody at Finisterre, yeah. So.

It's interesting that Howies wouldn't?

Well, they never responded to any particular questions that I was having; I'd always tend to get just a general response.

That's interesting.

If a response at all, yeah.

Because...they're quite open on their website, and I think one of the things with small companies is – and Howies have always been quite open about this, I think is that, particularly before the sort of the money came in from Timberland. They...they just said, you know, actually, auditing and supply chain is incredibly expensive, and a company of our size just doesn't have the resources to do that. So I think what they used to certainly do was just piggyback on, you know, they find that a big company that was good at it like Marks and Spencers, for example. So they'll find out who Marks and Spencer's supplies are, and they'll piggyback on to those suppliers knowing that Marks and Spencer's will do the audit....

Yeah, I know. I mean I kind of.... Yeah, because I'm not.... A few...a couple of times, I tried to... [inaudible 00:29:27] (Mumbling) Anyway, I tried to.... I even offered my services for free to them, as part of the work that I was doing, but I didn't get....

So was that in your...that contact, was that in your capacity as a consumer or in your capacity as a researcher wanting find out more about a case study of the organisation?

Well it's a (Overlapping Conversation) as a consumer of their product.

But yeah, did you approach them as you lecturer/researcher or did you approach them as you as Howies customer?

Me, howies customer, yeah. But with also saying that (Laughter) I mean, "I also do this." And if you're you know, "If you're interested in a conversation or whatever then I'd be happy to have a chat and be able to help you out, you know." Because you see you know, I've always...from a work point of view, like always trying to get involved with organisations and often you know, volunteering to kind of help somebody out. Gets you insights into organisations that you wouldn't otherwise have which you can then use to talk about. Yeah.

Okay. Just going back to...you mentioned about your degree. What was your first degree in?

Environmental studies in Business.

Okay, then that I believe came out of that interest that you previously mentioned?

I believe that it was...there was dual kind of thing, that is; that I was interested in environmental studies, but I was also interested in the business angle to it as well. You know, how does this actually relate? Because it's sort of you know, I wasn't...I didn't want to do an environmental science degree, I wanted to do something with more I suppose a practical sort of thing. Yeah.

So just going back to this thing about responsibility. So I think that maybe tied up to that are ideas around the extent to which addressing environmental problems, for example are the responsibility of consumers or somebody else. And obviously you feel a sense yourself that you as a consumer have some responsibility?

Yeah, yeah.

Do you think generally that that's where the locus of the responsibility lies or...you know, who do you think ought to be taking responsibility for addressing these things in the supply chain?

I think it's a responsibility all the way along. I mean because...and obviously decisions that I make will ultimately you know, in many ways will have an influence on whether XYZ organisation's in business or not. (Mumbling) But they likewise are the stuff that I keep about Howies in business or whatever. But they've obviously got legal responsibility to recognise what their impacts are and what their priorities are, related to what my priorities are as a customer for them, so. And then obviously I need to coordinate with that, so...and be honest and open about that in the communications and the information that they provide that enables me to make the decision. And I suppose...I mean at the end of the day there's also a governmental role as well. Just that because I suppose they will set the part of the context in which that production and consumption actually takes place. And in some ways because it's not going to be just within one nation's boundaries; it's going to be certainly across national boundaries as well, so.

Yeah, okay. So just going back to a couple of points that we raised earlier. So the first one you were talking about pants earlier. So I don't want to dwell too much on pants, but you said that there was the issue that it can't be seen very easily and that might be an important factor in your decision?
I've learned that.

So is it...is that kind of conspicuous side of it something that's important do you think? Or what did you mean when you said that they can't be seen?

I think I was talking...thinking about this the other the day as well because we did a lesson on personal branding the other day. And if I suppose if I'm honest, then I will say it's also important to me about what it says about me. So the consumption activities that I'm involved in - the things I actually buy, the things that I wear are an important part of what people...who they see. From then they will infer what they can about me as a result of it.

Yeah. Do you mean that from a kind of from a professional capacity or like so do you mean as someone that's identified as someone who is active in researching and teaching and it issues our own sustainability that you feel that then you've got a...?

Yeah. But I think I'm also interested in teaching and researching that area because of...you know. Yeah. I think...yeah. There's a congruence...I don't know what the word is...with the two areas. I'm not...I don't brand myself (Laughs) as the environmental kind of person. I don't sort of consciously do it but I am aware that the sorts of things that I buy will say certain things about me. But it's not...I don't it's a...I'm not doing it so people think that about me. But there's also that, which is why I thought, "Will they say anything about pants?" or something. But I do know the two experiences I've had of you know, organic pants have not been good - just a really bad fit. And they were quite expensive and they didn't fit very well.

They are important, pants!

They are. (Laughter) So you know, they've got to provide (Laughter) even if I'm not aware they're organic or not, you know, even if they're you know, they're you know, merino wool pants or whatever you know.

So do you have... a particularly favourite item of clothing?

Oh, right. I think my coat, yeah.

The one that you...so that's the last thing that you bought as well?

No, I bought other things since then. I bought it a couple of years ago. But yeah, I particularly like that coat. Yeah. Because it fits well, it kind of...it's lightweight, it's but somehow warm. Yeah. It makes me happy when I wear it.

(Laughter) Okay. What was the last thing that you bought?

I bought...I exchanged a t-shirt I was bought for Christmas. That was from Howies. I actually bought something recently... but that was because my mum had bought me a t-shirt from them which then shrank. And then I'd sent it back and they agreed to exchange it. And then they had a sale on and I bought something. I bought something better in the sale. So I changed it for a shirt.

Okay. Before that, so the last thing that you bought that wasn't a gift or an exchange or... can you remember what the last thing was?

No, I...yeah. I'm trying to think what it was.

Was it that long ago? (Laughter)

It was. I'm trying to think. Yeah. I think I got one now. I mean...I don't know, shoes. I bought these relatively recently but they...I don't know... You see it's difficult when it comes to shoes because I've started to try and look at Puma stuff because of what they're trying to do.

Right. Which is?

Well, certainly trying to look at the overall impact of what their operations is and become more responsible and also look at recyclability of the products which is.... I suppose an emerging area is how the...when manmade, from the manmade fibres point of view have actually been, how the repolymerisation, the end process where they actually then remake it back into something else rather than...and it not being downcycled, it being actually be made back into something of equal value or greater. So these were probably more recent purchases. But....

Are they Puma?

No, they're not. They're Saucony, and that's because these fit and they're...they're actually running shoes for me are kind of like.... There's a lot of different factors that comes into running shoes. And to function, they have to work because I get sore hips and knees or whatever if they don't fit properly. Yeah.

So where's did you get them from?

Online, in a place called Wiggle, which is actually the very, very same place that I first bought a howies item, years and years and years that was the first thing that I bought from them. It was an organic cotton t-shirt.

Right, okay. And so had you gone out to try and get some Puma ones or were you just looking around for...?

No, I proactively looked for Puma ones or...and I looked at New Balance ones as well because they...some of them are made in the UK. But it's difficult to know which ones are made in UK, which ones are not made in UK and all that sort of stuff, so. Yeah. I couldn't actually find any in my size in the sort of style that I wanted both in.... I don't like white running shoes because they get...dirty all the time. But though a lot of it's about the sort of the...whether they're positive or neutral.

Are you a pronator?!

I kind of got quite neutral shoes but some of it you know, with a reasonable amount got cushion. And I can't spend too much on them because I tend to wear them out quickly.

Yeah, okay. So do you feel in the end that you got what you wanted?

I did feel like a compromise. Yeah, I felt like I got what I wanted but it felt like a compromise in terms of this isn't necessarily a perfect purchase or you know, what seems to be an ideal purchase. But I'm not 100% sure what more I could do.

Yeah. So what were the elements you felt you had to compromise on?

The organisation and what it's doing – I don't know how clear that is, it isn't very clearer than that – the information they provide, the....what will happen in the end of their life and whether they can actually be you know, remanufacture it to something else, whether they're just going to end up at a landfill site somewhere.

Is that something that you would...you would tend to do quite a lot of research about?

Well...what?

Yeah, all of the aspects that you talked about in terms of company motivations and things that they try to do, and where the product is from or...

I'd probably get into it as much as I could.

Okay. I mean do you find it normally quite easy to come across that sort of information or...?

No, no, you know, and often if you do then stop to look for it. And it's not actually always that easy to interpret. And there's necessarily...although not necessarily standardise what it is they've actually reporting in communicating information. And again I suppose it's that thing of the smaller organisations tend to be the organisations who...possibly even can back to you and respond to you and say you know, "Actually this is what we do. And this is what we're trying to do as an

organisation,” you know, don’t know. I’ve not come across any running shoe manufacturers that are...

Yeah. Do you ever use buyer’s guides to help you makes decisions?

No.

Okay. (Laughter)

(Laughter) I probably would...I would go on recommendation from friends but I’ve never...I don’t...well not...yeah.

Because Ethical Consumer do the buyer’s guides and all that sort of stuff.

No, I don’t think I’ve ever seen that.

Oh, Ethical Consumer Magazine. – it comes out every month. And Saucony always come out pretty well, actually.

Really?

Yeah. I seem to remember the last time. I know the last time I looked they did with the trainers. And I remember Puma didn’t so I was surprised by that.

Yeah, yeah. And this is thing. It’s that I haven’t actually gone deep enough into it. Therefore you know, it’s like I’m saying buy clothes for the children or buy things for the children. I possibly...I would compromise on that. I’m compromising things like my shoes whereas I wouldn’t, and I can’t maybe. I think compromising on my socks to pants and vests maybe. But still you know, they are fair trade you know. I feel like I’ve at least made a step in the right direction.

Yeah. So what...why those items? Why are they the ones that you have to compromise on? You know, why is there a compromise to have to make with trainers and kid’s clothes and socks?

That’s a good question. Yeah, I think there’s a...the longevity thing I will say about the undergarment items. I think the shoes because I’m not...because I haven’t actually probably found out enough more about them to then make a more informed decision. But then there is a question of why I haven’t gone out to try and find that one information about it, whereas you know, the last time I tried to buy a pair of jeans I agonised for ages over it. And then in the end I decided not to buy it anymore. I couldn’t find that you know, something that you know, that I was looking for.

So what did you do about jeans for example, you just ended up not getting anything?

Yeah, yeah, so. But then it is interesting. At first it’s part of that in that case because it’s actually where I enjoyed shopping. And from that I did quite enjoy the process of trying to find a pair of jeans.

But having not been able to find them?

Dissatisfied really, yeah. But I mainly said not to...yeah, not...couldn’t find the, sort of, ones I was looking for then I just...my decision is not to buy them.

And presumably that was just perceived as being a nonessential... you didn’t really need them. So what happens when all of your jeans fall to pieces?

Yeah, well this is the thing is that they get into a position now where ...

So what are you going to do? (Laughter)

Two pairs of jeans, three pairs of jeans, one of which have got a significant number of holes in them, yeah, which isn’t good.

Have you pre-empted that? Is this causing you any angst?

I have tried again to you know, tried to maybe make a concerted effort of trying to find a pair and then came up with zero. But I kind of as part of the process that’s where I came across, I can’t remember what they call it now, but the one that was set up by David, with his wife, he set up Howies – they make jeans in cardigan Bay.

But not under the Howies brand?

No, they're kind of...I can't remember the brand. It's called...I can't remember the story of the factory. There was originally a jeans factory in Cardigan Bay and they you know, they bought the jeans factory. They now produce jeans again there.

And they've...have they got nothing to do with Howies now, did they sell up?

I think...I think they sold up and moved away. What's to say they...I think...yeah. But then there is the aspect that £160 a pair I think it is. And I can't justify spending £160 a pair...on a pair of jeans.

But you probably know that, so you can buy a pair for 40 quid from H&M that will last you six months or they'll probably last you three or four years.

Yeah, there is the ones that...yeah, so one of the pairs that I've actually got because I couldn't find a pair. I did actually buy a pair that weren't organic-y kind, that weren't kind of... from TK Maxx. Because they were cheaper...they kind of fitted the bill.

Are they jeans that you enjoy wearing would you say?

But like you know, I don't know, they will never pass as a favourite pair of jeans I think, do they? I think I do. Was that you know, they...something that you wear a lot at work? Yeah, it's interesting. I don't know. This pair of jeans which are from Howies and that pair of jeans I don't particularly like wearing either because they're kind of...they're both...there's something about the style or something I don't like. Yeah. It's a little weird, isn't it?! I mean yeah, I mean I don't think you didn't...so to say I mean I don't actually... I have one suit. So we were saying about trading off, so if it came to buying a suit I would feel that I was more restricted in terms of where I could go and buy it from.

Because...? For what reasons?

Because I you know, I have to...I think I have to do quite a lot of research to try and find somebody who actually made a suit that was...and then you have to you know, I suppose more environmentally-friendly in some ways. And I'll have to try and look at the options so the whole thing's about you know, cleaning it and you know, what it's made out of, and where it's made, and those sorts of things. But then you're always going to have bespoke items or whatever, so.

Marks and Spencers made...they produced the first carbon neutral suit, didn't they? They did that last year. But they only made about 250 or something.

Yeah. So listen, this is (Laughter) the thing is my jeans purchase, I didn't necessarily buy the jeans, I was going to buy cheaper pair as a trade off. I have a tendency therefore not to wear a suit, (Laughter) so.

For that reason do you think mainly?

Because of not.... Because of the hassle of going out and finding one. Yeah.

Okay. Great! Is there anything you want to ask or...?

No, I hope that was useful.

Interview 3 - Chris

The first thing that I wanted to do...talk about as I said is perhaps some of your aspirations for morality. So, would you say that ethics first of all, does play at least some role when you're buying clothing in particular?

Yeah. Clothing is an interesting one because as an ethical consumer I probably don't focus on clothing as much as other areas. So, the moment we're doing a green build, that's taking up a lot of energy motivation or something like that. Clothing is an interesting one. I should have worn my Fair Trade shirt today (Laughter)... that I got. It takes me about half an hour to iron, because while it's Fair Trade, it's cotton and also I'm intrigued by it. If you look at the overall life cycle, it probably takes more energy if we're talking about energy, actually. So, yeah, I mean, if we're talking about myself, talking about myself and wife together, we're a family unit really and maybe talk about extended family members and things like that. So, do you want to talk about generally or clothing?

I want to talk about clothing specifically, but I'm interested generally as well, and if there are relationships between the different sort of product types that you buy, then that's of some interest to me.

Yeah. I mean, aspirationally, aspirationally then, certainly ethics would be key and very.... And then, there's actually what you can afford debate goes on. So, wherever possible, for instance, buying food wise, for instance, we try to get organic where possible. My wife's very into organic. I'm very into local and there's a difference in how we perceive things that way. I mean, like tea, coffee, all that sort of stuff, sort of fair trades seems a no brainer in that way. Clothing wise, I've got a few items of clothing that are specifically Fair Trade, but not that many. Interestingly, if you looked at across the board of things that we purchase which we purchased with an ethical mind set, clothing is probably rarer. My wife gets quite...has bought quite a lot of stuff from...is it Bishops Trading? I think. So, in their catalogue and that sort of thing. She likes it when they have sales because then they go down to about more normal pricing. So, I've...and I don't have all that many items clothing wise that would be Fair Trade. I'd like to. The challenge is just the price just seems significantly higher on that and with a sort of new child and things like that, and budgets become much more squeezed. But in terms of...talk about aspiration first of all then, I think personally I perceive that, as a consumer, one of the things that we have the potential to do... or it affects our value, isn't it? What we buy and how try to live, it's a lifestyle project in that sense. So, it's...you're trying to buy things for the...it's a reflection of your identity in a sense I think. So, you're trying to buy something because it's what *you* want to perceive yourself to *be* and the type of impact you want to have in the world and part of, as an academic here, then I've given lectures talking about corporate social responsibility, fair trade, and other things like that. So, then of course you reflect your own life when you engage in those sorts of processes as well.

Do you feel that because of that role that you have as an academic, do you feel that there's some extra pressure there to kind of live up to those values in some way?

No, it's an interesting...yeah. I don't know how widely felt that would be. I think with my political perspective, critical management studies would be one way I would advance myself, then I think then there is an onus on...I'm reading stuff about new social movements at the moment, and there's this concept of pre-configuration which is about "Be the change you want to see in the world," Gandhi's sort of famous phrase. And I think therefore then, that creates an onus of we're not living – after the revolution, then it will be better sort of thing - what can we do here and now in our own lives within our own buying power with one aspect of that of which you can make a positive contribution? Um, interesting, my brother and sister-in-law, because he's downscaled a lot and he now runs a very little charity, hasn't got all that much income. So, there are...actually everything on high street is sweatshop labour, so Primark is as good as anywhere else. I mean, they used to be all into People Tree and everything like that, and they've adjusted their value base to fit within the sort of...their financial constraints. So, there's an interesting trade-off there. And that certainly for them, a really clear identity project where at one point, it was like "Everything we buy is from that, because then they had a bit more money, and then moved into the charitable

sector, don't have any money now. So, then, actually they'd have to really configure their identity and their value system I think in that sense. For me, I think how we live is an expression of the values in which we try to embody. So, the clothing interestingly for me doesn't represent my identity that clearly. So, I don't feel that connection as I would do to my house, for instance, or maybe how I spend my leisure time or other things like that. Clothing is a bit of an anomaly on a personal basis actually. I...they're functional in a sense. They're not that expressive in that way. When we've been to the shops that sell Fair Trade things, you don't get that many more conventional forms of clothing. There's a lot of very stripy items and hippie style.

(Laughter) I know what you mean.

So, there's a very nice Fair Trade shop in Cambridge which is near where I'm from and we've been there a few times and they've got very nice values and ethics and all that sort of stuff. But the type of things...you *know* it's from a fair trade shop, let's just say, because there's a certain style, isn't there?

Yeah.

If you're buying that sort of thing for work, it's not necessarily always going to be appropriate. So, say, I've got a couple of items that are specifically fair trade. You know, we've bought a couple of other very good quality... I mean, this is the next thing. It's probably produced in a sweatshop somewhere, type of thing. And it were cheaper in the sale. And then, there are a few things there. So, I think, yeah, it's interesting on the...clothing is a bit for me, yeah, it's outside of that somewhat.

So, a few things to come back to then. So, on that issue of fair trade, is that what you would associate as being the primary ethical issue in clothing? Is that what you readily associate with the idea of ethics when thinking about clothes?

Yeah. I mean, there's a...in terms of the kite markets, yeah, there's a sort of aspiration, but I think it appeases conscious, doesn't it? It's fair trade, you know. You think that'd the ethics bit sorted for me. I don't think about it very much now because I know because I know it's fair trade and it's good. My ethical stance...I'm much more interested in local. Now, from a clothing point of view, that's rare I guess. And then actually, it's going to be quite bespoke if it's going to be that sort of thing. And I'm not prepared to spend that much I suppose and looking for that sort of alternative thing. So, for being...if it says Fair Trade, then that's a nice easy quick hit as it were. For other products that we buy, for food and for housing and things like that, then its sustainability is probably the thing I'd look at, which is why I think my Fair Trade shirt is interesting as it is. If you look at the life cycle of it actually causes a heck of a lot more ironing than this [points to shirt being worn] would do, and therefore probably [inaudible 00:08:19] probably the embodied energy over its course of its lifetime is probably higher than other items. So, yeah, it's...and then, this is what we found from a green building point of view, concrete on one hand is incredibly bad. It uses a lot of carbon emissions and that sort of stuff. But over a lifetime, it's...it does work. So, actually you've got to begin to educate yourself and learn and that's quite a lot of personal energy and involvement. And so, for me, green building is something that's quite close to my heart. So, actually I'm prepared to go on internet forums and read about that sort of thing. I've never even thought about it for clothing, because it's stuff I wear. It's so very masculine! I'm dressing myself up in a terrible light but that's a very....

No, no, not at all. I don't think it's terrible!

Whereas...whereas with my wife, it does matter more and she's more a hippie. She thinks I'm a closet hippie. So, she'd like to be embodied. The clothing that you buy and intend to buy at sort of places represents a certain...it is a definite lifestyle thing and you can see people, you know, who...it's obvious, isn't it? Some of that side of clothing. I would like to be more aware of anything else in the high street and I've often thought if you have pictures of maybe the conditions, a bit like the battery chicken, you know. You don't really want to see where it's coming from and you probably don't really want to see where your clothing is produced, et cetera. I have the assumption that probably anything else in the high street is all the same in terms of where it comes from. I have no way as a consumer...or have...probably I maybe haven't invested very much

time, but I don't know the difference between a Primark one and something in Next or River Island or Burtons or wherever else. I guess they're all probably producing the same conditions actually. So, in my mind, it's maybe wrong, but in my mind, there are two camps. Basically, the unethical, you don't want to ask too many questions, and then there's the one that's aspiring to be ethical, clothing, and that's it. I don't know if there is a grading scale, like you get for food, you get freedom food. This is sort of like...it's not bad but it's not free range sort of thing. And I don't know if there's an equivalent in production of other items. So, I think that's....so on that basis then, I guess my stance would be occasionally when I can afford it, then I will buy something and I will...I have to search for as an ethical item and then go through the catalogues and look for...the rest of the time it's like, "Actually, it is January sales. I'm just going to go and buy something because it's going through the carnage of Next and go a few days later after everybody else and just get what's affordable." That's how I perceive it. Now, I'd be interested to know if there is a sliding scale of other items within that. But as a consumer, that's how I would understand it. Those fair trade items are going to be...again, from my perception, there are certain catalogues of places so that people...things like People Tree and Bishops Trading and others that specialise and set themselves up as ethical, there's a few independent-type shops and then that's it.

But you tend to see those as being quite niche...?

Yes.

...specialist shops. Then, that would be the only place that you could get things that....

That's how I perceive it, yes. And it's a bit like, when I was growing up, being a member...my mum was a member for church so we go along and the only place you could buy fair trade tea as far as I was aware in my hometown sort of 25 years ago was that, oh, what's it? Tradecraft tea. It was really unusual. It's weird. Now you can buy it in Sainsburys and we have a debate in my house of whether we should buy our tea from...there's a local shop called Town Bites which is our local independent organic worker co-op. Should you buy from there or should you - actually, is it more positive that you buy from Sainsburys, buy your bananas Fair Trade from Sainsburys because actually then that's mainstreaming it. The corporation still have it but so it's moving from that marginal status to mainstreaming and our thoughts are actually it's probably going to do more power in a sense through the big corporation, the independent sector, creates innovation and things, and it creates a beginning of a market. It's probably more the aspirational eco consumer to begin that. But, you know, fair trade tea 25 years ago was a weird thing. Now, it's normal and it's rare to buy something, you know, not fair trade. Clothing from my perception as a consumer is again on that marginal line, I haven't seen...you go through the thing and then there's the...you can't go, as far as I know, in Next or River Island or any of those sort of, or Burtons or whatever, the high streets chains. And then, there's a little section of, "This is our fair trade" things. And it's...if you can mainstream that, it might transform that process.

You mentioned...you said a minute ago about shopping from the big supermarket carrying kind of more power. And you talked earlier about some of the research you did around preconfiguration. Is it a concept of what comes across?

So, it's what you do, be the change you want to see in the world. So, it's about trying to change, new such movements to this. So, it's idea about trying to create the type of structures in the way of living now to totally reflect the society we want to produce in the future.

So, do you feel that you have that power as a consumer? Do you feel that your individual buying decisions do make a difference?

Yes and no. I think we...you have opportunities of which you can do difference. So, like my wedding ring is fair trade gold. We did loads of research. We spoke to quite a few jewellers who just went, "What are you talking about? There's no such thing." It was very... And we found one little independent place. We actually then talked to a few "Why don't you get recycled gold? It would have been actually even more sustainable." Whereas the black diamond thing has taken off now and because the films, sort of things like that, then that's become something. You go, well, obviously, we make sure our diamonds don't have, you know, aren't from conflict zones. Gold, we don't even ask questions about that. So...and then, when we got married, we were really clear with

we tried to get everything local, organic, sustainable. We had a big debate because I eat meat, my wife's a vegetarian, but we found a compromise around that. We got local musicians who are friends of ours to play so we didn't, you know... We did all the...so it was purposely an expression, "This is the value of who we are and who we want to be in our marriage." And as a small...as a consumer, a wedding consumer, if that's the right phrase....

Well, you have to buy things...appropriate things to make it happen, you know.

Yeah, yes. And actually, it was a real reflection of our identity now, values through that. And we wrote in our little wedding booklet that we made, "This is who we are and this is what we stand for." And that was a really empowering process. It actually brought us together more. We began...no, through that purchasing decision, we actually began to say, "Who do we want to be?" So, on that basis, for...I think on top of other weddings and people sort of saying, well, actually, you know, ours is their favourite ever wedding because we'd actually invested ourselves in it as opposed to, "Right, I'm just going to go to just get this off the package thing from a hotel," sort of process. So that was a very empowering process.

So, I've got to ask, did that extend then to the wedding dress and the suit or whatever it was that you wore?

Yes, yes. Yeah. We bought...we tried to search for...my mother-in-law...it's a medieval weird wedding, right? (Laughter)

Okay (Laughter).

So, we had this pagan... the only thing we didn't want to do...but this is part of it. The standard wedding dress, you wear, bride wears once and that's it. And so, actually we wanted to wear something that we could wear again, not that we wear medieval clothes very often, but we could then take it to, you know, a fancy dress party later and go, "Actually, this is our wedding outfit." And everybody in the wedding but two people got...were dressed in medieval costumes. It was a weird and amazing thing. But we searched for fair trade cotton and silk and all of that sort of stuff as part of the process. My mother-in-law wanted to buy it from the local market because that for her was more important to see the trade. When we spoke to them, they don't do fair trade. So, actually...but it was really, really difficult to find actual just cloth that was fair trade, virtually impossible. But we found one supplier through...I think it was Bishops Trade. It was one these sort of things which I said, "Yeah, talk to that person." We found it. And so, that was really significant for us. And it was...but it took a lot more energy than just going down and hiring something or buying something or whatever. So, everything we tried to do in that, but it...we've made it very explicit in our wedding booklet all the way through. And it was about local sustainable...I mean, we went...we tried to get big pies, and we went to a local farm shop and said, "Can we have...we want them to be free range eggs." And they went, "Well, you can't do it," because it's basically little...you suddenly start realising actually how much these things are just pre-bought in and all of that. So, it took a lot more work to try to do it in that way, but that because it's a wedding as well felt a very worthwhile process about finding fair trade gold. I don't know how you found it, but there wasn't many jewellers that you could go to who even understood like, "Well, you can't get that." That's the first point, and eventually, you have to do a lot more searching. So, it's a lot more energy, intensive to do it which for a wedding, it felt very worthwhile because that's certainly...on a general everyday thing, I don't put that much effort in. So, on one hand, yes. The no answer is I would say on a daily basis it's...you end up still...we try to buy stuff from our local ethical workers co-op. But equally, it's just as easy...you know, sometimes, you just got to go down to Sainsburys and fill your trolley with stuff and all of that, and we do both. We feel better when we buy stuff... Some buy it. Sometimes, the vegetables are a bit manky and you would much rather get the washed one from the supermarkets a lot easier. And sometimes, you've actually got, "I'm not going to get home today till 8 o'clock at night, my wife has got to look after the children, etc." And you want to do something quickly out of a jar sort of thing sometimes as well. So, it takes a lot more effort and because....

Do you give that a lot of thought afterwards? Do you feel more predisposed to shopping at the sort of the local co-op and do you feel...does it make you feel bad if you don't just because you haven't got the time or whatever or...?

Well, we've come with a compromise that we buy some things from them and some things from the supermarket and work in conjunction. And you got to think realistically what can...I don't ever feel...at times, particularly when I'm reading about stuff like this, I'm then like, "Yes! We're going to get everything from them." And then, you look at the prices and then you look at some of your other things and you think, "When you then get the bank statement?" And then, you go, "Well, right, okay. Yeah, let's try to cut down." And organic is like a third more expensive very easily for a lot of stuff if not more. So, then you start thinking, "Well, I don't know." Then, you sort of...yes, there's all of that sort of stuff. From a building point of view, green building point of view, then yeah, because that whole process is very much again, it is a big lifestyle investment, then I've thought about it a lot. I've spent a lot of time and energy reading up and searching for things and all of that sort of stuff. So, again, when it's...I think there's the big decisions and then there's the everyday thing which you have to almost like regularize. And so, that's why in some ways, I would say this for instance, the fair trade bananas just makes that everyday-ness a lot easier being honest. So, I think this could be about also how much energy do you want to spend on that when you've actually got to think, so you're drawing away from, you know, your family and I think if you're going to spend all your time searching for that sort of stuff. So...but equally, you realise of course, part of it and you are creating a sustaining large-scale corporation. So, you're not necessarily changing things too much in some ways. That's why I like the local stuff to me because then even with our wedding ring, we then had a relationship with the jeweller and you got treated... we help work on the design with them and felt very much part of that collective thing. And then, they sent us cards and lots of bits, you know, afterwards and....

Where did you get it from?

A place called Adam Browns in Lichfield...well, between Lichfield and Derby. So...but it felt...and they, they didn't sell that much fair trade gold but they were trying to push it, and they were very...it felt good to be doing that because like, "Yeah, well done," sort of thing, and that's quite nice when you had validation; whereas, the previous jeweller, it was just like, "What are you talking about? There's no such thing." And it's quite nice to get back, "Yes, there is." So, things on those lines, you know, that's where it becomes...and again, this is symbolic, isn't it? A wedding ring is a symbolic statement of "This is who we are." And I don't want to have as a symbol of my marriage something that may have caused conflict in some other part of the world. We tried to talk to a lot of other people and they are...they say, "Have you thought of that fair trade gold?" And it is on people's radars. So...which I think is interesting but maybe we perceive that marriage is a particular symbolic act, quite purposely and deliberately. And that was very key for us. So, I think...in some ways to answer your question. I think I feel more empowered when I feel I'm making a statement. I think it's one way of seeing it. And so, buying certain things and consuming certain things, etc, do, but equally I think fully aware of the way in which of course, what the large-scale corporations do. They watch these things and then they go, "Oh, look, that type of thing works well. Right, we'll import that back in" and it further reinforces those big dominant thing. And Sainsburys buy in fair trade tea. It doesn't mean it's still not shipped all around the country and those sort of ways as well. You got people with the box scheme. You got people like, is it River Nene organics? They're a massive corp, right? Yeah, massive corporation really in many senses.

Yeah. Well, a big independent, I suppose, but, yeah, I mean their reach is quite large now.

And we've got friends who are farmers up in Cumbria who have their own little mini box scheme but find it very hard to compete against something. And they're growing vegetables in Cumbria which is a very unusual attempt anyway really! And of course, the River Nene and that whole collective is not necessarily that locally based but they are organic. So, yeah...so they're finding it difficult to compete with what seemed to be quite ethical. So, there's, yeah....

So I suppose the stock corporation response as well, you know. We're just giving people what they want, you know. So, that would suggest that in their view the power and responsibility relies on the consumer. Would you kind of agree with that sentiment then, that really it's up to individuals and people to say actually, "No, we want this"?

I think we don't...we don't...what is the influence is what's the information. When you come to buy that item, what information is honest? The look of it, it's the price, isn't it? It does...if it had another label and went, "This are the ethical conditions above which that whatever which produces the impact it might have on the environment. These are the carbon emissions." all the *bigger* price, then that might help change things. And of course, we live in an increasingly stratified society between rich and poor which means that people are on budgets and therefore maybe aren't able to make those decisions. And, you know, the chief execs of these corporations make quite a large amount of money, particularly in the banking sector, et cetera. So, there are issues around that.

And in clothing! (Laughter)

Yes. And I think we...I mean, the clothing's a fascinating one, isn't it? Because actually, how often do we throw things because they've got older and they're just not looking right. And now, the ethical clothing is slightly smaller because, you know, you're not buying something for...it's going to last for 30 years still, so that would be the real ethical line, would be you've got that shirt and that's the shirt you're wearing when you started working in and the day of your retirement age 68, you're still wearing that sort of item patched up maybe or whatever. (Overlapping Conversation) that the consumer responsible to societies. I'll just go back to answer your question then. Isn't it the idea that we have that we've got power of control over that? I think at times we probably have more control than we perceive in some sense, but actually equally small-scale individuals are never going to make the sort of change they wanted. And I'm talking about talking to our Undergraduate students and they're aware but they're not all that as aware as you think they would be about those sort of issues, because we don't want to educate ourselves because actually it's hard work.

Okay. So, do you find...? So, you talked about, you know, throwing things like...because they have holes in them and all that. Do you ever repair clothes?

No, no.

And do you find, you know...how often do you tend to buy things? Do you kind of...? I mean, you said at the start that clothes are not important to you but you....

Yeah. Um....

You know, do you tend to kind of try and keep up with styles and fashions and...? Do you have a high turnover of your wardrobe and all that sort of stuff?

I don't know, you tell me, tell me (Laughter). I'm going to a wedding at the end of month and my wife winding me up about. I will be able to wear my 16-year-old suit so it's the one I always wear at weddings. I think everything works and things like...I think as a male, I think fashion doesn't change as much as it does for female. There's more pressure that are there. My aim, I don't know if I've achieved this, is to buy less but buy quality that lasts which would enable more sort of ethically sourced products. And I'm trying to just...the January sales basically, that I go through, quick, get those three shirts there 40 quid now because they're massively... It got 70% off sort of thing. I mean, the last...if you look at buying things then, the last sort of...two things I bought are last January, I went out on sales and bought things. And then, about nine months...probably about a year ago, I had a couple of interviews with the chief executives. I was in for the textbook we're writing. And I wanted to wear something smarter. So, she got this jacket and I...from a local independently run family business in my hometown and then also another local independent shop. So, the items weren't ethically sourced in that sense but they were from independent local sort of retail outlets.

Is that something you set out purposefully to do, to support those local suppliers?

Yes, in a way. Yeah. I mean, the first one, I got that, is a fascinating old. What we think when...it's called Gray Palmers. And when Mr Palmer dies, then you just can't see it surviving. But it's the classic gentleman's outfitter of that era really. And the other one was I've never spent £50 on a shirt before but my wife went 'It's an amazing buy, I think'. So, yeah. And it was...but it felt positive...it was a mass chain item. They didn't know but we did ask them about the sourcing of it and all the things like that. And I think, we were looking for something a bit different then actually it felt, yeah, it was different to just going down to Next or Burtons or whatever and just getting something off the shelf sort of thing. So, that felt a more casual thing. And I think it was just that what we're trying to move to then is I expect it is less but better than then lasts. And then, my granddad is...he doesn't say but we could see him as some environmental pioneer. He has hand-me-ups and he will repair anything and he will wear, but they look....

Is that the sense of environmental responsibility? Or have a sense of thrift because that's the sort of the generation he came from?

Yes, the thrift, the thrift generation, yeah, totally, and in many ways, I quite admire it, you know. I just think actually...he looked scruffy and a mess but (Laughter) but they, you know...you wouldn't want to go far as he does. He's got holes in his shoes and he's got 300 grand in the bank and you think that only reason why you can't...why he can't see himself over...he just doesn't like spending money. There's nothing ethical about it. But it is...it's an ethics, isn't it? Source. So, yeah. And whereas I...so, yeah. So, I'd rather buy...personally I'd like to buy quality stuff that lasts and have less of it. And I think there's perhaps...I don't know. I don't know. Maybe an age aspect as well of things, so you sort of think mid-late 30's and that's sort of like...you can see, you know, what you wear for work. Right, okay. You maybe just buy a couple of shirts, two or three shirts a year. That...from a work of view, that's plenty to recycle a year, you know. You change...so over a five-year cycle, you've got 15 shirts and particularly now, some jobs you don't need to necessarily come in every day and then that opens up and you'd rather just buy some stuff that's a bit better quality or in the sale or whatever. And I hate clothes shopping –that's the other thing, genuinely hate it. So, DIY shop, I could be there for hours. God, it's so gender specific!

(Laughter) So have you got particular shops that you would always think of a lot of the time? I mean, "Right, I'm going to go there and..."

I mean, my home town is a small market town. And in a way it's got independent shops and I think we would look at... and then Cambridge where it would...yeah, it has got fair trade shops and every Christmas and over the summer. We would go to those places as part of our...so, then basically, there would be two parts to that. Basically, what's cheap in the sales and then there's the opposite line of "Okay, where does independent or fair trade, and then basically": OK, I'm prepared to pay £50 on a shirt occasionally because it will last and it's... and I know I'm not buying lots of things sort of thing. And then, if it lasts, it makes more sense than sort of buying five pairs of jeans for whatever because you just, you know, they wear out and all of that sort of stuff.

So, you talked about that shirt...just taking that as an example, it was quite expensive, and more than you'd normal spend. Is that something that you kind of feel better about having in your wardrobe?

Yeah, bizarrely. Because it felt like it was...I wouldn't say a statement but it's not quite that, but yeah it felt...I know where that's from. I know that they only sell three of them in that...no, there aren't many shops selling it. It was a bit different. And it felt quite positive and it felt...I felt different about that, yeah, definitely, as opposed to I know you're going to M&S or whatever, getting something that hundreds... 'cause the worst thing is going somewhere and then you've got somebody else wearing the same thing as you, sort of issue. So, yeah, it felt nice and it felt nice getting it through an independent place as well where they actually saw you. And my wife bought...this wedding we're going to the end of month, weighing up - she's like, I've got a confession, I've spent far more than I intended to. But the person who's selling it was so attentive. So, there's that personal connection between yourself and the retailer that you don't necessarily get elsewhere. And so, that is part of that buying experience I guess.

So, you talked about wanting to move towards buying better quality but buying less or buying fewer items. What do you think will help you to make that transition or what might the biggest barriers be to you making that transition?

Yeah. Polishing your mind set and getting into that habit. I mean, partly it's going to be very easy because I hate shopping. So, that makes it...if only I had to turn up a couple of times a year to make it a lot easier. Partly, it's about thinking about it in terms of... particularly making...I think it's...do you want to get out of the high street, you've got to make a purposeful decision. The high street is easy. You just walk by...I walk by a lot of the high streets on my way in and out of work and the clothes... a lot of the time it is too early, but they're easy to go into, aren't they? You've got half an hour to get in town and then you will just go and get something or have a look or whatever. But I think if you want to buy something that's a bit better quality, you've actually like got to spend little time on this now. I've got to think about it a bit more, I've got to engage with it more as well. And then, we wanted to try to...it's a purposeful decision. So I think it's that shifting...we live in a highly consumer society, don't we, which then - things are very disposable. I knew somebody once who literally bought a T-shirt a week, because he likes the idea of buying something new. But again, you have to spend 3 or 4 quid on one, but he likes the idea that you could keep buying new things. So, it's actually...yeah, it's making yourself decide that's how you want to do. And then, you got to transition when you've got a lot of getting yourself into that habit, It's a process really.

And I guess, I don't want to put words into your mouth, but just to confirm if I've understood it right, so, I think what you're basically saying is, that in order to do that and to buy from the places that would help you live up to your values is actually quite difficult because it's predominantly going to be from very small niche suppliers. So, there's extra effort involved in having to do that.

Yes, definitely, definitely.

And that's something that would put you off?

I don't know. I mean, that's what the clothing thing, it's just the green building thing, but it would be an analogy for the clothing as well. We're trying to build this highly sustainable house. We have to get [inaudible 00:38:02] membranes, but you can't go to your local DIY merchant, your builders merchant or whatever. Just off the shelf. And you've got to order a number of items. You've got to order them online which has got a delivery cost. And therefore, then that's £7 or £8 or more. Sometimes, it's £15. And I think I just need roll of tape here, it's 15 per delivery. Therefore, I've actually got to then buy all these other things to make it worthwhile, "Right, I've really got to think about this." As opposed to just going down to being BNQ or builders merchant or whatever, and just getting it, and it's a bit like that with a lot of clothing things as well actually. There's quite a lot of them. I do think there's a barrier thing because most of them are through catalogues as you go to an independent shop. So, the catalogue ones then, you've actually...you need to buy a certain amount before it becomes free postage. And so, then, it's like, "Okay, we're going to put in a larger order," and then, you've actually got to really go through and think about it and decide about it and that sort of stuff. So, that becomes a barrier supposed to your local shops. It's just convenient, isn't it? I need to get a shirt, that will do, buy it sort of things as opposed to actually making that as a positive decision, isn't it? And that becomes a barrier of that. Plus, of course, if you're trying to buy less, then each item becomes more significant, what you buy, in that sense as well.

Okay. You mentioned earlier that you had a few fair trade items, T-shirts, and things. How did they come about. Were they from specific purposes or...?

Yeah, I think it's...I was dragged around the shops by my wife. Then, she likes some shops. So, then, I go along as well. And then, go through and then she had fair item for her and then I will look for one for me. I don't go clothes shopping very often anyway. So, they become then...I would rather buy something from there if I can. It is just that the styles of them...

So, is this from one of the local shops that you're talking about?

Yeah, well, the fair trade local.

The place in Cambridge?

Yeah, as an example. Those sorts of shops have stuff that, yeah, certain style to it, doesn't it, which isn't necessarily for everyday use. So, that becomes a challenge I think. So, yeah. But then, it becomes on...it's on the agenda at that point, isn't it? Yeah. And I'd much rather buy something from there. It's that the styles aren't necessarily appropriate and I guess the price really but....

So when you have those fair trade things, they're typically been from there and it's been because you were there and they...?

Yeah, or we look through the catalogues. So, those few things, or actually getting stuff for Christmas. So, I don't get clothes bought for me apart from those sort of items because my brother and sister-in-law in particular, at the time they were very into People Tree, all of our presents came from People Tree. And then, he downscaled his job and now runs a small charity. And we don't get those sort of presents anymore. So...but at the time, that was...

And do they tend to be - those sort of fair trade things - they tend to be particular types of items so they kind of plainer T-shirts? You know, there's a lot of kind of pyjama bottoms, yoga pants, that sort of stuff, you know.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. There are...my wife's got...yeah, underwear and pants for poverty and stuff. It's quite nice strap line really and that sort of thing. So, yeah, it could in your PhD, pants for poverty.

(Laughter) It's not the first time underpants have come up!

(Laughter) So, yeah. So that sort of thing. But it's...do you think... And maybe I'm not searching enough, but it's just...yeah, it does feel harder work I think. Perhaps it's just not in your view all the time, the areas. It's just not for the presents I said, really.

Okay. I just wanted...there's one thing you mentioned earlier that I want to come back to. And you talked about when you were younger going to the church and then having the fair trade tea and all that. Clearly, you've got a very...what's the right word? Your sense of values, I think are quite...you know, you're quite sure of those and they're quite specific. Do you think that sort of early experience in the church was important in shaping that or the influence of your parents in some way?

It's where the values come from. The righteous thing to think, yeah, with a Church of England, Christian upbringing shaped the values I had as child I suppose, shaped that sort of thing. And you live in a thing where there were charitable actions by the church on the communities, I was involved in homeless charities for going to university shaped my views, particularly seeing people who had quite high up jobs and then losing them and then they're up on the streets and that sort of thing, and a sense of wanting to do things. I remember reading, there's a book, this one called *Bury Me in My Boots*. This is a woman who spent lots of time working with homeless people actually, you know. I think she died on the streets or something like that, a really powerful book. And then, going to places like Africa, traveling before going to university and seeing the vast amounts of poverty, but not feeling that you want to do something different about it. I think then going to university, changing a bit my views religiously, but then discovering critical Marxist, inspired critical theory, and inspired ideas, and then more recently being inspired by things like the situation that's in sort of 1968, sort of student protest and new social movements, but it's certainly that you can't just criticise it. You need to be involved in engaging with things.

So did you think there are values that you've kind of had or that you've felt from really quite a young age?

I think they're developing and they morph, but yeah, I think that I've always been slightly angry about the way the world is really. And then...but not prepared...I don't feel it as...I don't feel I want to go out on marches about it. I'd rather do something about changing my own life in a way. And obviously, what you're doing is just becoming... feeling good about yourself and not necessarily changed the world...there's this thing about wider structures versus personal responsibility. I think I gear more towards personal responsibility, towards hopefully part of that then you can say to other people, look you can do things. So our house is a standard terraced house and we're like kind of retro insulate it and we are trying to build with straw bales and timber and all that sort of

stuff. What we discovered by doing that is an amazingly powerful community of other people doing it which is different to my experience about clothes. Clothes, I'm just buying it as a passive consumer. Building, I'm an active...because I met people I've never met before, done weekend workshops for people with...I've emailed people because I've written blogs about their house. I've never... "Come in, come and see our house. This is what we've done. This is what we've done, that sort of thing." This active, engagement, you know, who's sitting on top of straw bale walls and bashing things in and it's really active and engaged, equally dominated our lives, cost us far more money than it has, probably... made a lot of pressure on family relations, etc, because you're trying to do the old and unusual ways. It takes a lot longer. There's much more energy, time, emotional involvement and far harder because you've got to come up with solutions that actually nobody has to know without too much detail, straw bales to cut at an angle. Nobody we can find has made them. So, we had to invent our own ways of doing things. So, the DIY culture of that in literal building DIY in a "you can do things yourself" culture, to me, it feels like...well, I'm not waiting for 'the revolution' or whatever it is. I want something that I can engage with now. I want...what I like with our local workers co-op food is that, A, I go in and I know the people, I know where it's sourced from, I know that their lives are being impacted by that. I have that relationship with that shop. And so, you know...so that aspect of it, I feel a sense of connection to it, and I certainly feel a sense of 'that's the community that I am part of that... I can feel that through a consumer, I can contribute a bit'. Like I say, we don't earn loads but we do earn more than the average. And therefore, I think there's a responsibility back there a little bit. So, I think part of that background is an awareness about our social responsibility and a concern for the environment and poverty and other aspects. And then, partly, there's an onus of whether what can I do about it. I don't like the idea of just saying "It's them out there." Actually, we can do things ourselves. But equally, I think there's a naivety that the ethical consumer can solve all of these problems. So, we need to be aware of the wider structural relations as well. What I like in particularly doing things like the house is that you can build your future as it were really. You can do something that is engaged that says, "This is the statement of who we are and this is how we want to live our lives." Like our wedding, it cost us about £5,000 to £6,000 and probably at least £4,000 of that went back into the local community and it sent a signal back out to us and that felt good as opposed to paying through some corporation through the nose for a standard wedding that everybody else got as a package. I don't want a package. I want to be able to create my own life. Of course, then you go on and say, well, everybody else had medieval weddings and did all that sort of stuff. But it doesn't feel like unique, but in a way it is. And it's because we authored it. And I guess, ultimately, what my politics at the moment really is about authoring your own lives. So, it's partly that. I think I should be making my own clothes maybe, but....

Well, that was going to be my next question actually, you know. Is that something that...you know, that DIY ethic, you could extend into things like clothing.

Definitely, yeah. But you've also got to know what your interests and passions are, and yeah. So, I think...and then, where are you at with those, sort of things. But yeah, I think...but maybe, you know, you can see economically there may be a shift towards everybody working full-time jobs towards that more local thing. Well, actually people do make their own stuff and repair things and all of that sort of thing. It depends on how...recession seems to be going on forever, doesn't it. And actually, what we're not able to economically say, "Okay, how can we recreate things?" So, we live in that disposal world, 'oh it's had it'. We're not really good at this in our household, but you should be able to go, that shirt - "Right, once that's used, we can use that for something else and then it becomes a rag and then it becomes a cloth that we wipe things." And that whole lifestyle cycle thing. And I think the difficulty when you're working full time, the family, etc, is that it requires a lot of energy to invest to even think that...so, maybe it's learning old skills, isn't it? It's actually...we laughed in some ways in my granddad, but his shirts never die (Laughter). Even when he's stopped wearing them. Then, they become a rag that he repairs his car with and whatever. And I think we've lost that. I think we just chuck it away. And actually, there must be a joke about him, there's a lot we can learn from his generation in a way. They were the austerity generation. So are we but we haven't learn their skills yet.

Interview ends.

Interview 4 - Isabella

So, when you're buying things generally, are ethical concerns something that's important to you?

Well, I think that this is the main topic of my research (sustainable consumption), but I was not working on this area because of my specific.... Well, it's not that I'm not interested, but not because I was a convinced ethical consumer. So it's also interesting for me to see how slightly my... I'm not sure if my values are changing now because of what I'm doing.. but I would not consider myself an ethical consumer. If I'm buying things that are ethical or sustainable in general it's more because of probably [inaudible] reasons. For example, it's easier for me to buy organic milk because I prefer the taste. While I like shopping and I like to buy clothes, I still don't really care about ethical issues while buying clothes. I think I still prefer things that I like and brands that... Well, even if now – because of my research, for example I went shopping yesterday and I went to H&M. I bought something because it was cheap, it was something that I like. But, for example, while I was paying I was looking at one corner which said something like 'give back your old clothes', so I know they are doing something in relation to sustainability and recycling clothes and things like this, but still I'm not selecting clothes for these reasons. Sometimes I can see that some of the things I buy are organic cotton, but it's not the main reason that I buy clothes instead of others.

So what would you say are the most important factors for you when you're buying clothes? You mentioned price as being one?

Yeah, but I have to like them. Not just clothes, but bags and shoes as well. And then price is the second important factor. Yeah, I think that I have, like, four categories that I expect to pay for something. So if I see a pair of trousers, so if I see something I'll say; 'well, I want to pay this amount', if it's more expensive I don't buy it. But I always have to like them because I'm kind of picky and if I don't like them I won't wear them. Yeah, and I am more flexible if I really like something, so I'll say 'yeah, OK, even if it's more expensive if I really like it I will buy it'. And I think for some categories I am more willing to pay for others. For example, for bags I will spend quite a lot compared to clothes, I guess.

Why is that, do you think?

Yeah, um, I dunno – because, really, clothes they are to be on myself – they have to sit on myself. When you see a bag, it's kind of beautiful in itself so if I want it it doesn't depend on me, because it doesn't have the shape I have or something like this, maybe.

So why do you think.. why is 'you' important in that?

I'm not sure... I'm just more willing to pay for a bag! And another thing that I didn't mention before is, well, I have to like it, it's the price, but also the quality of the thing that I'm buying. Because when I buy I know if something is good or something is less good and I don't really like to buy things that I know will just last for one week. That's why even if Primark is cheap, I don't buy things. Not because of ethical reasons or the way they produce or where they produce, - nowadays everyone is producing in China or wherever... third world countries, I would say, because cheaper is the rule of the market, but I bought some shoes in Primark and they lasted really one week and it's not worth – even if it's only £3 I still don't want to buy them because they don't last long enough.

Is that a very conscious, cognitive evaluation that you would make?

Yes, I do this sometimes. Although I'm not so mathematical in my calculation. If it's good quality it's still worth...umm, it's not so much day per day, but the quality of the leather... I can still see that it's a good pair of shoes.

So why is it important that things last a long time?

Yes, erm, even if it's cheap I still want it to last longer. It's something that I'm used to doing. Well, if you buy something you have to use it as long as you can, and you can also mend your clothes – make some small repair to keep it lasting.

Is that something you do a lot?

Well, not a lot, but if something has a hole, yes I do.

Can you think of any examples of things that you have mended?

Er... well, now I'm thinking of something else! Like, I bought a kind of a... blouse, and it was... I bought it in Zara and it was kind of elegant. Not so good quality, but still expensive, and I wanted to wear it for an occasion – a work occasion or whatever, and I thought it was better to maybe iron it, but I don't iron anything in my life! So I tried to iron it, and as soon as I put the iron on it I created, like, a small hole, and it was like, no – this was kind of expensive and nice. So what I have done, and it wasn't like piece of cotton that I can mend, so when I was in Italy I asked my Mum to do something really creative, like, um, we took some buckles – we went to a shop to buy them – and we mended it somehow because I didn't want to throw it away because of a small hole. So now I have a new piece of clothing, and I haven't really worn it after this so I'm not sure what it looks like on me...

Do you think the repair improved it?

It's still nice, but when I bought it it was perfect as it was, otherwise I wouldn't have bought it.

Do you ever repair things just because they've got old and worn out?

You know what? Tights! I do this because there are always holes in the toe while the rest of the thing is good, so I always mend these.

So why do you do that?

Because they are still good apart from this bit, and it's where the shoe is so it's not a bit you can really see.

You say that they are still good – do you feel that it would be wasteful to throw them away? A waste of money or wasteful in some other way? What's the motivation behind that?

I don't know... it's not that I think about the price, like 'oh my god, I paid £3 for them'. Because it's not like I bought them one week before. Unless they are really bad I will continue to... I don't know why, I just do it!

Your mother can obviously sew and mend things?

Yes. My Grandmother used to create things from the start. But my Mum, for example, with tights – she wears tights every day because she always wears a skirt, but she always wears really thin ones and every day they are broken. So for me, I wear thicker ones because if they only last for one day then I really feel bad – come on, I just bought it and it's already broken, so I prefer to buy the 10 or the...

What is it you feel bad about, though? That you would have wasted money? Or a waste of resource?

Well, I don't think about resources, actually. I think about money, and also that it was not good because the quality was not good. So even if it was cheap, still the quality was not good so...

So do you feel that is some way a reflection on you as a consumer, or the way the organisation has treated you, or...

Hmmm, well it's also a matter of the brand. Because if they produce things that are not good I feel kind of badly treated, you know? Because they are selling me something and they know that it's not good. But, maybe, the reason that I don't think about resources, it's maybe because I don't buy things... well, I buy some things that I don't need, but it's not that I am such a wasteful consumer, I would say. So it's not that I feel that I am using more than I really need. Maybe that's why I don't think about the resources or what is beyond the product, I guess. I'm not sure.

So you mentioned that your grandmother was quite resourceful in making new things out of the things that she had...

Yeah, this was kind of because of the historical period, I guess. Well, I think that it changes because she was living during the World War and maybe this affected her way of behaving. My mum, as she's grown up with my Grandma, is still like this. I think that it was also more important for a woman to be able to do it. So, maybe that's why they taught them, and so it's not like my Mum

tried to teach me how to sew. I tried with some... knitting or darning. I tried sometimes, but it's more difficult. She bought a sewing machine but I never learned how to use it. She taught me how to do some decorative things, but... I don't know. But for me it was normal to try to mend things because I have seen her doing it...

You said that they thought it would be important for a woman to have those skills. Why do you think they would see that as being important?

In the past? Oh well, for my Grandmother I think that she would say it was important to do it, mainly to save money. Because maybe they didn't have enough resources so you should have been able to do this for the economic stability of your family.

Did your Grandmother work?

Yes, well, she was working the land, and they also had a shop and they were also selling clothes. So probably she was also caring about the quality of whatever she was buying, and yeah, so she's really proud. She still has some things left from, I dunno, ages ago and she said 'maybe you can try something that I still have!'. But I think that they were not really rich so this idea of having good clothes that last for long... yeah.

Do you think your mother and you inherited some of those values?

I think... yes, my mother is kind of similar. I think that she... because she likes to do it, so sometimes she will do stuff, or sometimes she just does some gifts for other people. So I think that it's kind of an hobby for her also. But my sister and me, well I think that we want to keep things for as long as we can, but I think that we care less because the context where we live now – it's different, so you can still buy things and if you don't like them any more you can buy new things, and this was not the case in the past. But I think that your values are also related with your family.

And is that thing about buying quality and expecting things to last, has that come from your parents, do you think?

I think so, yeah. I also think that I kind of care about money, er, even a little bit more than my Mum, probably. This is my personal character, I guess – my personality.

So you said at the start that you feel your values maybe are changing, maybe as a result of the work that you do. So, how did you get in to researching the field that you research?

Er, well, if I have to be sincere! Well, when I finished my Master obviously I worked on product-service systems, and sustainability was one of the main areas we were talking about because of the potential of product-service systems towards sustainability, and when I was looking for something to do, like for preparing my application, I thought that this was one of the, er... most... you know... people are looking for sustainability right now in Universities – it's an area of interest right now, so I thought OK, I can work on this, but I didn't have really an interest specifically – I was open to anything else. But I thought maybe with this I have more possibilities.

OK. That's what research is about, though – identifying where knowledge needs to be developed and what the possibilities are.

Well, you know. When you work with people who have, you know, strong values about... in my case it's with sharing with other people or caring about ethical issues – if you see that you are not like this you feel *bad*, I guess, because I'm researching people who share their things, but what about me – would I do the same? Or if you see people who buy clothes because of ethical reasons and you don't do this, it's a little bit strange, I guess. Well, as a researcher you can maybe see better from outside looking in about why these people are doing what they are doing, but maybe it's also well, if I know that this is good maybe it's me- that I'm wrong. But you know that you are not like them, so...

Is that something that you often feel is a tension?

Now? Well, now I think there is a tension and maybe that is why I think that my values can be certainly be changed because of my research. Because now I am *questioning*, I would say, my values

because of my research. And so I'm saying [to myself]: 'OK, you can *try* to do it, if other people are doing it and you know that it is good, you can *try*, maybe! [Laughs]. Yeah, I think this makes me be slightly... think more and try to do this kind of thinking ethically and sustainable in some things. So, yeah.

Do you find that most of the people in your network of academic and researchers are very sustainability-driven? Do you feel a bit 'outside' of that?

Well, if you go to some workshops... for example, I went to a workshop and realised that all the people there were really, like, ethical consumers, and it kind of struck me that there was a buffet for the two days, and everything was vegetarian, so no meat at all because of the people that were there. And we went out and went to a very nice Indian restaurant which was vegetarian, and also they said that if someone wanted a vegan option they could still have it. So they were really caring about these types of people because they knew that people researching that area would be certain types of people and activists or whatever. So when I am with these people I feel that there is a community which shares some values and a way of living and I am not absolutely doing it, but with other PhD students that are researching in other areas, they are kind of 'normal' people!

So as you find out more about sustainability and you are becoming more tied in to those networks, are you feeling a sense of increased responsibility in some way?

Yes, I think that it's more responsible because... I think that my own nature is to not really care about other people. I mean, when I completed your values questionnaire if I have to be sincere, I said: 'well, I'm not so much caring about people that are not in my 'in' group, but this is kind of bad because it's something that you *should* do, maybe, if you want to be a nice person I guess. So I know that I am a little bit different because of my values... I don't know, because of my personality, but I think that in the process of growing up as a person, it's OK to consider other people and be more open to... um, you know... other persons... workers in China or something like this. For example, this is a stupid thing, but during the summer vacation I was watching a documentary on television and it was something related with how food is produced and how they... not sweatshops, but something like this..., like about prawns in that case. So they were... it was more like, British people sent to the place where food is produced to work, and see how it is... And, I like prawns, but now every time I buy prawns I always think about what was in this documentary – how they are produced and how people really have to work hard to produce whatever you eat. So now sometimes I think more about this and probably if I was not doing this research, probably I would not have related this documentary with my..., er and probably now I am more sensible in a certain way to these topics, and if something really struggles me I will try to think more about it.

When you think about those ethical issues do you tend more to think about the people aspects, then? You have mentioned quite a few times workers in the far East or in developing countries – is that the thing that is in the forefront of your mind?

No. Well... I don't think... I'm not sure, because I think that I mentioned more than once because it's the thing that we are more used to being told about. So think about the poor people working for you, and you just keep changing your clothes while they are working hard and they are not well paid, and you have rights and they don't.

Told about by whom?

Well... TV, something like this.

So the media?

Yeah, I think so. But part of my research is also how to prevent waste, so I also know that there is the aspect of resources – natural resources, not just people. Maybe you think more about people because you feel more of a relation with other human beings, I guess, but not with the environment. Er... well, I hope that people are doing the right thing, well, I mean that factories don't produce too much and they care about the natural environment, er, so that we can maybe care more about the welfare of other people, so I would assume that the natural environment should be, kind of, treated in a better way because, well, it's good for everyone, so for, also, people living in rich countries because if we continue like this it's a problem for everyone. So I hope that

in the future we will assume that we have to take care of the environment and gradually change our way of being to take more care about other people. But it's kind of difficult because some markets... you know, there are some rules in the market, so I don't know how we can deal with this. We know that... it's not that everyone can have the same kind of wage, because... it's unsustainable! Yeah, so I was thinking more than once about this problem – how can... because at some point you just say that, 'OK, there is people that have to work for less. It's not how can we do, or we really have to shift towards a new system, or... everything will continue to go like this - after China it will just move to Taiwan or Indonesia or Albania or wherever is cheaper, I don't know.

I suppose one of the arguments is, that when you look at wages in particular, part of the development process is that you start with low wages and that attracts investment, and then over time the wages and conditions increase as things develop.

Yeah, but what about if they just move somewhere else?

Well, I guess there is a finite number of places, and the argument would be about improving the world economy, I suppose!

Yeah, but you know what happens, because in Italy after the war people were not having high wages, and we had a huge development because of factories – work rights arrived and people were paid higher wages, and what's happening? We are not competitive any more and factories are moving into Poland or wherever, so people have rights, but they don't have work! So I don't think this is a good... er, well, I know that people improved their positions because, well, Italy is changing after the war, but now we are in, like a standstill. Well we don't have work – the number of unemployed people is as high as ever, so I don't think that this is the real point.

OK, so going back to this thing about sustainability and the environmental sustainability we mentioned before, and you talked about people perhaps needing to change their behaviour in some way. Where do you see the responsibility for that change laying?

Er, this is a good question, because I think that we can't really say, er, it's not related with consumers, it's, like, companies – they have to do this. I don't think it's just the state that has to do this. I think that it's, like, a combination to go in the same direction. So, we need the Governments to give you laws or financial aid or whatever is needed to drive this shift, we need that companies start caring more about ethical issues, sustainable issues and go in the same direction as the law, and then we also need the consumers to kind of change their way of behaving right now.

Yeah.It's... yeah, I think it should be a combination of more factors.

In what ways do you think consumers need to change behaviour?

Well, as I'm studying these kinds of things, I started thinking about how values can drive behaviours, - we have to change values, this is my first assumption when I started studying. Then I realised, 'oh well, values can't explain why people behave in ways instead of other ways, so we have to take care of the context and other things. Then I have acted the other theory, so what I think now is, um, people have to just think that behaving in a way that is more sustainable is the normal way of doing things, and this isn't possible if all the context around them is different, so a contribution from the state, from the companies... because whatever is offered also makes the consumer change his behaviour. So, if you have more options that are sustainable, probably more people will start thinking that this is the normal way of doing things.

Taking that back to your own consumption and clothing, you said at the start that you don't feel that you do buy particularly sustainably or ethically with clothes. So is that because you feel there are barriers to you doing that? How do you make that link between knowing that consumers need to change behaviour and lining that to you own consumption behaviours and patterns?

Well, I still think that maybe it's more expensive, and it's not really worth it, I guess. For example, for milk – I think it's more expensive because it is, but I prefer it because it's – I don't want to say for my health, because I don't really think about health – it's more about the taste of the milk. So I don't really see this direct benefit for me, and maybe this is still what I have to... the barrier that I have cross, because when I will care so much about other people maybe I will cross the barrier, but

because I don't have a direct return and I have to pay more, I just say 'oh well, I can just buy the other thing'. And I think that if everyone is buying ethical things, or sustainable things I would say become the standard, for sure I would buy them, I guess.

So when you say you don't think there would be any benefit for you, what sorts of things would you perceive those benefits to be, in clothing?

Because I don't think that I am such a... you know, other people might say maybe it softer... I think maybe that colours are not chemicals, er, you know – they don't harm your body, but you know I don't really care about these things.

So what are the things that you would care about? What are the things that are important to you when you're buying things?

Maybe if they are better in quality, I would say. If sustainability is related with the quality maybe it's the entry point for me – it can be this one.

Do you think that those items of clothing that might be defined as 'ethical' in any kind of a sense tend to be poorer quality?

No, I don't think so. But I'm not sure about their quality. I don't know, actually.

Have you ever bought an item of clothing that you would consider to be an ethical or sustainable piece?

[Pauses]. Well, maybe I'm not sure if I bought something that was organic cotton. You mean, maybe... I have seen a presentation where they were telling me that even if it's organic cotton it's not sustainable [laughs]! But... I'm not sure.

OK. Is it something that you think is available? Do you feel that there are options there for you?

Yeah, I think so. If you want to you will find your options, I guess. Yeah.

OK, so you mentioned Primark earlier that you said you would avoid for quality reasons. Are there any other retailers that you would not shop at?

That I would avoid? Well, what I avoid is Primark, well I still go there, I still buy something. For example I bought some jumpers to be at home – so, as everyday. And actually, they were kind of good quality because after one year of wearing them every day they are still good, and they were cheap so I'm still OK with this thing. But, for example, not bags and shoes, also because of the smell because when you arrive there you can smell plastic and it reminds me of China. I know it's wrong, but, you know, when you go to a Chinese shop in Italy – we have a lot of Chinese shops and they are very, very cheap – when you enter you have this smell. For example, for shoes, they will have this smell forever on your feet! So I have this kind of feeling – I can buy other things which are maybe not plastic. Cotton is still OK. Er, I avoid also brands where I am not sure about the quality and they are expensive because I think it's not so worth [sic] to buy there, and right now I think that I tend to buy everything in H&M and Zara, even if Zara is a little bit more expensive, so I check better what I'm... If I want to spend more I think more when I buy in Zara. In H&M they are still, er, cheaper, so I am buying more easily there I guess.

What are the reasons that you like to shop at those two places in particular?

Oh, I think, er... I think that it changed because in my home town we don't have these brands because it's not so big, and I used to buy from two other kinds of shops – not local ones, but other brands, I would say. Then when I moved to Milan I started shopping in H&M and Zara and it was more like enjoying shopping, and having nice clothes and a huge variety. So now for me I feel I have more freedom in choosing my clothes from these shops. When I come back to my hometown I still go to other shops where I used to buy, and sometimes I buy things, but if I think about my shopping and where I want to do my shopping, my idea of shopping I imagine going to Zara and H&M. This is my idea.

And do you feel if you're not able to go to either of those places, for whatever reason, that you will now only go to those places? Are you still quite open to other choices?

I can still have a look in other shops. Recently, for example, I found that... well, I buy something in TK Maxx because I think that the quality of the things is good and they are cheap. I found a really nice dress there recently. I'm still waiting for sun and hot weather to wear it, but...! But, well in general I still think about Zara and H&M but I still like to also see other shops. There is another one – it's a brand that we don't have in Italy – so I used to go because they always had nice things in the Winter, but then when I tried them they didn't fit with my measurements, so, I think it's more of a habit to go to the same kinds of shops, or if I try new ones then I decide if I like them or not. For example I tried Topshop twice, but I decided that it doesn't fit with me, the price is too high and then I don't go in there any more. Not even to look – I just avoid that brand.

Is shopping something that you enjoy?

Yeah. A lot!

What is it about shopping that you enjoy?

Oh, I like to spend a lot of hours, but to go alone. Because if I am with other people they soon get bored with me. Also because I am sort of a picky person so I try more than once the same thing – I try... I like to try more than one thing so it takes me a lot. So I think that shopping is an activity that I like to do, and it requires some time, so I learn from... when I was in Milan, if I want to go shopping I have to go alone and take my time, so I'm free to see and try whatever I want for as long as I want.

How often do you go shopping?

Er... [pauses]. Sometimes I go shopping if I need something, most of the time it's because I want to have a look around.

Every week? Every day?!

Every day, no! Well, I go food shopping, well not every day. Almost every day I guess and still I go to supermarkets for food shopping. So, something in general that I like to buy things, but not to over buy, you know? Shopping... er, um... maybe when I am close to the city centre because now I don't live so close so I have to plan to go shopping, I guess. Um, sometimes I think I go shopping when I am in the mood for something new, or when I see, for example here it happens to me, when I see the sun I think 'oh, spring is coming, I should buy something new!' Or maybe I want new colours in my closet, like: 'oh, it's spring, I need more bright colours in my closet', because during winter I always have something grey, black, so maybe I need something brighter and good occasion to go for something shopping, yeah.

And do you find it easy to find the things that you like?

Ha! It depends. It depends on my mood, I guess, because if I am not in the mood for shopping (and sometimes it happens!) I can't find anything. I can go wherever and I can't find anything that I like. Er, sometimes I am like, er, I like a lot of things, but then it's my mind telling me, 'oh you can't really buy anything, you can't spend so much' - just select whatever you want. And I think that it also depends on, er, going to H&M and Zara and what they have in that moment because they change quite frequently. And so it depends when they have something that is nicer and unusual and I would be attracted by this item. Yeah.

Have you got a favourite item of clothing?

Mmm, that I already own? Well, I think that I, in general, I have a distinction between things that I wear every day, and I don't like so much things that I wear every day – they just have to be, like, OK. And then there are things that I really like, like some dresses. But sometimes what happens to me is, if I like them, I don't wear them. I dunno, it's weird because I think that, er... Well, for example, I told you that I like bags – I bought a very expensive one last year. And I used it once, maybe, because, I dunno – if I use it it will wear out or something, and also because it's not the weather that you can wear dresses every day here and maybe they don't fit with my everyday style. So I will regularly use them if I go out at night, or in summer, for example when I am back I go out every day because I live near the seaside and I wear dresses. So I think that is dresses in general...

So with your bag for example, where do you keep it at home?

It is in my wardrobe, with thousands of bags, like shopping bags! I will use it more often for occasions, but I don't have these occasions because it's a kind of formal bag and I decide to use it if I have a conference or something, and it's not like I have a conference every day. I went to a workshop and I was wearing nice things, and I realised that all the other people, well, they don't care here in England and they wore whatever they want! So why should I wear so nice things?! And then every time it's raining, I can't have rain going on my bag, I guess. That's why I am not using it – but at some point I will, I will!

Are there any things that you have felt unhappy about buying?

You know what, I'm really..., the Primark shoes. They were like flats – no, not flats, sneakers – the black ones that everyone has. And here, on the outside bit, really the plastic was broken after one week so I was really unhappy with this. I am unhappy with some t-shirts I buy cheap t-shirts, with stripes, just to change the colour. Usually they are like this one – plain. I bought one in H&M, and what I really hate is that if they are not good quality, this part of the side turns in the front and, yeah, because this is not good quality,. The t-shirt is still good, but you have always this party in the wrong side and it makes me... it really annoys me. I will still continue to wear them,... well, I am thinking about one with the stripes now because I wanted to wear it today, and every time I am thinking 'this is not, er...'.

Is it the look that you don't like, or how it feels, or...?

No, it's not the look – I don't really mind about this everyday t-shirt. But because it's wrong it should not be like this, and when it's through just washing it's what annoys me. Or sometimes what annoys me is shoes, when they are uncomfortable and sometimes also good shoes, like leather ones, they, not cut you, but...

You get blisters?

Yeah, yeah. If it's flat and it's cheap I would blame this, but when it's leather it annoys me because I paid more for a good pair of sneakers and still they have this problem. But after a while it's OK because when it's leather it changes, when it's plastic it's probably always the same. These are the things that annoy me.

Interview ends.

Interview 5 – Vivian

So, the first thing I want to understand is what's important to you when you're buying things, and whether ethical issues in particular are something that come into any of the buying decisions that you make in any particular types of products?

Right. I think probably my...the place to start in a way for me is that I'm kind of aware of sustainability in terms of how much I consume. So, I think probably I'm quite aware but not what I would consider to over consume rather than...So, probably once I decide that there's something that I want or need or feel I need, that I, you know, that I'd probably considered it quite strongly whether I needed to buy something or not. And I suspect that I'm not a huge consumer. But then, I don't know what you compare that to. So, I'm not sure if I'm right about that. But I think in terms of things that I consume...when I say that I mean, you know, my house and my household contents for instance, my sofa etc. I've got a fair amount of things that we bought when we first had a house, second hand from friends (Laughter), and bought a few new things. And to be honest, we've never really... done a big replacement programme. So, I've never got to the stage where I thought "Oh. I've got to have a whole load of furniture. So, I suppose in a sense that actually a lot of the things in my house probably a good 30 years old. You know, I don't...I don't sort of go and buy things like that very often.

Is that primarily for sustainability reasons, do you think?

I think it...I think it started...I think it is more now. But I think it started off as a sense of what I was brought up with which was that you didn't just...you know, you made things last, things were durable. And I suppose that comes from the way I was you know, brought up in my own parents who didn't have a lot of money. You know, I mean it was just a sense of you were lucky to have a house and some furniture to put in it. And so, I think it was kind of upbringing and probably constrained by money.

Did you have a kind of an austere upbringing then would you say?

No, no. I wouldn't say austere. No. I wouldn't say austere. But just it wasn't...it wasn't...You know, the money had to be looked after quite carefully, and we weren't desperately hard up. But we weren't rolling in money. So, choices had to be made. And I think that's how kind of I am now in my own life. It's like, oh, if I spend it on that, I can't spend it on this. So, I think my buying...but I think as I become more aware of sustainability, or you know, issues on sustainability. I do think "Can I justify it?" I would think to myself, "Can I really justify throwing something away that's perfectly good." So, we've had an on-going discussion in our house for about the last two or three years about having a new kitchen. I mean, my husband's more austere, if you like, than I am, in those things. And he says, "I don't like waste. What's wrong with this? There's nothing wrong with it. So, why on earth would we take out the kitchen and throw it on the scrap heap?" So, there is that sort of sense in terms of household things.

Do you think that extends into all aspects of your consumption behaviour?

Partially, yeah. I mean, I think my own weakness probably would be that I spend a bit of money on clothes for myself. But again, I wouldn't have said my budget's huge when I sometimes get an insight into...I mean, you don't know what other people spend. But I imagine it's actually what I think I spend lots on clothes. Probably isn't very much at all. But in terms of food, no, we don't really, you know, throw food away. We sort of quite...I mean, I spread out my shopping between sort of what's convenient...So, it's a balance between convenience. Yes I would go to Sainsbury's because sometimes you can get...I'm in a hurry and don't have that much time. And I want to buy everything. But equally I probably would...I mean, certainly when we had more time when the children were grown up. And I didn't...you know, I wouldn't have driven to the shops, sort of thing. I very much shop at the co-op and the local shops. And I try and do that now when I've got the time and the choice. I would think, well, I'll go and buy that at the co-op because actually, I'd rather shop at the co-op.

What are the reasons that you'd rather shop at the co-op?

I perceive the coop as being a cooperative rather than having shareholders. And making some effort to be ethical. So, I sort of rate the co-op in that respect. And local shops. I do think about it. Do I want to put money, spend it there where it's going to...the profit's not going to the shareholders? Or do I would spend it in the local shop where it's you know, it's local etc, rather than go to Starbucks or Costa coffee, I just go to...sometimes go to Atlas which is an independent little place. Or you know, if I'm going to do something like that, I would actively choose not to go to...I wouldn't go to Costa... Cafe Nero because that's British owned and not Whitbread and all the rest of it. But then there's a knock on effect because of course if you don't...if you do avoid those bigger companies, there is a sort of knock on argument of well that's our pension funds, etc. And it goes on and on. But yeah, I would think about where I'm putting my money, can I...maybe can I get something in Oxfam rather than...You know, at Christmas...I had one Christmas where I was determined to get everything from kind of Traidcraft and whatever in terms of presents.

Did you do that? Was it quite easy to do?

Yeah. Because I don't really like shopping online but I'm not really like an online shopper. In fact, it was a bit annoying because I bought some hankies for my dad and when I opened the box, there was one missing. So, I think someone had helped them self. (Laughter) And that's a bit disappointing. But you know, I did manage to do that. I did a whole Christmas of Traidcraft or local fairs. You know, like local craft fairs and things like that rather than sort of make a determined effort not to buy anything.

And were they well received by the family, do you think?

Never quite sure how the Christmas presents go down. Probably just as well received as buying them from anywhere else, actually.

And is this something you'd do again, do you think?

Yeah. I do try. I do do try to do that. Yeah. I do try to think quite carefully when I'm coming up to things like Christmas presents, you know. I do quite a lot in the summer, when I'm on holiday in Whitby or something. I'll buy local things for Christmas presents. I've actually minimised it as well. I've just...apart from the kids, I buy something they want. But no, I don't buy extravagant presents just for the sake of it. But yeah, I would think about that. So, that's that.

So does that extend into buying clothes? Would you adopt sort of the same kind of principles?

So, I do. Yeah. So, getting along to the clothing thing. It's only because you said about interviewing, when I was thinking about clothes, I thought actually, I think I'm...I think my vanity overrules my principles to a certain extent. Because...I say vanity...I think what it is I've got limited amount of time. I know certain brands, if you like, that kind of fit all right that are kind of not too expensive but will last. I do shop in John Lewis for things like that, I suppose because I've got a John Lewis card, credit card. And it's easy. It's one shop. They've made a lot of the choices for you. And they're very reliable. So, on the one occasion, I did buy a sofa bed, I know it's not clothing. Yeah. And it went wrong. They will deal with it. And I can't...in fact with you know, having to complain, which is why online puts me off. Because who do I complain to? And if it's not right, I've got to send it back. And it's just a faff. So, I tend to go to...I know Monsoons fits me. And I know that they have some sort of ethical policies but how valid, actually how valid they are, I don't know. John Lewis, because I feel they are reliable and they've got a good choice of things. And it's quite convenient. And I want to go and try it on. And you know, and buy it. I don't want to really spend hours looking on computer at things and find they're not right. But I think what I think it's about...because I was thinking about answering questions around this because I think I do things because they're habits. So, I don't really look to change that habit very actively.

Is shopping for clothes something that you would say that you enjoy, then? Is that habit to try and make it easier?

I partially enjoy it if I'm in the right mood. But I find that after about...I might go with great intentions. And after about two hours, I think right that's it, I just want to go home now, I've had enough.

So you're not one of these people that shops for pleasure and spends a nice Saturday out to go shopping?!

No, I don't go out. No, I'll go to walk rather than go shopping. Yeah. So, no. I don't...I'm not a person who shops for leisure...in my leisure time. No. I'll go because...Probably about every six months, I might have a little bit of a list in my head and think, I could do with a pair of shoes or a T-shirt or whatever it is. And the easiest thing to do is to go to Monsoon, go to John Lewis. Yeah. That's probably mainly about it. And I guess...No, my...problem is my ethical stance is sadly, fairly low down, if I'm honest. I like the idea of fair trade T-shirts and things like that. And if I had a choice, and they were the same, I would definitely think right...I'll buy fair trade. But actually, you know, I'm quite fussy about the few things that I do buy.

Okay. So, when you say "fussy," what do you mean?

Fussy is that I don't have...I'd rather have a few things that I feel comfortable, that are easy. I mean, it's a bit like, I imagine, men's suits are, you know. I tend to have grey and black trousers, a few coloured T-shirts. And I don't actually think about what I'm going to wear in the morning. So, I wouldn't spend time doing my wardrobe or anything like that. So, I have reasonably smart...and then, that's for work. And then for just casual, I tend to have...I've tried all sorts of things. And I come back to Levi jeans. I've got a couple of pairs of Levi's jeans. That's mainly what I'd wear out, you know.

Do you think you've been like that for most of your life?

I think I have. Yeah.

You know, you haven't been really interested or into fashion when you were younger or any of that kind of stuff?

Well...not madly. Not madly. I think I do. I am a bit particular. You know, I do care about what I look, I think, in what I wear. And again, I think it's just a matter of I've never had a lot of money to throw around with it. And now, I'm restricted because you know, my kids are at the age where they've...One's just gone through university. And this one's about to go. And I find myself thinking, "Oh. I'd really like, you know, a couple of things." I go into John Lewis. I like that. And I like that. And that's 150 quid. But actually, my son needs clothes in the summer ready to go to university. So, I stand there and think, "But that's 150 quid I can't spend on him. And he needs some shoes." You know, because he's...So, I have to think well, I'll make a choice. Well, I won't get those things just because I like them. Because I know that they...my kids, you know, that money is going to be spent on them at the moment. So, I think I've just never had...it's always been...I've always got a choice, you know. If I get that, I can't go on holiday. Or I can't you know, whatever it is. But I think the other thing I spend money on is...I do a bit of swimming and a bit jogging. So, actually the other money which is quite a lot on clothes is you know, buying a pair of jogging shoes, 80 quid. I've got some Ron Hill track suit bottoms. And I bought cheap things to, tops which I don't like. They haven't worked, and the latest thing I did before Christmas was went to John Lewis and I bought a Ron Hill top which cost £35 which I thought was really expensive, but it's great. (Laughter) So...but again, it's more about the clothes that work for what I want to do than the fact that... but no, I didn't think about sustainability when I bought it. I just thought, you know, what is...am I going to feel like okay? And I can throw in the washing machine sort of thing. So, I suppose it's that category as well of walking boots, you know. It's just things that will perform that are comfortable. I am aware Patagonia is a very good company. And this has spurred me to think well, actually, I'll look on their website next time I try and get something for that reason. Rather than trial to a camping shop or something.

Yeah. Okay. So, in terms of...So, is it fair to say then that you tend to spend money on things that you need to have some sort of level of technical performance?

Yeah. I suppose that's true, actually. Yeah. Even when it comes to things like work. I suppose yes, that's true. Because I tend to buy...like my shoes. I've got very knobbly feet now. And I have to be really careful about what I buy. And I've learnt my lesson of going there. I tried to buy stuff in TK Maxx. It doesn't work. So, I...

When you say "It doesn't work." In what way doesn't it work?

You know, because they're not comfortable, you know. I mean M&S, M&S cheap shoes. Next sells shoes but they're not comfortable. So, I tend...I buy Gabor or Ecco, because I know I can go and get them from John Lewis or Charles Clinkard and you know. And I can take them back if I get home and I try them and think they're going to be comfortable. So, I spend...so, I spend probably twice what other people might spend on a pair of shoes. But they'll last me for five or six years. So, that's quite technical in a way because they're well-made. I like well-made things that will look nice and last. Yeah.

Again, would you kind of apply that more broadly and across the sorts of the clothes that you buy? So, you know, have you ever bought...you mentioned TK Maxx. Have you ever shopped at any of the heavy discounter retailers?

No. I tend to avoid them because I find they're just whimsical and...

In what way?

I suppose, fashionable for the moment. But not something I can just wear day in, day out. Yeah. And sort of something... you tend to get lured into buying it because it's a bargain, you think it's a bargain. And actually, when you get it home, you think, well, you know, there's very few places I

would want to wear this. And it doesn't really...it only goes with one thing. And actually, there's not many times you can wear it.

Is that something...does that relate to any particular items that you have bought from those kind of places?

Yeah. I bought a cardigan and it was kind of short. And then, it didn't go with other things. And I'd rather have something that's just plainer that will go with a lot of things. And then, I've only got to buy one cardigan. I don't have to...yeah. It's that thing about not spending time, you know. Getting dressed in the morning. It's like, I know I've got four cardigans in my wardrobe, and they go with most things. It's a bit like wearing a suit – you can just put it on with any combination. So, I suppose there is a level of technicality in that really. I mean, when I worked more in an office, when I was younger and didn't have children, I had a bit more money. I think probably, I was like that then. You know, I did have more suits then. And just because it was easy. Yeah.

And you mentioned Monsoon earlier. And you said you thought they were ethical in some way. Have you ever bought something from them that's kind of really overtly 'ethical'?

No. Just general...actually, the general stuff. I think probably just plain-ish sort of trousers that work every day. Maybe one or two plain-ish sort of T-shirts. When they do beautiful things, don't really buy dresses there (Overlapping Background Noise) things that they are known for. And then, sort of more the plain functional things that I know would work. Because they usually fit well and they're quite well-made. But no, they...more just because as a company. Like a lot of companies, they say, you know, "We are...we have CSR, you know." Subscribe to CSR requirements, etc. I mean, I'm not...again, I'm not...I don't sort of actively seek that out. But I think what I do do is pick on the negative publicity. So, the negative publicity about Primark or some of these programmes on telly about that the supply chain that of making T-shirts or whatever. And that has made me think a little bit about what am I buying and what's going on behind it. Yeah. Where is it made? And this Bangladesh thing, with what just happened now, you know...

Yeah. Of course.

It raises things and you think, actually, I really want to know more about where things are made.

Are those things, things that you feel you do know quite a lot about?

A little bit, probably not a lot. And I probably could know more if I actively sought it out, really. But, again, I suppose it comes back to I try not to over consume generally. And be a bit choosy about the things that I do buy. And part of that is sustainability. But a lot of it perhaps isn't. But I think if it was overt, I think it's more about the supply chain was overt, then I think probably...I probably would be, you know, quite interested in that, but I would have to make very conscious changes because I could do that if I went online, you know. And I looked at what was actually ethical. Maybe it's just [inaudible 00:19:01] to do a bit about that. But it's that how would you overcome the convenience and the habit and what you know of your normal buying patterns to take on something different.

So, have you got...actually, there's three things now. Well, okay. So, I'll come back to the others in a second. So, have you got a particularly favourite item of clothing in your wardrobe?

(Laughter) I've got a cardigan sort of mohairy cardigan I bought from Marks and Spencer's. It comes out...I keep thinking I want to give away because it's getting a bit old. In the winter, it's one of those things you can put on top of anything. Yeah. So, I could call that a favourite item. I've got one or two items like that.

Okay. And they are...something that you have had for quite a long time?

Yeah. Oh yeah. My wardrobe. (Laughter) I think yeah, when I get a favourite, I can be wearing it for at least 10 years unless they do wear out. But I should think a lot of things that I wear that are favourites, that become favourites, I would imagine I probably have...Oh, I've never really thought about it. Probably on average, I would say most things I've had for five years. Just as a guess.

Is there anything in your wardrobe that you've ever really regretted buying?

Oh, quite a few things, yeah. (Laughter) That don't really fit properly. Because you're in haste and you buy it. And in fact, I've just cleared my wardrobe out on Sunday. I think it's something to do with this interview on my mind. (Laughter) And I've got about four (Overlapping Conversation). I've got four bags for Oxfam. Actually, I've got two. One for my sister, one for my mum. Because my mum's a bit smaller than me. She has had a lot of my clothes, actually, that I've...certainly when I finished work and I had my children, and I didn't wear quite the same things. Oh, my mum hasn't bought...she buys everything from Oxfam and charity shops. So, she's a bit smaller than me. So, I think some of the things maybe, you know, I passed on to her. Yeah. Trousers that I feel are too short for some reason or whatever it is. So, I got one bag for her, one bag for my sister. And then, about four for Oxfam. So, I think they were the wrong buying decision where...like a cardigan too itchy or...Perhaps I've just worn it for you know, three or four years and got...And other combinations of what I wear it with have changed. And so, I don't wear it anymore. And, yeah, they tend to go to Oxfam.

You tend to pass most things on?

Yeah.

Either to charity, Oxfam or people?

Yeah. I mean, I would...Sometimes, I pass things onto friends, something that has been kind of quite good or I've given shoes. I bought a pair of Gaborshoes and they turned...when I walked to work down the street, I realised they were a half size too small. They felt all right until I actually walked to work. And I thought, "These are too small." So, I passed those onto my sister in law. That was 80 quid. Yeah. So hard to actually get something that fits. But yeah, I would think "Who can I pass it on to?" And then, ultimately...I mean, obviously if something...T-shirts that get really horrid, I sort of put in the clothing bank, or underwear or something like that. But otherwise, I would, yeah, think of someone I could pass it on to, or pass it on to Oxfam usually.

So, we talked earlier about...you've kind of got this upbringing that was...

It was careful.

Yeah. About being careful. And then, how that has kind of reinforced or translated quite nicely into your...I don't know if I'm using the right word to use around sustainability now. So, what kind of sparked your interest in the whole sustainability in general? How did you get into that?

Actually, with you saying that, it has just come to mind something. I mean, a long, long time ago, I went to India for a year. I worked for Boots. And when I was 28, I'd always wanted to go travelling. And I hadn't done it. And I had a year off. And I...and it was sparked off. I was going to go anyway but then, my friend, who's a doctor, she had a six-month placement. So, we agreed, we'd meet up afterwards and go travelling. And then, I stayed and I travelled on my own. Anyway, in all that, I went trekking in Nepal. And I've always liked walking. And I was brought up to...with the Venture scouts. And that was what I enjoyed doing really.

Was it quite outdoorsy?

Yeah. Outdoorsy. Yeah, yeah. And so, I enjoyed that. And this friend of mine was in that as well. And so, we did the Anapurna [?] trek - we went right down [inaudible 00:24:22] spent quite a bit of time doing a few other treks up there in Nepal. And one other thing...the funny thing...the thing that I would admire in somebody, I admire the fact that these people would have shoes on that most of us would have thrown in the bin 20 years ago. And they would make them last. They would tie them up, you know, really tie them up or however they may, like all stick together. And there's something about that simple sort of what you...well it's like, you know. What's that saying about necessity, necessity being the mother of invention? And there's something about that that I admire and I don't quite really know why I admire it. But I admire that much more than I admire what we're supposed to admire in our consumer sort of world. And in fact, my partner came out to meet me and do another trek in this travelling period, he just came out for a month. And we went up to Lei. And he had some...he'd got some boots that he...were a bit old. And he thought, I'll wear

them because they're comfortable. And of course, they split. And we went into this little...we found a man in the village and said, "Can you help us?" And he sewed them up. And we always remember it because this man, he sewed up with this nylon kind of rope, a very thin rope. And instead of actually sewing with stitches, he sewed one stitch and tied it in a knot. And that's how they...and anyway, he sewed these boots up. Again, they lasted for quite a long time. And about that time, because I was studying accounting, I became interested in accounting for the environment when it wasn't trendy, before sustainability and everything. Rob Grey and David Allen were just getting going. And they were the critical accountants. And I was...I'm a vegetarian. That's another thing that kind of, I try and be careful about what I eat. I think about what I eat in terms of sustainability because I mean, that's quite a big impact. And when I was on my degree course, I mean, I was a joke, you know. You can think of the joke. The joke nowadays. But I've always had a little bit of that, you're the joke. Because actually, you care about things. And you know, you care that, I mean at the time there was the Falklands war, all brought to mind recently. I actually didn't like seeing the headlines, we sank the Belgrano. Because actually, they're just people. But I can remember my course mates cheering and you know, poring over this. I always felt at odds with it all. And so, I think then, I had this...I think it was just that being in the outdoors thinking that there were more important things somehow. And that people were able to...I mean, all this business about fracking and mining, it really annoys me. Because I think, "Where is the constraint on these things, you know?" Why do we think we can go and spoil things like that? But I read a book by a guy...I've still got it on the book shelf. And I've tried to research him since. I don't know if he was an academic. I think he wasn't really an academic. I think he was called Robertson, somebody Robertson. And he wrote a book and it was quite a small book. And it was just one of these green literature type things that I kind of used to shop in book shops and get. And he said, "Why do we have to have a world where we have to produce more and more and consume more and more. So, we sell more and more sweets so that we can have dentists, so that we can pay for dentists, you know. So, why do we have to have on the one hand the fact that we're ruining our health, or just spoiling the environment or whatever it is so that we can publicly have dentists and doctors to fix it. And it seemed really sensible to me this argument. And we still don't seem to have fixed it.

Yeah. So, you said at university, you were kind of...you used the word joke. Did you feel like a bit of an outsider as part of that or...?

Yeah. I think there's elements of that, yeah.

And do you still feel like that now?

Sometimes. Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

And is this something that you...you kind of it's part of who you are and it's fine. Or does it...sometimes, you know, does it cause you problems or any existential angst or any of that kind of stuff?

Yeah. I think it caused me a bit of angst in the sense that one does feel a bit hopeless about what you can do to help. And even when you do try and make an effort to think, "I'll go in a particular direction, you know." I mean, just to doing work, whatever it is. And I did my MA in Values and the Environment. And there's still an element of have I really achieved anything.

So, an MA in Values and the Environment.

Yeah. I did an MA 10 years ago. I should be doing a PhD like you. You know, it was [one particular Professor] who was the one who was very encouraging. And he...well, he was encouraging staff to do an MA basically and most people did finance. And I said, "Well, I will do something. But I don't want to do it really in account...Well, I want to do it in the area of social environmental accounting." And I looked around courses, and this was...there was one at the open university. And there was this one at Lancaster University, distance learning. It was similar, in fact the same staff was on both. And so, I looked at the most convenient really. And it was this one at Lancaster which was distance learning. So, I did two years. And it was really, really interesting. It's the most interesting thing I've ever done really, I think. Because obviously I did my accountancy exams and

I've seen more accounting, that sort of thing. And I...so, I did that. But it was really...I found it quite challenging the first year because it was actually in department of philosophy, you see. So, most people who'd done a philosophy degree did the Masters in Values and the Environment to specialise. So, it was quite a big learning curve to take up that on board. And then, what I did was I looked at my dissertation at...gosh, I haven't thought about this for 10 years. What social environmental accounts reveal about sustainability, but also conceal about sustainability. And I was quite taken with Heidegger's work and especially concerning technology. And the idea that...some of his ideas in that, you probably know it. But the idea that nature is...do we actually...are we sort of...because he used this word enframing, didn't he? Are we enframed by nature? Are we enframed by, sorry, technology. Which, I suppose my values, I feel we are. We say we use it as a tool but actually, we use it as...we are enframed, we're captured by it. And actually, don't really use it. We say we use it as a tool. But really, we only see the world through the eyes of technology. So, what he was saying was "If you see the eyes...if you see the world through a poetic, romantic, romanticism movement, view, you see it differently to...if you see it through technological lens," which is what our modern day world I believe is doing.

You've obviously got a lot of interest and knowledge around a lot of those issues.

Yeah. I don't know how you link that to clothing.

Do you find...well, of course, there's a broader point, you know. Do you find it easy to translate those into buying clothes or anything else, you know.

No. I think that's what the interesting thing is that having done all of that, I wouldn't say I've given up. But I think I've sat back a bit and thought, there's a limit to how one can live one's life and...encaptured by all the other things, the children, your work, the day-to-day things. And I do feel it's quite hard to...maybe I'm just not prepared to inconvenience myself enough to really make a difference. And I feel a bit frustrated that...I think there's a lot of good research goes on, obviously in the academic world. But I never really found a way of channelling those things into something practical which is obviously the sort of thing perhaps you're trying to do, and you have to be admired. But maybe that's just because I work part time and...and...

Life happens, you know!

Yeah. And that would be the ultimate. And even so, you've got to have the ability to do that in some way – the opportunity to do that. And I think probably if I started earlier and...I'd like to have got into a job perhaps where I was trying to apply the sorts of principles. But one would really have to be in a large auditing firm or whatever and I feel, you know.

Do you feel that you have an opportunity or maybe even a responsibility in the job that you do to kind of educate other people about some of the issues?

Yeah. I mean...yeah. So obviously, trying to do the module that we did, my colleague and I, sustainability as an opportunity to do that. And I know she's working on trying to sort of embed that. But...so, I suppose a lot of help that was going in the right direction. Probably still is but a bit more without me. Because other people have come along and they're more involved. And you know, I have my accounting teaching to do. And my accounting colleague and I have put the word sustainability into our level three modules for next year. So, we probably do need to sit down and think what little chink we can put in there. But I feel...yes. But I mean, obviously the children coming through, are different. They've been exposed to these things at school in a way that they weren't, you know, 10 years ago. So, there's a difference there as well.

Do you think - just going back to a previous point about consumption and all that, do you feel that it is possible for individuals? Or do you feel you can make a difference through the things that you decide to buy or decide not to buy?

Because you know we talked shopping in independent local shops and all that.

I think ultimately where you are prepared to put your money counts, doesn't it? I haven't got heavily into the other area of shopping with your own savings and investments and banking. I have looked quite seriously. Sometimes, I've tried in bank and things but I haven't gone down that

route, and I haven't got huge amounts of savings. But my little ISA's and things like that. I've always used the CIS. But again, you see...I mean, that's sort...that's all changing. I mean, they used to have a co-op adviser. And they all went last summer and so, you don't quite know what you're getting now. So, that's an area where I feel you know, it's difficult to make very ethical choices and be secure. But, what was the question you asked?!

So, do you think individuals could make a difference through their buying behaviour?

Yeah. I mean, yes. So, I think, yes. I think we can, I think we can. Or at least, even if it's only a tiny, tiny difference, you might feel better about it. You know, so, I suppose there's an element of I could do more. And it's easy to sort of sweep under the carpet really. Yeah. I could be more active about what I do.

Do you think you do feel a bit of a sense of responsibility around some of those issues?

I think I feel quite a res...very much when I'm shopping for food, you know. I'll think, oh those apples look nice. Then, I'll look where they're from. If they're from the other side of the world, I'll think well, I'm not buying them, you know. I'll buy the ones that haven't travelled so far. Or you know, try and get some English ones or something like that. Because I feel a sense of responsibility. It's very overt when you're buying food I think because you know where it's from. And I know if I go to a farm shop, I can buy their local potatoes and yeah, and eggs and things. So, I do try and go when I can plan it. And I've got a bit more time. I am fairly...I'll have a few weeks when I do that. And then, I'll...Oh, I'm too busy this week. And suddenly, a whole load of family descended on me. Oh, I have to rush to Sainsbury's because I know what I can...do it all. And then, I do feel a bit guilty about that sometimes.

So, just a final question I want to ask around this issue of sustainability and which bits of that are really important to you. And I think from the discussion that we've had, that it's kind of the environmental side of things that you kind of seem to...

Yeah. I suppose...

Is that what you tend to think about principally when you're...

Yeah. Probably. Although, I wouldn't say that social things aren't...yeah. I think probably...I think environmental in the sense that I see people as being one of a number of species you know, on the earth. And so, I suppose for me sustainability is about human beings, you know, on footprints or whatever on the earth, really. And that we have to co-exist with a lot of other things, a lot of other species and what have you. And I think that's why bringing it down to a buying decision, sometimes, yes. It is very important. But it also, there's an element of futility about it. Because actually, ultimately, we're still consuming. We're still making things. We're still shipping them around. So, I think this idea of maybe full cost accounting is something that I've been attracted to and I've read a bit about. It hasn't been very successful as a research area but...because it's so darn hard to do. But you know, if people...I mean, there was something on a television programme last week said about somebody who lived in Australia. And they were talking about the prices that was in Australia. And that shoes can be very expensive. And this woman was...I can't remember what programme it was. This woman was saying, "I can actually buy a pair of shoes online from Britain. And get them shipped over and pay 60 quid or 80 quid. Yeah. And if I buy them here, you have to pay £150 for a decent pair of shoes. Other aspects of living are very cheap." And...no. It wasn't on a television programme. It was in my pilates class on Friday.

Okay.

It was a woman who had come over here. She was British and she lived over in Australia, and she was saying this. And she was telling some people in the class. And she said, "So, what I do is I buy...I order it online and I ship it over." And she said, "Not many people have caught onto that." And I sit there thinking "How awful that you can do that." Because the ship...You know, what about the environmental cost of that. And we don't build that into the cost of everything. And if you fly something or ship it, you're not actually paying for the damage to the environment and arguably, there are carbon taxes et cetera. You know, it's coming in but it's also too late, isn't it?

Yeah. So, just a couple of follow up things then. How long have you been a vegetarian?

On and off for...I say on and off in the sense that in my 20s I was. But I'd say at least 15 years now because my daughter...We then had a period where we did eat meat but not very much. But probably about 15 years now. But I eat fish - that's not quite a vegetarian!

Do you buy leather?

Yes. But shoes...I've got about two belts probably. That's probably it.

Interview ends.

Interview 6 – Marie

So, obviously we talked on the way here a bit about your role and that your interest in sustainability. So, is that something that is important to you when you're buying things more generally?

Yeah. And I think like for me, when I buy anything most of the time, a question in my mind is that which of these products is the best thing for my family and other families. I tend to try and personalise it like that. So which generally means if I can afford something organic, fair trade, I will get that. I think if it's something particular and because that seems the best for everyone even if it's a bit more pricey sometimes, sometimes. That's how I approach it.

Okay. So, when you say the best. So you search for the best for your family and what do you mean by the best. What is that? What would that include?

In terms of our well being, that which, let's say I mean for clothes, the fabrics that you wear, which are the most natural fibres, which you know organic cotton that sort of thing. And in terms of, because I am concerned about toxins for example and that side of it, pesticides and everything like that. And the same with food, so I think about it from terms of our own well being and also the producer or the grower of the whole food chain. I'm just buying fair trade, organic.

Yeah. So, so this kind of a, there is a personal health issue maybe associated with that too.

Yeah.

And would you tend to kind of, is it possible to say, is one aspect more important than the other if you look at say environmental aspects that you have mentioned, some of the more social aspects thinking about the treatment of workers and things like that, is one of those more important than the other do you think?

I think generally, I'll think about all three and partly because of my job obviously because part of it is about sustainability. So, I'll very much look up the link between the economy, society and the environment. So, that... those three things are always on my mind. But environment wise, I would say that's more of a pressing concern because you know we don't support things like organic farming and things like that. We just, you know, we're ruining the earth basically so and I say that's a more probably the most pressing concern is the environment. But also I think about all three when I'm purchasing, yeah always.

How easy do you find it to live up to those values when you're buying things you know, do you find this quite easy to buy things that are environmentally friendly?

I think yeah, it's quite easy these days, most products. And I mean, if things that I'm buying would be, let say cleaning equipment, clothing, not so much clothing actually. But then there's a cost element to that perhaps more than that - you've got to eat, where clothes, I mean you only need a finite amount. So I tend to think of clothes as more of a sort of luxury maybe, because I've already got enough clothes. So, I'm buying more clothes in my closet. I'm sorry, what was the question again?

So, I was asking if you find it easy to kind of live up to generally to kind of live to your values. You mentioned food in particular and something where you tend to buy a lot of sustainable and environmentally friendly things.

Yeah. And the green products, and you know like laundry liquid or detergent, cleaner and that sort of thing by natural forms of those or bin liners or a lot of stuff around the house I think this quite good, quite at ranges now. You can get a lot of stuff because you know, as environmentally friendly as you'd hope it will be. And then also I suppose it does sometimes stop me buying stuff, like if I think about in that way. And I'm trying to think of an example... like, say for a party, I'm just going to use old stuff instead of buying new stuff if the new stuff is going to be disposable or that sort of thing. It might actually stop me buying something that I would otherwise buy if I wasn't thinking about such environmental concerns.

Okay. All right. So do you find that it's true then when you're buying clothes as well, do you try and take those same sorts of things into account?

I do. But with clothes I would say, I mean I do buy some organic cotton and fair trade stuff. Like, school uniforms used to be really good from a company called "Clean Slate."

Clean slate? Okay.

Although I think they might have gone bust so, again I mean school uniform is one thing, I mean it's only one area of clothing but, your choices are a bit limited and for that, it's not too expensive basically compared to organic stuff. And but clothing for me like, because cost is an issue, definitely. So I would actually tend to think more about the social point of view then. So if I buy a lot of my clothes from charity shops for example. And to me that's sort of adds to the social aspect of sustainability. So I might not be able to afford something really naturally, even if I want it sometimes then I'll go to the charity shop option because it feels like that's a good purchase in a different way.

Yeah. Do you kind of perceive then that the Fair Trade and organic clothing lines are more expensive?

Not necessarily. And I've got some stuff from second hand shops as well that's fair trade and organic that's really cheap. But I mean you know Tesco's – although I don't always like to buy from Tesco's, like for example this t-shirt I've got is a Tesco fair trade one. And that was really cheap so that's like a fiver or something like that. And it depends on what you're buying because usually when you go shopping you want a specific item – you've got a specific item in mind. So, you know you might, when I've got new stuff I haven't been looking for it and it's stuff I've found in a charity shop and I haven't been looking for it or whatever. Whereas I want a specific item, I might find that fair trade or organic stuff is the more expensive option.

Okay. Can you remember when was the last thing that was really a specific item that you tried to buy? Can you remember?

Of any clothes?

Yeah. Do you remember the last thing you bought?

I think jeans. Yeah. Some trousers, yeah. And the ones I bought from a charity shop but they weren't fair trade or organic.

Okay. And did you look on the High Street for them as well or did you just go straight to look in a charity shops for those?

Yeah. Yeah. Went straight to the charity shop that time.

Do you find it easy to find what you want when you're looking for something quite specific like that? Do you tend to find that you can find them in charity shops?

Yeah. Usually yeah. If you're not too... you know, if you don't mind the colour or that sort of thing. If you're not too specific in what you want. And yeah, I suppose I would do that rather than say look online for something. I tend to just go straight to the shop.

Have you got particular charity shops that you prefer over others? Do you have kind of a fixed set of shops that you would go to?

Yeah. And there's a really good one near my office, so location is great and they have got quite good stuff.

Okay. So what sorts of things are important to you do you think when you're buying clothes more generally?

Well, obviously I'm going to try it on and you know, that is important to me that it looks okay, and then... I would normally try and get stuff that looks like it's going to last as well and I suppose at that point, 'cause cost is a bit of an issue and like with the clothes, as I said before, a bit of a luxury

rather than food. I got to buy food anyway, so, then I would tend to get... I'd be more likely to get organic and fair trade food rather than clothes perhaps. And so if it's organic and fair trade that would perhaps sway me from one product to over another but it tends to be a bit of bonus if it turns out organic or fair trade, especially in charity shops.

What proportion of your clothes would you tend to buy in charity shops and what proportion on the high street, are you able to quantify?

Say like 80 to 90 percent from charity shops.

Is that purely from a kind of sustainability or ethical point of view?

I say equally the cost and that I'd rather give money to charity than to one of the high street stores.

So, have you got a particularly favourite item of clothing that you bought from the charity shop?

Quite a few. Well the jeans that I bought recently, these green jeans are nice and jumpers. All sorts, really. Yeah.

So, if you take the jeans as an example. What is it particularly about the jeans?

The nice cut and the good quality. But they weren't organic or fair trade.

Okay and can you sometimes find shopping, then can that ever get frustrating that you can't find the things that you might want in the charity shops or do you generally tend to think you find...?

If I don't find something then I just kind of think, 'oh well, I don't need it because ... I'm not really someone to trapse around all day play shopping. Yeah. So I'll do without it if I can't find anything!.

So, are the things that you need to buy for specific occasions like you know...?

Wedding...

Yeah. Wedding, parties, work all the things that you might do, sports equipment that sorts of stuff?

Sports equipment, I kind of make do unless I see something in the charity shop. Because I do running, pilates and stuff like that. So, that sort of thing I would generally...like I say, make do unless I bought something at the charity shop.

Is the gear you've got at the moment originally from charity shops?

Yeah. And apart from sports bras it's very important to get, a personal sports bra! But other than that I suppose for a wedding, if I was going... for example I think the last couple of weddings I went to, I was reading - doing the reading - and for that yeah I went to Monsoon but I did go to a shop, a High Street shop to get something specific because I did feel like I really needed to get something, like I couldn't just turn up in, like, jeans I need a dress! And works stuff occasionally if I need something that I might get to Next clearance. As well as cost wise then location wise it's near my house.

When you go to the high street places. Well, I suppose the first thing is, do you... again, do you have kind of preferred retailers that you tend to go to? So, you mentioned Next as being one that's being near your home and Monsoon. Are there any others that you would tend to go before you go to others?

Part of the reason I like Next because the clothes fit me well. But also because they seem to have, having... I used to get this magazine. What's it called? Ethical Consumer. And Next, always seem to come out very well with them in terms of how they, well, environment, and how they treat their workers and all this sort of thing. So, then that was kind of a win-win really, because I like the clothes as well. TK Maxx I go to because of the price. Not really anything to do with anything ethical. And well, being short as well is quite nice because I would only go to shops where they've got petite ranges as well. So, that's a factor if I'm going to a high street shop.

Okay. Does it ever, have you ever kind of bought anything from the High Street, and afterwards thought, I would have preferred to get something that was more sustainable, or ethical, or to be able to kind of have those feelings of guilt coming into anything?

Erm... [pauses]. Not really. No. Because I tend to think, well I sort of get a good mix of stuff anyway. So, if like, if I had something specific, like say that dress for the wedding, whatever, and I kind of think, well you know, that was something that I kind of needed to get because I was going to do a reading. So, even though you know, I'd prefer to go in charity shop whatever, or an organic one, or whatever but you know...

And do you ever find, when you try to find things on the High Street, do you ever find it maybe I mean, do you think you've mentioned fair trades and organic earlier. Is that, are those things that you would think are pretty widely available, and you'd know where to go to get them?

Not really, I'm thinking about, I was gonna, as I said, I do actually get my stuff from charity shops. If I wanted to get something organic or fair trade, I'd probably look on the internet. I know that some places - it tends to be maybe be cotton items that shops seems to do a lot now - I know maybe Marks and Spencers has some organic cotton ranges, and stuff like that. Depends what you wanted to buy really; I wouldn't really say that that's widely available from my experience.

If they were more available, do you think there's something that you would, that would encourage you to shop on High Street more, or secondly, do you find it frustrating that they're not more widely available?

Yeah. Both. I would say yes to both really, and I probably would be more inclined to go to High Street shops. But then again, it's sort of sometimes they feel a bit gimmicky. They just do the odd product and I still think, yeah, I'd still rather give my money to the charity shops than these guys. Not to be too divisive, but... so that was one thing. Yeah. So, I might be more likely to shop there. It depends really how I felt about what I thought they are trying to do. Is it just a gimmick or are they really committed to being more sustainable in their production process and that sort of thing.

And so, are there any places that you definitely wouldn't buy from, have you got a blacklist of places at which you would never shop?

Um, not really. I don't think I've got any that I would never shop at. I'm aware of some practices, that I'm not that happy about whatever. You know, like I say...

What sorts of things?

Say Primark. Well, I mean some sweatshops, and all the rest of that. But like, say Primark. Maybe I was just trying to make myself feel better, but I swear, I do occasionally get stuff in Primark especially my kids, think about it, yeah. But they have... I watched this documentary, and it was some of the female workers from Primark, and they were saying "Please you know, don't stop buying from Primark, just campaign for better wages for us" and this sort of thing. Because they said that they... I think they were from Bangladesh, these women. And they said, because we got a job at Primark. They said "we get to live in the city". They said "we work, you know, ridiculously long hours and conditions are pretty shocking". But at the same time we get to go home and watch Sex in the City with our girlfriends. And we're out of the villages where the men bully us. So we're actually, this is all right compared to what it would be if we didn't have this job at Primark. So there again, it's a kind of the social and the environmental and you know there's no sort of black and white really. So I wouldn't say that there's anywhere, I can't think of anywhere that I would never shop, no.

Okay. So you've mentioned the kids a couple of times and buying school uniforms and that sort of stuff. Do you tend to be able to find clothes for your children at charity shops as well?

Yeah. I'm actually quite lucky. A lot of my neighbours give me hand-me-downs and sort of things or my ex-husband sends second hand clothes from his friends and things like that.

How old are the kids?

Seven and twelve. Actually my auntie. She works in Mark & Spencer's and she's always getting them clothes as well. So I don't actually buy that many clothes for my kids, because people give them stuff, so that's pretty cushy!

Are they starting to care about clothes or do they just wear what you give them?!

And they are, like my twelve year old - she likes to look good. So if she gets money for her birthday, she will go and you know she wants to spend it on what she wants to spend it on whatever. So yeah. She might go to New Look. She likes New Look or Primark or wherever...

Would you ever get into any arguments about clothes?

I taught her about it, but then at the same time, I could like to think I sort of give her information, but then it's up to her really. I'm thinking about when I was her age. I probably wanted to look stylish and I wasn't thinking about all that so just give her the information really.

Is that something that you think becomes less important as you get older?

The ethical aspects?

No, the sort of looking stylish.

I don't know suppose other factors take... other factors compete with that as well. Like I said, you know, I want something to look nice, or I'm not gonna bother buying it. But at the same time I think about the other thing as well, where if she, it will look nice enough.

So what would that range of other things be that you would take into consideration?

Well the price, but she probably wouldn't think about that. And there again I say if it's because that's a charity shop like I say. If it's something well made and then if it's organic or fair trade that's a bit of a bonus anyway.

Yeah, okay. I think one of the first things you said was about feeling a sense of responsibility almost to your own family, but then to other families as well. So is that a sense of responsibility tends to make you feel quite strongly?

Yeah, not in a, sort of, of guilt way, but I just think it helps to remember that we are all connected and we're all like a human family. So, when you buy product, I just think it helps to think about things in a personal way. What's the implications of this for my...? Even it might be this one product but then when you think about that about everything, then it adds up to something that you feel like, you know, you're making some informed choices that you're happy with.

Yeah, so do you feel like you're buying behaviour makes a difference?

Erm, Yeah, I do. I think that... it does in one sense because it's just one more person buying, supporting you know, a certain shop or a certain made of production or that sort of thing. And then if you talk to people about it then you're sort of raising awareness and sharing information about places to get other things or whatever. And then I think, you're also, like your intention - I think it helps yourself as well and even the people who you're thinking about when you're buying, I just think it's a more positive experience really then.

Okay. And do you feel that your own consumption behaviours have an effect on some of those wider sustainability or environmental issues?

Mmm. They do. I think to the same extent, at least it's one more person buying organic, because then also, that's supporting it, and hopefully helping the prices come down a bit and making it normal and that sort of thing, more mainstream, or whatever. So, I think, yeah, you don't need to be complacent about it, they owe it to one person because you know, you can think that about anything in life but, you got to feel good about the decisions that you make in your life, so. Does that answer the question?

Yeah, I think so. So, do you think if we want to address some of these problems, whether an environmental problem or social problems or other problems, where would you see the responsibility for that primarily laying?

I think it's on all of us because I kind of think that any decision that happens so and well, it's a bit like I think anything that happens really is on all of us and that makes from a really broad perspective that we're all complicit in everything that happens in the world because we're all connected. And but in terms of them when you break it down, I say, yes you know, the consumer definitely. Even in terms of how much we consume not just where we consume also is a factor there. And what you want to spend on money on and those sorts of things. And then in terms of the companies, that we're hesitant about anything environmental, we're just thinking about this massive conglomerate companies and the influence that they have in the world. So, there's, yeah, and laws could be stronger and all sorts of things really. I think responsibility lies in everyone as individuals and then certain things could be better as well.

Okay. So obviously you're researching in this area and have done. Where do you think your interest in that whole sustainability agenda came from? Is that something you have for a long time or just something that you came across more recently?

I suppose I have always been interested in it in terms of choices that I make and shopping and then I don't really know that much about sustainability. Not as much as the detail until it came to my job role. So that I'll ask for the ins and outs of it and the facts and everything else and...

Yeah. So how long have you been so focused on sustainability within work?

Probably about three years, maybe, something like that.

And how long have you been, say for example shopping at charity shops?

All my life. Because my family does as well, charity shops. Yeah, they have always been...so far the shopping experience.

Yeah. Again, was that for environmental reasons or for kind of issues with the cost?

Yeah, cost and... I haven't really asked my parents directly. But I think probably for them they preferred to buy from charity shops as well. Because just the way they are making a donation to a charity and at the same time that shopping seems a bit of win-win situation.

Is that so, I mean are they kind of quite pro-environmental in other areas of their lives that you know about?

Not especially. No. No. The charitable donation, that kind of thing is something that they would... I mean my parents; luckily I haven't asked them directly what was best with my decisions. Probably just seems to know to be what about that. They're quite sort of 'make do and mend' - they've got all the same stuff in the house that they had when they married forty years ago or whatever, and the only reason they kind of continue, Yeah.

Well is that something that you like and that you were happy with growing up?

Yeah. I think for a bit while you're growing up. No, probably not. Everyone else has got really cool stuff. You know seventeen, whatever. But now I'm pleased that had that and put that perspective because then I know that as well and I'm not going to buy getting the newest thing or whatever. Which, you know helps my own situation as well as in life...you know? Why do you wanna get something new when the other thing isn't broken yet or that sort of thing.

So, when you are thinking about some of those things, so you talked about maybe if you were thinking whether to buy a new item of clothing do you have your parents' voice in your head a bit, do you think when you're doing that or is that just a...?

Hmm. Not consciously. I bet I will do now, though!

Sorry!

Not consciously. But I suppose like I say, because they're like that. That's my basis as well. In the end while having a look for that thing. So I don't really need it.

How do you rationalise that to yourself? So you know why, why do you think "I don't really need that" and what do you think about the...? What's the other thing that bothers you most about buying something that you don't really need or you think you don't really need?

Let's face it that seems a bit wasteful. I think, well I don't really need this. I don't use it that much. And spending money on something that you know, just a waste of my money.

So when you say wasteful. What do you mean by that? Is that from the money point of view or from a...

And resources as well, probably too. Not even the second hand but not wearing that much that somebody else might also have it that's going to wear it or...

Okay. So do you feel that - we talked about the sense of responsibility before - do you feel that it's quite easy for you to assume that responsibility and you know, you're kind of comfortable with the things that you buy? Generally do you tend to feel quite happy with things and the status quo almost of your buying behaviours?

Yeah, I do. I could be a bit less vain about it.

What do you mean?

Like I'm not getting something unless it looks nice as well.

Okay. Well that's important too, you know?

I think about that as well as the function whichever and I have what you mean like maybe I do when I'm specifically buying something it's a bit of a decision. But then when I think about the clothes I've got or how much stuff I've got whether especially compared to my most people in the world - yeah, probably I don't feel so good about that in the big picture.

Do you tend to keep things for quite a long time?

Yeah I do, yeah.

If you had to put an average age on your wardrobe what do you think it would be?

Well some stuff I had for ten years, fifteen years like that.

Do they tend to be particular types of like of items? What sort of things do you tend to have the longest?

Not really particular types. Not certain items I don't think just... if it's lasted I'll keep it. If it's not so I'll throw that away.

Yeah, okay. So what was the very last thing you bought, can you remember?

Clothing wise? I think it was the pair of green jeans.

Talk me through that again. So was that something that you had actively sought or you kind of like "I need a pair of jeans" and you went out to look for a pair of jeans.

Yeah. I thought I need some more trousers to work, more I think. I think jeans and a little bit more to work.

Formal?

Not exactly formal. So yeah so I need some new trousers and I saw that from charity shops so that will do.

And did you...was the charity shop the first place that you went to?

Yeah

Okay. And did you find the making of the decision quite difficult? Or you just like, oh yeah that will do it's easy and don't worry about it too much.

Yeah and if you try them on and they look alright, and the price is alright. I mean the fact that the price is low makes it an easy decision as well I think, but sometimes it could be too easy!

What do you mean by that?

Well then you could end up getting like more items than you will get in a High Street Store. Depends how you think about it really.

And do you feel that you have to make any kind of sacrifices when you're buying those things?

In terms of what I would like or what I think I should buy? Yeah in a way, I would like - if money was no object I would probably get more organic or fair trade clothes and from all sorts of like, right for my own health you know again it because I think that would feel like a better decision but you can just make the best decisions you can according to your circumstances. So yeah if money was no object then I'll buy more organic and fair trade stuff?

Would you prioritise whatever there is...do you make any distinction between the organic and the fair trade?

Well I suppose if it was anything I'd probably get fair trade because I know that they have a minimum organic standard or, sort of, pesticide stuff anyway to be certified fair trade, I believe. Yeah.

We mentioned sacrifices? Yeah...

And sacrifice according to what you think you should buy. Let's say what sacrifice do you think I should make?

Oh no. Do you feel that you have to make sacrifices?

I have to make sacrifices. I mean no one has to do something but I think that for me that I would rather, like say... I enjoy shopping at charity shops but partly I might think that I would find something nicer in a High Street store. I'd rather like say, support a charity than find a slightly nicer thing and from a different shop.

Have you got particular charities that you would prefer to give money to or is it that any charitable giving is good?

Generally, yeah. I can't think of a charity shop I wouldn't support. And then I suppose convenience is more of you know, the ones that are close to work, rather than a particular charity shop.

Okay, so earlier you were saying that the issue of animal rights is something that is very important to you, and you have bought some vegan shoes in the past...

Yeah, or products with vegan ingredients or ones that aren't tested on animals. So when it's a new product that's something I'd think about, but you don't really tend to get that information from second hand products because it's not on the labels anywhere. Especially clothing.

So this might sound like a really stupid question – are you vegan?!

No – I'm vegetarian, but I'm not completely vegan, no.

And how long have you been vegetarian?

Erm, since I was seven.

So is that something that came from your parents?

No – well, I was a bit slow, so I was seven when I realised where meat came from! And then when I found out where it came from I just thought it wasn't necessary to eat animals to have a good diet.

Were your parents vegetarian as well?

No, so it was a bit difficult.

So do you buy leather?

Well I do buy some leather. Especially if it's second hand. I suppose it's sort of weighing up things. Like I say, I'll get second hand leather shoes, but if I'm getting something new I will look for a vegan alternative sometimes. Shoes I'm prepared to spend a bit more on – like trainers or boots that I'm going to wear a lot. So to be good quality I'd tend to get first hand shoes, so then that is a consideration.

So have you ever bought anything new and leather?

Yes, probably... Yes I have. Erm, some leather trousers. I got them because I liked them – ethics went out of the window!

Did you think about the ethical side of it when you bought them?

Um, yeah. I did. I didn't feel good about that purchase actually – I've hardly ever worn them!

How long have you had them?

Um, about twelve years. I've worn them twice! I don't really wear them because I feel bad about buying them.

But you have bought new leather shoes in the past too?

Erm, second hand ones, yeah then, as I said – first hand I'd look for a vegan alternative to what I was... let's say... sometimes I've bought leather work shoes when I can't find a vegan alternative. Like, say a smart shoe, because sometimes the vegan ones look a bit plastic, but I've got vegan boots and vegan trainers – that sort of thing. They tend to be well made as well. Like, if a company is thoughtful about different processes and who it affects and that sort of thing, they tend to make better quality stuff as well, I find.

Interview ends.

Interview 7 - Vivian

So, could you summarise your background in terms of what you do, both in terms of teaching and research, but also professionally?

OK, so my area of work is environmental health and public health. My specialisms are around food safety and food security, and also health and wellbeing. And within those areas I've worked quite extensively within sustainability. I do environmental crime as well. I've been in academia seven years full-time and before that I was in occupational health and safety management, but my background has mainly been in local Government working within environmental health practice. And it's interesting, because to see the changes that have occurred in society and our understanding around environmental issues since the late '70s, which is what I tried to engage with more and more in relation to pollution issues, food safety, food risks, erm, certainly wellbeing, workplace management and things – so going beyond my remit as an environmental health practitioner and working with outside partners, so that's quite interesting. But the other thing is, um, because I had children I took breaks and part of that was, well I started when I was 16 actually, making clothes to sell locally and I got picked up by [inaudible] for my knitwear, and I've also set up nurseries and I had a market garden as well!

An eclectic background, then?!

Yeah, and I'm actually from a farming / coal mining background in rural Wales, so a lot of my ideas and issues come from there.

So those environmental and sustainability issues are important to you when you're buying things?

Yes, very much so. Even to the point where, when I was a teenager I wouldn't buy biscuits, chocolate, tea, coffee, anything unless it had been produced locally. I couldn't understand why people would buy things that had been transported all around the world, or manufactured in one place, stored in another and then distributed somewhere else. It just didn't make sense – all the packaging and everything. And I've had that view since. Erm, I've moderated perhaps my extreme views that I had as a teenager going into my twenties, but I still feel quite strongly about purchasing, if that makes sense?

Why did that seem problematic to you?

I just didn't think it was... even then I didn't think it was sustainable. Because if you are putting all that energy, if you are putting all of that into manufacturing a product, ultimately there's got to be an outcome. And my awareness at the time – I didn't fully understand the pollution implications, impact on the environment, issues around packaging and the disposal of it – waste management. As I went into environmental health I suddenly thought: 'whoah, this is a major issue here'. Um, but we still have to survive, so how can we do that a little bit more sustainably? No-one was looking... considering the inputs more fully, they certainly weren't considering all the outputs of their processes, and that's what I wanted to engage with a bit more.

So you said that was something you had from quite a young age. What led you into that way of thinking? Was there something in particular?

I don't know. I think it was just growing up in the environment I did in rural Wales, that to survive you all had to be very dependent on each other, and what one person did could impact on someone else, so, you know – a change in weather meant that someone couldn't produce their cabbage so they couldn't sell cabbage. It sounds odd, but we all had to work together because slight changes could make a difference. So a supermarket coming in nearby suddenly changed people's way of living, erm, because everybody could have the convenience. Oh, yeah, it was fantastic – great food, not having to go to the little shops. We were quite an isolated village in the sense that unless you had a car, there was only a bus in and out once a day, sort of thing. So there was strong community, and I think it's from that, although I did move around a lot that was the place that influenced me the most, yeah. And, yeah, it's all just part of the whole process. Plus, my village was a location for a lot of communes and the communes had been disbanded a little bit and you had a lot of people in the locality whose views were about thinking about the

environment, I suppose. Yeah, I engaged with a lot of people like that. My parents – my mum was very environmentally aware, erm – don't waste anything, use what we've got, survive on what we've got.

Do you think that was out of a sense of environmental responsibility or a sense of thrift?

I don't know if it was totally thrift because my mum was... I was.. I always underestimated her in some ways, but she was very aware of what was needed at the time – it wasn't just thrift orientated, she could actually see the benefits of it. Erm, if you met her now she would be a big advocate of making all aspects of life sustainable at the end of the day. Even in her seventies she's still very much involved with a lot of these things.

So would you say that those issues come in to all aspects of your buying behaviour generally?

Yes. Where I can. Erm, I would say, though, in the last 12 months I haven't been as... I've been conscious of the fact that I've not been as sustainable as I could be. Because I've been and purchased... clothes. For the last couple of years I've not been and purchased anything, erm I made a decision to have a frugal lifestyle. So to see what I needed and what I didn't need, and I've come out of it – actually it's really interesting because I've had to engage with things on a global basis, like turning up in meetings and going 'well, I can't believe you've turned up looking like that!' So I think these values are influencing how I perceive myself and I how I think I should present myself, so I've been engaging a lot more in purchasing. Clothes especially. Yeah, and shoes!

So that's been something that happened quite recently?

Yeah. It was fairly simplistic – make a lot of my own stuff... I try to influence my girls a lot that way, so it's reasonable, but I have a daughter who is, like, miss princess – a dress a day! I don't know how she even thinks like she does!

So you wouldn't say your children shared those values which were passed to you?

My son and daughter do. My youngest one – I don't know what planet she's on! Genuinely.

Why do you think there is such a difference?

Erm I think being the youngest, I don't know whether we were as influential on her as parents. I think her peers have been really influential on her which is odd as I did spend a lot of time with her. An interesting issue – my husband is an environmental health practitioner... but we used to talk a lot about things like environmental pollution, various issues like how... we even had a game that we made up about the environment and how you engaged with it and everything. And three years old, we were going along in the car one day and my son suddenly points to this [inaudible] coming in front of us and goes 'that's environmental pollution – it must stop!' So we knew we were influencing them. We haven't influenced the youngest one in the same way at all. There are some things she thinks about, but really she is typical of what I call 'the bling society' that exists out there.

Does it cause any conflict?

No. As a parent one of the rules I've always had is they make their own choices and decisions, so if they get tattoos or piercings or whatever, I go 'it's not what I would do' and I might be a little bit disappointed, but it's your choice, your life'. Er, think about what you're doing, and they come at it themselves eventually, actually, if you're still demonstrating it around them. There's no point having arguments about something. They have rules, and I'm quite strict about some of them, but no, no point arguing!

So when it comes to buying clothes particularly, are there particular issues or factors that you would try to take into account?

Erm, my big thing is the type of product it's made from. So... I'm also looking from a comfort perspective, but I'm also looking to see what it's been made from and where it's likely to have been made. So the venues that you're buying them from or the outlets, you're buying them from, especially when you consider all the issues that have occurred now, erm you're very conscious like,

I have to go into Primark with my daughter, but that's my equivalent of hell on earth [laughs]. You know, there are so many ethical issues associated with mass-produced products, so hence the reason that I try and make my own. But, if I had to go and engage with shopping – and I don't particularly like shopping; it's like a painful thing, and I don't do online shopping. That's like 'why do I want to sit in front of a square box and look at something that I might want to buy, when I have no idea what it is?' Shopping is an absolute waste of time – I'd much prefer to be out on my bike, and I have to go out and shop! My idea of shopping is, and I'm really bad because I'll often go to Marks and Spencers because you can walk right through it and within ten minutes have purchased everything that you need without any real thought sometimes about it – that's my idea of shopping.

Why do you say you think that's bad?

Because you haven't got time to consider what you're looking at. From, well... I don't have to look at myself so I've got nothing to worry about – it's other people that have to look at me! So I wear what I'm comfortable in, I wear what I like. Erm, I do like to dress up, but for that reason I will make what I need to dress up.

So when you need to dress up, you will make those clothes yourself?

Yeah, sometimes, but again it's that thing – it takes a long time. Well, I suppose a lot of women don't think it takes a long time, but the idea of spending more than an hour in town going around shops... And I can understand why people are attracted to going round places like Zara or those sort of things – they draw people in. But, they're nice., but...

Do you have a set of preferred retailers that you would normally go to?

Erm, yes. I use Sea Salt, and actually I use Sea Salt online. I use Boden a reasonable amount, and again they're online. Marks and Spencers because I've just grown up with it and it provides me with my basics, sort of thing. Erm, I tend to go to places like John Lewis because I can have a selection available to me and choose, but then it will be... I always tend towards the White Stuff, Sea Salt and East sort of stuff, 'cause they're not as expensive as the silly stuff on the other side! And the other place I will buy from when I want something fairly nice is Hobbes. I know the places I will go to – Hobbes, East, M&S, pop into John Lewis – I don't expect to go any further than that.

And is there anything in particular about those particular retailers that attracts you to them? You mentioned Marks and Spencers and tradition...

Yes. And it's convenience and I know that there are other stores that I could go and use on that basis. Um, my choice of Hobbes, Sea Salt and Boden; quality – the way they're constructed and put together, far better than a lot of others – it's quite interesting walking around some of the student stuff there [a University fashion exhibition] – lovely designs, but some of them could learn to do some tailoring! Um, so that and also the materials that they use – I can obtain natural materials. And I'll also look for the cotton labels to see that they've been produced in the, er, PES [?] managed cotton, as well.

Could you tell me what that is?

It's cotton that has been produced without pesticides. So, there's a little label you can get on things that will say that. And I like Sea Salt because it's a small company – they are trying to grow, but they're also from Cornwall and I spend a lot of time in Cornwall – I engage with it from that point of view.

You talked about material a couple of times and you mentioned natural material, so could you just embellish a bit more on that – the sorts of things that you look for?

Cottons and linens or wool. Actually, we really need to get reengaged with wool – we're not doing very well with that. We seem to have ignored that fact that wool is actually quite a fantastic fabric – it's lightweight, it's warm, it's natural – we've got a lot of it out there, um, well, there is a disadvantage because all that sheep production uses masses of oil, but that's a different issue, but yeah – I'd really like to see wool getting a bit of a higher priority. And that's because of my

background, and the wool market has really dropped off because people feel that wool has a very negative, homely sort of... it doesn't... it's associated with high fashion and stuff like that, but high fashion of the Primark type – they would never use wool because it's too costly for them. You have to accept that there's a balance between price and engaging with natural products.

And what is it about the cottons and the linens and natural materials that you like?

I think it's because – it sounds an awful thing – I've never ever liked anything that's been, erm, manufactured by, or... humanly manufactured. I've just had this big thing... I think, many years ago before I went into environmental health, I was going to go into textile technology and developing textiles, not just for clothing, but textiles on a large scale, and actually I just suddenly thought 'this is so wrong' because it's the antipathy of what I really believe in, other joining it to try and change it, erm, I thought 'no'. I've got a big thing about mass produced stuff as well, even though I still use it, er...

From what point of view? What is it about mass produced stuff that you don't like?

I think it's my concept of going back to being a teenager – the whole issue of what it requires to put into it and how we concentrate things in certain areas, um, all the logistics associated with it. The loss of control we can sometimes have in relation to mass production. The horsemeat thing is a fantastic example of that right now, erm, so... And you can have mass production that has a localised aspect to it and local control, but often when you get into a level of mass production you talk about in relation to clothing and food, it's managed by global organisations, you know, and do they care? It's bottom line stuff to them at the end of the day. So there's a whole load of issues that go along with that about how we treat people, how we have an impact on the environment, how we utilise resources, how resources become a commodity rather than something we need to consider and how we're actually accessing it and using it.

Would you say that you're fairly distrustful of big corporations, then?

Um, yes, a little bit, but then I'm willing to engage with them, which is what I'm about to do in a bit around food security and everything. Um, and you have to, because these are the people that have tremendous influence – you can't ignore them, it's about working with them. But hopefully not being swayed in their direction to go along with them – you can have a dialogue about these issues so that you can bring about a different approach, maybe.

We talked a little before the interview about how the current Government don't really have sustainability issues on their agenda. While we're thinking about supply chains, and thinking about the role of Governments and consumers as well, if we want to change the sustainability impacts of products, whose responsibility do you think that is?

It's a really interesting thing. I don't think it's the Government's responsibility as such. I think it's.. well, there is a level responsibility, but it's right across, from your final consumer through, say provider, producer and manufacturer and it's about everybody understanding their engagement with that. You cannot get that influenced until you have society understanding a little bit more about it, which is my issue about education – our, erm, the curriculum, which is what Gove wants to do, if we're not educating youngsters to understand the impact on the environment of what they do and how they engage with it, you're not going to educate a generation that perhaps will think about change or influence change. You talk about 'pester power' – you know, youngsters have been quite influencing their parents who haven't got that knowledge, but then it needs Government input, in relation to the curriculum, maybe influencing industry. You've got to bring industry on board, and they've got to understand that there is some benefit for them to engage with this. And what you tend to find is that it's the smaller businesses that look at the concept of sustainability because they utilise that as a way of selling themselves. Howies over in Cardigan. Well, question mark about Howies – let's move from London over to Cardigan again, and they come back and they go: 'we're going to make jeans really sustainably and we're going to whack 'em back to London and sell them at a massive profit'. Ooh, there's an issue there for me!

Why?

Well, it's this issue of why not just make cheap jeans like [inaudible] did up the road and sell them to the locality? Why make them at high end level to make loads of money? And actually Howies are quite good because they've engaged with a load of food initiatives and things like that, but what do they do? They get bought out by Timberland, you know, and... how do you avoid that happening? Because if you want to expand and develop, erm, the way that they work and the way that they ran their business was very interesting, it was very local and that was great. But when you want to expand your market and you've got a concept that a big company thinks 'we've got to buy into that concept', actually, we're not going to try and invent it ourselves or develop it, we'll buy it from a company that does it, and we've attached corporate social responsibility to us – we're doing really environmentally friendly stuff. Sorry. You have to excuse my level of cynicism! And they've bought the company back off Timberland – I think they found that operating under that big company didn't fit what they were wanting to do. So, yeah, it's interesting. But we still are going to have to engage from my point of view with the Tesco's, the Waitroses and the Sainsburys, you know – the big food manufacturers, because – and food is my big areas so they're the sort of people I'm engaging with – and we're looking at clothes manufacturing, it's just so... it's a very capitalist system and it's going to be who can produce the cheapest and forget human rights and forget, you know, working conditions and all of that – we just need a cheap product. And the consumer out there – that's what they want. 'Cause that was really interesting to see how people responded when they saw that Primark and a couple of others had been associated with that factory fire. 'Well, it's cheap, I might think about what I'm buying, let's go back a week later. Ooh, I thought about it for an hour'. And that's again about how you educate people, isn't it? So, it's about everyone taking responsibility. It's got to be started somewhere, and maybe it is the Howies of the world, maybe it could be through education. Maybe it's about those of us who feel strongly about it going out – I used to stand outside McDonalds with my children, demonstrating. My children didn't go to McDonalds birthday parties because I didn't agree with them! I stuck it out until my son was about 6, but peer pressure means you cannot avoid it! A lot of my friends thought I was really mean, but I said 'think about what this company does'. I know that they have improved tremendously in what they're trying to do, but you still can't ignore all the deforestation that they generated just so that they could get soya grown so that they could feed beef for their beefburgers. Everyone has forgotten about that, but those trees aren't going to come back. Oh, and I know they're doing so much good know, but they're going to have to do a lot to make up for that! Sorry!

So going back to clothes, we talked a bit about materials, you mentioned that you would look to see where the clothes are made, so what would you look for on the label and how might that influence what you buy?

I mean, the typical thing is, let's not buy anything from China. And that's getting harder and harder – even your M&S stuff, there's a lot coming from over there now.

Why would you try and avoid China in particular?

Because of the human rights aspect around their employees and everything. They've got to up their ante, you know, and that has an impact on cost, which is the same thing that's been happening in India, Bangladesh and all those areas in relation to clothing production. The more that we continue to buy, the more that those people will be oppressed. OK, they're happy to have a job, but there's got to be a balance of how they do that as well.

So taking all of that into account, do you find it easy to buy the things that you want to buy to live up to those values?

No, not really. I mean... a typical thing is Marks and Spencer's underwear – a standard buy and you see a lot of it is produced in China. So then you try to find alternatives and then you see that the majority of it is produced in China. And you're just sort of thinking 'what am I going to do?' [Laughs]. So, you know, your bigger... what I would call my other clothing, I'd look at it quite differently. I mean, when I was in Spain recently I bought quite a bit of stuff because it was all produced locally – dyed, the fabric was cut and dyed locally.. I mean, I wasn't there to shop – what I was doing was walking in Andalucía and I found all these small little industry type things, and I thought, yeah, this is where I'll buy stuff from.

So we've talked about quite a range of ethical issues – is any one of those more important to you than the other? Do you try to prioritise those in any way when you're buying, or how do you try and take those issues into account?

I don't think I'd say I particularly prioritise things – I... from a clothing perspective... there is that issue of trying to buy locally, like I said when I went to Spain, and there is that aspect as well in the UK when I look at small businesses and see what they're doing. But travelling around and buying on a day-to-day basis, that concept of local just goes out of the window, really. *[Tape cuts out due to battery failure]*

So we were talking about whether you feel you have choice and you were saying yes, that you always have the choice not to buy something.

Yeah. And the other thing, like I said, is you always have the choice to buy better than others because of income, and I've got an income behind me whereas others don't. And I can spend time making decisions about my choices and my purchasing decisions. And I, actually, I think – yeah, the choices are there. But there are choices in different ways, and the simplest one to me is – do I need it? And if I don't need it, I don't buy it. And there are other things that can influence it, and I perhaps I am luckier than some in that, as I say, I have an income behind me. There are a lot of people that don't have choices because of where they're located, what's available to them... Oh, and the internet makes things a lot more accessible. If you're thinking about clothing – Asos now are really top of the league, aren't they in relation to what they're able to do and how cheaply they're able to do it? Hence the reason my daughter's able to be a dress-a-day girl. She would buy a dress, or seemed to be wearing a dress, every day. 'Look I managed to get this for £3' Where from? Ebay. Asos. Sorry. And so choice is wider for people, but I'm not very good at engaging with that sort of stuff.

Do you tend to try and find out about the retailers that you buy from?

Oh, yes. I think because of my areas of interest about consumption, supply chain management, CSR – all those areas that I talked about before – I engage quite a lot with the companies that I'd be using for purchasing purposes. So from that point of view, my own research and my own engagement with the concept of sustainability is making me much more aware of what is out there. The people around me [laughs], and other than my perhaps having conversations with people, you know, my choices are very much about what I understand about those companies. And I actually have to say that in researching some of them I have to change my views sometimes. You know, I can't be as cynical about them all as I perhaps thought I *should* be.

Can you think of a specific example of that?

Well, oddly I must say – Tesco's. Well, to me they're still the biggest evil on earth! No, not quite! But it's the way that they've gone about their business. So, actually, looking at it from a business perspective they've done a really good job. They've messed up in the last 18 months and America was their big mess-up, but they do try and engage much more within the communities that they're impacting on. The development into the far east has been much more about working with people at a local level and how they do that and how they support them. So it's not just going in and setting up a retail premises, it's actually what is needed beyond this idea of a retail premises. Cynicism may turn round and say 'well, if we give them a school, they'll come to the shop and everyone will come and shop with us'. So it's a balance. But, they're trying to do something positive at the same time. Corporate responsibility is [sharp intake of breath]... you, know – I struggle with that sometimes. But I've had to change my view about Tesco a little bit.

We mentioned the clothes retailers that you shop from earlier. Are they organisations that you're happy meet that ethical agenda?

Erm, M&S – better than your Primarks and your Z... oh, well, yeah – better than Zara. But there are still questions because they've taken a lot of their clothing abroad so there are still questions about M&S. My daughter who actually did international fashion marketing – maybe that's why she is such a bling girl! – she spent quite a bit of time in China and Marks and Spencers over there, she

said, they just dominate the processes and dictate exactly what's going to happen. And then you start thinking, well, perhaps that's going against the culture of the Chinese – are they really fitting in? There's a big question mark. So... Hobbes. Do you know, Hobbes I'm not so sure about. Now I'm going to go off and see about Hobbes in more detail! But Boden, Sea Salt – those sorts of ones – they're much more about local production, um, being locally sourced, the way that they deliver their business and... But again, Boden their thing is more the bigger commercial area and they could be questioned about some of the things they do. And I guess as people expand their commercial aspects, isn't it, they...

Things like organic or fair trade – we mentioned looking at labels – are they labels or things that you're interested in from a clothing perspective or things you've ever bought?

I look at... Ok, fair trade – oooh, don't even take me down that route of what fair trade actually means. What's happening with food and cocoa in places like Malawi, there's a real question mark. The concept is fantastic. Er, and yes, it would make me look at those things and actually pick them off the shelf and make me engage with them a lot more. Organic, definitely the organic cotton and that I was mentioning about being pesticide free beans that has big implications in, mainly in Africa where cotton is grown – removing pesticides has had tremendous benefits for producers – health, well being and everything. But there's issues about how well they're producing the cotton. So, organic and fair trade are things that will influence me, but there are issues about both aspects as well at the end of the day.

Do you own any organic or fair trade clothes?

I've got organic clothing. I don't think I've got any fair trade... I'm thinking about my rubber-soled shoes – I think they're fair trade. Yeah, yeah yeah. I never thought about that – I think they are. Yeah.

And if you can quantify it, what proportion of your clothes do you think would be organic?

[pauses]. About... 4%! Because of availability. Oh well, actually, some clothes are organic but they're not labelled as organic – going back to the stuff I bought in Spain that are made with locally grown products, dyes things like that. Some of the wool that I get, that I knit my jumpers with, is produced by farming friends at home, so it's organic. Well, depending on how they produce their sheep, but two of them do produce their sheep organically. I never thought of that, actually. But that's my going back and dealing with local products, I suppose.

So do you have any particularly favourite items in your wardrobe?

[Pauses]. I have a.. blue, sort of dress thing that goes over leggings.

And what is it about it that you would pick out as being your favourite?

Well it's a bit funky and different. I love the colour – it's turquoise and blue – it's cotton, and it's a German product, but it's a small company that's produced it. Very much like a Howies-type company, sort of thing. Erm, and actually it's a shop in Ashbourne that sells them so.. actually I do head there to get a few things every now and again because of the sorts of things that they sell.

What's the shop – a small independent?

Yeah, yeah, it's independent. They sell shoes, clothes – it's got a mixture of things. But there's this one group – company of stuff that they sell that I quite like. Yeah, I never thought about that, actually.

Do you think your motivation for going there is because of the style of the clothes, or because it is this independent?

Oh, it's the fact that it's a local independent business. Erm, and the style of the clothes – I like what they have available there. I know sometimes I'll go in and they'll say: 'oh, we haven't been able to source that from where we thought they could source it'. So they actually think about where they're getting their stuff from.

And what was the last item of clothing that you bought?

The tunic I'm wearing! It was from M&S. It cost £21.99, and it was bought because I was going out to Bahrain for work.

So you needed something specific that would fulfil a particular function?

Yes. I had to be reasonably well covered up and it was going to be warm, but there was air conditioning being used, and I could wear it over a pair of trousers., so... It fitted a brief!

Was it something you shopped around for?

No, no. in the sense of how I shop. I was with my daughter – I said 'I've got to go to Bahrain – I'll need some things. Half an hour – let's see what we can get!' What influenced was, it's linen – again, there could have been a lot of other things that I could have picked up but I didn't – it's fabrics again. And I bought a silk top, this and a pair of trousers.

Was it a purchase that you found quite easy to make?

I would like not to have bought things. I thought I was buying it for a purpose, and my whole issue was 'do I really need this?' My daughter even watched me start with a pile of things, going 'I don't need this, I don't need that...' And I was left with three things and I said 'I think that's enough for a week's work' and she said 'I don't think it is!'

So did you find it a satisfying experience?

I was happy that I'd got something. It just made me feel that I'd had to buy things for an unjustified reason in some ways. No, it... yes... Yes and no. It's a very odd feeling – just about the I have to go and buy something, and could I not just manage with what was in my wardrobe? But as my family said, 'there's no way you're wearing those clothes – those are five years old!'

Why was that? What did you feel uneasy about?

It was just having to purchase something, you know. I recognise that I needed to – I just felt uneasy about... Well, how much am I going to wear it? And now I will wear it to death! [Laughs]

And how do you feel about it now?

Oh, fine – it's infiltrated itself into my wardrobe – it's part of my daily... I still go to it and go 'should I wear it, or should I keep it?' Oh, that's the other thing I have – if I've bought it I've got to keep it for best! [Laughs]. What's best these days?!

Why do you think you have that thought process?

Oh it's from being younger, isn't it, when you really only had two outfits. You had what you wore for school, no three – what you wore for school, what you wore to play in and what you wore for best. Best was always best and you had to keep it, and if it was new it was always best. That's my upbringing – it is definitely my upbringing.

Interview ends.

Interview 8 – Doug

Okay. So, obviously your interest in the field of sustainability is tied in with your work. Does that translate into purchases when you're buying things?

It does to an extent in that you try and make sure that you buy a car with good mileage, etc. rather than the 0-60 figures, and avoid waste wherever possible... just around the house and in normal consumption. That may well be outlined to a natural Northern meanness but I... [Laughter] irrespective of that. It was still, I think that's a moral imperative that all of us should try and be as responsible as we can with the planet, with waste, with whatever.

And would you say that's something that comes into all aspects of your consumption or does it apply to more things rather than others, do you think?

I would like to think it applies to everything, but there may well be areas where you're less concerned than others. And some of it is probably where you got a particular stance on something that may not necessarily be mainstream and fashionable in terms of what's sustainable.

What do you mean by that?

Well it could be things like at the moment it's quite fashionable to talk about water and water usage, but from my point of view water is one of those things that isn't consumed. It just cycles

around and if there's a problem, the problem isn't the water, it's probably that too many people doing too much. Not the fact that we haven't got enough rainfall or whatever. It's a nonsense. Similarly, on the textile side there are people who are kind of thinking well it comes back because of all the water that's used in growing it but if you look at cotton, there ain't any water in it, it's just what goes around. So, the problem isn't that. It's maybe in the areas of the Aral sea. You shouldn't be diverting scarce water resources for cotton. You should be growing cotton where it's more suitable environmentally. Not that cotton's bad... Does that make any sense?

It does, absolutely yeah. So you mentioned cotton in particular. My study is really focused around clothing in particular. So, are these concerns that come in to your clothing consumption habits?

Only partly I think. I think normally I'll pick garments that I like, that make sense, that are likely to last a bit, etc.

When you say 'make sense'. What do you mean by that?

Well, just something that I can see myself wearing for years rather than this weekend or next weekend, which some of our students do.

[Laughs] And why is that sort of longevity and durability important to you?

It just, a.) it seems natural and b.) the actual, the research that we've done recently, confirms that actually things that last a long time cause less damage overall to the environment.

Is that something that you've always had, do you think? Do you always try to buy things that last a long time? So, you mentioned in some of the research you've been doing recently, is it the research that's informed your practise or is that something...?

I would say in most areas that's been practised for decades. I'd be stretching the truth if I said, "I always acted that way as a teenager." I probably didn't. But that's, you know, we mature and we learn.

So, you mean when you were younger you probably, you were actually worried about things lasting for a long time or....?

Not particularly except that being brought up in a responsible household you're still taught not to waste, that things last, so you've got that family background even if you know as a youngster you don't necessarily follow exactly that. But it's in your genes anyway or it's in your heritage.

Is that something that your parents or in the upbringing you came from where a lot of emphasis was placed on waste not, want not?

Absolutely, because my parents came from the generation that were brought up in the Depression when there was not this, you know – we've got this so-called Recession now, but I'm talking about a time of the Jarrow Marchers.

I was going to say this is in the North East presumably?

Yes, and they were brought up in Tyneside and times were generally hard and so they were brought up to, you know, you scrape every little bit from the butter tub or jam jar before you throw it out, etc. And you try and you take the bottles back if you can. So, all of those sorts of habits that were normal in that age died out a bit as we came to be a throw-away society and hopefully they are going to come back again.

Would you say that your kind of upbringing was quite austere as well? Was there still a hangover from that when you were growing up as a child?

It never felt that way. It's just that's the way, you know, it was obvious you didn't throw things away and you've worn the hand-me-downs from elder siblings and that was just the way the world was.

Yeah, I had that too – it's unfortunate my older sibling was a sister so... [Laughter] ...so I wore a lot of her stuff!

Well I have older brothers so it wasn't a problem, and it was the sort of thing where the, because everybody was doing it, you didn't feel bad about wearing shirts where the collars were being turned back to front and, you know, it's just that was the way the world was and people wouldn't do it these days. And we can grieve about, you know, when we look at our children and the way they operate and they've been brought up into a time of plenty and they don't do that as naturally.

Have you got children of your own?

Yes.

Are they values you have tried to instil in them?

Yes.

Successfully?

Only partially, I'd say. Only partially. Well, obvious examples of things were you know this use-by-date on food? They see that, and if it's a day over they're thrown away. So, you got noses to test for that. Just because somebody's put that stamp on it, even if it's still alright why throw it? Just use it.

So, early on when you were talking about I think it seems like more of an emphasis on environmental or sustainability side of things from your perspective in terms of the things that's most important to you, and is that something that developed out of the research that you've been engaged with and it opened your eyes or are you researching that field because you had the previous interest?

It's.... The interest has been there, I guess, pretty well since the year dot and it's just been fortunate that this research area has cropped up and I can choose to be involved with it.

What was it that you think got you interested in those issues?

Well, originally I think just a recognition being brought up with an involvement with and an understanding of nature. It just seems normal and I suspect these days far more people are brought up in a purely urban environment and don't really see nature, they don't see where stuff - food comes from. They don't have that, um, like gardeners - you build a compost so you can recycle stuff, and that was just the way people are brought up in my era and I don't see it so much now.

Did you say that outdoors thing - was that just a function of geographically where you lived or were your parents interested in...

It was the lifestyle. That was the lifestyle of the family environment I was brought up in.

From a leisure point of view or just for practical, you used to grow your own vegetables, you live in the countryside and...

I guess both. My grandfather, both grandfathers, have a lot. It was just, that was the norm. That was what I saw everybody doing and that seemed very straightforward and seeing it moved to a world where you've got little understanding of that and no appreciation of what goes around comes around, you can see how we're running into trouble. Plus of course the, you know, we've got a huge, huge explosion of population which is the biggest problem.

And I suppose this is the way of finding creative solutions to deal with that.

And, yeah, or if we don't solve it nature will solve it and we won't like that either.

So, if you think about these issues, and in particular issues that are important to you, and particularly when you think about products and services and obviously, again, want to focus on your role as a consumer, do you feel the responsibilities for those issues lies to a great extent with individual consumers or do you see the responsibility being elsewhere?

Mainly elsewhere. Consumers to an extent, but then consumers by large aren't informed enough and aren't really in control enough of all the other upstream activities. So, they have to rely to a large extent on those that supply and those that manage control and regulate that supply.

So you said at some times, some of these issues influence your own purchasing behaviour? Do you feel that makes much of a difference when you reflect on it?

No. As 1 out of 60 million. It's, that's the amount of affect it has.

So, the obvious next question is then why do you do it? Why do you kind of persevere if you know that it's a largely a futile exercise?

It's, I think, it's responsible to show a good example. It's responsible to have those sorts of good habits anyway and if there are opportunities to influence others, then yup, take them.

Okay. But would you say that... the sense of responsibility is kind of still there that you feel that in most of your purchasing behaviours?

Yes.

So, it's kind of an internally motivated, driven thing?

Yup.

Okay. And so, as I want to focus particularly on clothes, and the clothes that you've bought, is there anything in particular that you can think of that you've bought recently or in the past that you would classify as being very overtly sustainable in any way?

No, it's not the first question that I'm going to be thinking of either when I'm buying stuff. You know when you look at need and functionality and price and all the others, you know, image, fashion, ...in sustainability are well down that list. If I'm honest.

Are you able to describe your kind of, your typical shopping behaviour when it comes to clothes, like do you shop often, frequently, that stuff, and where do you tend to go? How does it work?

I shop very rarely. I would say probably like most men probably, at least as much as bought for me as I buy myself. So, you kind of hint at birthday presents and it'll be wife, relatives, who will buy the shirt. You just tell them your collar size, or whatever. So, the rest of it is probably what you would choose to buy because you need something. I find the quickest and simplest way to buy stuff is to go to Marks & Spencer and if you can't find it in 10 minutes, forget it and try again next week or next month. So, I'm a very occasional shopper. Occasionally on impulse, but not really a huge mainstream clothing shopper.

So you would normally go to Marks & Spencer. What percentage of the stuff that you buy would you get from Marks' do you think?

Probably about 70% or 80%... because in my previous career working at Courtaulds, it was well known that Marks gave you best value best quality clothing. Whether that's still true, I have my doubts. Once you developed that habit, you find that it's fairly quick and easy to find what you want and buy it there. So why wouldn't you?

Okay. And you said sometimes you buy things on impulse. So, can you think of the last thing that you bought that was an impulse buy? Do you remember?

Probably a three-pack pair of underwear from somewhere like Asda. That would probably be it. You know, I figured out earlier, the others are developing a few holes and want to be a better... So, it'd be something like that.

So occasionally, you shop at a supermarket or places like that for clothes as well.

Yeah. If you happen to be wandering through as you do and you see stuff, then yes.

You talked about buying things that you perceive you need. So, when would that issue or if the need arise, what would lead you to thinking that you needed to buy something... can you think of the last thing that you bought it where you need it?

It would be probably when something is wearing out and is getting scrapped or there is an activity that you started off, like I've recently started playing golf. Therefore, you need a golf jacket, you need waterproof trousers, and I've just got, this is an interesting one, one of my sons was wondering about a birthday present and I said, well I haven't got a hat and something like a... I don't want a baseball cap, but something like a proper cloth cap would be good, and he got me one of these, and it's beautiful, Barbour tweed, wool cap which was great. I haven't been on the golf course yet, and that'll be whether it's more sustainable, it's wool which is good, made in the UK which is good, so that's fine.

And so, the thing about... So there're two things you said were good about, being wool and made in the UK. Could you embellish a bit more why you think those two things are particularly good?

Well, wool is a particularly capable fibre and it's natural. So, its functionality is excellent. There's a natural, again a natural tendency, if something's made in the UK then that's a plus point. It's not absolutely essential, but it kind of makes sense if you can.

Yeah, okay. So, would you know that you are to buy things that are made in the UK or made from particular fibres?

Probably, the UK bit if possible, but it's not, you know, a main criterion. It's just kind of nice if you can. Fibres generally I would pick the ones for comfort and function as much as anything else.

You've mentioned you worked at Courtauld's, in your previous career, and you mentioned that sustainability is something that came up in your work there so that was important to you in terms of trying influence your...?

No, not really. The key measure and it might even be a good measure for sustainability, is cost, and if something is lower cost, then the implication is that probably less impact on the planet, etc. So, but that's always in business. That's the prime driver.

Sorry, so you said then if it's lower cost, do you think that there's less impact?

Yup.

So, could you just give me an example of how that might work or could you explain a bit more about it?

Well, if transport was a huge component of costs with the price of oil, etc. then that would make things that came that used a lot of energy getting somewhere would be priced out of the appropriate market. As it happens, the price of transport is very low. The cost of those consumables is still very low and people talk about the oil price going up but maybe it should be \$100 a gallon or a barrel by \$1000, for instance. We might take care of it a bit better!

But is there not an implication then, that if cost is the major issue, there is always that cost imperative - to drive the cost down - but that's when you run into problems and cut environmental corners or whatever the case may be?

Possibly, and I think that's where you need appropriate regulations so that you're not encouraged to use factories that collapse in Bangladesh. You use ones that don't collapse. And if that means there is a higher overhead in terms of building regulations in Bangladesh, that would be a good thing. I don't think anybody would argue with that sort of thing. So, you got that as a balance.

Just getting back to your role for a second, do you - and I talked about your sense of responsibility as a consumer that you might feel - do you feel a sense of responsibility as a professional as well?

Yes, I think we, all educators, have a responsibility to make students aware of environmental aspects, sustainability aspects, and I think that's reasonable. There is a difficulty in that the amount of genuine information as opposed to greenwash is in relatively short supply. So, there is an issue about educating the educators in that sense, and it doesn't get away from one of the problems is you can focus on water in cotton or whatever, if that takes time and focus away from the real problem which is over population, then that maybe just delays the solution and doesn't help in the long term.

Okay. And then just going back again to the clothing and clothing purchase in particular, so you mentioned earlier that sustainability comes pretty low down the list...

Pretty low.

So, are you able to... and I don't mean this in a kind of really kind of threatening accusatory way (Laughter) in any way, but I'm just interested in that relationship between those senses of responsibility that you feel both personally and professionally and then how that translates into your actual behaviour and if you're able to... if that's something that you have, that worries you or bothers you, or anything that you kind of have trouble rationalising in your mind?

I think I know what you mean. Why have I regarded that as the top priority in terms of what I buy, and I think it's because certainly at this stage of this level of knowledge, there aren't enough real solid differences between one item and another that actually reflect a true sustainable impact cost. Because there are so many factors that you can put into these sort of things. It's things like the people who buy brands. What they're actually paying huge amounts for is for the advertising and marketing, and it's quite arguable that that is an activity which is just, in terms of planet sustainability, totally redundant even need to be, you know, you don't need marketers, if it's just product that you want, there is a whole lair of activity, expense, consumption, everything you don't need. So, if you look at that in terms of the products offered on the high street. How much of that cost is in the marketing and advertising? Does anybody know? So, I don't think you can worry over much about the fine detail there and always hype about what you should buy from Patagonia because they wear their ethical hearts on their sleeves sounds great until you find actually the recycled polyester from bottles that they made a big play about that goes into their fleeces. Actually, the bottles get transported to Japan and then they get spun in, you know there's one factory in Japan and then the fibre goes back to somewhere else for the process, it's you know, actually that's why maybe Patagonia is a bit expensive and is that really what you ought to be subsidising, maybe not. So, it's very difficult to get a good, clear, honest, unadulterated picture of the sustainability of product in the shops.

Yeah. Is that something that you... that you feel kind of, and obviously you talk about specific examples like Patagonia, so you obviously have a lot of knowledge there, is that something that you actively try to find out about in a personal capacity?

Not actively. You pick up all these sort of things as you go along and you pick up all sorts of bits and bobs from all sorts of people. There might be things where you could, say with dry cleaning, you would prefer to use somebody who uses GreenEarth rather than Perchloroethylene because it has less damaging impact on the planet. So, there're things like that but again with cases like that, that should be impacted by rules and regulations. It shouldn't be left to how many people are chemically scientifically informed enough to know about, you know, GreenEarth versus Perc? It's not fair to expect them to do that. Somebody in authority should be able to say okay well, either this is banned or there is a big tax on things that are damaging.

Have you bought any clothing lines that have been labelled as fair trade or organic or any other kinds of badges?

Not knowingly. I can't think offhand.

Is this something you do in another consumption with food or anything or cleaning products or anything else?

I don't know. My wife prefers to buy what she would think of as free-range eggs, and if you look at the differences, it's debatable whether this is a real difference, but she believes there is and that's fine for her. But generally speaking, there's so much greenwash, there's very little that's reliable about that. Fair trade and what it means is a bit...

You're sceptical.

Absolutely, yes.

With what you're sceptical about, what are the things are you uncomfortable with?

Well, we talked about cotton before. A lot of people who hold their hands up in horror at GM food. They wouldn't ever touch it. They think they ought to be buying fair-trade cotton or whichever, or organic cotton?

Yeah, well you can get either or both!

Yeah, well in theory. But at least two-thirds of the world's cotton is grown from GM seed. So everything, that shirt which I presume is polycotton, will have GM cotton in it. And if you like at a spinning mill, you'll find that one of the ways they get uniformed quality here in cotton yarn is they mix batches of cotton that have come from all of the planet so you get some sort of averaging and consistency. The chances of having a cotton mill setup specifically that is only going to spin organic cotton is a bit dubious. It might be true, I don't know, but why worry about it? Because the other thing is there is no test that anybody can do that can differentiate between so-called organic cotton and other. So, if there's no difference why do people bellyache about it.

So, it's not something that causes you any existential angst? I mean, do you feel that you're able to live up to those values that you have around environment sustainability in particular, is there something that you worry about or...?

I don't worry about it! I'm very relaxed about it all and I think if there are genuine opportunities where something looks and seems better for those sorts of reasons then that's fine. But I'm, yes, I tend to be very sceptical about claims that people make about stuff.

Why is that, do you think? Is that because of your background in the industry or...?

Partly background in the industry, but even before that it's a scientific training as to look for evidence that's supportable rather than to believe political hype. And once you've been trained that way, you can't stop it. I've done science, yes, so it tend to have a very different approach, a different way of analysing things, and you know the scientific method evidence base, and it's probably taken to extremes with disciplines like Physics.

So, do you think that reflects it in your buying practices – do you take quite a measured approach to things in deciding what sorts of things to buy? What thought process would you go through? Let's take for example the last thing you bought, if you remember?

Apart from a three-pack pair of kecks?!

(Laughter) Yes, not an impulse one...

Well, I've... probably hiking socks. I was looking for something that was going to be wool-rich, thick enough so that I wouldn't two pairs in my boots, and that's what I did.

How did you decide what was the whole process for choosing one pair over another so that's the pair from the pairs that were available within the shop, but also the pair that might have been available in other shops.

It was probably while I was in town a quick trip to M&S, look at their socks, see which ones are the best, the thickest, with traditional wool-rich cotton, and it probably took about 5 minutes.

Okay. So, you wouldn't go to lots of places and compare prices, that sort of stuff?

I suppose I might with a major item, like a suit. The last suit I bought, I maybe did look a little bit further afield and, but I think I ended up buying it from M&S because it was easy to get the jacket and trousers mix and match that fitted. So, dead easy.

And what other things that you would've taken into account in making the decision?

I've taken advice about the colour and the suitability for the occasion that it was being bought for, and that was about it. If it looks alright, I wanted a good suit, I was surprised how cheap it was because the last I bought a suit was probably the same sort of price in it. Inflation should've gone up. It should've doubled. But it didn't. So, yeah. Decent suit around about 200 quid, fine.

So, you're happy in the end?

I only wear it on occasions. Yes, I'm always happy with it. And in terms of I don't know... I probably did look to see where it was made and I suspect it was Eastern Europe, and I've looked at the label for the fibre composition, and it would've been wool-rich, because that makes the best suits, crease recovery, etc., but that would've been about it.

Do you think looking at where it was made tells you very much, like is that something that you would normally try to do?

Just out of professional curiosity and because I know when factories started migrating overseas, it was interesting to see what went where and to hear a bit of feedback in terms of why you might get jackets made in Romania and trousers made in Bulgaria or Turkey or elsewhere.

Have you got a particularly favourite item of clothing?

I don't think so.

Are clothes something that you enjoy and do you enjoy clothes shopping?

Not really. I mean, the probably, you know, I quite like wearing cashmere jumpers these days in the winter because it feels good and it looks good, but I don't have any particular hang-ups about anything like that.

So, what is it about them that you think, why do they feel particularly good and why do they look particularly good?

Well, they feel soft and warm and they do a good job. They're not too bulky but they're warm and they look smart and that's fine.

Okay. Do you enjoy the process of shopping when you to do it?

No. It's a necessity. I feel kind of neutral about it, really. It's just one of the things you have to do. So, I'm not a typical fashion shopper and I, you know... What am I doing in here? ... I'm from a textiles department – you're quite right! I mean, when I got into the business it could've been anything. The fact that it was a section of the fast-moving consumer goods industry just made it interesting and challenging, and everybody's interested in this sort of... There's lots of really interesting processes that go on. Quite apart from any computer aided design. There's loads of stuff.

Do you think, just as a final point, do you think that this thing you do within the department have that environmental motivation? Do you kind of see it in them and a new generation of people coming through that are interested?

I would... Possibly. I was going to say yes but, I mean, the key driver, particularly the students we see, is to look smart, attractive. It's what I want to describe is clothes shopping for, you know, the 15- to 30-year-olds, is they're looking for mating products. Things that make them look attractive in the clubs and pubs and wherever, and things that they will look smart - not just for the, I'm talking about the girls mainly because really we have mostly female students, but they like to look smart to their peers. It's not just, you know, to look smart for the lads, which I find quite interesting. I guess that's what you go through with those at those years as you, as you're seeking to find your own style and where you're comfortable shopping, and where you get stuff that fits, that's another crucial thing, which colour suits you, etc., but I guess I must've had some of that when I was a teenager, but that's long, long ago.

Interview ends.

Interview 9 - Paula

Could you tell me a bit about what you do, your academic background, and how you got to where you are now?

OK, my academic background is a bit different. I did my BSc in Economics, my MSc in International Banking, and then I decided that I needed to do something completely different because I don't think I can take Economics for another three years of my life! So, I started from 0! I found a fashion buying book, fell in love with it, and I got accepted here to do a PhD! I didn't know what I was doing, and now reading around every single thing about fashion and business, so I ended up... Well, I wanted to do something more like fashion and economics – more fashion industry and stock market, but I couldn't find a supervisor whatsoever so that was out of the picture. Reading around, I landed on sustainability and fashion, because I'd be able to use a tiny bit of my economics background, environmental economics, business background. I did work in finance, I did work in accounting, I did work in marketing, I did work in media – not good in any of it! [laughs] – but I ended up combining everything and ending up in sustainable business models, which is kind of promoting business models, well sustainability in the fashion industry in the bigger sense, and how it's going to get there. What do we have to do, in terms of, if you are a consumer, retailers, Government – more of a macro picture – not the micro level looking at firms. But keep in mind that I'm doing it because firms need to make money, and it has to be sustainable for the environment – it doesn't mean that it will not destroy anything, but at least we're doing it responsibly, and we have to make sure that we treat everybody equally. So that's my goal of my research.

Was that sustainability agenda something that was important to you before you came into the PhD?

Well... personally... I'm kind of concerned about waste resources in my life in general. Like, I don't take plastic bags, period. Those types of things have kind of grown up with me for some reason. I don't know why. But in terms of sustainability in clothing, it's completely new. Because it's so big for someone, because – firstly, clothing is not food. You don't actually get the same advertising as for, say organic food, or whatever. But when it comes to, say, organic cotton, you can't see what it is that is of benefit to me, so you have to go in depth into it. So before I was doing this it was still quite new to me, but as I'm getting into it, it gives me more ideas, but it takes a long time to get to know about sustainability, like cotton, polyester, waste – because it's so big, isn't it? Like fast fashion and everything. Because, like, I am a consumer – I love shopping, because I am a girl [laughs] – you can't take that away from me! But I'm kind of doing it responsibly now. Because, before, my background – my culture... like, in Thailand... Primark is a small problem compared to how we shop in Thailand.

What do you mean?

Oh, OK – we shop by wholesale. So every shop sells four pieces at least you get half price, but retail price it's like double, so you have to buy at least four pieces from one shop. You come home with thirty garments each time you go out shopping. In that thirty garments at least five of them do not fit whatsoever, you kind of donate to charity right away. In Thailand charity is completely different because we have orphanages, poor people – you can see actually where it goes to.

So why would you buy things that don't fit?

Because in Thailand women have lots of different body types so they sell one size fits all – like, how does it fit all?! But it will range from like 6-10, and you can't try them on because they come in flatpack – you point, point, point, point and put them in the bag and go. And in the building there will be, like, 300-400 shops, so fast fashion... I took my friend to Thailand last summer and I said to him if I take you shopping you will literally faint at how we shop! Because Primark is nothing compared to this! Even Primark would be considered durable compared to those clothes! Because some of them are made in China, some in Thailand.. it used to be in China, like the whole container comes in, and out of 30 garments 25 would fit me and 5 of those wouldn't look right, so I'd have maybe 20, and then half of those would fall apart after a few washes, or the colour would

probably ruin the rest of my clothes or something. So, out of 30 I might end up with five good clothes, pretty much.

Is that very typical of all clothes shops in Thailand?

It's pretty much the majority... well, that's how I shopped when I was younger. But then when I came over here, because the price is more expensive in terms of, even Primark as well, but over here with the quality extras and retail policies and everything – because over there you can't return anything, you can't try anything on – so you get what it is. But over here you get to return it, you have to make sure it lasts – that you can wash it at least two or three times. So this is a better policy than I used to buy, so I'm kind of training up as I go along without even realising, and then getting into this, I'm not even completely banning Primark because everybody's actually doing that. If you're into sustainability in clothing, if you shop at Primark that's a no-no, but for me certain things I still buy from Primark – I still pop in there from time to time, because for me it's about practice – it's about my behaviour.

What do you mean by that?

Um, because for me... if you actually... you can't tell... if you actually ask a lot of retailers this... you can't tell if sometimes it's the same t-shirt with a different brand – it might be from the same supplier – it's how I shop, how I behave, how I wash it, how I dispose of it, how often I shop – that is my point of view about how sustainable it is.

So could you just explain a bit more about that in terms of what's important to you when you're buying clothes? What do you to achieve?

Well, the thing is, I'm not actually an example. You wouldn't... if you actually see someone who 'does' sustainable clothing you probably see someone who does organic, undyed clothes or whatever. But I'm not... A lot of people would think that; environmentalists and activists and all that, but for me, I kind of love clothes – I have clothes for living. Like when I was doing my master, it wasn't meant to be economics, because my Uncle was a very good Economist – he would tell me that I should read all the time, even on the toilet, but that's not me – who would do that? So for me it's always been the fashion stuff, like growing up as well because, er, I was kind of growing up with lots of media – newspapers, magazines – that was my family's business, so...

So when you say you grew up with them, what do you mean?

My family business was doing, like, sports newspapers, something like that, so I kind of completely don't care about football or the rest of two guys chasing one ball – to me that's too boring. But other stuff around it – the media and how people advertise – I grew up with that, so I'm loving it, and when I was working I had to analyse this advertising and stuff in a woman's magazine and I *love* all that stuff, so for me buying clothes is giving me pleasure, so if you stop me buying clothes it's like stopping someone who loves food going to a restaurant. It's pretty much the same thing – I could starve myself! I could starve myself, like, if I actually want to go out and buy clothes.

So how often do you go shopping, do you think?

Erm... this is going to be on record – this is so bad! I can't believe I'm doing this! [laughs]. Well, how often do you go out to eat for a meal, let's say a glass of wine – how often?

Well, not so much nowadays – maybe once a month, but I have a small child now...

OK, so before you had a child, because you're priorities are completely different, aren't they? Because, like, for me – now I'm writing up my PhD, so, well, online shopping still counts [laughs], so probably... once a week. Yep, around once a week.

And is that just looking around or actually going out to buy things?

Erm, once a week is looking around. Buying or not depends on how tempted I am and the things I see, but doing this research changed the way I shop. Because before I was coming from a culture where you would buy thirty garments per one trip of shopping. Now, imagine me buying something – I thinking now whether I can wear it for another five years, at least, and I will consider it more.

And I've stopped buying summer clothes whatsoever since I've been in the UK for five years – I learned [laughs]! Because now I've noticed that in January all the summer clothes are out on the sale floor, and I was like, 'wooo, summer's coming!'. This is about to be June and it's still cold so I stopped buying summer clothes whatsoever!

So you have those summer clothes sitting in your wardrobe...

Yes, and I can't wear them so I took them back to Thailand and I don't remember what happened to them, because I put them back in my wardrobe in Thailand and I go back twice a year, maybe, and when I go back I remember 'ooh, I got this' but I can never remember, and sometimes my cousins, my friends, my Mom... well, not my Mom – she can't wear them, but mix them so I never realise what I have and don't have. And what I have in my wardrobe now, a lot of the time my friends or my boyfriend will say 'you already have that. Don't buy it, please! Like, seriously – you already have that'. And I'm like; 'really?!' What is it then because I actually have a lot of stuff – I try do... I DO wear them, surprisingly, but now I've stopped buying things that I know I'm not going to wear, especially stuff on sale that I don't particularly like that much.

OK, so do you have preferred retailers that you would normally go to?

No, most of the time I'm browsing around anyway, and it's just kind of me walking round and seeing what's out there. When I was actually doing some market research on the retailers, I had to look through all the tags and everything and see how they market to consumers in terms of sustainability – even M&S, 'cause like, they're so big in what they are doing, but they don't really talk to their consumers about them doing it, so I was actually having to look at the tags and dig into garments and stuff which looks a bit odd, to see how they actually communicate with the consumer into considering [buying] off them, and I bought something to take back to Oxfam as well to see how that works – taking back to Oxfam. So those processes of me doing all that stuff had actually educated me a lot more. How do I dispose of my clothes, actually change lots as well. Yes.

And when you go shopping do you have favourite shops that you would look in first?

Hmmmmmm, no... I do, I do still stop at H&M, partly because of my research because they have their 'conscious collection' coming out every season, so I do need to check that from time to time, and the price range is still alright and it's my taste as well, because Top Shop as well – Arcadia stuff – is a little bit overpriced from what I have... from what I know how much they were made. Some of the stuff is actually alright, but they might not be my first stop and I don't think I would actually buy them full price. Because they don't actually have any value-added for me. So, H&M recycle polyester, even though I know that it's kind of not as good quality as normal polyester because it's recycled, but because recycled polyester is mostly summer clothes I wouldn't be wearing it as often anyway. So I feel a bit better buying that stuff because I know that it's not from actually virgin material.

Would you always look to see what the clothes are made out of and would that influence your decision, do you think?

Since I'm doing my research, yes. But before, no. I would never know what they were made of, and how they would actually be to wash or anything like that. But what I'm doing now is actually making me think a lot more, looking a lot more. Because I'm not actually from a textiles background. Because if you speak to someone from a textiles background they could actually spot right away which is good quality, which is bad quality – for me, I still can't really tell that much.

So just going back to what we were talking about at the start, you're obviously now researching for your PhD and looking at sustainable business models and the whole field of sustainability. Is that something that you consciously said: 'Yes, that's what I want to study', or did an opportunity to study it come up, and you thought 'yeah, that's what...'

Well, it was more, like, it's an opportunity that came up. Because I looked into it, and I know that at the back of my mind I had to do something that I actually care, that I'm interested in. So I actually sat down and thought 'can I do this for three years?' Cause the more I'm reading into it the

more it's getting interesting – different techniques of making textiles show a different carbon footprint, and I get excited over little things like that. Like, different dyes and different colours of t-shirts have completely different carbon footprints; grey has a much lower carbon footprint than white, for example. And I was so excited to find something else new like that!

So have you sated buying lots of grey t-shirts?!

No, but it's actually getting me so excited. You would have never thought it would be like that, would it? White, maybe, but no it's not – it's grey. Learning lots of little things like that every day is actually getting me going out!

You said you were always concerned about waste and mentioned plastic bags in particular – is that something that has been fairly constant?

It has been, yes, because, er, I actually don't know if it's worse or not, because I have lots of bags, and whenever I go shopping – it doesn't matter where, even if I go clothes shopping, I don't take bags – if they're paper bags and maybe a really expensive brand, then yes, I will, but if they are plastic bags I don't take them whatever. I've been like that since I was little, for some reason.

Why do you think that is?

I think it's because of my family – at home my Mum has this, like, cabinet and you open it and it's like an avalanche of plastic bags! I never understood why people had to take so many plastic bags when they can be [inaudible]. So when I got to the UK I remember that we first time we go to Marks and Spencer we had to pay for plastic bags, and it kind of gave us a conscious... like, we need to bring bags. So that like was like 'yes, finally I get to do something that I really want to do', so that made me, like, when I go to every supermarket now I have my own bags and it's for everything you can think of. I actually don't know if it's more wasteful because I have a bag for everything!

Is that just something that applies to plastic bags, or do you try to avoid those types of wastes in other aspects of your...

I try, but it's not really up to me – this is only one thing I can control. Like lots of stuff, why do you need all this packaging for such little things? Like, stockings for females, you actually have plastic, 1, 2, 3 with another paper inside, you take everything out – this one little thing is like the product. It's a lot of packaging, but it's not really in my control, is it? But this little thing is in my control – I'm not creating more waste – I never throw out plastic bags. Even if a guest stays and brings, I fold them up and keep them. Not like supermarket ones, those I just screw up like a bin bag, but these ones I have a box full of them, and I don't know what to do with them because I feel guilty, even to recycle them because I feel that you shouldn't even be taking these in the first place, cause you don't need to.

So we talked a bit about ethical issues and sustainability. When you think about those issues what are the things that are important to you? We have talked about environmental sustainability, earlier on we talked about treating people equally and fairly. Could you just embellish a bit more about those things?

Well, let's say – if it was something I could actually do, actually make a life of somebody a better life, human and animals as well, I would try to do that. In terms of, like, me volunteering, or doing stuff on my birthday which now I'm kind of stopping because with the money I don't know where it actually goes to, cause I don't actually have a birthday party every year – never have birthday parties for seven years now, er, I go to an orphanage, well, when I'm in Thailand I go to an orphanage, take all my friends there, I don't accept any presents – every money you want to spend on me, donate straight to the orphanage. Or if you want to give me anything, give me money and I'll donate it straight to a charity I pick. So, but, I've kind of stopped doing that now because you don't... well, if it's actually at the orphanage I do it. I used to do it at Oxfam and the British Heart Foundation here, but I stopped doing that now because a lot of people said you don't really know where your money goes to, um, let's say if it's £400, that money can make a lot of difference when it goes straight actually to where it's meant to be, so in Thailand the money will support children

who can't go to school, who have to work, or who can't afford uniforms, so I support those kinds of scholarships now.

And is that charitable giving something that you have always had in your life as well?

Yes, because I think I have been quite fortunate in lots of things in my life, it's not just like money or anything, it's just the fact that I'm not handicapped in any way whatsoever, because I have seen... The first orphanage I saw, actually, stated me doing this - this place, they are mentally and physically handicapped because of unsuccessful abortions, because they come from the lower [inaudible] of society, they can't support their children from the beginning. So when you actually have handicapped children, it's like, ten times more... they just dispose of them in these handicapped places. When we want to visit them we have to make an appointment, we can't just go in - because the females are the same age as I am, but they can't like go to the toilet themselves, so it gets quite dirty and messy and you have to prep these people for us to go and visit. So most of the time we do just donate stuff - we try not to bother the staff. But this is the first thing, when I've seen it, I am so fortunate in lots of things in my life, so it's...

And why did you first go there?

Well, it's like - my friend was like, 'well, you have all these clothes lying around, are you not going to... do you want to come with me?' I think it was seven years ago one of my friends asked me and I've actually seen it with my own eyes. And when you go you're not actually supposed to say if you're coming back because it can trigger their abandonment or something like that, but when you've actually been to see one this bad and the numbers keep going up... so those things I know exactly where my money goes to and what I'm actually doing now Like, on my birthday, I used to donate lots of money to, like Oxfam and British heart when I'm here, obviously it depends where I am, but with the same amount of money if I'd actually be able to go to the right place.

So do you not trust those big charities?

Well, I think it's like the process before it gets there, if that makes sense? If there are lots of processes for it to get there, if I actually know where to go already, I'd rather go there.

What do you mean about the process? What is it you're sceptical about?

Well, um, like.. I actually do direct debit with Water Aid and WWF to save pandas, but I don't actually know which panda and I don't actually know where it goes if that makes sense, and you can't see where you are going, and in Thailand, like, I give twice a year to Unicef which is a really well known organisation, but you don't really know what you are doing good for. Now my family, and I don't really know why they started doing this - they give scholarships to, like, the really, really poor kids. You have to see, like, how they live and stuff. I was like, OK, how much is it? Erm, five hundred... no, a hundred pounds a month can change the lives of these kids, and they have to stay in school - they have to keep up the good grades and as long as they keep doing that they keep getting the money. Those types of things, and you can actually see them growing up as well, so it has been really good.

So we've got the environmental side and the social side of sustainability. Do those factors influence you when you're buying clothes? We talked a little bit about how you are starting to buy fewer clothes and to buy things that last for longer - is that fair?

Yes, definitely, yeah.

Do you ever buy things that are being overtly marketed as being sustainable, maybe like organic cotton, or...?

Well, the thing is, like for me, I'm not really bothered about organic cotton because there is still a lot of controversy on that. Because yield per yard is still low so that means you need more land to do it and stuff like that, so I'm not really that bothered. But if it's organic cotton and it's not really, really overpriced I wouldn't mind buying it, because it's kind of more like hypo-allergenic to my skin than normal cotton and those types of things, but it's not something to do with the bad end of the supply chain for me. Because I went to interview one company which has 100% certified

organic cottons, and they're like 97% reduced carbon footprint or something like that, and they actually have their wholesale price list, and I took a peek of what their retail is, because this is like B2B, for exactly the same t-shirt with the retailers brand on the back, it went from, like £4 to £80. So for me, with that stuff, the price range is not right – it's tremendously high. I would prefer organic cotton if you asked me, but if you asked people from textiles and stuff about recycled or organic, it doesn't last as long so there's a kind of trade-off. But for me I would actually buy organic if the price point is not that much different.

And then on the social sustainability side of things – supply chain issues – are those things that you would ever consider?

Well that stuff is for, like, companies with lots of really good CSR, like genuine CSR policies, it doesn't really reflect on clothes unless you go and read their CSR report, but lots of companies do really good CSR, have a really good marketing team kind of help me a little bit, but it's still not as strong because it doesn't really reflect on the product, because the CSR is more like you're doing things and marketing it, but people either have to read your CSR report or actually have to dig in to it, but it's not actually displayed on clothes is it?

Is that something that you do – do you try and research some of the companies that you buy from?

Um, some of the stuff, yes, I do try to research some of the stuff, but if I do research into it I kind of try to see.. it's not... hold on... let's scratch that. If I really want to look into a company to buy *because* of their CSR, I'm looking into it in depth. Normally I just buy, if I'm like 'hmm, this company is really good in this' before I actually make up my mind, if they're really good I'm looking into it. It's one way or another – I'm either not bothered or extremely bothered!

Are there any companies you wouldn't buy from?

Hmmm, no, actually, no. I don't think so. Cause, actually, I have seen a lot of people in sustainability in fashion – I remembered I actually had a Primark skirt on and I went to a conference at London College of Fashion and this girl was like 'oh my god, your skirt is beautiful' and I didn't want to tell her where I got it from! I really should have lied! And these people listened to my talk and all this stuff, and after they came up and she was like 'oh my god, I love your skirt it's beautifully made, it's impeccably so pretty' and she was touching it and everything, and she was asking me where it was from, and I was like 'oh no, this was a bad choice of skirt for me!' And I didn't want to lie, so I did say it was from Primark, like five years ago, which it was, and she did this: 'Ugh', and she stopped talking to me after that. And I was like, I should have lied – I should have said it was from Thailand or something like that, but that's just the way it is.; because she was actually complementing it, like the way it was made and everything. And she was like [pulls face]. Seriously, next time I will lie, because I remember every single clothes – where I get them from, where I wear it to, where is the first time I wore it. Like I remember every single little memory of my clothes, so every time I'm letting go of my clothes it's quite hard. But now I'm like, Ok, you need to let go, because the bottom of my wardrobe is so packed you can't remember what you have and pretty much you can't find anything either. So I need to let go, but every single thing I remember, and like which year. So, yeah, that skirt I remember and it was five years ago and it's been with me for five years, which is actually it's from Primark, but she was like 'no!' So, yeah, next time I'll know – I'll learn to lie and not to wear Primark to any of these conferences [laughs]!

So we talked a bit about how your knowledge of sustainability issues is increasing, and how it's starting to change your behaviour in different ways. Do you feel that your purchasing behaviour makes any difference to that whole sustainability agenda?

Well, I dunno, because the thing is if you consider fair trade, like even now I'm not that much bothered about it, I'm more like... like with coffee, I prefer which taste, I'm not actually bothered about fair trade, but if it's exactly the same taste I would buy fair trade. That's just, like, a little bit for the sake of me feeling good about it and stuff like that, but if you asked me to physically try or taste everything in the market, can you? And do I trust the company? I do trust the company because I'm not actually that bothered about it.

OK, although I don't really mean it's whether you trust companies, but we talked about you changing your behaviour, and it's more about whether you feel your consumption behaviour has an impact – does it make a difference?

To other people?

Yeah. Or to the environment, or to...

Well, it's for me... considering I haven't taken a plastic bag since 2008, and I haven't been able to recycle them all I think I have made a lot of difference. And people around me as well, they're kind of a little bit conscious when they're around me, like; 'ok, I'm not taking the bag!' In that sense, I think, yeah, I make a little difference.

Do you feel a responsibility to act in more ethical or sustainable ways?

Well... yes, if I can. The thing is, I'd rather be the person who is finding the way to get the information out, because for me if there is more information about the product on the spot of buying, I would actually make a different choice. But because of this stuff, there are too many things all at once in that sense, so I don't really know how to... well, this is being from a consumer point of view, there is not enough available information for me to decide, so for me when I'm buying clothes if there is enough information for me to base on, I would definitely be considering that.

So whose responsibility is it, do you think, to address some of these issues? You said that more information would be helpful to you as a consumer...

Well, the retailer, I think, would say that the consumer doesn't care, but for us it's more a two-way thing. Because if you give me information I could actually decide based on that. But how can you say whether we care or not, because if you don't give us enough information or do anything ... Because we might care a little bit if it's actually having enough information for us. Because even for M&S you have to find their 'How We Do Business' report – you have to download it from their web site, which I don't think any normal consumer would do.

And do you feel that you choose in being able to live up to your values. You want to act in more sustainable ways – do you find it easy to do that?

Yeah, if I want to do it, yes. If I want to have, like, if there is a company where everything is sustainably made, and I like it – I like the clothes as well, because most of the time I don't like it, that's why I don't buy it, I like it and it's not really expensive but I know it's going to last, like cost per wear is the same, I would buy it.

Is that something that you tend to calculate in your head? Would you think about how much something costs and how often you are likely to wear it?

Yes. Cost per wear. Because this is what I'm doing now. Because a lot of stuff, people would say, well it's ridiculously expensive; I couldn't afford it so I'm not going to even touch that stuff, but lots of stuff with cost per wear, like let's say an evening gown and it's costs £20,000 and you're going to wear it once p that's just silly. But if it's something like a handbag that's going to last you a lifetime and your daughter's lifetime and your granddaughter's lifetime, it might be worthwhile considering it. So for me, cost per wear is the most important thing, besides the fact that I like the dress or the clothes a lot – cost per wear is the second most important thing.

Is there a number in your head?! What is a good cost per wear?

Yes, 25p-50p. Yeah, roughly something like that. It used to be that, like £10 – if I bought a £10 dress and I know I would wear it once, I'd be like 'yeah, it's not that bad', but now I'm not doing that. Cost per wear is like 50p. If I can make it 25p I'd feel like I was breaking even!

And are there any circumstances in which you would be prepared to pay more for that cost per wear?

Well, a wedding dress. Stuff that I actually need to by because the one thing about guys and girls is, here are two things that are different. One is that you buy things that you need, and we buy things that we want.

[Laughs] OK!

Does that make sense? So stuff that I need, which means stuff that is occasional, OK, fine – I would pay for it., just for the sake of it. Like going to someone's wedding, yes I would pay for it. But other than that, no. handbags, on the other hand, is different, because handbags are investments.

So have you ever sold a handbag afterwards?!

Well, the thing is, cost per wear per handbag is, hang on... taking, like a hundred years to break even. So most of the stuff, like before, I used to think that people that buy expensive handbags are silly – I'd rather have, like 400 bags. But, you know, if you have 20 Yaris and one Rolls Royce and you only drive the Rolls Royce once a month, I mean which makes you look richer, come on! I used to think like that when I was younger, but that is creating more waste – it's lots of stuff I don't use., so now I'm just buying a piece that is a piece and I'm using it for a really long time.

You talked about things that make you look richer – are people's perceptions of that important to you?

Well, in Thailand it is – everyone is crazy about what's branded head to toe, but here, yeah – I really don't care. It rains all the time, I can't use nice things. Like my first expensive bag was [inaudible] skin, and it can't be rained on, so I'd have to like put two coats on and my umbrella for my bag, not for myself! So, yeah, those types of things – no, I'm not bothered when I'm here. So it's kind of different culture, different social status, just like a guy needs to drive an expensive car, a girl needs to have expensive handbags.

OK, so if we could talk about some specific things. Do you have a favourite item in your wardrobe?

Yes, actually. Well, I have one bag that I've been using since the first time I got it, and I think cost per wear now is roughly about 10p. And it's a Louis Vuitton bag which I never actually think, well, yeah, it's about 10p now, I've been using it forever. And I have another one where cost per wear is very expensive, cause with lots of stuff you buy it not knowing what you're getting yourself into, so now, from that stupid mistake – not again.

So the expensive cost per wear one – is that now something you don't like?

No, I like it. But it's so, like – it's one of those things that you can't wear with dark clothes, because my clothes are not expensive enough that they will rub off on the bag. It can't be rained on, it is so heavy, there are so many different things that I can't use it. So it just sits in my wardrobe and that's it. And cost per wear – I don't even want to talk about it! But the other one – I can throw it on the floor, I can do whatever with it. The worst was I called a restaurant and booked for three, but it was for two and one seat was for my bag – it was that bad! But this one, I can put it on the floor, I can do whatever with it. The other one, people can't touch it – someone walks past and it breaks my heart, so it stays in the closet!

And if we put bags to one side, do you have an item of clothing that is a particular favourite?

Hmm. OK – this is a hard one! [Pauses]. Hmmm. I think the only one thing that I wear so often is a robe. Most of the stuff that I wear at home, and all of my pyjamas, actually, because the thing is, I'm working from home. If you base it on the last five years anyway, because most of the day I'm home, so most of the stuff I'm using is either my PJs or the robe. Yeah, those ones – cost per wear probably 2p!

OK, and what else specifically is it about those items that make them favourites?

Just comfortable, and how often... cause like sometimes they're just on top of the pile and you just keep wearing them, but comfortable, warm and kind of, really, the functionality of it. One of my coats is so... well, everybody says it's so ugly, but I love wearing it because it's so warm and it's really functional, and it's not so pretty but if I go and walk the dog or anything like that and I wear it so often, but I don't care what I look like, really. Actually, those clothes I wear more often than the ones where it's about me caring what I look like.

And what was the last thing that you bought?

Ooh.... actually... hold on... No, I don't remember. I really don't remember.

Can you remember when the last time you went shopping was?

Er, hold on... if it was clothing it was... no, hang on. This is the first time – normally if it was clothing I could say, like, it was last weekend! My supervisor will be so proud of me – I haven't left my house for ages! [Pauses]. Hmm, I think... I really don't remember. Probably a month ago – some time a month ago. Don't remember where. Really don't remember where – might be somewhere in Birmingham.

Is it fair to say that shopping is something you find to be a fairly pleasurable activity?

Yes, definitely. It's like my boyfriend and eating and me and shopping. So he doesn't shop and I don't eat, so it's those type of things! Which trying to find a common ground now, we don't know what to do! He doesn't care about any of the stuff. He wants to eat, like, every two hours [laughs], and me, just don't really care about food – just getting pleasures of getting new things!

You talked a bit about getting clothes that you like, or seeing things that you like, so what is it about clothes that attracts you? What types of things is it that you like?

Er, well, most of the stuff... since I changed my behaviour, when I was in Thailand and in the UK, it's completely different things that I'm looking for. Because in the UK I don't really care as much about what I look like, but I do care about the functionality of it. If it's warm, I don't have to do so many things with it, and yeah, the functionality of it.

And in Thailand?

Oh, it has to look nice. It has to really look nice. It doesn't matter whether it's comfortable or not, shoes whatever, it has to look nice.

Are you able to explain or articulate what 'look nice' means?! What types of things look nice?

Erm, I think... Thai girls are always trying really, really hard to look nice, so what would you wear to a party, or let's say what you would wear for formal wear here – that's what we would wear there. Something like a proper dress or anything like that. Some kind of dress that you would wear to a wedding here, we wear every day there.

OK. And then just as a final thing, do you ever feel that you have to make any sacrifices when you're buying things in terms of being able to live up to your values or are there things which you often find problematic or dissatisfying?

Most of the time I do want to buy stuff... sometimes there is a company that is doing really well... sometimes I have to compromise between either the price or how it looks. If in terms of how it looks it has, like, a different functionality, if it was clothing, you know like all the kind of outdoor industry where they try to do, like, Patagonia and all those stuff, if they have a function within the clothes, like, you know, smart clothing – if those stuff is a bit more expensive, if it doesn't look as nice I wouldn't buy it. It has to have a little of a kick or something. Because otherwise why would you want to buy really sustainably made clothes that you're not going to wear? So that is a waste as well. So, I, if it's not as pretty as I would expect it, 'cause this is what I think now, lots of pretty clothes is not so functional as the not as pretty, but if it's not as pretty it has to be certain things to satisfy me; it has to keep me warm, it doesn't have to be dry clean or it has, like, it has to be water repellent – those types of functionality, and I wouldn't mind paying a lot of money for it.

And do you have any items in your wardrobe that you would classify as being very sustainably made?

Hmm. Because the thing is, I wouldn't know how it was made so I'm not... I can't say it was. But items I bought it because I felt there was some aspect that meant it was a little more sustainable, like undergarments, there are a few of them. Because there are not that many available, because I do really want to try... I do need to buy them for samples for when I present and stuff, but in terms of wearing it, Marks and Spencer ones, even the ones that I really, like, they don't do 100% organic cotton, they do, like 50%, but their style is not really my style yet. H&M does do quite a good few

ones in terms of compromising between styles and sustainability, but I don't know how green that is, really.

You mentioned Patagonia. Do you ever look to any of the niche, smaller independent, sustainably-focused retailers?

I do – I try. Because Patagonia is really hard to find in the UK, so I haven't actually physically seen what their clothes look like, but Timberland is quite keen on sustainability as well, but not as big as Patagonia. Ah - Adidas – Adidas, no, actually Puma and Nike – Puma and Nike is really keen on sustainability, so when I have options I'm buying it, but I don't really wear much sportswear, so it's not really in my niche area of things I normally buy. So if one day I'm working out, I will actually go into those types of clothing in terms of companies that are doing better things, but right now, the things that I buy, the companies don't really have that much offering for me.

Do you ever buy online?

Yes, I do. But not as often because I get pleasure walking around, just browsing.

And is it fair to say that you don't really feel like there's the choice of those really overtly-sustainable things on the high street that you would like?

Yes, that's what I feel like. Marks and Spencers tries to do that whole thing, but the style doesn't fit me – it's a bit older, and the only companies doing this right now are Puma, Adidas and Nike. These brands – I don't wear them, I don't really wear sportswear. So if Arcadia started doing this more and buying into this more I might actually start buying them, but apart from Dorothy Perkins I don't really go into them.

Why don't you go into the other Arcadia stores?

Erm, I feel like they're a bit over-priced. For me anyway, because they're really, really fashionable, so cost per wear for me is really high because they go out of fashion quickly; they're kind of fast fashion, but higher priced. Even though I'm buying H&M, I buy the basic stuff in H&M more. Zara – some of the stuff is basic enough and classic enough and I buy it – it depends on cost per wear, really.

Do you feel you know about some of those niche sustainably-focused retailers? I'm thinking about companies like People Tree...

Yes, I do, but I don't really like their clothes – it's really summery, really Marks and Spencer-type stuff. I don't know how to explain it – it might be in my wardrobe, cost per wear is, like, I can probably wear it from now until I'm, like 40 years old, but I don't know if I'm going to be wearing it in that point in time in that sense – I might be wearing it next year or maybe when I have kids, or maybe when I'm going to a PA meeting! So it's not really in my taste just yet. One day I might buy it when my taste is there, but not yet. It's like an older person's style, and, like, £80 for a summer dress - that's already in my head, like £40 per wear – no, that's not going to happen – it doesn't matter how it was made.

So as a final point, we've talked a lot about this issue of cost per wear. Why is it that is so important to you?

Because I have a lot of clothes that I don't wear and it feels like that's a waste of money. It doesn't matter how cheap I bought it for, if I don't wear it it's too expensive. And if I buy too much and clog up my wardrobe I won't be able to find anything to wear; that's every girl's problem! So I try to keep it to a minimum and make sure that every single piece I make maximum efficiency and utilise every single piece I buy. And getting older as well, but because clothing is still my passion, you can't take that away from me just yet! But when I have kids that might change!

And why is that efficiency important?

Because if you make a product and it doesn't get used, then somebody else can be using it. Like, I have a big, big bag to take to Oxfam, but it's so big I can't carry it. That is a big wake-up call for me, like, you can't keep doing this!

Interview ends.

Interview 10 - Matias

Could you tell me a bit about what you do, your academic background, and how you got to where you are now?

Well, Ok. I am doing a PhD part-time in sustainable art and design, and at the same time, well, before I started my PhD I started working as a research fellow, and then after a year I had a word with a Professor and we decided to do a PhD, and the area of my research is sustainable product design based on LED lighting, and at the same time I am involved with a project on LED recycling. So that is more or less my background. I have also been doing some teaching, so hopefully I will finish my PhD soon and I will get a proper full-time job!

So when you came as a research fellow that was specifically in sustainable product design; did you have a background before that in sustainability?

No, I had been working in industry, but never associated with that. Although I have to say that in my practice as a product designer I had to take into account many of the features that can be applied to sustainable product design. For example, I had to make products that were easy to recycle, easy to dismantle, I would try to avoid toxic materials and all these types of things, which now in sustainable product design are a must.

Was that because you had an interest in sustainability or you had an environmental awareness and those things were important to you?

Hmmm, I think it did because a good designer should have those... for me a good product design should be easy; it shouldn't be complex and simplicity and sustainability are inextricably linked. A simple product will have less components, easy assembly... for my standards it's better and matches with sustainable design principles. So there are many features which are similar. Er, probably the only one which is not similar is that my profession is probably not very sustainable, because what I do is I create false needs; you probably don't need anything, but I will make sure that you pay for it! So when I was in industry, my manager wanted me to create something that people will crave – they will see it and they will want it.

What sorts of things did you design?

Furniture and lighting.

But people do need those things!

Yeah, but you don't need to buy every year! So I'm now understanding a product which can last, you know, maybe 20 years, or even probably all your life because in a way that can be upgraded easily. Before didn't people care about that, sometimes you even have to break it before you can repair it, and that means you have to buy another one. And that was the whole desire of product development in a company, you know – why do we have to make it for life? I mean, I want them to buy another one next year, so, er... and at that point, you know, you just have to do your job, you know – you can't say to the company, 'no, let's do something really reliable that lasts forever', because the company cannot make money. So it goes against the strategy of the marketing of the company. Well, you know that!

And you felt pressure from the company to build in that planned obsolescence? That was an imperative of the company, to design that in?

Yes. It was. And there was no question that I couldn't even go into that area, I mean, it's like, we have to do this, and you have to use these materials and this is the budget and these are the suppliers, and the most important thing is cost. So, if we had to go over the budget because it had to be some type of performance, it wouldn't fit with their core values, with the customer, like, if they will be able to pay more it's because they would have something extra usually that extra wasn't really with eco.

Did you find that problematic? Was it something you struggled with?

Er, to be honest at that point I didn't even know about... I wasn't even sure about... you ant to work and I work, I didn't know about like this. Now I understand much more about... I am more aware of what I am doing. But I like to make better products, and if you tell me to make something that is more sustainable I will still like it, because I like to do something which is like, er, like a new type of product – what is going to be next, I like that. I like this type of research about products. But now I take into account more that it has to be sustainable, but it's not something that is at odds with designing. You can design, it's just one parameter more. When I have the spec, it's the same as before, but now I have to add, er, you know, like 20 parameters more, which makes it more difficult to design, because the freedom I have to design is narrower.

So you keep referring to 'before' and 'now' – presumably you mean 'before' you became a research fellow and through that research fellowship became more aware of sustainability issues?

Yes.

Are those sustainability issue something that you feel is important to you now, or more important than it was?

Yes. Well, er, I think the problem with this is on both sides; on the side of production and on the side of the consumer. Because the problem is we are not informed. Like, er, before I was talking with [company] and it's a company that is very aware of eco design, and it's a company that is very into eco design because it's part of the company strategy, you know. And when I was talking with them I was getting some information on the tools they are using to design more reliable products, and the problem they have is that, er, some of them don't have knowledge about tools. For instance, we want to design LEDs. LED is new in the field of lighting. But they still, we don't know how to design them, how to dismantle LED products. And I was asking them, do you have any sort of tools to make this possible, to make it easy to short out the LED components when the product goes to disposal? And they said, well, there is nothing yet – I wish I had this tool, but I am not aware of any type of tool which can do that. So the problem is that, and if I talk about friends of mine who work in small companies, they don't even know about Sima Pro or any type of software that can assess environmental impact. But then I didn't know that... because I have been reading and reading and talking with people and going to conferences, now I know what is available. And I know what is the impact and what are the consequences of the impact. You know, I didn't know about heavy metals – that it goes into the fish and then you're eating the fish and then it's affecting you! And many people, you know we talk when we go for supper, and they don't know. So, you know, why should I care? Why should I buy... when I have one here, this is £5, this is £10, but this has been fully taking into account, you know the eco features, it is 100% recyclable material, it's been made using the right materials, the right processes, but it's £10 because that takes effort, and this is £5. I would prefer the £5, so if I don't explain to them the consequences of buying the £5 they will not know – they will be happy with the £5 because they cannot see through. So the problem is, people are not informed; people on the production side and people on the consumption side. We are not informed – if you know that it will have a direct impact on your life tomorrow, you will buy the £10 for sure.

Is it just about the impact for you, though, or is there a wider...

I think it's personal or someone close to you. We cannot fool ourselves in that. I mean, you go to conferences and people say 'oh, we have to save the next generation', but 80% of the people... I think those are a minority. 80%, they only care when you say, OK, tomorrow your family, tomorrow you. And, you know, tomorrow, because I will not be here in, maybe, 20 years, so I don't care. Many people don't care about the planet or sustainability – 80%.

Do you feel differently to that? Do you think that is true of yourself?

No. But, anyway, for me I think before I was a sustainable product designer, let's say I was behaving in an unsustainable way. I mean, I wouldn't care about things and I wasn't into that sort of thing. Now I understand a little of the principles, but I think I am still the same. You can't easily change people – I don't think people change so drastically. I mean, if you know things you will be more aware, but if you are... you now, there are different types of personalities and that doesn't change

much. I know people who do recycle things, and they don't know much about that – they have to do it in the natural way, and other people who are into, like, ok, let's buy the latest eco fashion, you know – because eco has a fashion as well, and other people who say 'OK, let's buy the latest eco car, because, you know, it's unique - who is buying electric eco cars? Not many people, and you know, it's expensive, not many people can buy, so it became a status thing as well for some people, so...

But in terms of your own behaviour, just to clarify, do you feel like your own behaviour has changed as a result of your increased knowledge?

Yes, yes it has.

So would you classify yourself as being 'a sustainable consumer'? Do you buy things from a sustainability point of view?

Er... yes [hesitantly]. But the problem is I'm very aware of everything. You know, like eco labels and everything, and I still have problems to choose the most sustainable option because I go to the supermarket, and, er... I don't go and choose, er... for instance, I don't buy organic.

Why not?

[Pauses] Er... one of the things that I am not very... I am a bit... There is such an amount of labels today and claims about things, and whenever I look at them... For instance, tuna – one says that it is line caught, and another one says this is organic, and so which one is better? And so there is such an amount of information and they are all saying this is good, and this is, you know, we take into account the environment, so which one is better – which one do I have to choose? So what I do is I buy the one I like! But I have a big problem with that – this is not a standard you can compare. We have a project about eco labels, and still I find it difficult – different people have different standards and brands, and in the end you give up. I mean, I go to the supermarket and I don't even look any more, because come on, they are all saying that they are ecological, and it's really difficult to estimate which one. But there are other things, for instance, in my behaviour – at home I will try to use all saving lamps, I will, you know, for instance, I will use public transport. You know, these are things which are clear which I can choose to do. [inaudible] It's the same with clothes. You see this coat – I have another one, but it's recycled PET. But I didn't go to a specific shop to buy it, I didn't go on purpose to buy a fully 100% recycled one – I didn't. I went to a shop and I got this one because it was cheaper and I liked it.

So let's take those two coats as an example. You have your recycled PET coat which you didn't go out looking for; where did you get it from?

No, I did not. TK Maxx. So I saw it, and then later on, because it didn't have any information about that, so I bought it and went into work and they said 'what did you buy?' And I found out that this brand, who is based in London, is well known for its recycled PET.

So it was just an accident?!

[Laughs]. Yes. So, I am really aware and I will do things, but in terms of products it is difficult. In terms of food I am clueless, I mean I buy, usually, er... I don't think I look at the things – I will never choose that. In terms of clothes I will not... Probably also because, if you look at Patagonia. I mean I want to buy a coat from Patagonia, but the one I bought in TK Maxx is much cheaper! OK, so I was thinking let's go for [inaudible] and spend more money.

So that process of buying the coat, so you looked at Patagonia and you obviously didn't buy while you were looking at them because they were too expensive?

Yes, yes.

And then you went to TK Maxx and found this one instead?

Yes. And it was very low cost. I mean, I went there – you know the price at TK Maxx is very good, and then if I like it I buy it!

How did you feel afterwards? Did it bother you in any way that you weren't able to buy the sustainable one and had to go to TK Maxx, or do you feel that you had to make a sacrifice or some trade-off or something like that?

In terms of my values? Not... I mean, that night I slept well! So I didn't!

With the recycled PET coat you have got, do you feel particularly good about owning that? Would you have preferred owning one over the other?

No, I think in terms of performance they are the same. And the environmental impact, you know, you cannot really see, er, it's the same function but different materials, different way of making things. But I think for me, I am more driven by cost. I am driven by cost, but up to a point I guess.

OK, so we talked a little bit about 'eco' and environmental products and those sorts of things. What is it that is important from that point of view that you would try to take into account?

For instance, if I buy – in the case of the coat, I know it's about the material. Usually if you buy a coat and they claim it's environmental, it's the material. It's 100% recycled or 40% recycled, the outer layer or the inside or something like that.

Because I suppose what I'm getting at, is when you think about products generally but clothing in particular, there are lots of sustainability impacts that a product might have and that could be addressed in different ways. So there's the issue of waste and using waste material and recycling is one, there's environmental impact, maybe from things like the use of pesticides in cotton, there might be social issues in terms of workers in the supply chain, and there are potentially quite a lot of these issues. So are there any ones of those that you feel are more important to you than others?

[Pauses]. Um... well, I think social issues are more important. For instance if you told me that, well, of course they would not tell you, but if they are so cheap because they have been using children doing, you know, working in really bad conditions, I mean probably I would say, 'no, come on. I am not that... you know. If you have some guts you will go for the other one, no matter if it is more expensive. But I mean probably the one that has been produced that way, they won't tell you, and the other one will not put a sticker saying 'the other one sitting beside, they have been exploiting children, but ours are fine'! So it's always... as I said before, it's a problem of information. I think if they tell you in the face and very, very clear, probably people would choose, even me. So this coat, it's not saying anything bad about the company or the coat, so if it's OK in price then I will buy it.

So if we're trying to improve or resolve some of these social impacts or environmental impacts or whatever they may be, do you see the responsibility being on the companies, then, to inform people of how things are made? So that you can then make an informed choice?

Yes. Well, the first step is that, usually when I go shopping I am in a rush, so I don't have time to get into the company and study which place in the ranking of the sustainability index or whatever – I don't have time, so I will just see if I like it, what is the price, and then if it says something – if it informs really clearly and then I have two options, then I will say, ok, I have to pay more, but I will go for the sustainable option, but if I don't get information from them it will not help me to make a decision. So, you know, if I give you two cars and I don't tell you which one consumes more petrol, clearly you will make a decision not based on that parameter.

Would you say that you feel a sense of responsibility to buy more ethically or more sustainably?

I do, but now you have made me think about it, I do, but now I'm reflecting on my own history, if you tell me that something is wrong, I will not buy it. But if you tell me something is good, but is not bad, probably I will buy it. So if you tell me that something is going to really, really harm someone or something, I will say 'no', but if it is good price, and OK, not the best option, but... probably I will buy it. And I will buy really nice clothes if they are sustainable as well.

So that thing about being informed – have you ever made a decision not to buy something because of information you have found about a company? So, maybe you have seen something in the news - has that ever informed your purchasing behaviour, do you think?

Yeah, for instance, I don't know if this is true or not, but you know the problem is there is a lot of greenwashing and, er, because it has become part of the marketing thing so for the consumer it is difficult to know where you stand. For instance, the last thing I saw about Zara – you know it's Spanish, so you know wherever possible I like to spend my money with Spanish and everything – I try to invest in Spain if I can. You know, I will buy Camper, I will buy... But I the news I saw that Zara was not acting, er, how to say... they were not acting particularly correct, part of the production in India or whatever it was, was not particularly fair. And I didn't know that – I was shocked, I was... You know, how these companies so big, how are they risking their business? They could spend a bit more money, they don't have to carry that thing. And since then my perception of Zara has changed; I will not buy it. That's an example. But the problem is the companies' way of doing things change, so it's difficult for me to catch up as well, because at some point it would have been Nike – at some point they were not doing things ethically, they were not doing things correctly in the way they use suppliers, and I think it was recently, yes, I was reading and Nike take into account, as part of their corporate strategy, the environment seriously, because they realise that consumers are aware of that. So, you see, if you don't catch up – and I am working in this area – if you are not into this business, probably, two years ago, someone was saying that Nokia was doing things wrong, and today it is right. I stopped buying, and tomorrow they say 'no, it's the top company in the sustainable index', so now I have to buy. Or I buy Patagonia and tomorrow I find out that Patagonia is using toxic materials, so you have to catch up. And you see, some of the information... and because you have research different types of information, you give up, I think.

So you are happy to forgive companies if you knew that a company had acted very wrongly in the past, but now it had improved its practice?

Probably, although probably I wouldn't buy it because I might think how a company can change that drastically I their supply chain, everything. That is not visible, you know, I wouldn't... I wouldn't trust. OK, a company had been 20 years doing all this, and suddenly they have changed all their manufacturing supply chain. On the other side, they can improve, but they cannot change drastically in two years. So I would not trust, and now I can understand reflecting on that why for instance, like here are things which are independent of products which is influencing my behaviour. Now this is one thing that is true; I don't like to buy anything new until what I have is broken, and if I can repair it I will.

Why is that?

Because I think it's part of... er... it probably has nothing to do with being sustainable because I have done it all my life. I think it's part of, why do you have to buy a new thing if the thing you have works well?

So that's something you think you have had all your life?

Yes.

And where do you think that came from?

I think that's it's personal, you know, or genetic...

Were your parents very sustainable or did they have to be very careful with money?

No – average. Probably they were not so into the 'let's buy the latest car', and I have been influenced by that probably. But I will try to buy something, even if it is expensive, if it will last – that is true. But on the other side, when I go to buy something, I will not choose... I will not go crazy, like, looking at the neighbours. But lots of the time there is so much information, and I don't have time. Like food, you know – I don't have time – I have to buy it quickly. So I just say, OK, I like this, OK is it organic, but I don't go to the web site and look.

Thinking about that, do you feel like you have a choice to be able to live up to the things that you find important?

I have the option, but I don't think I have the right information to choose, to compare. Because I cannot compare based on the same label or standard. And that probably makes me give up, and

say 'OK, whatever'. If it was very clear to compare and benchmark with the same standard I will say, OK, this is clearly like this. So it's very difficult to choose, but there are some companies that have been so up there in their... like they are so well known in the eco design world, for those I will buy. For instance, there are some companies, er.... Now I think about it there are so many! Patagonia, for instance, now I know Patagonia is very well known, so when I see Patagonia, if I choose this and it is more expensive, probably I will go for Patagonia. But because I know, for me it is clear when I see this coat, the brand in my brain is clearly... there is no doubt it is very, very ecological. But there are so many different brands that I don't know very well and they are changing continuously. So which one is the right one? Which one is the best?

Do you feel that your increased knowledge has made that more complicated? Like, was it easier before you knew about all of these issues around sustainability?!

Well, probably yes! Because before for me, the easy things were, what I was taught to look at were the eco levels. But now I learned that there are many, many types. And some of them, you know, some of them they even say that you shouldn't look at them. Because they are not reliable, like you have to look at FSC, but not look at this one because it's not like a fair [inaudible]. And the way to assess a product as well, it's full of gaps – it's full of questions. So I am doing this, and when I see the co label and they say it is this or that, you know, there are many, many things you have not taken into account and many... So in some way I understand. Like I was talking with some Professor here, and he was saying, do you really believe in LCA [lifecycle analysis], because I am working so long with LCA because it is the closest, most objective tool we have to assess something. And he was saying do you really believe in LCA? And I was like, probably you are right because it's not perfect, but this is the only tool I have – this is the best I have. But it's not perfect, I know that. So I am giving you some arguments to by, and I am not fully convinced of this. That is why people say sometimes all these claims can be misleading, and then consumers don't start to take it seriously any more.

Do you trust companies to tell the truth generally, do you think?

Er... I think there are some companies who... the core of their business, the core of their vision and philosophy is that... but there are others who [inaudible] like Nokia, although it's not a green label, I think the way they work is like the Swedish, the way they work, it's part of the culture. Although they don't claim it, they are doing it that way. Whereas if you go to the US, Caterpillar or something. Then, now, we have to introduce it into our strategy eco-design principles. But that's not part of the core philosophy of the company. Caterpillar probably have a philosophy to build the best, I don't know, build the best machines – this kind of thing. But now they have to incorporate that. So it's something they have to incorporate and have to sell more. In that case, it's part of the marketing – when another company does it it's in the core. But the problem is how do you identify those companies?

In clothing specifically you mentioned Patagonia. Do you know of any other companies that might have those values at their core?

Er... [pauses]... er, I'm not sure. Let me think.. [pauses]. Not much.

Have you ever bought anything from Patagonia?

No... Which was the company... I don't remember... To be honest, there are many of them who have products in the catalogue which are eco products. For instance I was looking the other day at some samples for Powerpoint, and many many companies have some products which are ecological, but companies which are, like, fully – they have become known because of that.. I am trying to think and there are not, I mean there are, but there are not many of them.

So thinking about some of the things that you have specifically, have you got a favourite item of clothing?

Do you mean type or brand?

A specific item!

Probably some jumpers I have.

So can you talk me through what is it you particularly like about them?

I have a jumper which is, like, er, wine coloured. I like the colour, I like the texture and the feel.

Can you talk me through when you bought that? Did you go out to buy a jumper?

No, er, the way I would buy is, for instance, when I'm here I would buy some items, but not usually, when I go to Spain for holidays and have time, I say OK, let's say I have spend time with my mother, so I say, OK – let's go shopping, so she can go shopping and we can have a day together, then we go, and then I will do, like, a big shopping. And then I will bring everything here, and here I might buy some items like shoes or coats, but really when I go there I will do shopping for the whole year. And then I will know what I'm going to buy, you know – I will go around and see if I like it or don't like it or any of this.

Why do you wait until you go back to Spain?

Er, there are two reasons. One is because it's cheaper than here. And also because I have more time when I'm there because I have holidays. And I want to spend time with my parents so I say OK, let's go shopping – it's like, er, it's like a ritual thing. We go out, we have dinner together, we spend the whole day together and then we will do some shopping. So...

Is that something you've done from childhood – that shopping is kind of time you spend with the family as well?

No, only really since I came abroad, because I only really go to Spain at Christmas time and summer, and Christmas is shorter – maybe just one week or something like that. But in summer I have one month, and, yes, then I will do that. And usually I will buy all of the clothes at the same time, and I don't have anything specific in mind, you know. It's not usually I am going for one thing.

Is shopping something that you enjoy, do you think?

Not much. And that is why as well I have clothes that I bought, maybe, ten years ago as well. I mean, I will buy something... my mother will say 'come on, buy something, you have been wearing the same clothes for how many years?! You cannot go to University like that to teach or anything!' So I will go and I will buy, but I can have, for instance, I bought this [shirt] maybe one year ago, but I bought these [jeans] maybe three years ago, and I have at home jeans, like, five years ago as well, and I will only throw them when they are, like, broken. And the same with suits – when they become to be deteriorated. So I don't really like to spend time buying things. So here I will never go, only if I have to.

When you do go to buy things to you just go to one shop or do you like to look around, or...?

Usually I will try to go to a big, how do you say, shopping centre. We have a big shopping centre with many shops, so you go there and you go from one to one, I will look around and then I will choose. So I will go to the typical shops that they have there [inaudible], Mango... but I will look at the cost and also if I like it. And I will never look at the eco features, but it is also true that very, very rarely when I am looking at clothes, it's not common to see labels that say this is eco. They don't say it, I mean...

Does it bother you that you can't do that?

No, it doesn't bother me so much.

And do you think you're a good shopper? Do you generally feel pretty satisfied with the things you have bought?

Er... yes.

Can you think of anything that you were unhappy with?

No. Usually when I buy something I will be very thoughtful. Because I don't want to buy something that I will not use. So I will go around and then I will buy. Because I want to make sure that is what I like because it will last for quite a long time, so...

OK, is there anything you want to ask?

No, but let me think – this sounds like very strange behaviour, but I am quite aware, no it's true... I am not so well aware of the companies, but I know about how products are assessed, where is the impact of the materials of these type of products... I guess, probably because I don't buy so much, but I will look at... like, with food and clothes which are the things I buy most often, I will not go for a brand because it's well known to be eco. Or for a product in a brand like, er – Speedo – I like to swim – I am not sure if they have eco goggles at all, but I have not checked – I went to Decathlon and I bought the ones I liked.

I suppose when you think about fashion now, and everyone talks about this idea of fast fashion, is that something that you perceive, not for you but in society generally, to be a problem?

If I was more fashion conscious maybe I would try to keep up with all these new things that I could buy, but I don't. So in that sense I am more, how to say, I am trend-proof! And it won't affect me much. But I know people in my office, some girls, and I even know one who is very into fashion, and I was like, oh my goodness, every week she is buying things. And no matter if they are sustainable, you are consuming, so the first thing is they do not change. The second thing is if you have to buy something, buy sustainable, but the first thing is do not buy it if you don't have to. And she is buying every week. So I was thinking, OK, so this is behaviour, it's not about being sustainable, it's er..., the key thing is the behaviour – what you are studying now – changing behaviour. And that is very, very difficult – it's personal. I don't think it has to do much – it has to do with information, but if I tell this girl – if I gave all the information to her, probably she will still buy all these things. Probably.

Interview ends.

Interview 11 - Helen

Right, okay. So could you just start by telling me a bit about your role and your interest in the sustainability from a professional perspective?

Yeah, so the majority...one-fifth of my role is sustainability teaching so I've done some lectures so far, but, start as module leader in October on a sustainability module. I've got...my background's been in sustainability, my degree was Environmental Sustainability. Many years ago... I then went on to work in the energy sector for a number of years and I'd worked in community regeneration for eight years, so quite...it's always been part of my life.

Where did you do your degree in Environmental Sustainability? Which discipline was that from, was it a scientific background or a social sciences course?

It was a BA Honours and it was...prior to that, I lived in a...my stuff, I did my degree when I was 25 so I went as a mature student, I lived in a sustainable community before that. So I was very interested in the social aspect of sustainability and people's approach and how society approaches environmental impact. So there was a lot of philosophy, it was a big part of the course. We did some environmental science but it was a fraction of what the main course was.

You said that was something you had been interested in for quite a long time, where did that interest come from?

I think it started quite young probably from evening school actually sort of friends I mixed with had been brought up by it - a lot of my friends were vegetarian and...so from, probably 14, 15, it was an early interest. I spent a few years not knowing what I wanted to do. I wanted to kind of, get into camera work and be a wildlife camera person, so I went to film school. Then didn't - I changed my mind and went into the theatre for a while and then I spent a few years deciding what to do. Once I worked in fashion, actually, so I tried to get quite a few jobs in fashion and then got summer jobs and realised it wasn't really what I wanted to do. And kind of decided to go out to Spain and lived in a sustainable community for two years.

You said you developed an interest in those types of issues at school and that a lot of your friends were interested in sustainability and all that stuff. Howcome do you think there were so many friends at school that you think were in that area, or what drew you into that?

I'm not entirely sure. You know, it's not saying I was...my parents was, weren't particularly that way inclined, I would say. I think I just ended up with a sort of alternative group at school and that kind of developed. I can't really pinpoint why. I don't think it was the school influence or....

At the time, time, was it something that was, you were conscious there was quite a big focus on in the media and was there was a lot of interest in...?

Yeah, probably kind of...there was a lot around sort of CND and stuff like that and that kind of...yeah.

Was that quite a shift in your life, do you think, at that time? Is that...from your upbringing, from when you were much younger?

Yeah, I think so. And then, probably that shelved for a while when I went on to explore other things. But it wasn't until I ended up working in a fashion company for about a year, I ended up saving up to go abroad but I don't really...they were a Saudi Arabian fashion company and the hours they worked was a big impact and on the face of it, it just didn't sit right with me as an environment I wanted to get in to.

So, would you have identified yourself at that time as an environmentalist, from your teenage years that you felt quite strongly was part of your identity?

Probably, yes.

Were you politically active in anything around that, in any groups around that time? I mean, I knew you used to live in a sustainable community, but were there other groups you're...?

Not really, I'd say. My friends were more, and I kind of picked it up by association rather than being particularly active myself.

Yeah, okay. That's interesting. How long did you live in the sustainable community for?

Two years.

Right. What was that like?

So it's a research centre, so it was looking at the desertification of arid land and solar cookers and tree planting. So probably about 50% of people that went, went because they were doing research and they were doing their Master, PhD or dissertation. And the other 50% went because it was a sustainable community and a community living and sort of very basic lifestyles, try to reduce their impact on the environment. So there was a slight conflict of interest in the people that were there. It's quite interesting because it was very transient community. I was a member staff for 18 months, but you saw a lot of people come through with lots of different opinions—political, social and environmental. So I think that probably just embedded my views really on the impact we have and how you can make a difference when you go back.

Do you still try and live by those principles? Is that something that you kind of carried on or did you leave it back in the community?

No, I do. I do. But probably now, I'm just wracked with guilt. (Laughter) But, you know, we went back this year. We went back in, my husband with our chil-...we met, I met my husband there. So, we took the kids back. So it was nice to go back 15, 16 years since we left and the kids were surprised, so. And it was interesting that we went back and we were like, what do you think, because we only went for one night, and it's a vegetarian community and they were just like, it's very poor, isn't it? And like, no, it's a choice that people have made, they just didn't...it was very alien to their world, but...

Even though presumably they are...

Even though we recycle like, very conscious of our impact and all, but they were taking it to a whole other level.

So, what other things...obviously, it's the environmental side of things that are important. Are there other aspects of that sustainability or ethical agenda that you try and place a lot of emphasis on?

I think it's, yeah, the environmental side is important but also the ethical side and if we talk about fashion I'd be concerned about where things are coming from and the impact on people's lives and stuff like that is very important as well.

Thinking more generally about your consumption behaviour, do those factors play a part in most of the consumption decisions that you make?

Probably, yeah.

And in what ways do you seek to try and live up to those ideals or values?

Most...I'd pretty say most purchasing decisions was...I had to consider all the, you know - is it the right thing to be buying? Do I really need it? But I'm not always... perfect. There isn't a choice and money comes into it. And, yes. Then I get really guilty. (Laughter)

Generally, do you find it quite difficult, do you think, to live up to those values that you have?

Yeah. And I just feel like since we came back, it was interesting looking back and reflecting on when we lived in Spain with, we had £45.00 a week, we got paid in food and accommodation and, but it was a very easy way of life. And then you come here and you get into the cycle of big mortgages, cars, kids, activities for all of that, and really it just gets diluted, your principles.

Do you feel a sense of responsibility to buy things that are in accordance with particular values? And also, do you feel that you're making any kind of a difference in doing that?

I think whatever difference I make is quite small. But I think the personal decision that at least I feel I'm doing the right thing is probably more of a drive for me. I feel guilty, like yesterday I did some online shopping and I'd love to have the time to go to local shops and buy what we wanted, but I did an online Tesco shop. But the majority of the shop, and I went to Natural Collection online for my... Some stuff I could buy there for instance, cereals and cleaning products I got from there, but they didn't have everything to do my shopping and I don't have time and I'm working. But the shops are where I'd like to shop.

Yeah. So is that something that you struggle with, you know? Did you feel bad afterwards that you...? (Laughter)

Yeah, then my husband goes like, "Why did you get the Tesco's order?" But then I'm saying; 'I use Tesco's vouchers because we're going to go to Legoland' and I'm like, God, I'm just buying into the.... (Laughter)

Is that something that you would have done when you were younger, do you think?

Probably not.

So, buying clothing in particular then, if you could think about that specifically, can you just talk to me a bit about how often do you buy clothes and then the places that you tend to prefer over others and how does your whole behaviour 'work'?

I think it's changed. I always used to...I was very much a charity shop buyer in my younger days. And, but my sister and my mum used to laugh because I'd always buy my clothes from the charity shop and then I'd nick a few of hers. I'd wear them, I'm like, oh! So I do like nice clothes and I, probably the last kind of five years, probably buy fewer and more expensive clothes than I used to.

So what are the reasons for that?

Because I think they last longer and probably not as fashion trend following as I perhaps used to be when I was younger and I'd rather have something that's nice and would last. Kind of in my mind to have if it's a decent company, hopefully they're a bit slightly more ethical in the way they treat you know, where they're getting the material from and the impacts further down the chain.

When you say 'a decent company', what would you categorise as being these sort of companies and what sort of principles would you base that on?

I buy a lot of stuff from like White Stuff and Phase Eight are my favourite shops at the moment, things like that.

Okay. And are they companies that you see as being...?

Probably not Phase Eight, no. White Stuff probably would have...they do have an organic range. But, it's the kind of thing I haven't really looked into because I probably don't really want to know. I mean, I wouldn't go...I'd avoid going anywhere like Primark or somewhere like that. But then I would perhaps go and buy a cheap T-shirt that the kids are going to paint in for school. So I'm not 100% perfect, you know? But I would...I wouldn't tend to shop there because I think it's just exploitation of workers and....

So what is it about Primark in particular that you think is probably...?

It's just...because the true value of the item isn't costed, you know? There's no way you can create a T-shirt for £2.00 if the people are... fair trade. It just doesn't stack up.

Is that something that you think is exclusively limited to Primark or is that something that you think is...?

No, I think, generally, most cheap shops. Perhaps that's why I've gone, like I said, more expensive, but then I'm probably just being ripped off! But, at least you put...you know, there is a true value in the supply chain being taken into account.

And then you talked buying things that will last for a long time, so why is that issue of longevity particularly important to you?

Just because it's just wasteful to have things that don't get worn or these one-off items that, the amount of effort that goes into it and the amount of energy needed to make that product is quite a lot.

And what is it about that specifically that concerns you? What's at the root of that uncomfortableness that you have about it?

Just you know, having...just having too much that we don't actually need and generating stuff for the sake of it, and I just find it really wasteful that things are thrown away and not used.

Did you sort of grow with that culture of being careful with things and not wasting and all that? Is that something that was a key part of your upbringing?

Yeah, I think so. Yeah.

More or less so than other people, do you think? Or was that, do you think that's kind of how it was at the time?

I think it's probably how it was at the time. Yeah.

Okay. So when you're thinking about buying clothes, I mean, you've got this thing about not wasting and feeling a sense of responsibility around it. Who is it that you think and feel that responsibility towards, primarily?

I think, around clothes, the workers at the bottom of the supply chain. We did some work with Puma last year, as part of a project. It was very interesting the impacts as you move down the supply chain and how little control they have when you go down sort of Tier 5 of the supply chain. But, that's where the greatest impact is.

Is it something that you feel you know a lot about in terms of companies and what they do or don't do?

Not that much probably, but then I'm kind of more aware than a lot of people. I don't think I'm your average consumer, so I do...I am really conscious and had a very different experience from other people. And I think majority of the people don't want to think about it.

And then...so, is it something that you feel that you know about through your professional work and life? What kind of average consumer...do you tend to find or research the backgrounds of the companies that you buy from or you know, where do you feel that kind of awareness and that difference comes from?

Probably more professional now, but I spent a long time reading Ethical Consumer magazine. And in the end it just made me so fed up, I stopped reading it. Like, if you read it too much, it's just like, I'll just sit in my room and not do anything at all or buy anything or.... So it's sometimes you can scratch down too much. So, you want to switch off from thinking about it.

So you don't read or use Ethical Consumer anymore?

I've not for.... I still get their emails and I'll have a quick glance through it, but if I ever sit and read the whole magazine, because we used to get it subscribed through [the work project], I think 'I'll just give up and go home'!

And have you used the buyers' guides?

Yeah, I've looked at the buyers guides. Actually, I did buy some bubble baths for the kids when I did my shopping out of Faith in Nature. And so I kind of scan it and I sort of check out the names, and they were good, if I remember.

Okay. And, is there anything else that you try and take into account when you're buying clothes in particular?

Make sure they're not dry clean only because that's just really annoying. (Laughter) Not really. I don't think....

You mentioned earlier that you take some other things now that are less perceived as fashionable. So, is that because of changes in your life stage or you know, why do you feel there's been that shift in terms of...?

I think it's probably got a lot to do with age and I'd rather have something that was more elegant, which is more my own style if I'm going out... more elegant I can wear a few times rather than something that is more fashion. But, I think when you're in your 20s, it's a very different approach to fashion. Perhaps, you don't...people have got their own individual style.

Was fashion something that was quite important to you when you were younger, because you mentioned that you had worked in the industry for a while?

Yeah. There was a lot of desire to be different, and alternative probably wasn't what everyone else would call alternative,... Yeah. so, I was quite conscious. I wanted to...I have lots of different things. I'm probably a lot more mainstream now.

And you mentioned when you were younger you did a lot of your shopping in charity shops. Is that something that you still do now?

No, mainly because of time. Yeah, probably haven't been to one for ages, apart from for fancy dress.

So, do you tend to buy quite a lot of stuff online?

Not that much online. But, I think the other reason I don't buy as much is just the time. I don't really like shopping. People that go shopping on a Saturday for fun, is just alien to me. I just find the whole thing an unpleasant experience like, because I...I'm very much if I know what...I know what I want, so I've got an idea in my head and exactly what it has to look like. Because I used to make quite a lot of clothes as well and I'd always go shopping and think, I can make that.

Just for yourself or for other people as well?

Myself mainly. So I've got very fixed ideas on what I really like and I just get disappointed that nobody else had made it for me ready off the shelf! Or it's not quite right. And it went up, just picking those things up and then the whole change room experience, I just try things on and oh, it's horrible, it isn't quite [inaudible 00:22:09].

So is it difficult to find things that you like? Is it because of your individual style that you find it difficult to find things that fit?

Probably because I'm quite fussy, I think. And I come up with...and I'll often go online, browse online but then I want to go and see it. Sometimes, I'll order like online, but usually it gets sent back because it's not quite right.

In what sense? So can you give me an example of something that you...?

Trousers. I'll have to find trousers that fit. You know, it's just...cut is not quite right. So, I struggle with that.

So do you have quite a small number of retailers that you just go to. If you need something, you'll just go to one or two places and...

Yeah, yeah. I'd probably go to Monsoon, Phase Eight, Next maybe, but, it's a bit too mainstream. I don't like wearing stuff that I think everyone is going to wear. So I'd probably go to John Lewis... So, it minimise the need to go to lots of shops.

So I was going to say, what is it about those particular retailers that you like?

Yeah, so I can see lots of different things at the same time.

Do you ever try and buy organic or Fair Trade or anything like that?

Um, I've looked, but it does come down to style where you found anything that... I can't think of anything from my wardrobe that would be classified as organic.

Okay. Would you know where to go to look for it?

I know there's some new ranges. I'd say, I did notice when I bought some tights the other week in Boots that there was a bamboo-type range and I got those rather than the cotton ones. And I think Marks and Spencer is starting to bring in an organic range.

If that was something that was available and there were things in the...

I'd probably steer towards it, but... ... the actual item, style and appearance would still come above when it came to fashion.

I mean, do you tend to buy any things where it might be a bit easier to buy organic things, so maybe with food, with groceries and things like that...

Yeah, I'd always buy in that way. But, yeah. I have to say, fashion and style overrule whatever it is, organic or whatever.

I'd like to just talk about some specific purchases and specific items, then. So, have you got a particularly favourite item of clothing in your wardrobe?

Yeah, I got something recently, a dress I bought – Phase Eight that was. I have a few dresses from there.

Okay. So, can you tell me a bit about that? Was it something that you needed? Was it for a particular occasion?

It was...I wanted a practical...well, this other dress was for my friend's 40th last Saturday. Probably brought it about six weeks ago, four weeks ago. And I got it just like I was passing...I'd gone to Cambridge with my sister to meet up for the weekend and happened to be passing by the shop, which is where I usually do my shopping and as we were passing by it caught my eye, just a really nice little silk dress and it was all down to the way it looked, so...and then, it was 20% off online, so I did buy that online, I just glanced it in the shop. But, I suppose, it should be right size-wise. Because dresses usually are.

So, what is it in particular that you like about it?

Just the shape and the way it flows, really.

So it was quite an easy purchase to make?

Yeah. I'm very black and white when I go...if I go shopping and I don't see anything I like, but it's those kind of things that I see and go; 'I've got to have that'. My favourite thing is a coat I got in Camden Market in February. I'm quite into coats and it was...it probably does go against my principles because it's probably mass-produced in the Philippines. It was from a stall in Camden Market, but that was...as I went around Camden, there was quite a few selling the same coats, which, it was quite cheap, nice. Some things I'm just like, I have to have that.

So you said on reflection, it was something that might go against your principles. At the time, is that something that came to your mind?

At the time, no. I was blinkered by it! (Laughter) But, it was just the fact I really liked it.

Have you ever have any items where you have a bit of existential angst around the things you are buying?

Probably not when it comes to clothes. No.

Is it the same with the family? So, do you like, do you tend to buy the kids clothes or is that a shared responsibility?

I tend to, but most...my daughter Hannah is six and all of her clothes are hand-me-downs from my niece – she's got an expensive, over-consumed wardrobe. Actually, I do feel...I feel quite...my sister often brings me black sacks full of [niece's] clothes. And I do feel a bit...I don't want to say anything ungrateful. But, I think, god, no nine year-old should have this many clothes. An obscene, obscene amount of clothes that she's got, which means we get loads and loads to choose from, and most of it just gets passed on to other friends. But, I do feel quite cross – not that she's got a shopping addiction in some way, I think. She just buys stuff that... and I just don't think it's very good to bring children up in a way that they've just got so much, she's got like 15 party dresses. It's crazy.

So, in terms of...so, in buying the kids clothes, then, is that...? Again, do you have sort of particular places that you tend to go to and...?

Yeah. And it's pretty.... It's down to ease. But, yeah, the same kind of principles apply. I have to say, again, it's diluted when it comes to fashion compared to other things I get.

So when you say ease, what makes it convenient?

When I was working in the city centre, it was what was the closest to get to in short amount of time, so, I'd probably go to John Lewis.

And is that different now that you're here?

Yeah. I haven't really had a chance to buy much. That's probably a good thing!

Can you think of a thing in your wardrobe that you have the longest?

I got a T-shirt that was my mum's when she was... in the '70s that I still wear. It's a black T-shirt. It's kept its colour. That's probably the oldest thing in my wardrobe.

So that must be something that you like quite a lot?!

Yeah, I suppose. It's quite simple. Yeah. I think we had a big clothes...I had a clothes swap party at my house last year and it was like everyone's... about 12 of us, 12 friends came around, to drink wine and bring a pile of clothes. And that was really good. And everyone left with something which worked really well and, we'd do it again, but there's only a bit of time, but we'd do it again.

So what was the reason for organising that? That was kind of interesting.

Just because, again, I don't like the idea of... my style changes. I think it depends on where you're working as well. So, when I...since changing jobs, when I worked in the city, I'd like to wear my high heels and wear a dress. And here you would feel a bit of an idiot! But, it's...I like to be a bit glam you know, sometimes. But, on a day-to-day basis, I tend to dress down which means I need to like think about my work wardrobe *again* and what's appropriate. So that's kind of changed as I've changed jobs and prior to joining university I worked in consultancy and I used to like dressing up for work and wearing some suit dresses and things like that. Now, that's kind of all sitting there.

Do you miss that?

Yes, I do sometimes. I like dressing up. It makes you feel motivated in a way as well. I think clothes do have a big impact on how you behave as well.

Is that something that you feel is always important not only in your professional life but in your personal life, too?

Yeah, yeah.

In what ways do you feel wearing different things might influence your behaviour or the way which people perceive you?

I think most people would see me on the school run probably like, I look like I'm going to work so then I have days where I just...I got quite an extensive poncho collection. You know, I like to wear

stuff that's completely different. But, I still would like to think it was stylish, and that's important to me. I'd never go out in tracksuit bottoms or trainers or.... It's just not me.

What was the last thing you bought? When did you last go shopping?

Probably that dress, I think. Yeah.

And how long ago was that?

That was, I think about four weeks ago.

So how often would you say that you tend to shop normally?

I'd probably buy something for myself probably about once every two months. And sometimes a bit more often if I had a bit of spare money. I just bought a nice jacket when I went to Cambridge with my sister and we saw it from the shop. And then I bought it online because they'd got the size in there. It's one of those things but I really, really liked that.

Do you tend to find that most things that you buy in that way that you kind of you'll be out doing something else and you'll see something...?

Yeah, because I don't...I can't remember the last time I decided to go shopping to buy something. I probably went with my daughter and it's just really, it's a short timeframe. By the time we get to the changing room, I've had enough!

Is she getting to an age where she's interested in clothes, do you think?

Yeah. She likes...she's quite interested in clothes. She gets very excited when the sacks come from her cousin! Let's go through all the clothes and she's like, she'll try them all on and whereas my son, he's eight and he just couldn't give a monkeys what he wore. And at time, I'd say, go and get your own clothes out, you're going to get dressed. And he'd come out looking horrendous. Like, tracksuit bottoms - you're not leaving the house like that!

Yeah, I'm trying to remember when I was eight. I think I was, as a young lad, probably not, on the face of it, not at all fussy about clothes. But, I think I was actually, I probably was. But, I was fussy about not being fussy about clothes, if that makes sense. You know, I liked wearing jeans and these Converse-style trainers and that's what I wanted to wear you know, and nothing else. So, I must have probably looked like I wasn't fussy, but I think I probably was, you know?!

That reminds me of when I was younger, I was really anti-labels. I didn't want to wear anything with a label on. And probably I still don't.

For what reason?

Because I just didn't like the ethics behind that organisation, I didn't like being like everyone else and thinking that if you got a label on, it makes it better.

Yeah. So when you say, the ethics behind the organisation. Is there a particular one that you are thinking of?

Um, I'm trying to think when I was really...I can't think of the name now.

So, anything else in your wardrobe that you...that is something that you tend to wear more than others or you know, you got items that you tend to wear a lot and others that you wear less frequently and what are those?

Again, I think I go through phases of favourite clothes. If...as soon as I get something new, I wear it quite a lot. So, I'm probably most comfortable when I'm not at work and in leggings or jeans and....

So when you go through that, when you buy something new and then you wear it quite a lot and then it gets itself consigned to the back of the wardrobe, does it make an appearance again?

Yeah. It will probably go back in the wardrobe for a while and then, oh, I forgot about that. (Laughter) But it'd come out again for a while.

Would you say that your wardrobe is extensive comparatively - do you think you have a big wardrobe? Not the wardrobe itself, but, do you think you have a lot of clothes?

I think I probably have an average amount of clothes. My husband thinks I've got a lot of clothes and then still, I'm like, 'I've got nothing to wear!'. So, in a way, it'd be easier if I wasn't so fussy. (Laughter) But, I do feel like I like...I do like to have different things to wear. I get fed up with wearing the same kind of things.

And how long is it you keep things for and what point would you try and get rid of them?

I think I keep things for quite a long time which is why there's so much in there. I don't...they have to sit there for a long time, like when I did the clothes swap party last year, there was stuff that you go through and think, oh, that I could wear that again. I really forgot I have it. I'll keep that for a while and then it will sit there again. And now, I'll just go for my favourites. So I think probably, 30 to 40% of my wardrobe sits there, not getting worn. And I just need to be brave enough to say, right, it's going. I don't care if I like it again in three years' time, it's gone.

And then when it's gone, what do you do? How do you get rid of them? Throw in the bin or...?

No, I always take it to recycling clothes or the charity shop.

Is there anything in your wardrobe that you're really not happy about? Is there anything in there that makes you feel unhappy in any way?

It's been so...I think I'm quite lacking good summer, a good summer wardrobe. Because we haven't had a good summer for a long time. So when the sun does come out, I'm like, I don't own a pair of shorts, something like that. Every pair I try on just feels horrible so it's bits like that I'm not happy about. Most of the stuff that I've got and I'm not happy about probably went on the clothes party last year and someone else loves it, which is great.

Is there any purchase you have made that you really regretted when you think about it?

Yeah. I've probably... down to those shopping trips which is why I don't do it anymore, go on a shopping trip and go because, and I want to leave with something, so I need something formal for parties and you end up buying it thinking I wish I'd just not got this; something that you've already got. It kind of sat there. Yeah, I've got a dress sitting there, with still the label on. It's been there for 18 months and I kind of convinced myself in the change room, let's buy it. I put it on and it was like, it just doesn't hang right.

Does it bother you when you see it?

Yeah, it does, much like that. I feel guilty. That was a waste of money and a waste of the whole material and everything that went into making it, so I need to clear it out so I don't feel guilty I've got it!

Is guilt something that you feel often, do you think, as far as clothes are concerned?

Probably, yeah. I feel guilty about all sorts of crap! That's the problem with having principles!

Yeah, absolutely. So, what sorts of things do you tend to feel guilty about? And is it something that really bothers you on a regular basis or would it be...?

No, by the time I've left the bedroom, that's fine. (Laughter) So I'm looking at the wardrobe thinking, there's loads in here I don't wear. Do I really need it? That bothers me.

But that's something that happens kind of after you bought it and it stayed in your wardrobe for a while?

Yeah. But, I would say, there's not a huge amount of stuff. Most of the stuff that, as I said, about 40% sits there is because I just, I'd gone off it perhaps, so I don't like the way it looks or....

So, you've got your set of preferred retailers. Has that changed much over the last, say, 10 years, or have they been the places that you have always gone to shop?

It's changed a bit. I used to buy a lot of stuff from Fat Face and White Stuff and got a bit bored with their style.

Just because you have lots of stuff from there or because...

Yeah, because I have lots of stuff from there and it was...you end up feeling you look the same whatever you put on. So it's, this is White Stuff (points to top) and there's just quite a lot of that kind of pattern and, so it's just wanting to look different again. I get bored of looking the same.

Interview ends

Interview 12 - Nick

If you could start and then just tell me bit about your background, and what you do, and what you are research interests are, teaching and so on?

In relation to probably what you are most interested in? Yeah, certainly my research has got a strong ethical dimension. What I'm doing at the moment is we're... you're probably aware we're in the news today. You saw there is a big story about the potential for children to be born with three parents genetically. And that sort of technology is on the periphery of my research because the reason that we use those technologies, those artificial reproductive technologies as we go older is because even fertility is going down and there has been a lot of evidence to suggest that not just human fertility but animal fertility has dropped significantly in the last 50 years and if you see a drop like that in an organism, a human, or in my case we use the dog as a model to investigate this phenomenon in humans, if you see that sudden drop, it's not an evolutionary change. It's got to be what people suggests as it's lifestyle and the dog as a model confounds that argument because the dog's lifestyle some people might say has changed in the last 50 years but probably not that as much as ours, but the other strong argument is there is some environmental component so we are exposed to this cocktail of chemicals. As we sit in this room, we are being exposed to flame retardants and industrial chemicals and plastics and those chemicals affect our endocrine system and mainly during foetal development when it is really crucial during, what we call programming windows. You know, what programs the foetus to become male or become female, that exposure is one. It is critical. And obviously those chemicals that we are exposed to, the source of those chemicals is one thing and the production of them and the ethics, just to give you sort of an example, in a few countries in the world they ban the chemical called BPA which is a phthalate put in a plastic. And then it helps with the matrix of the plastic to make it, well plastic or flexible. And it's a known endocrine destructor so if we're using that for baby bottles when children are very susceptible for these changes in their endocrine system, it's got to have an ill health effect as we call it. So, those countries where it's been banned, you can buy, and in this country as well although it hasn't been banned in this country, you can buy BPA-free baby bottles. You can buy BPA-free drinking bottles and things like that. But because of the polymer compound that the plastic is made from, it has to have a phthalate or a plasticiser in it in or it would be very brittle and crack or break, it would not do its job. So, they've replaced BPA with another phthalate and the most current research suggests, guess what, those are every bit as much an endocrine destructor as the BPA were. So, you can see the ethics of this and how it comes into it. So, through my research, you'll become quite aware of these issues and the plastic generally is the massive problem it is globally and packaging and not just the disposal of the packaging and the recycling of the packing but what does the packaging actually do to us in itself, and I've always had quite a wide interest in food production and in a twisted sort of way you'll appreciate that as an academic, you know, pleased by the problem we had earlier this year with the horsemeat and beef scandal because it just raises people's awareness that you know you have got to look, "Where does our food come from? Is it ethically produced?" and those sorts of things. So, you know from my research and from just my own interests I have an interest in what you're looking at, not directly with clothing, but probably the global issues I guess.

So, what's your background as academically you are geneticist or a physicist or chemist?

Oh, well reproductive biology I guess if you have to put a tag on it, reproductive biology.

Okay, and the reason you're here is because of the work you're doing with animals?

Well, I came here as a lecturer to teach and mainly on the equine programmes to teach breeding and reproductive physiology as relates to horses and then you know developed research interest in an area that has to do with reproductive biology but at the moment using the dog rather than the horse. It is much more convenient and a much more appropriate model because we are trying to help get to the bottom of the problem we're seeing with humans because the dog shares our environment. Especially, it is a very good model for children as well. To say in this room, there is this flame retardants sprayed on the carpet. Dogs are closer to the carpet so are children, so it's a really good.... So that's why we developed the canine models from sort of a horseback that I moved

into, but when you are looking at a piece of testicular tissue done on microscope, it doesn't, however, really fit at all from a dog [laughter] or a horse and for obvious reasons, we can collect tissue samples from humans. We don't have a queue of adult males waiting to give us their testes so we can look at the histology of it, but with the dog we can collect testicular tissue from routine castrations. As we go with that, the dogs are castrated and we look at their tissue.

So, you talked about that and there're sort of wider ethical concerns and the horsemeat scandal and all that kind of stuff. So, are these issues that you think influence your own consumption behaviours in particular product groups or generally?

Um, it's an interesting question because I think awareness of ethical issues and then practising behaviour are often two different things.

Yeah absolutely.

And I'm sure somewhat like yourself appreciates fully what it's like to...you try to do what you feel is ethical or right within the constraints financial, time-wise whatever you have, that most people in an ideal world you would have this behaviour and you try to work towards the idea as best as you can. So, it all does influence.

What types most of the things that you buy, could you give some examples of where those concerns might kind of play out in practice?

Well I think in terms of consumer behaviour you have to look at household behaviour rather than my individual behaviour. What comes into our houses is mostly not bought by me.

Okay (Laughs)

But it is a family discussion and because I have an awareness of the situation with plastics and the toxic aspects of plastics contaminating food, we do look at packaging because I have an interest and as a family we have an interest in where our food comes from, food miles, I don't know if you heard of those sorts of things. If you can get things local rather than.... And even when you do go to Tesco which, as we say, in an ideal world I would never darken the door of the Tesco's. I'd go to my local farm shops and go to local producers, but in the real world you have to. All you have time to do is shop online at Tesco's but even then if we go in or if we purchase online and it's not Tesco's value chicken and it would be the free-range chicken. So, we try to do what we can.

So, you think those issues around human and animal welfare and health are the things that you try to prioritise over factors or the ethical factors do you think?

Yeah and I think not limiting it to just our immediate situation but considering if we have a 2-year-old son, and I don't know if you have children, it's so hard to keep the plastic from coming. It's just a constant stream of plastic packaging, plastic toys, and so we have an awareness that's like, "Let's try" and you can't not do it because he will go to the child minder for the day and come home with a plastic toy because...but just try as much as we can to reduce that in our household for us and for our.... It sounds very idealistic when you talk about it this way but just do what we can.

Not necessarily. I mean, I try to avoid plastic actually for different reasons and I have some level of understanding about the chemical make-up but my concern is that it's going to exist forever in a hole in the ground at some stage!

But most of that ends up in the ocean and that's a whole other problem. But this is the idea that we live in the real world and you can't avoid it, but you do your best.

So with that whole sustainability or ethical agenda in theory, are there other concerns that are important to you or is it more centred around your work in the plastics?

No. As I say, I think being an animal scientist as well you have concern for animal welfare and... or generally I think that the consumerist... we live in a time of consumerism, we eat more and buy more than we ever have. If you look at the poultry production for meat in this country and I think it's 6 or 8 billion chickens... So, it's a ridiculous amount and I think do we need to reduce as well. So it's not just to do with the aspects that relate to my research.

What's your concern with this idea of about over consumption, what do you think are the negative effects of that?

Oh well, you said you wanted to catch the ten to bus?!

(Laughter) Well, in a nutshell!

There're so many different things. I mean, monocultures and farming are a problem, but if we want huge amount cheap food, there is not very many options but to produce poultry or more corn or beef in this industrial way. You see the way that, particularly in North America where their beef is produced, these are confined animal feed lots where they have, there's one in Texas that there's 100,000 individual cows and one feed lot, and the reason they're there is because of the monocultures and the cheap production of corn that they can feed to these animals. So, monocultures are bad for the environment. These or other animals are struggling at the moment. Part of it is because of the monocultures because genetic modification isn't something I think I'm not opposed to, but it's one of the things, but if it's being developed by companies like Monsanto that then come along and say, "Here's the seed," "Here's the fertiliser," and "Here's the pesticide" on these monocultures, it can't be good for the environment, it can't be good for the farmers, and then again when you get the animals living on these confined feed lots being raise in these way, it's not good for them. Then, when the meat gets to us, we've seen the incidence of E. coli go much higher than what it used to and that has to do in part with the way we're feeding the cows. It's not a natural diet, it changes the pH in their gut, the natural flora and fauna of the gut then changes, and E. coli, which many strains of E. coli are fairly benign, but when you change the pH of the gut it will change the strains of E. coli and then when you get it on your salad because there's a bit of faeces in in that salad which inevitably there is then you'll get that E. coli and so it's the system. We cannot just say, well, we have a problem with the over-production of corn. Now, that has knock-on effects right through.

So, all these are big issues that you face us, I guess, and so, taking the pragmatic aspects of things as well, when you try and adapt consumption behaviours that try and address some of those kinds of issues, do you feel personally that it's making a difference? Do you feel that you have a sense of responsibility to do that because....

Again, you know to.... Well, the thing I feel mostly is frustration because, and I think probably because of my job and my research and naturally as academics we're inquisitive, my level of awareness is probably a bit higher than your average person so to speak. So, that leads to frustration because the reason in how we've developed the system in society that we have is consumerism and expectation for cheap food, cheap clothing, and whatever, I think it's because of the way we live in terms of the time budgets, spending much more time in work, which may give less time to make clothes or grow food and more money. So, in a way, there're all those factors as well.

When you do make those decisions, if you buy locally when you can for example, do you feel that undertaking the act, do you feel that makes a difference to the wider problem? Like, do you feel powerful as a consumer?

I guess there're two aspects to it. There's, make myself feel better [laughs]. It's like, okay, I feel better buying free-range eggs from the local market, and I am realistic in how much change I think I'm making, but I think I am contributing to change for myself, and this is probably and maybe not something for your research but in myself I think the way I bring about more change is through my job and research rather than my consumption. But certainly in... and quite often I have students and people I talk about these issues with who are vegetarian and they say, "I don't like the way animals are produced. I don't mind eating meat. I don't mind the taste of it. I'm not opposed to it, but I'm opposed to the way animals are produced for me," and I say, but if you remove yourself from the equation, then you're less likely to bring about change. So, if you become a vegetarian because you don't like the way meat is produced, then the people who do produce the meat don't consider your opinion at all because they are only driven by the people who are going to buy it. So, you'd be better off saying "Look I don't like the way the animals are produced. So, instead of

becoming a vegetarian I'm going to buy from the producers I'm happy with," and then that brings about change and we've seen that, I mean, and the changes in terms of food and animal welfare, if you look historically, the big changes are kind of because of human health scares and not because people were devoted about welfare and the welfare changes. So, yes, I feel my little contribution when I go down to the local shop and buy free-range eggs from the local farmer does, in a tiny way.

Do you feel generally that addressing these types of issues and some other things that you've talked about, where do you see the responsibility for addressing those issues primarily lies? Is it the consumers? Is it individuals on the street or what does it include?

It's interesting because when you see changes and, I'm Canadian and I still spend some time in Canada every year and you say you travel, you see the difference is in different countries. What drives the change is the people at the tail voting for change. So I think ultimately it's not just me but it's the people who are going... If you go back 20 years and know just free-range eggs or 10 years even, you go to the supermarket, what was the situation there was any, none, maybe one brand, now you go in and most of them are... and that change has come about because that's what people want to buy. So, I think... now that's the most powerful thing is people saying, 'This is what I want,' and then you will be provided with it.

Did your interest in these issues, does this purely come about as part of your research and through your professional development in looking at reproductive health was your interest sparked because of previous interest that you've got into it?

You probably would be more familiar with the literature than I would be on what brings about these changes but from what my knowledge of it is, the older you get, the more educated you become, the more you are concerned about these things, and I do think that for us to worry about it is a luxury, let's say we didn't have the money which provides us the options to sit back and say "I'm going to be vegetarian. I'm going to be a vegan." That's because you have the luxury of choice whereas other areas of the world and other times there was no luxury of choice. So, I think it is about we can sit back and sort of be a bit smug and say, "No, I'm not going to buy that shirt. I'm going to buy that one," even though it's more because you can afford it, and whereas if all... if you have less choice here. The decision making is much more straightforward so I think it's something that... It's hard to say. If I wasn't in this job and I wasn't doing the research and working in an academic environment would I still feel? I think so. I think I would still develop an interest. It's hard to separate the two things.

When you were growing up were these things that were important to you or your parents; did you grow up in a very liberal, enlightened household?

Again, thinking back, there was not a lot of choice. If you went into the shop to buy milk, you just bought the milk. It wasn't free-range. There wasn't organic. I remember paying my way through university working on farms and the practices at that time. Well, some of them are illegal now, but it was accepted at that time so I think as societal opinion changes and as my opinions have changed through time, I think I didn't have an awareness or I didn't have a concern that I do now.

So what sparked your interest? Was your first degree was in Biology?

My first degree was in English Literature.

Okay [laughs]. So how did you get into what you're doing now?

Oh, gosh again. We don't have the time to go through that but...

Because that's quite a change.

Yeah, no, well... I like to shock my students by telling them I've studied at 10 different universities, 10 different subjects... It was after I finished my first degree I studied Science as well, after that, and then went on. It was a series of events that led to ultimately doing an MSc.

That's interesting. You don't often hear people make that switch from...

No, no.

...probably through literature into the sciences. Did you find it was useful? Did you think your grounding in English Lit helped you?

Yeah, yeah, Scientists came right [laughter]. It's such an important part of academia. It's not good enough just to do the live work or do the research. You have to write it up in a way that it's suitable for publication and so yes, it has helped.

So, obviously my specific interest is in clothing. So, could you quickly kind of describe your clothing purchase behaviour, what sort of shopper are you?

I don't think you have to look too hard to realise that I don't worry too much about it! And, you know this is where back to my original point is that I think you have to talk about *our* purchasing as a family because I don't buy my own clothes very often and it's very, very rare, and the funny thing is I'm aware of the situation with, you know, cheap clothing and I don't go out and buy the three-pair Tesco jeans, and I don't if that's out of an awareness of the issues and the concern or just my own... I don't know what you know, just people don't want to wear Tesco's value jeans, but the other aspects of my life where I do make very deliberate decisions don't seem to extend so much to the clothing as it would for food, and I think, you know, because again now I know that what we eat goes into our body whereas with clothing it's not probably such a direct link and concern. And my wife buys most of the clothes!

Does she buy them from some of the same kinds of places? Does it bother you where she gets them from or where it is?

Well, other than a general, we wouldn't be happy to go when you go to discount stores and you see clothing for sale that it's got to be selling at less than the cost of production, I don't know much about it, but you'll think how can they possibly make a pair of jeans or a shirt for that money and you know behind that, there has got to be poor practise. There's got to be the sweat shops with the collapse and fires and then the doors are barricaded to keep them in, the horrible hours that people work and the poor consideration of poor, poor conditions. But the other side of that is of course everybody needs to work and live and some of these prices – that is the only paying gig in town so you don't want to take that away from them but sort of beyond that going on I wouldn't buy that because there is no flipping way they can produce that for that money. Somebody somewhere is there's something strange in all of that.

So, are there particular retailers that you wouldn't buy from that you're aware that associate with that practise or is it just dependent on the particular item at that point in time?

Well, I think most of our shopping is done online now and that has to do with our lifestyle. My wife's a lecturer as well and we don't have a lot of time to go shopping and my weekends and evenings are quite often taken up with research so to get out to the shops is something that... and I'm not somebody that enjoys shopping either. If I need something, it's quite often I just buy it online. So, it isn't so much going to a shop or avoiding a shop, it's decide what you want and then go online and find out who's got it and that's that.

Are there a particular online retail that you tend to use? If you need something, will you go 'right, I'll look at those three places' and then how does that work out for you?

I think I'd be more like to just to put whatever item I wanted in. If I want a pair of Levi's, I'll put it in Google shopper and see what comes out and look and see and make sure it's a company that's credible in terms of there's no negative reviews about it. But if it looks okay and straightforward just buy it.

But it's interesting that you say a pair of Levi's and not a pair of jeans. So do you mean Levi's or is it a catch-all term you use for jeans?!

Oh no, no, I'm afraid that these companies when they establish brand loyalty with children, it's a really good idea because growing up it was Levi's and it's not even probably a decision because they're Levi's. It's because I don't have time to faff. If I need a new pair of jeans, I'd get one now

and I know Levi's so I bought them. And I'd be perfectly happy to go and try other jeans, but it's one of those things that if there's doubt, then you go with what you know.

So, does that extend towards all items because jeans are quite specific.

No, no I don't think so. There're a couple of shirt companies that my wife tends to use and wear and she buys me shirts.

What proportion of your wardrobe would you say you bought and what proportion would you say your wife bought?

Oh gosh! That is an interesting question. I would say if I had to come to work in clothes I've bought I would be half naked. And I think that's probably typical, is it? You get to an age where you sort of rolls....

I buy all my own clothes.

Oh, do you? Well, that makes me feel a bit guilty! (Laughter). I have to thank my wife more profusely, but thinking about it, shoes and the other things that I have, I am more particular about shoes, not from a fashion point of view but because you want to have comfortable shoes and you tend to go with brands that you recognise and had before, so yes those were good, comfortable shoes, and not that I wouldn't try something else but say with jeans it's like okay I know that company. I've their shoes before. They fit, they last, and they're comfortable. It's those again.

So when you want to buy clothes, what do you think are the most important factors in terms of the things that you buy?

I guess time to find something that seems appropriate is the most difficult thing and usually it's like she says, "Do you need new shirts?" and I say, "Yeah, I probably do," go online, and this would be like that one and the if they look OK that's about the end of it, really, and because of the pressures we're under, inside a bad shopping is just when you think... I think shopping for clothes is like shopping for food for us. It's like, it's not, "Do you want new shirts?" really, it's "Do you *need* new shirts?" Do you need some milk? Do you need some shirts? I'll get some and it's very much... it's not a pleasurable process for me anyway to go and I would love to go shopping for new shirts or new jeans or new shoes, so I need some new shoes.

What about it don't you find pleasurable?

Oh gosh, that's a long list. Well, the first is because of the nature and, you'll be sympathetic with this, you know when you're not doing your work you're thinking you should be doing work. So, if a Saturday afternoon rolls around and there're a few free hours, do you want to go shopping or, no I think I'd better get on with work. Then there's the shops themselves, the people, the parking, the getting there. If it were something to... all of those things are acceptable if I'm going out to do something I want to do. If we're going to a show or something, you don't mind driving, finding any place to park, getting through the crowds, but if it's something that you don't really want to do then all of that becomes an obstacle apart from the... and that's one aspect I've never been keen on.

When you have been shopping, is the act of finding and buying things something you tend to find quite easy?

The decision-making process is usually quite short for me and quite often when we do go shopping it's not for that specifically. If I do those shopping quite often, it's because I have to for another reason and we leave something else more along there and make the most of it and pick up a new pair of shoes during Christmas, it's like I have to go shopping so while I'm here I'll just grab what I need as well.

Have you ever bought or sought to buy anything that's overtly 'ethical' in nature?

Clothing lines?

Yeah, so have you ever gone for organic cotton or fair trade cotton or any of that kind of stuff?

No, I can't say I've deliberately done that. Which I'm going to think more about now. (Laughter)
Some of our other purchases we think about quite carefully, but when it comes to clothing it's beyond the basics, like I said...

Yeah, and so if you think about the particular items that you've got then, say do you have a favourite item of clothing in your wardrobe?

No.

You don't feel any attachment to a coat or anything that you really like or wear all the time?

Well, I do have a very comfortable pair of flannel pyjama bottoms that I'd like to put on every Saturday morning. (Laughter) But no, I mean certainly, the types of clothes if I'm just around the house are comfortable T-shirt and comfortable pair of jeans would be my preference, but not a particular T-shirt or a particular pair of jeans.

Is there anything in your wardrobe that you feel really bad about and say you might even regret buying it or you hate it or is there anything like it? Are there skeletons in the closet so to speak?!

Well, no but because of the way we buy clothes quite often when my wife brings things home they don't fit me. That goes in the closet and we'll dig it out at some other point or give it to somebody who are.... Because you know shamefully we usually can't be bothered to send things back or take things back.

When she buys stuff for you, how often does it go back if ever?

Not usually, and it's the times we live in it's the time versus money isn't it? Not that we're wealthy, but you know what I mean. We've got more money that we have time probably so inevitably these things tend to kick around.

Yeah, is this something that bothers you ever?

That it doesn't fit me or that it sits in the closet (Laughter)....

Well, that you might have stuff that you don't wear?

Well, if you think about it, yeah, and quite often those things they'll go. A friend will come over and so I go, "Do you like this?" or "Do you fancy that? I've never worn it. It's not going to fit me. You have it," and I feel better that somebody else is getting some good out of it rather than just hanging in the closet.

And when you do get rid of stuff, how long would you attempt to keep things for?

Oh it's opportunistic, isn't it really? It's not often that I... and when everybody come... when people come visit, I don't think what's in the wardrobe that I could pass along, but if we are aware we're going home to Canada next week actually so, if things in there that might fit my nephew or my dad might like that I would throw it at the suitcase and take it along, but it's not a very deliberate thing. It's when you think of it when you have the opportunity.

So, at what point would you get rid of, say a pair a jeans, and how long do you think you keep them on average for?

Well, less as I usually buy the same pair of jeans, I don't have a problem with that because they're always the same in certain things and yeah, I don't know I could say really how long that would be. Hard to say.

Okay. So, can you... what's the last item of clothing that you bought or have bought for you?

A shirt last weekend.

Okay. So, can you tell me through, just talk me through the process of buying that shirt?

Yes, the short version is my wife arrived home from shopping and said, "I bought you a shirt..." (Laughter)

...and I think, "Thank you very much." I didn't thank her enough obviously because I don't appreciate that she does that which is exceptional but that was it really. She was just in the shop, saw a shirt, thought I'd like it, and brought it home to me.

Is that fairly typical of things?

Yeah, I think it's part of, she buys a few things for herself and thinks I'd better buy him buy something as well [laughter]. But you know, if she is at a shop and see something, she'll grab it.

Is it something that your wife likes doing, does she go clothes shopping?

She does tend to go out. She's the one, and I think it's just about pressures because most weekends I'm in the lab or doing some other work and she goes in and does the shopping. So, it's just the vision of labour in our house. So, I think she certainly enjoys it more than I do and I think she enjoys going without me, if you know what I mean?! We do shop together sometimes but I think it's a more relaxing experience for her if I'm not with her.

And does she tend to buy, do you buy a lot of clothes for the family? Is it something that you do frequently and does she buy clothes for your child? Does she buy clothes for him or her?

Him. Yes, yes she does.

Does she buy a lot of clothes for him, do you think?

No, no. I'm sure it's the same for you. Kids get a lot of clothes bought for them as gifts. So there's that. He is becoming a little bit more opinionated to what he wears and so I think some of the decisions now are in part his. It's a Spider-man T-shirt versus another kind of T-shirt. It's the Spider-man T-shirt, so yes she does buy stuff for him.

Yeah, and again are there particular things when as a couple buying clothes for him that you tend to try and avoid?

Yes. One of the things... getting back to your question which I'd probably should've remembered at the time, I do try myself and try to encourage my wife to buy natural fibres, but I think that has to do with my own background so for our son we try to buy things that are natural fibres rather than some sort of synthetic blend and try to avoid anything which is not so bad now but don't want anything that's got flame retardants on it. So, some, again it's mad. If you know a little bit about it, you would never put it near your child. People think that you can purchase, particularly in North America you can purchase pyjamas that are flame retardant. But the chemicals that they spray on, not many children smoke in bed or whatever, so I don't know if it's a necessary thing but the chemicals that's sprayed on them, the children are most susceptible so we would make sure that he wears nothing with a flame retardant on it for him particularly.

Would you always look?

Not always, but it's something that would certainly be, I would hope, part of the decision.

Is that something that you find quite easy to do, like to be able to buy things that don't have that and that you know what chemicals are in them?

Easier now I think. The natural fibres maybe not so much though because a lot of kids' clothes are... I think you can do it. We seem to get through it. Clothes are made up of many different components. If it's a T-shirt, which is made from cotton with an image on the front of it, that image is not natural. So, it's hard even if it says it's 100% cotton shirt. If it's got Spider-man on the front and Spider-man is some sort of plastic. I don't know what it would be but it wouldn't be natural.

Yeah, and is that something you try to do for yourselves as well.

Yeah, everything for the family. Well, we bought him something the other day to take home with us to wear to the beach and when we took it out of the plastic packaging, the actual item of clothing smelled like plastic and it wasn't a plastic, it was just the packaging so I was like, "Well that's got to be washed before he wears it." And again, most people probably aren't even aware of

that plastic smell. That is the phthalate and that's one of the ways they leech out of the plastic and that's one of the roots of contamination is just through breathing them in. You know the new car smell that people like, that sort of thing? That's just plastic really and although it might be a nice new car, that smell is actually bad for you.

And it's amazing even storing, we do, and we should know better if we store our clothes in plastic bins and you take them out and it smells like plastic and it's not about the purchasing but it's just that's got to be washed before you wear it. So we do try. We do try for ourselves to buy things made from natural fibres if we can.

Back to when we talked about buying meat where the animals have been raised with higher standards and a lot of other stuff, again is that something you consider if you are buying leather or are there animal products that's used in clothing? Also, do you feel you know much about it maybe?

Yeah, well it's something I wouldn't know as much about leather for clothing as I would for raising animals for meat for consumption, but most of the leather we buy is, it's a product of the meat production industry. So, I know some people again say, "Well, I'm not gonna wear leather," but if we all stop wearing leather it would devalue the cow which if an animal is of less value, whatever that value is however you measure the value, whether it's like another value or emotion or value or whatever, as soon as the values lessen then the welfare usually does as well. So, I'm not opposed to buying leather for those reasons because I know it's really probably got very little to do with how animals are treated. It's just residual from the meat industry and not by another we would devalue the animals and the welfare would be less.

So, do you feel you know a lot about the activities of companies? You mentioned a particular retailer where you might say 'well, that just doesn't add up to me', but it's kind of knowing what happens is that something that you feel in clothing in particular that you know a lot about?

No. I can't say. Again, I question practises. When I go into Tesco's and I see a pair of jeans for whatever ridiculous price I think maybe before you catch your breath you can tell me [laughter] how can they possibly do it, and I think I don't know that I want to support that, whatever those practises are to get. It's got to cost them that to ship it from whatever godforsaken country it's produced in. So...

Interview ends.

Interview 13 - James

So could you just start off by telling me a bit about your professional interests and your research and your professional background and the sorts of things that you do?

Sure, I'm a Senior Research Fellow at X University, work in the Institute of Energy and Sustainable Development, where I do research and teaching around, sort of, really, behaviour change issues, public engagement, at the moment, it's a bit more focused on energy buildings, and trying to get people to understand the environmental impacts of buildings and organisations and it's slightly more focused on energy at the moment, but in the past it's been around, my PhD was based around waste behaviours and recycling.

So what was your background and degree and that stuff?

Oh, well, it's... all over the place actually, I did a degree, and undergraduate degree and masters in theology, erm, which will come in in terms of value systems and plays .. has had a big influence on me. Err I then did an MBA, at X Business School. I then went on to do a, worked for six years in environmental management in an aerospace engineering company. And then that really started to really cement the whole ideas of environmental impacts of organisations; that's the thing I became interested in. Well from the MBA and the theology I got interested in organisations and their impacts on globalisation, on the social and environmental impacts of our lives, of organisations and then became increasingly convinced that business has a role to play, the the stuff that we buy, or the fabric of our life really. And doing the work of the engineering company, and being asked to do environmental management, I was asked by my boss to do 1401 because he thought HR wasn't important, and that I had loads of time – which I didn't - but they sent me on the course and I did 1401 over two years and implemented that and really just saw a nice link between businesses, social responsibility and environmental management as something that people can do. And then loving MBA here, thought about doing research again, I went, found a funded PHD at Birmingham, that was looking at Social learning and citizenship around public engagement and waste management. So that was just a way of operationalizing the big ideas that I had because initially I had been looking at PhDs and they were all about changing the world – big CSR issues and realised that actually you needed to focus down and this one example of a waste management company, engaging local communities when they were building incinerators, was a nice, funded – importantly, thing to research. And then really saw the benefits of public engagement and what that does for people and wanted to sort of carry on exploring that, er, got a research post at De Montfort.

So were environmental issues an interest that you had, going into your theology degree, or – what was the reason that you decided to study theology in the first place? Was it to do with a sense of...

Yeah, exploring faith? No it was nothing to do with environmental society then, it was, erm, in my late teens, becoming interested of questions of life, you know, I guess, making a commitment to become a Christian; but really wanting to explore that in depth, you know – to like, make sense of it. I had lots of questions about the Bible and what it all means and did a year's voluntary work in a church in North London and instead of going to University. Initially, ironically I was due to go and do a Business Studies degree and I really didn't want to – my dad was making me do it - and didn't do that. Failed, didn't do well in my A levels as a result, went to do this year's voluntary work, community - youth in a church in North London. The Vicar there had studied Theology, took me to this Theology College and realised I could do a proper academic degree exploring questions of faith and theology and it included philosophy and ethics. It was a fascinating degree. And towards the end of that, I was interested in doing a masters because the thing that was coming through was the emphasis of poor and social justice in the bible. The MA course leader was a white South African who had been very involved in the student movement against the apartheid, and he was leading the masters and there was modules on theology of the poor and ethics and social justice and that's what I wanted to get into. So it was the more globalisation and social justice issues around people that interested me. Er I thought I would go and work in the charity sector and I was looking at homeless charities or development education charities which I ended up going to work for part time CRED that you've (unintelligible 0516) the guy that set that up, I know his wife was

doing the theology degree as well, the masters. SO I met her, she introduced me to her husband, and then he was running this development education charity in Chichester. So I worked with him, part time for 2 years, but just became increasingly aware that business plays a massive role in society and the issues of development and poverty and justice. And realised that at twenty five by this point these were really complex issues that I knew nothing about – really - having worked, studied theology, worked for a church and then for a Christian Charity and became aware that I needed to understand business more. I think it culminated in, I interviewed the guy, the son of Ken Sowaweewer who had led the Agoni who'd been killed by Shell, allegedly, in Nigeria; and just feeling utterly inadequate. And that's when an opportunity came up. My family own this business in Nottinghamshire, an engineering company. And they said they'd employ me in HR, pay for me to come here, to the business school to do an MBA and I thought this is a way to get out, to work in business for a few years, do an MBA and to really get an understanding from the inside of what it all means. So it was the much wider issue of business in society. Consumption came out, I remember at the time working for CRED, I remember you know, speaking at events on clothing, the whole consumption became an issue. We had a strapline in CRED at the time, 'How you spend your money controls what happens on the planet'. Greg got to know Katherine Hamnett, the fashion designer, who was very into these issues and we got her to design some CRED T-shirts; and we had a strapline on there 'How you spend controls what happens on the planet'. So right back then, sort of twenty one, twenty two, these issues of consumption emerged. But I never translated that to the professional life, it was more my personal life, starting to think about where you buy your clothes and things. But the environmental side came out later through working in industry, y'know and one of the ways that an organisation can be socially responsible is the environmental side. That's the bit professionally I got into and realised that I could earn a living from in terms of the PHD and things... So yeah a lot of stuff there.

You mention it was in your late teens that you became interested in religion and Christianity was that something that you'd always had in your upbringing, or what kind of sparked that interest?

No nothing. Practically, very specifically what happened was, a completely none religious upbringing. Erm... in mid-teens, the school, I remember the Gideons coming in and handing out free little red new testaments and I remember people in school just ripping them up and chucking them round the school playing field. I remember that really upsetting me – I don't know why. But I was like, intrigued so I started to read it and, y'know, it was fascinating. And then someone I walked to school with went to a church and just started asking questions and kind of went from there really. So yeah... and... as I started getting into it...started wanting to attend church and stuff, it was a bit of a shock to my family I think. Probably still is. And then when I wanted to do a theology degree, they were a bit confused. But once they realised it was a proper degree, I was like y'know it is still, y'know through Brunel University...it wasn't some crazy...sect... it was a proper... degree, that had proper academic rigour to it. And once they saw that they were, they were happy.

Very interesting. So, you've alluded to the fact that issues of ethics play a big part in your buying habits, Would you say that's something that come into every buying decision you make?

Within reason. Yeah, and I find I've gone through cycles in my life for last, probably, we're talking twenty years now really since, I've been very explicit, maybe, y'know I've gone through stages of just buying fair trade, or ten years ago, I came across this company called 'Howie's' that was very into alternative, organic stuff. So for about three years only would buy from there. Then started to, y'know, the whole issues around are you just being marketed to, is this just another marketing decision? And people I worked with at De Montfort got to know some of the people in art and design who were quite critical of organic cotton for example. Where actually, there was far more water involved... I was feeling utterly confused, I thought I was doing the right thing, buying organic cotton, and apparently I'm not. The experts tell me that actually, it's not necessarily the right thing to do. So um, but generally speaking, yeah, whether, it's ... we bought a car a few years ago, erm, clothes... generally try and... I guess the general mantra for me is buy less but buy better quality that lasts longer. So in terms of clothes for example, I don't buy that much but I try and buy

fairly classic, simple stuff that sort of bucks fashion trends that's gonna last longer. That's the position I've got to and in talking to people at De Montfort who are into that stuff that actually...try to avoid the peaks and troughs of the fashions and actually, y'know, buy a bit more expensive but buy stuff that lasts so when I started working at De Montfort and that whole work smart/casual thing, buying three John Smedley black jumpers that were quite expensive but actually five years in, I still have them and still wear them, that's kind of where I have landed.

You mention quite a few things in there, so, You mentioned using fairtrade or organic labels, as cues, maybe not so much now, but in the past. And earlier on you were talking about through your theology degree, you centred on issues around social justice, we've talked about environment as well so, are any of those issues more or less important to your buying are there things that really place a lot of emphasis on?

Yeah, it's tricky. I think that... you're thinking about clothes specifically?

Yeah – I mean I'm interested in clothes but in any purchase really

(Pauses) Environmental I think would still be a thing, but... possibly has dropped off a bit now – mainly because I just don't know... probably some of the labels. For example if you were to limit yourself to organic cotton and fairtrade as two cues, or even wear some stuff as bought... there was a period I remember with trainers, discovering that New Balance trainers were made in the UK so 'I'm only going to buy them' and I'd say at the moment I'm possibly in less of a dip... some of the clothes that I've got or trainers, I couldn't tell you where they come from particularly. I would try not to buy from excessively cheap places... the Primarks of this world. I know a friend of mine in very senior in George and she negotiated the price for the white t-shirts for George's label and she's sent the factories and is utterly convinced that her, George's jeans are made in the same factory as Paul Smith and Harrods's jeans are. It's just a different line. So that's where all the lines get blurred and you think "what am I paying for?" when I'm buying the more expensive... am I actually buying into a brand and ideal and not getting anything better. With... our car... my dad died five years ago and we came into some money and we'd had an old crappy car for years and I love cars and we decided to a ... er ... decent... environmentally friendly car but still a car that was nice to drive; so we bought a year old BMW diesel estate that was very economical and that was a big impact – certainly with a car for example, part of me... I always wanted a Golf Gti growing up- I couldn't live with that sort of fuel consumption. Whereas the BMW seemed a good trade-off; still a good driving experience but also loads more economical. And I looked into it and BMW were getting the Green Cars of the Years and the manufacturing.. and everything... the CO2s... The savings I think an article I read, the savings that BMW do in the manufacturing process, was greater than all of the other manufacturers put together – phenomenal. So that was a big impact and that was quite nice 'cos actually I always wanted to buy a BMW 'cos my dad had them, so it was an emotional connection... but also , y'know the fact that they had the best green manufacturer as well was like great. I can justify it! It wasn't just like going to buy a premium car for some sense of ego or status; it genuinely was the better environmental decision .

So that obviously involved a lot of research on deciding what car to buy. Is that something that you consciously do in anything really? Do you tend to be quite considered and look into the background of things quite a lot?

It would depend on the item really. Not excessively with clothes. I remember I liked Reiss as a clothing shop and when they had their sales, I would try to... cos it is a bit expensive... but we try and pick things in the sales and I remember once in an act of abandonment, finding a phone number and calling them up and getting through to this random guy and asking about his environmental policies and stuff. And he was quite put out "I don't know, we're a small company, y'know". I was a bit disappointed and didn't buy anything for a couple of years but then with clothes for example, the whole eco labels often... sort of organic... think about People Tree or Tradecraft, the clothes are awful.

In what way do you think they are awful?

Just how they look... often, y'know the fashion. I do... a lot of people I meet in the environmental word seem to care nothing for design or beauty or art or creativity and y'know, wear the same thing for 10 years and don't give a stuff about what it looks like or anything. And whilst I'm not a huge follower of fashion or anything, I do have some sense of...with the clothes that I buy or a product for the house or something, that it's still... I mean Greg and Ruth for example – Greg who runs CRED and his wife Ruth, they are... they have worn the same clothes for the last 20 years. I find they have no sense of... and there's often you find there's people types who exist in this world and one of the... Greg has said that one of the reasons for the CRED jewellery specifically Greg reacted against the Tradecraft movement that was in the church circles, that came out of the faith movements and you would go to church conference or church halls and there would be cheap tradecraft stuff that was Fairtrade, or y'know this....Indian clothing... sort of almost like the festival chic type look. And that's what was associated with green and eco and...

Do you think that's kind of true then? You mention brands like People Tree, do you think they still adhere to those?

I think it's getting better, but I still don't think that it's, they are... erm... and I admire with jewellery for example, I admire the fact that Greg and CRED have gone down the (inaudible) "this must look beautiful is still there, you know, if you are making a product, it's primary function must be still, you know – if it's coffee, it still should actually taste like good coffee... but just the fact that it is fair trade, doesn't mean it is an excuse for poor quality. And I had a friend who, his job was social responsibility and ethics and he refused to buy fairtrade, this is 10 years ago, sort of the caff, when café direct came out, 'cos it's like it's awful! And it should actually be good and I'm not going to buy it out of sympathy. It should be a good cup of coffee... Now... what we have seen in fairtrade coffee is revolutionised and you can now, ten years later, buy fantastic fairtrade organic coffee and... so there is no excuse really. And that's the great thing about the BMW 3 series, y'know the highest performing, highest selling executive car. People aren't buying it because it's an eco-car – and yet it comes out as top of the eco awards this year – their buying it because it's a great car. And I think that's my approach and that's the challenge with clothing or other ethical decisions is that, first and foremost, it should be a good quality product.

So what do you take 'quality' to mean in that sense when you say good quality, what particularly as it relates to clothing? What do you see as good quality?

Yeah, so form and function. It should look good, it should fit well, it should wash well, it... if you are into fashion, it should be relatively fashionable... I mean I've looked into, for my green business module that I teach on...I use Patagonia as one of the examples. Yves Chenard in his book, talks about clothing, a sustainable piece, an article of clothing should be able to cross different boundaries. So that shirt that you wear socially, maybe you should wear at work. I think there's something really in that, about transferrable clothes. You've got, you know, I'm dressed more casually today, got chinos on, but actually you can roll them up and wear them with sandals and it's more casual, but actually roll them down and put on the formal shoes and you can wear them to work in the office. I like clothes that can perform a range of functions. So that would be a criteria for me if I am buying something. So I don't any more buy t-shirts that are... patterned for example. So coming in here, I am slightly aware that you've got the Dean next door {laughs} who's I've been talking to about jobs and I'm here in sandals... but actually it's that sense that it's a neutral t-shirt. I can wear this... y'know so buying clothes that you can wear across a range of er... things... you can wear it socially, you can wear it more formally to the office, that's good sustainable approach to clothing I think.

Do you find it easy to buy clothes, to buy the things that you want?

Yeah, on the whole actually. My problem is we never afford the clothes I want to buy. 'Cos often, for example, you take a John Smedley... jumper. ...The difference in quality and style of fit compared to say ... going to John Lewis or House of Fraser and their own standard, maybe £30 knitwear kind of jumper that is fine and you put it on and think it's alright, but I know what that £100 jumper fits like and that's going to last but and honestly I shouldn't have to afford to buy many of them because they should last longer and broadly speaking they have, but that's the

challenge. It is a more expensive route so it is maybe looking out for the stuff coming up in the sales... and that sort of thing.

So have you got preferred retailers and brands that you would normally go to buy...?

Yeah, generally speaking now yeah.

So what sort of places...?

Well, I mean it would be pretty limiting. I mean I've not bought anything from John Smedley for probably 4 or 5 years now... 'cos House of Fraser used to stock them, and they always used to be in their end of year sales, so you could y'know pick up one of the jumpers with, sort of £40 off. That margin of affordability comes close. If actually a jumper's say £40 or £50 regularly but the John Smedley £100 jumper suddenly drops to £70 in the sale, I mean that's worth buying less of but buying the expensive thing. I think you mentioned at the start about sacrifice and pay off. I think my sacrifice would be buying less but buying more.

I like some of the Reiss stuff, I find it neutral and classic but again it's expensive so... I'm not... my disappointment with them is it's unclear as to the ethical policies and where they're at. I know Paul Smith have a very good reputation... my friend Greg again; I had a lovely moment with him. His abandonment of being very ethical in decision. He once ... but then he was speaking at a event on fair trade diamonds and he ... I met him beforehand and he had a white shirt on and he had spilt ketchup all down it so "I've got to get a new shirt!" and we were in the middle of London and he said, "there is only one place to go"; marches into Covent Garden Paul Smith shop just goes "I need a new shirt" and literally walked out with a new shirt on his back and he's like they are the only company that you can trust with their supply chain. And he still wo... interestingly... 5 years on... he still wears that shirt, when he, it's his one smart nice shirt that he wears, so... but again, y'know, they are expensive brands so I think the dilemma I have is trying to find sometimes more affordable clothing places that have, the brands you know. Harries was somewhere that I always went to, I found style-wise. I think, for 3 or 4 years I was doing my PHD and I was essentially a student, didn't mind the sort of look but I found professionally, that transferrable stuff, t-shirts, it's the whole skater, surf thing. I think when they first started out, they were making stuff for office, workplace and stuff and they seemed to have positioned themselves much more skater, surfer, hoodies stuff which is, y'know, not my... thing anymore. So I do struggle to know where to go, but the reality is I don't need it. I've got... y'know ... my work stuff, I've got some shirts... actually from the consumption point of view, there's nothing I need. So it is actually resisting that temptation when all the sales are on at the moment in town and resisting that... I don't need, I don't need anything. I've got enough shirts, like, it's summer I've got enough t-shirts, a resisting to those marketing pressures.

Why do you feel that resistance is important. What are the reasons you want to resist that and you want things to last for longer?

Yeah, I guess the waste. I am pretty convinced, you know, I was listening to something just the other day on population growth; and the problem there is not over population but the over consumption of the population, so certainly for me and my family, really trying to resist over consumption and waste from an environmental point of view is really important; making things last longer... I mean it's a battle because I'm not instinctively a deep green person. For me it is that... a deliberate commitment. Many people that I work with, it seems very instinctive and natural and they've been brought up... you know my values, growing up, my family were relatively materialistic, know,...got... they bought stuff, business people ...I remember at 13,14 saying "I wanna get a job and earns lots of money and buy a Porsche!" y'know that was sorta some of the background I had and I think through my education and faith I've really learnt that that's a wrong approach but those instincts are still there sometimes...

You still feel you have that underlying value system that...

Yeah, and it feels that there's a wrestle going on.

That you are competing with your newly learned value system almost...

Exactly. So with a car for example, buying a more economical version and then when your car goes in for a service, they take you back into town in the top of the range sports car, it's amazing! Couldn't live with a car with less than 50 miles to the gallon anymore, that's the value position or with clothes, I don't need more than 3 pairs of trousers and they will last. With the children as well, they've got enough. We're not going to buy the next thing, with all their friends getting all the latest consumer goods; we're not going to it's just going to be more plastic in the (inaudible 2747)

You mentioned earlier about your Theology degree and the human side of sustainability and the issues of poverty and human welfare, are they things that often come into your buying decisions particularly with clothing as there has been high profile things in the news.

Absolutely, I have never, particularly gone to those really cheap outlets – so it's not like we would stop going to them 'cos we have never started to go to those. I mean certainly in the 90s when Nike and Gap and... that's when I got cognoscenti of those issues, y'know Naomi Kline's No Logo and anti big brands and anti corporates and stuff, so that was a big thing and then looking into it and actually thinking actually maybe more of these high profile companies have a more accountable supply chains now - so it's a just a very confusing thing. And we still have these debates, is it better to buy from GAP than from, my wife is it better to buy from GAP than New Look. At least these big visible brands have – in theory – have more visibility and therefore more accountability. But certainly there are places that over the years, it's just built in that I just wouldn't go to.

Would you still count Nike and GAP as those places that you wouldn't go to?

I did try... actually, I would give them a second go now... but I went to Gap a couple of weeks ago and again it was just the case of the fit – I just couldn't live with that so I didn't want to buy from that. But I'm sympathetic to the fact that... you know...people on low incomes, there's a challenge about affordability here. So my recommendation having known the, having been fortunate enough to know the person who goes and audits the factories for George at ASDA, I would be very happy buying stuff from there.

Do you feel, - I mean obviously there is a specific case, knowing the person at George, but do you feel you know enough about the supply chains in big companies and their practises?

Relatively – and I guess because some of the research I've done - I'm not a normal case, but I think it is very difficult still to cut through the spin and some of the policies and the auditing. And often who do you trust in the decisions; because certainly you don't trust always the large brands and the policies but equally, these days, I don't always trust the pressure groups and the campaign groups. Equally I think they have an agenda. Some of my research looking at, round the waste facilities, interviewing people at Friends of the Earth and I know they've got a very strong agenda and they're not always objective or neutral parties as well. And certainly with my friend Karen at George, that very frustrated at times with... who's the group- War on Want? Getting frustrated that they wouldn't - y'know they wanted to talk to this group and they didn't want to talk to them and they're like, "come and see what we do, we'll show you". "Oh no we don't want to engage with you – you're the baddies". And so it's very confusing.

I'm engaged with a sustainable clothing group of people and George are very active...

Well interestingly, when George were, when ASDA were taken over by Wal-Mart, they wouldn't accept the environmental policies or standards of Wal-Mart, they kept their own – so they have their own independent policies and systems. I think Wal-Mart are trying to learn from what, erm, George are doing – but then you think, what lens do you look through when assessing the ethical quality of a company? Because then you look at the local retail impact of an ASDA going I or the local shops or the impact on the local communities and there's an issue. And I have spoken to people at George and ASDA about their approach to buildings and outlets and that's really frustrating, there's no long term planning about y'know how long a building is going to last and the impacts of the building, it's like we'll put this new building up, we'll stick a wind turbine on, it's all fine. It's like, it's really not fine. But their financial planning model for their building is really short term.

When you look at all these difference areas of complexity that we've kind of highlighted, does that cause you any... do you suffer any kind of existential angst? As a consumer how do you try to rationalise all this kind of stuff?

Yeah, it does cause angst actually, and I think, many people that I know and work with choose to opt out of the system and they view the system Othis global corporate system as being fundamentally evil and therefore they must separate themselves as much as possible... and I just don't believe, ultimately, that's a long term solution – I don't think we can go back. I think it is about trying to embed and change from within. And do you see that that's my role in all of this with my research and teaching, that's what I try and look at. And so with the Green Business module that I teach, looking at examples of people that, you know whether it's George Cadbury, who is just an astonishing example of being able to achieve a profitable, successful firm that still had very high moral and ethical standards, erm, Yvonne Chenard with Patagonia, I think is another very good example... erm, I think there are more beside, erm another company we look at, Interface Carpets, Ray Anderson, his sort of work.. So that for me is the way forward. I don't believe that there's a big conspiracy, a capitalist conspiracy theory that is trying to perpetuate evil here, I think there is still possibilities for change and I think it's often people don't realise that these things are important.

You mention that thing of voluntary simplicity and saying “well, it's not a viable model and we can't go back” and we've talked about responsibilities and consumer responsibilities. So do you see yourself as being able to make a difference through the things you buy?

I think I am fairly realistic... in the global perspective in that my decisions aren't making any difference whatsoever, but I think there's the value position that if I can't, if I'm not willing to change, then how can you expect anyone else to be. Whilst that on one level I think that I'm not making a difference whatsoever, hearing, this programme I was listening to this morning about population growth, 1.1billion people in India. Y'know I am realistic about the scale of impact my life is having. Having said that, I think it's right to um... to do it. Who knows the subtle ways of impact that you have.

Do you see it as being any one person or group whose responsibility it is to take – in terms of the environmental agenda. Whose responsibility is it to address some of those issues?

I think it's all three really. My PHD looks at the relationship between government, business and citizens and so I think it's everyone playing their part, absolutely we need more legislation, y'know – higher standards. Whether it's... I know about, more recently for example building – if you think about the building standards – y'know building regulations could just be so much higher. Building legislation puts everyone on a level playing field. I've got quotes in my lectures about John Lewis, talking about lighting standards and saying “We want to go for all LEDs but if we do it that puts us at a cost disadvantage to everyone else.” But if you make everyone do it, bang: no impact. So legislation clearly has a huge role. But again, leadership in business. And that's where I think the individual makes a difference. And I have certainly seen that. If you get in positions of authority, individuals can have a huge impact on the culture and policies of a huge organisation. I think that's where the individual can really make a difference. But then it's about the individual citizens, making their voices heard. Cos sadly there will be many organisations that won't act unless they feel that people care.

So I think that it's all three really.

You mentioned your teaching,. Do you feel a responsibility in your position to try and influence other people through your teaching? Is that something you feel a strong sense of?

Yeah absolutely. And I think, again as an academic, if you've got those 12 or 15 people in your class, and you're that sort of gate keeper of knowledge or whatever it is and we all – I mean I look back at the influence that lecturers had on me... I think that's a key role really and that's one of the reasons for me wanting to come into the University is to influence on that level.

I want to talk about some specific items of clothing that you have in your wardrobe. Do you have a particular favourite item of clothing?

[pauses] erm... I did ... I do like my ... John Smedley jumpers, but I did actually buy – and again ethically I have no idea where it came from, but I had wanted a black jacket for a year or two and I'd seen one in Reiss and it was... silly money and when the sales came out I waited and I waited and eventually it was half price and so I bought that and I do love that. And again I...that fulfils those classic requirements – and I was debating whether I should buy a suit or not and I don't really have the need for a suit I have a one that just about functions for job interviews or a graduation tomorrow that I've got to go to but actually ... y'know, buying the suit I thought "when will I wear it?" whereas the jacket, I can wear it socially with a pair of jeans, going out for a meal,

So it's more like a sports jacket, blazer type?

Exactly, fitted, black... jacket thing, but actually then I can wear it to work if I need to and I can raise or lower various things, you can wear it with a shirt and tie or wear it with jeans and t-shirt; so yeah, that's my, that's my favourite.

So is that where the need came from, that you wanted something that could fulfil all those different functions?

Yeah... I think um... [pauses] I got more of a management role (inaudible 4017) at work and I felt like ... at times, that whole awkward smart casual – and I know we've talked about it before – do you just go for wearing suits – suits are a bit formal but then there's times when you are going for meetings and it just felt like you wanted something but I didn't want to have something just for work actually... y'know some other, if you are going out for a meal or if you go on holiday and you just want something and yeah...

Was it something that you had looked around for a lot? Had you shopped around for a jacket and you'd seen this one that was so expensive? How did that all work?

[Pauses]...not looked around...too much... well, yeah maybe just hadn't seen many 'cos quite often jackets come with suits and y'know I think the... fashion a year or so ago was maybe to browns or greys – black and navy will suit, to wear with anything and that again – you know that classic, simple...but you can wear it with grey trousers, blue jeans – like whatever it is,. But if you go for a specific colour it then limits the options. So... [pauses] and there weren't many about and I just know that Reiss do deliver that... I'm quite tall and skinny so that more slim fit kinda a thing that Reiss ... deliver that look, but again it's y'know – pricey so you have to again wait 'til it comes in the sales and it was there so I nabbed it.

And what is it about it that you particularly like?

The, the fit. I mean a distinction is - a black jacket arguably is a black jacket but I have a suit that is a black suit and obviously has a black jacket but it was the difference in... fit. And I guess relatively, one eye on fashion. I was a bit obsessed that this suit I bought 5 years that at the time, seemed a slim fitted suit but now seems quite loose and baggy! I don't think that 'cos I lost weight, I think fashion has, the whole cut of trousers has completely changed... over the last 3 years. So that was, yeah that was why.

You've mentioned a couple of brands in particular, Reiss and John Smedley. So where... do you feel you know a lot about their particular sourcing and manufacturing process?

Reiss –I don't. John Smedley I know a bit more about, partly with interest and partly by accident. I happened to catch 'In Business' on Radio 4 is it? It was one of their business programmes, and they had one of the directors on and I knew that they were... they tick all the boxes – they tick ethical, environmental, social... they are still made in Derbyshire, in the local mill in Derbyshire. It is all made there. Family owned company y'know, they tick every environmental box... sadly the sustainable development box they don't tick is the financial capital because they get increasingly expensive from the 5 years ago I bought these jumpers that were like £70- in the sale; yeah, they're like now £140, £150 for a jumper which y'know, my one gripe about all of the ethical and environmental fashion clothing is it seems to be partly an excuse to really... go crazy on the

pricing. Bono's wife has created a , they've got their ethical and social label, and again, you look at it, I thought "wow Jack", my wife's called Jack , "look at – Bono's wife – Ali Houston's got her own brand now!" but again it's £200, £300 an item. It's really frustrating that the implication with all these social and ethical decision making things – food as well, y'know the Waitrose thing. It all seems to be the privilege of the rich.

Was John Smedley something you bought and already knew about as a brand?

I can't remember actually... um...[pauses] I think I just... stumbled across it initially and [pause] ...even before coming to Nottingham, I am sure I bought something when we lived in Watford. I can't remember now where I originally... I think I had in mind they were simply a Paul Smith – an aspirational brand and then I think looking in, I discovered they were made in and thought, "oh that's nice". Like when I looked into trainers a few years ago and discovered that New Balance had actually just opened up a factory in the Lake District and were making UK trainers – oh fantastic! It can be done – you know. Now the problem I have now with New Balance is that I just would never wear a pair of trainers that look like that – I don't buy them anymore 'cos I don't wear trainers anymore. Erm. But I have got a pair of... I did buy a pair of... what I tried to do with the two pairs of shoes that I wear is buy ones that can be re-soled; so I've got two pairs of boots, sort of suede sort of desert boots and they're on their third re-sole now . So that's how I'm interpreting the shoe thing.

So you've talked about not wearing particular styles or things anymore- is that a definite kind of shift in how you dress? What's brought that about?

Age I think! [laughs] Just getting old. I guess, certainly mid-late 20s when we first moved to Nottingham, friendship circles, it was trainers, jeans, like the Howie's – discovered the Howie's t-shirts and it was just more relaxed than formal stuff. And now I guess with work and getting older...just feeling like you want to not be wearing... look like embarrassing dad sort of syndrome. Sort of style and fashion decisions I guess. But then also that question of "I can't wear this – when do I wear this sort of fashion t-shirt, printed... Howie's t-shirt or hoodie. When am I ever going to wear that now?" I can't wear that for work... I like to have a sense of fluidity between when I work and my social life. I don't view my job there and my social life here – so there's a sense of a merging and a blending. I guess the fact that your clothes reflect that. So there's not that "Here's my really formal work wear and then here's my really casual social wear. I like the fact that it merges a bit.

Is there anything in your wardrobe that you really regret buying?

[pause] um... nothing in particular recent... nothing particularly recent , no I can't think of anything...

Have there been things in the past?

Not overly... cos I think I am fairly... my wife hates me cos she's got loads of stuff that she regrets buying! I think 'cos I don't buy that much y'know...don't buy that much...these days...

Do you feel that you are able to act in accordance with your values in your buying clothes in particular? Is it something that you feel a level of comfort with?

I feel relatively happy. I think there's a little sense... for example, really liking Reiss's stuff –there's a slight guilt thing – I haven't investigated it that carefully – partly 'cos they are quite small, it's hard to get the information, I don't fully know... but I don't quite just know where else to go these days. I mean, Zara I know which has an interest in clothing; we tend to get most of our children's clothing from there. I remember seeing something and investigating it a few years ago where they had really good, built on good principles and stuff. But just going in there now, oh, it's so youth focussed and just not.. 'cos I don't like shopping I like to have a fairly pleasant shopping experience and if you go into GAP or somewhere it is such an effort to find anything and the whole noise and ...

What do you find difficult? Where's the effort?

Just being able to literally find something. If there's too much choice or if it's too noisy or too busy, it's just not pleasant.

So do you have particular retailers that you go to that you think of as more pleasant?

Yeah – for example, Reiss is just a nice shop to go in. Or John Lewis. I know I sound terribly middle class now. That is just the reality of it. [pause] um... and some of this is youth and age. I mean you go into a top shop or a NEXT or GAP or a Zara and I've no doubt that many of the clothes would be fine, but navigating it is tricky. And I go "aah, I'll just go back to what I know 'cos it's nice, it's peaceful ...

And easier I guess

Yeah I've now got to find that thing and if it's actually a little bit more, I'd rather do that.

That thing of familiarity – knowing you are going to be able to find something somewhere – would you say you stay a customer of particular brands or shops for quite a long time? Like how do you discover a new one? How did you discover Reiss I the first place?

I am a man of habit in that sense, I like going back to ...the same places and ...I'm not a huge risk taker, I don't like going to new places particularly. How I discovered Reiss? That's a good question. I'm trying to think now... was that a Nottingham thing? I think so... I think I must have just stumbled in, I used to look out for Paul Smith stuff in the sale but, yeah, so that must've... I had a run of buying Paul ~smith cords in the sale cos I knew – again – ethical thing. So I had a phase of buying some things from there... and then I bought this expensive pair of Paul Smith cords and they were £100, that's a lot of money and I thought, that's fine if they then last me 4 years. So this came off the back of Howie's. So when Howie's changed... I had a pair of Howie's cords and they were – didn't like them, didn't fit well... so I stopped wearing them, went into Paul Smith; really nice, fitted perfectly... 4 months later, they were threadbare on the back. I thought "this is terrible". Took them back, they said, I'm really sorry this shouldn't happen, he said "we'll exchange them" To be honest I said, 6-9 months and they are starting to go, and that to me is utterly unacceptable- that, if I don't mind paying £100 on a pair of trousers if they are going to last me 5 or 10 years. If they are going to last me a year – forget it. And then I think -0 even possibly geography, Reiss is opposite Paul Smith on that little sidewalk. Went in there, oh, these are nice, these fit great, and actually the cords lasted ages and the jeans I bought from Reiss and all the clothes have lasted really well. Although the two shirts that I bought from Reiss- more formal shirts after three or four washes started to shrink. And I was like, I don't buy shirts from Reiss – work shirts.

So as a final thing, Fairtrade, You have some questions in your mind about organic thing and whether that's better or not. Is Fairtrade something that you still try to look for or buy anymore? Do you have fairtrade items in your wardrobe?

Yeah, would do. Would like... I mean broadly speaking very positive about the fairtrade thing. I am aware there are some issues... but generally speaking if there was that option. But still I guess, sadly for me if there was a fairtrade t-shirt but it was really ill fitting and poorly designed versus the non fairtrade t-shirt, that fitted perfectly – I would probably go for the non fairtrade one. But if all things were equal, the tipping point would definitely be there. So with coffee for example, you just – unthinkable to not buy fairtrade coffee for example, cos y'know, the quality is there – there's no excuse. You can't argue or not buying fairtrade 'cos it doesn't taste good, cos you can buy great tasting... I think that's the challenge with clothing for example – if it's as good.

Interview ends.

Interview 14 - Naomi

Could you just start off then by telling me a little bit about your academic background, what you do and your teaching and research interests?

So, I'm a lecturer in Ecology and Environmental Sciences and my research is very ecological. So, I'm a freshwater ecologist. I'm interested in invertebrates that live in riverbed sediments and how they respond to changing flow conditions. So it's...yes, it's very specifically ecological rather than broader environmental management. But, my degree was in Environmental Biology here. And, that sort of gave me a background, and I suppose, I did that degree because I'd always been interested in being environmentally conscious and being a green person and recycling things and all that stuff. And yes, so the PhD was not...it always has the background of climate change and broader environmental issues that just sits in the background. And then, my current teaching is mainly ecological. So, I teach on modules including An Introduction to Cell Biology, so very biological, and Natural Environments, Aquatic Ecosystems. And so, my colleagues teach more about sustainability. I would touch on it but, it's not my area of expertise.

You said that you were always interested in environmental issues and, environmental protection, in particular. So, is that something that's been with you or part of you for quite a long time?

Yeah, I can remember being very...sort of primary school age and being interested in that sort of thing. And then, when I'm at school and I did my A-levels, I wasn't very good at science. So, I did Music and French and Media. And then, I realised I didn't want to do anything with my life relating to those subjects. So yes, I had a moment in Nottingham Library when I'd decided...well my mum had decided that I really should go to university. So, I was looking through prospectuses and saw that you could do courses in things like Environmental Biology. I think, "Oh! Well, that's what I'm interested in." (Laughter) I may not be very good at it. But, it's what I'm interested in. So, that's when I went back to college to do an evening course to get a Biology A-level which allowed me to take a Science degree. So yes, it was always an interest, rather than something that I had thought I would pursue. I guess Ecology is notoriously badly taught at schools. And, Biological Science, in general, I don't have any fond memories of being taught Science at school. So even though it was an interest, yeah, it was never something that was related to educational career until, yeah, until after I was, I guess, around 20-21.

And, where do you think that interest came from? Was it something that you knew was important to your parents? Or, you know, what kind of...?

Maybe. So, I grew up in a village where...and it was back in the days where you could just go out and be gone for some time. And so, there was plenty of countryside around. My parents were interested in gardening and we'd go to nice gardens and outside places. But, I suppose, there were... in my teens, there were influential figures. I was...I became a vegan in my teens. I was vegan for 17 years. So, I remember when I was 11, deciding that I wasn't going to eat lambs anymore because they were very cute. And so, I was partly vegetarian by the time I was 11. And so, I guess that all interlinked with.... But, I can't remember what it was initially. That's because it was so early on.

You mentioned specific things like recycling, which I guess at the time wasn't anywhere near widespread as it is now. Were things like that things that were done in the household generally?

I can remember when we got a Green Box and that was quite late on. But no, I would have been doing things that my parents were not particularly interested in. But, I suppose they were very much of the school of make do and mend. They've been born during the war? Yeah, during the war. And so, they were quite frugal, even though they're perfectly well off. They were...yes...they were very anti-waste and also anti-"spending money just for the hell of it". So, there was that aspect.

For economic reasons rather than...

Yeah. More because it was the sensible thing to do. And, it was just.... And, it was a different society, wasn't there? And, there was.... Yeah, things cost more and so, you were less wasteful.

But, yes, there wasn't particularly the thought of the environment or environment issues that were...that were there.

Okay. And so, you say you were...you said that you were a vegan for 17 years, so presumably you're not a vegan anymore?

No.

Are you still a vegetarian?

No. I never was a fan of vegetarianism...because you're either for animal cruelty or you're against it. (Laughter) And, vegetarianism seems to...erm. It's neither one thing nor the other in my mind. So, I was vegetarian for just a few months during the transition from being vegan to...well, I try to be more of an ethical consumer. But, it's not always terribly easy when you're faced with, you know, the choices in the café. And, you don't know where the products have come from in particular.

So, as you mentioned, you try to be an ethical consumer. Is that something that you think applies to lots of different aspects of your life? Or, is it just something that applies to food or...?

No. I'd say everything I buy. I would find it very difficult to buy a new item of clothing. So, if I needed a new shirt for work, I would have to really need it today to want to go to a new shop and buy a new shirt, rather than looking in charity shops. Or, maybe just waiting for people to give me clothes eventually. (Laughter) So, I'd...yeah, it just seems terribly wasteful. And somehow, we're already...well, we just spend so much money...spend £30 or something, when you could spend £3 on it. And, give those £3 to a charity, instead of giving £30 to a corporation who probably exploit children in Asia. So, it's quite difficult to disentangle being tight from being environmentally aware or ethically aware. Because, there are combined benefits usually!

So, when we talk about those ethical purchases then, whether it's in food or clothing or anything else, is it those environmental concerns that you think are the most important to you? Or...and you mentioned a few things. You also mentioned animal cruelty and supply chain, sweatshop type issues.

So, by far the most normal shopping I do, it's very rare for me to go clothes shopping or to go to a shop for fun. And so, it would really be Sainsbury's once a week. And which, that would in itself tells you the limits of my ethical (laughter) awareness. But, I have had phases of going to farmers' markets and buying from, you know, the very green type shops. But, I guess, just in terms of ease and that's...and now, yeah, but I think that's why I moved to [area x]. Because, I did live in [area y] which was actually reasonably close to [area z] and there was a farmers' market there. So, I could buy stuff there. But [area x], I'm not aware of any farmers' markets. And so, Sainsbury's seem to have a slightly more environmentally sound profile than Tesco's, but....

Where would you get that sort of information?

I guess, it's what you hear in the media. So, I would be aware of things like...because of things that I teach. I'm aware of things like the Marine Stewardship Council. And, sort of who ranks high? Because, Co-op are usually considered pretty high up. But, they rank pretty low in terms of their fish sourcing policy. And so...

So, is that something that would prevent you shopping at the Co-op? Or is that a reason maybe you've kind of put the Co-op at the bottom of the...?

No. It's sort of really more of an awareness. And, there are certain places.... The thing is, big corporations, they do seem to be aware that they're under scrutiny, and therefore, trying to tighten up their practice. Like Nike. Apparently, Nikes are dreadful trainers that I bought for running many years ago. But apparently, they are now, because they're so in the spotlight, they're now at the forefront of trying to avoid the production of their shoes being linked to rain forest deforestation. But, it takes a lot of research to actually know which company is best and how much of what you're hearing is greenwash anyway. And so... yeah, it wouldn't stop me from shopping in Co-op because I don't feel that I have a great enough awareness. I mean, because Co-op obviously have some

excellent points and I have, in places like Asda and Lidl and the ones that are all about cost, low cost, than being...above all else. I wouldn't shop anywhere like that. But, there's also the fact that I don't have a car. And so, I have to shop somewhere that I can walk to, really. And so, that does limit it. But no, there's definitely a cost versus environment issue there. And so for example, this week, I bought one bag of normal carrots and one bag of organic carrots. But then, if you buy organic carrots, you get home and realise they've been made in...made...grown in Spain, as opposed to the normal carrots which are British. So, there's me trying to follow one rule of buying some organic stuff and inadvertently tripping myself up.

Why did you buy one of each?

Just the balance of cost versus environment. (Laughter) I couldn't quite decide which to go for so, all right, one of each.

That balance – is that a dilemma you find in other purchases?

Yeah.

Why? Do you have similar things in buying other types of products or do you have that kind of internal wrangling when you buy stuff more generally?

Well, almost all of my shopping is in Sainsbury's because I think usually where it's.... So, that's a small purchase. So, I'll quickly make a decision and go on. Whereas, usually with a larger purchase, say, a £20 shirt or a £100 pair of shoes, I would usually just not buy the thing because it just seems, yes, too much. And then, there's the whole ethical minefield of what you're buying from a new shop. I think whenever you're buying a clothes item from a new shop and then, you don't really know how many ethical minefields you're falling into. Whereas, a charity shop, even if you don't like the thing. It doesn't fit. It's a complete waste of £3, it's still done some good. You still...at the very least, you've given £3 to charity. And so, yes, I would usually get any clothes or shoe type of things, I will go to charity shops. Except, the jeans.

Okay, why not jeans?

Because, I've got very short legs and only Next Petite fit. (Laughter) So, that's a legitimate reason to have to go for the Next Petite range.

Would you say generally then the environmental issues overall that dictate your behaviour? So, you say for example you don't drive, is that for, again an environmental reason or is it because you can't drive, or...?

No. I can drive but it's one of those things that it's very difficult for me to disentangle the multiple reasons why I don't have a car. There's, for health. Because I don't have a car, I walk and cycle everywhere. And, I'd be worried if I had a car, I'd become less fit and healthy. And, there's money. I very much enjoy not spending hundreds and hundreds of pounds on owning and running a car. And then, ah yes, as a cyclist.... Yesterday, diesels...and it just...and she was clearly having problems with her exhaust. And it was just...just horrendous black smoke. And so, I do hate car culture. And, um, yeah, I do. I get an immense joy from cycling past traffic jams. (Laughter) And so, it's partly environmental but, there are probably more...I imagine, if a car cost nothing and had health benefits, then, I might overlook. But, because there are many interacting factors, one of which is the environmental concerns, then that makes it a very easy choice not to get a car.

And, do those environmental concerns come into any other aspects of your life? Like, if someone went into your house, would it be quite obvious that you have those environmental concerns at the core of what you're about. So, you know, I'm thinking, you know we talked about food and clothes, would that be the same with household products or electronics or...

Yeah, because the electricity, we have a normal supplier, rather than ecotricity or one of the green suppliers, which is mainly because my boyfriend's in charge of that sort of thing. And, he just does what he likes. Anything like a DVD or a video or.... Oh, no. We have a new DVD player but, the video player and television and the speaker system are all second-hand from charity shops. So, it's probably more of a very modest house with little new stuff, rather than having any overt

signs that we live anything resembling a green life cycle. Life cycle? Lifestyle. But, there are two bicycles in the kitchen.

You mentioned buying the electronics at charity shops. Again, was that for largely an economic reason or for environmental or sustainability reason?

I'll say again...combined reasons. Oh, no. If the price was equivalent, I would still go to a charity shop. But, if became more expensive to go to a charity shop, then there would be some impetus to buy new things. But, there have been...occasionally, there have been occasions when it's been as expensive to buy something second-hand or to take a...yes, the more environmentally sound. So, the economic decision is taken out of it. But, there's no reason to...no economic reason to go green, I still would as long as it's not a economic detriment to make the environmental purchase. Yeah, I do find it...I don't find it that difficult to spend money on charity things. So, if somebody phones me up...because, somebody did phone me up from the Wildlife Trust, and said, "Would you like to increase your direct debit from £4 to £20?" "Yeah, sure!" (Laughter) And so...and someone from the Alumni Fund rang up and said, "Do you want to make a donation?" "Yeah!" So, when it's.... So yeah, I don't have any problems spending sums of money when it's for charity. And, that's... it's nice to know that I'm not purely just tight. (Laughter)

You say about 'being tight', but why is it that you think...do you think it is an issue of frugality that is at the heart of that all?

I think...it was my upbringing. My dad was a bank manager. I had a savings account when I was four. And, I so I saved. I saved a lot. And so...and we would. Yes, even though they were very well off, we would always go to charity shops. That was like a fun thing to do because you could see what you would find. But, it would be...yes. So, there were lots of benefits. So, I think that...because some people, I guess, would consider charity shops to be dirty or that there was something unpleasant about buying clothes that have already been worn by someone else. And, just the way I was brought up made me think that that was ridiculous. I'm more than happy to wear clothes that someone else has worn. That's...so yes...somewhere something.... I've got a hole in this 9top now- I only got it from my cousin about five years ago. (Laughter) And so, I'm going to have to ask my mum if she knows how to mend it. So, that was...it's just part of my upbringing. That being frugal, not spending money unless you needed to.

Did a lot of your clothes as a child then come from charity shops?

A combination, I guess. It was probably more when I was in my teens. I'd been encouraged. I imagine, as a child that it was...I can remember some things were home-...a few things. You know, they stand out that I had knitted jumpers that both my parents had knitted. They had some sort of knitting competition and I was the winner. (Laughter) But, I'm trying to think of the items that I wore. And, the coats were clearly new. I think that some of the skirts there would've been some second-hand things. Oh, jumble sales! There were often jumble sales over the road. We lived on the close with the village hall. And so, that was...that was another fun thing to do to go and...to go to jumble sales or car boot sales and get stuff.

Is that rooting around in charity shops something you still enjoy? Is that something that you still kind of see as being quite fun?

Sometimes. I have to be in the right mood, because I'd have to need something. And so, I do occasionally still think that it would be a fun thing to do. And, I'll go and have a look. But certainly, more rarely. So yeah, I think as a child, it was a combination of things from Tammy Girl and things from the second-hand. And, I have a sister. My sister is four years older than me. So, I got a lot of hand-me-downs as well.

So we talked about that sort of fun side maybe, but, you said shopping isn't something that you enjoy. So, you don't feel that sense of fun when you're rooting around in a shop?

No. Just, if a female friend makes me go shopping, I will usually just stand there and wait until they're done. (Laughter). No. It would be quite common for me to...if I did go into Next I wouldn't

like a single thing in there. So, I'd just be going, "Good Lord! Oh!" And then, just go from shelf to shelf thinking, "These really are dreadful items of clothing."

And, what is it about clothing that is in shops that you think is particularly dreadful?

It's just you never quite know what decade it's going to be in fashion this season. I believe it's been at the '80s there for a little while. Is that right?

I wouldn't know! (Laughter)

And, no. It's just that they're like quite plain clothes. They're quite simple things. So, when someone's just put a frill on a shirt, I'm, 'mmmmmm.' (Laughter) Arguably there is some sort of detail on this shirt. I think I must have bought it for some sort of graduation event. But, like yeah, so yeah, I wouldn't like things if they look.... Nothing lasts for more than a few months as well nowadays from what I can work out.

Do you tend to keep things quite a long time? You mentioned you had your cardigan for around five years?

Yes. I've one jumper. But no, I don't wear it, except on very special occasions. But I've had one jumper since I was eight! That's the one that my dad knitted.

And you still wear it?!

I did wear it for comedy reasons at Christmas time, but no, it's not part of the day-to-day wardrobe. But, I've still got some things that I had when I moved out. Stuff that I've had for about 15 years. And, that I would still... I've got a hoody that I would still wear, I would still wear a T-shirt. And so, there's still a few items, because they haven't worn out. Yeah, I still have them. And, they still seem fine.

And repairing things. You mentioned you said you have to ask your mum if she could repair something for you?

My main thought on how to deal with this hole is to draw a small brown patch on the white T-shirt underneath! So, no. I can sew. So, if I got a rip in my jeans, I'd be able to sew that up. But, this is woollen, so I've really no idea how to go about mending it. But, I hope it can be mended because, this is my work cardigan. And so...if say, this was out of action now, so if I lost it, then that would just mean I will no longer have a brown cardigan. Okay. Not that I would go and buy another one. So, yeah.

So you mentioned having a work cardigan. So, that must be something that you wear quite a lot?

It lives here. So, yes. Occasionally, I'd take it home. But no, if I'm in a shop. My mum, so let's say she wants to go shopping because I'm visiting, and so, she'd say, "What about this?" "I already have a T-shirt!" "What about this one?" "I already have a jumper?" Give up Mum, let's go to the pub! (Laughter)

So, we've talked to me about buying from charity shops and not buying from big corporations. Do you feel that those choices that you make actually make a difference? So, particularly if you think about the environmental aspects that you talked to me about. Do you feel that you're making any kind of impact?

I do feel quite despondent about that sort of thing, that regardless of what I do as an individual, then most other people aren't doing the same things. And so, no...I mean, it still makes me glad to be doing what I can. But I feel...I don't feel particularly positive about the magnitude of that impact. Especially, when you then start thinking about countries like China and sort of rapidly developing nations and the priorities in those countries. And, it's...yes. The very existence of, you know, the very actions of any one person, that's pretty damn miniscule, but still preferable to not doing what one can.

Okay. So, why do you think that that's still preferable if you don't feel it really doesn't make any kind of impact?

I just...that's why it's in terms of my perception of myself, I'd rather be able to think of myself as not contributing to the problem any more than necessary. I think, things like farmers' markets or if you're buying a product from a small business. And so, say I've done, I'll get a...things like moisturiser. I would get expensive ones from a company called Weleda who use nice natural herbal stuff. And so, probably buying from companies like that, when you're making a purchase from an ethically sound company rather than my usual tactic of not making a purchase from a large corporation. Probably those actions do have some impact because those businesses are reliant on a fairly small pool of customers. And so, I would view that as having a positive impact.

And in those circumstances, like with Weleda, do you feel a sort of sense of responsibility to the company or people who work in the company or the customers or the wider environment or why do you think that's important?

So yeah, those types of company, I don't particularly associate it with any of the employees, more the concept of a green company. So obviously, running that company, there are human beings. And yeah, not particularly feeling a connection with the other customers. But yeah, just a, I certainly would want businesses like that to keep existing. And so...does that answer...?

And when we think about some of these, really quite fundamental problems relating to environmental issues and maybe social issues we have touched upon, and animal rights as well, who's responsibility do you think it ought to be to address some of those issues? So, you know, you talked a bit about companies and big corporations. But also, you as an individual consumer, what do you kind of feel about that?

Because, companies do seem to be responding to consumer demand—to consumer outcry about things.... And, milk. We still have a pathetic amount of milk, don't we? So, should Get the Milk be involved? Should there be a minimum milk price?

In terms of farmers are getting a fair price for it?

Yeah. The farmers are actually making a loss because they're somehow forced to sell their milk to supermarkets for a pathetically low price. And so, it was.... I guess part of the responsibility therefore lies with the consumers—that we shouldn't kick up too much of a fuss if we're forced to pay 60p or something crazy for a pint of milk. And, I can see that it would be very difficult for one supermarket to take a stand. So, it would probably need to be some sort of industry body. I have no idea if there is some sort of regulator of supermarkets. But, I think it's probably below government, but above the level of the individual company. Because, we would need Sainsbury's, Tesco's, all of the supermarkets to be acting as one. That an industry body decides, you know, says, "This is a ridiculous practice that we're all insisting that we're having price wars over a couple of pence for this product and driving farmers to extinction. (Laughter) Out of business, at least. And so, as an industry, we're going to say that we're going to take this action." Hmm, I didn't know I thought that! But apparently, I think an industry body should be...should take on the responsibility. Because otherwise, if it's just a single organisation then, they're going to be putting themselves at a competitive disadvantage.

Yeah. Okay. And, when you think about some of the values that you hold, do you find it generally quite easy to act in accordance with those values when you're buying stuff? Is the act of purchase-making—whatever it might be, whether it's food or clothes or toiletries or household products or whatever, is it something you find easy to do?

I think the price issue does come into play, even though I've no financial concerns. I have enough money to spend three times as much on an Ecover product than a Basics product. And, but then...so sometimes...I'm not by no means saying that I always buy the green product. And, if the green product is three times more expensive, then sometimes I buy it, sometimes I won't...just depending on a flippant decision on that day. So yeah, when the economic and the ethical issues align, as in clothes shopping, then it's a very easy decision. When they contradict one another and to buy a more ethical product you have to spend a lot more money, then the decision could go one way or the other, especially Ecover. Isn't there...didn't they have some controversy a couple of

years ago where...are they now owned by some huge corporation or something. I remember veering away from them for some reason. And now, I've forgotten why.

Yeah. Lots of those niche ethical companies have been bought up by...

Innocent. I remember, Innocent being bought. Yeah. But, see things like this will probably...and certain things will remind me that I've slipped into poor practice.. And so, after this, I may well go and buy a litre of Bio-D Washing Up Liquid instead of the Tesco's value. And usually, after I've given a lecture about farming, then I'll start buying more organic stuff because I've reminded myself. So yeah, I don't always find it easy to make the right ethical choice if there are economic...yeah, if there are considerable economic downsides to making that choice.

So, on to clothing specifically. And so, we've talked about charity shops and that you get a lot of your stuff from charity shops. What proportion of the things in your wardrobe would you say came from a charity shop or was given to you?

It's probably a little under half. Most things are very old. (Laughter) And so...yeah maybe around half. I don't know but, that's cha-...yeah. I'm trying to think. I've got a winter coat that I bought about three years ago from a proper shop. There's another coat. I'm thinking of the things that are laying around my room. So really, it's very unusual for actually jeans almost always from a proper shop. Shirts, from a proper shop presumably bought for an event, such as an interview. That's charity shop. This is from a cousin. Charity shop, and... sportswear. So, I've got two pairs of black sports trousers that get a lot of use. And, they're new but, probably bought a decade ago. And then, tops. Charity shop. Charity shop. Sometimes band T-shirts and they're almost always bought new. But, it's very exciting when you they one in a charity shop, even if I don't like the band very much. And so, yeah, it might be around half. Half and half.

What was the last thing that you bought? Can you remember?

Clothes and I bought a pair of shoes on...when I went out with my birthday money.

Okay. Was that because you felt you needed a new pair of shoes, or...?

Yeah. They didn't go well because these [old trainers] have become my work shoes, which is obviously inappropriate. Thankfully, there's been a heat wave, which has allowed me to wear these sandals which are again, a little bit old. But, they've done me proud over the last few years. And, I don't like wearing these shoes to work, because...

Why don't you like wearing these shoes to work?

Because, they're red. They're just...They're running shoes. They're not appropriate with this outfit and I recognise that.

What do you mean appropriate? What do you mean by that?

Just...just that they...I think they're too loud. If they weren't actually red, then they'd be okay. They're quite dirty looking actually, didn't realise that! And so, I really felt that I needed some shoes. And so, I had my birthday money. And, I was going into town to see a friend. And so, that's quite a rare occasion so it's quite right. I need to buy shoes today. And, in fact, I had a list of the things that I needed to buy. And, I got most of them because I knew it would be my last chance for a good while. But, the shoes were...yes...but, I did buy some. And from...the shoes as well, it's very difficult to buy shoes second-hand. And sometimes - they're second-hand [points to boots]. But then, you wouldn't go out thinking I really need a pair of cowboy boots. (Laughter)

Is that how most things tend to get bought in charity shops? Like, do you ever go to charity shops when you need something you're looking for specifically?

Yeah, I had a...I went to a wedding in March. And so, I needed an outfit for the wedding. And [area x] has got reams of charity shops, probably about 6 or 7 at least. And, I was like: Right, if I don't have a dress...if you don't buy something for the wedding from one of these shops, then you've to go to *town* to go to a *proper* shop. (Laughter) Okay. And so, it was...and so I...I was like: Right, I need a top and a skirt, or probably a dress. And, I got a dress from a charity shop. So, I think

shoes...because there's an extra great chance that they won't have your size, so I've tried for a number of weeks before going to a new shop for shoes to get second-hand shoes without success.

Do you find it easy to find things that you like?

In charity shops compared to normal shops?

Yeah, all those.

Or, just in general?

Yeah, well, both. In general, you know. Is the 'look' of something something, something that's important to you, you know. Are you quite picky, do you think?

I am quite...I like...I suppose, I like certain things. And so, I'm very good at buying little jackets that have hoods. I can buy those until the cows come home. But, I'm very likely to buy something because it looks like something I already know and I know I like. So, I suppose I am quite picky. Like I said, I could go into Next and go, "No. No. No. No. No." But yeah, I would also make decisions fairly quickly. Equally, if I...I have before now, like when I started this job, I was like: Right, I need a shirt for work. I believe Gap to be my most likely chance of getting a plain shirt. And therefore, I'm going to go to Gap and buy the best shirt in Gap.

Why do you think Gap's where you could buy a shirt you'll most likely get...?

I just...just from their...what they do about their store. They tend to do...you wouldn't get frills and things because it's a male and female shop. That's another...that it's going to be good. That means you've got two gender sections to try for a shirt. That's always a bonus. Whereas, Next, they're more fashion-y. So, just based on what I believe I know about the stores of different shops. Yeah, Gap seemed like a good place for shirts. And so, it was easily after I've decided I need a shirt, I'm going to Gap. Then, I will get a shirt from Gap. I wouldn't. So, I'm not that picky. This little shirt? Yeah, that will do. (Laughter)

Okay. This is possibly a bit of a tricky question, but if you don't shop very much, and shopping is something that you don't enjoy, but you say you buy your jeans in Next and would to Gap first for a shirt, how did you kind of discover those places? How did you know what you know about those places? Was it based on a...?

I suppose...I've gone...yeah. It's a fairly...knowledge that has gradually built up over a couple of decades. That's because, with family, with friends, other people, typically like shopping. And so, on those occasions, then I would've been in. So, lots of these cases. And, yeah, I've been in most of the main shops a few times. And, yeah. I'd have a decent impression of the sort of things they sell.

Do you have specific retailers for a particular items of clothing, you have a place that you know that you'd be able to...?

Jeans and Next is a particular one. Because, a shirt, there's an excellent chance that I will come across a shirt, for example, I got a nice Zara shirt for a pound from a car boot when I went out with my mum. Jeans usually get to a point where...because the current pair of jeans are so ragged, that I absolutely had to go and get jeans. Whereas, the shirt is unlikely to get to that point. So, and winter coat. Oh, dear. Last time I needed a winter coat I think I knew the type of coat that I could picture...that I wanted. The black waists and height and wool coat or something. And so, I typed that into Google. And, saw the shops where I might purchase such an item. But...

And where did you end up getting that from?

Well, that's a good question. Is it Topshop? It could be Topshop (laughter) which is to say that I would never have imagined. Because, Topshop is quite teen and trendy. And so, it certainly wouldn't be on my list of places to try for a sensible winter coat.

On that point are there any retailers that you definitely wouldn't ever buy anything from?

Ah, see, because morally... Gap's up there!

What do you mean?

They've got...I suspect. The thing is, I think they have an unfair...they're...at some point in the past, they've been associated with sweatshops and appalling labour conditions. But then, I think, H & M have properly tried to steal that mantle from them. So, I can't think of anywhere that I wouldn't go, because I, at that point, like to believe that there must be some sort of law governing these sorts of things. And usually, if I make a decision, I would love to make a new year's resolution to stop eating tuna. Or, to tighten up some aspect of food consumption where there's a lapse morally, But so, I'm more likely to make that sort of ethical "Absolute No" decision in relation to, yeah, animal welfare, I guess.

Oh, did you ever make any one, any of those moral "Absolute No" decisions in relation to buying clothing? Or, is it normally with food, do you think?

I think it's food, because clothing is something that I would, let's just...there's no need to make a moral decision not to go somewhere, because I probably just wouldn't go there anyway. And so, whereas, if I, I think, I'm starting to eat a lot of tuna, and then, I'm reminded by some news story about the bycatch and the amount of fish that they kill or desert just as a result of catching tuna. Then, I will, you know. And, I'll make those decisions in relation to food. But, I don't think I ever have in relation to clothing.

We talked about organic carrots and stuff earlier. Do you have any organic cotton items of clothing?

No, I haven't because.... Ever? I used to buy those ethical shoes. But, that was to avoid leather, rather than to get organic cotton. So, for years I would buy stuff from them. But no, I would consider charity shop cotton to be ethically superior to organic cotton. And I'd also have to spend a fair bit of effort probably trying to get a hold of an organic cotton item.

Are you aware of any retailers that carried ethical ranges or that were... You know we talked about Weleda in toiletries, are you aware of any similar companies in clothing that exclusively driven by moral ideals?

They wouldn't really be on my radar because I think I'd have to be interested in clothes shopping before I started to then look for the niche market within that. So I think, yeah. I haven't bothered to become aware of that sort of thing because charity shops seem to fill that ethical hole quite nicely. So I'm vaguely aware that they do exist. But I'm not particularly keen on clothes that carry any sort of message. So, if it was just a plain shirt that you couldn't tell, then fair enough. But I wouldn't be keen on being branded. Even if I'd been branded in a positive and environmentally sound way. So I wouldn't really seek those companies out.

Okay. Do you ever buy stuff online?

Yes. Books and CDs, that sort of stuff.

Do you ever buy clothes online?

No. I try things on. So, have I ever...? Oh, shoes. I bought a pair of running shoes online before now.

Is that trying on something that's quite important to you to...?

Yeah. I wouldn't... It's very rare that I would just buy something without having tried it on. So I wouldn't assume that it's going to look as I expect it to look. So, yeah. An item of maybe...or a band T-shirt as well I would have bought online because they're not available in shops. But that's sort of...it's a risky purchase because it may not fit. (Chuckles) Or maybe it's too big. So, yeah. Online purchasing is usually books and CDs.

The last question then, have you got a particularly favourite item of clothing in your wardrobe?

(Laughter) Yeah. Quite a few. But coats in particular. Yes, I would certainly have a favourite coat.

And what is it about that coat that you particularly like or are particularly happy with?

It's warm. It fits. It's got a big hood. (Chuckles) So I... Um...

Was that a new purchase or was that charity shop?

Yeah, that was a new purchase. So, I don't know. It's just... Yeah, because I definitely have a favourite set of jeans, a favourite T-shirt. So there's probably a favourite one of everything. And unless they are in the wash, there's a good chance then that at the weekend at least, I will be wearing those items or my favourite nightie as well, which is a Guns N' Roses T-Shirt. (Chuckles) So yeah, there are certainly favourite items which have elements of comfort, being comfortable to wear as well as not looking too dreadful. (Laughter)
(Laughter)

Is there anything in your wardrobe that you really regret having in your wardrobe or buying?

Probably buried it to help forget. (Laughter) Regret buying...

Is there anything in there apart from the knitted jumper that you just don't, you would never wear?!

I'm sure that there are items that... It's quite rare for me to do an impulse purchase. I can think of one thing that I bought for social reasons because I was out with my boyfriend and his mother. It was an ethnic-y shop, one...you know one of those shops that smells with incense, which she likes. And she said, 'Oh yeah, it looks like. Buy that.' Okay. And so, yes. That was a complete...that was just a social bonding thing that we'd gone out shopping together. And that I felt that I *should* buy something. And I would never wear that top. (Laughter) So, but...

What, what is it about it that you don't like?

I think she bought one as well. And so my boyfriend just said to me, 'Never (laughter) wear that top.' And it's also...it's ethnic-y. So it's like got...it's quite a nice shape. But it's got like embroidered bits. I can't really remember because I bought it a couple of years ago and I've never worn it. But it definitely, it would say something about the person wearing it, about their ideals, that they were environmentally aware but in a green and waffy kind of a way. There's definitely a distinction between certain kinds of green people. And then I would judge those people. (Laughter) And so, yes, I would try to avoid wearing clothes that fall into that ethnic-y category, which I definitely wore those sorts of clothes when I was about 13. But not...

Is that why...you said that you like wearing quite plain things, without a lot of detail or whatever?

Yeah.

Do you think that's...I mean, why is that? Is that for the same reasons that it's...?

I suppose I've no interest in making a statement with what I wear or for people to meet me and be judging me based on my clothes. So I would, yes, I would typically go for something that was not outstanding. But are hopefully, yes, just fine. Something that was fine. But neither...equally I would avoid something that was exceptionally lovely because then people are going to be commenting on it. It's just not that...it's just clothes. It's not that important. (Laughter)

Why wouldn't you want people commenting on it?

Well, it's.... That means that if I've then bought something, that's like, that means that clothing's very important to me. Because look, I've bought this item of beautiful clothing and because it is beautiful... And I just don't really care. That's... Appearance is not really what I'm about. And I'd rather be judged on things I do and perhaps even say, than the way I look.

Interview ends.

Interview 15 - Keith

Could you just tell me first a bit about your academic background and your research interests, and where your interest in the whole field of sustainability comes from?

Okay. A potted history – I was a mature student, went back to what was called open college and did a modern studies degree at a Polytechnic which was international relations, geography, philosophy, sociology and ended up concentrating on the geography and the international relations. Then carried on and did Masters in International studies at and my PhD was on the Nuclear-free and Independent Pacific movement. At that stage, I was mainly focusing on pretty state-centric strategic studies. Guns and bombs and stuff, this is in the early 80s. I was also politically active as well in C&D related groups. Because it was a time of Greenham Common and, um, Intermediate nuclear forces, and that political dimension. The shift came from when I was...I started looking at the nuclear test programme in the Pacific and the Rainbow Warrior affair; the French sinking the Greenpeace ship. That got me interested in how small island states have made their voice heard on the international stage and it's interesting that they're coming to gather many small islands and some alliance of small island states. And the more I looked into that I realised how interested I was in islands, really. And that was really the leap into the environmental dimension and sustainability. Because this group had actually come together to be a cohesive block in the UN for the Rio Earth Summit Conference in 92. Um...it really grew from there. It blossomed into all sort of things as well. So although it sounds like it became more focused, ironically the research agenda actually got broader because I got interested in identify issues and indigenous rights issues. And...and a whole wealth of environmental stuff. Separate from the academic, field I've done a bit of scuba diving as well as I'm quite interested in the marine environment and coral conservation. So that lead on to depletion of fishery stocks and it goes on and on. In terms of what I'm doing now, I was teaching international relations for 20 years here. There's been some reconfiguration within the university. International Relations is now in social science. I opted to stay in Arts and Humanities because I really wanted to maintain that very broad interdisciplinary approach which we wouldn't get in social science, not to the same degree. So now I'm now in global studies and I also lead the MA International Development.

Okay. So you said you came into education as a mature student, what were you doing before you came and did your degree?

All sorts. Well I left school with a couple of O levels, thinking I wasn't very academically gifted at all. Civil servant for a little while. I was at Department of Health, in charge of security. I didn't really particularly want to do that for another 40 years. I've worked in factories, night porter in a hotel, warehouses and I'd actually had a period of quite long term unemployment which is when I went back and did the access course...really just out of interest. Because during at that stage, it didn't occur to me that I could...certainly not consider doing a degree. So I got a surprise when they actually said, 'Well, now you've done this access course. That's what that is. It's the equivalent of the three A levels that you never did that would get you onto a degree course.' And as I didn't have a job at the time, I thought I might as well carry on with this; I'm quite interested in. And I will get kicked out at the end of the first year because I won't pass the exams, but by then I'll have a job. It didn't work out right that now as I did quite well aca-...I didn't get a job but I did quite well academically. So that really carried on and I never looked back.

And there's obviously quite a strong political interest. Where...

Oh, yeah.

...where did that kind of come from? Do you think that's something you had always had, that those...those issues had been important to you?

No. It's...I don't know quite how that developed. I guess because it was originally the nuclear issues. There are other things going on. My partner at the time was very into animal rights issues, animal welfare. That's the point at which I became a vegetarian as well. That's been quite important to me, subsequently.

Are you still vegetarian now?

Oh yeah. Definitely more so, more than ever. Yeah. I feel more strongly about it...all the time. You do hear about people who slip back from it. But the more I looked into it, the more important it had become.

My study is about ethical concerns in purchasing and using ethics as really quite a broad term, I guess. Obviously there's the vegetarianism, are there other ethical aspects that are important to you generally when you're buying stuff and if you think about issues of ethics what does that mean to you, and what sort of things do you tend to prioritise?

Well...I mean I'm just back from a research trip to the Pacific and I did have to spend a bit of time thinking about the ethical dimensions of that just because of...I've got an enormous carbon footprint as a result of this, round the world ticket which I've just done. And you know, a couple of people had pointed out the irony of this. Well, what am I studying; its climate change and sea level rising. How am I going about it? But I'm actually contributing quite significantly to climate change and sea level. And the way I've squared that whole circle is to...so, now that I've come back, I'm going to write the results. It's integrated into my teaching; take every opportunity to explain to people what's going on to see the connections between.... the sorts of things you're researching - the personal lifestyle choices and the broader, global impact they can have. Um...I'm still a little torn on that one. (Laughter) I know there are some people who would say that's quite a dubious argument and I've got colleagues here who only fly if they absolutely have to. So, they're...overseas holidays they won't really...take, just go camping in the Peak District or something rather than fly anywhere. But it is the nature of my job and it does involve air travel. And I do try to factor that in in terms of...and therefore, I'm drawn to teaching things like international development, and I've got an undergraduate module that looks specifically at the Pacific Islands and well other things (Overlapping Background Noise).

So do you feel quite a strong sense of responsibility to educate others?

Yeah. Yup. I mean it's um...I'm a bit of libertarian in terms of I don't want to prophesise and say 'You must do it' even though that I do feel quite strongly about it. And sometimes, I'd...I will go as far as say I think people should at least be making informed decisions. So, sometimes I'll inform people, even though they haven't asked me to. Because people will challenge.... But vegetarian does makes a good example. And people would say why are you vegetarian? And of course I've got a hundred reasons. You know, it's very easy to justify. But it doesn't necessarily mean it's right for everybody else.

Okay. And do you think it's the environmental.... You know you talked about climate change and sea level rises and that kind of stuff, are they the most important factors do you think when you're thinking about the decisions that you make?

It's probably case by case and very often it's probably unconscious anyway. As I mentioned to you earlier, I'm not a big consumer but I guess that's a decision in itself. You know, I mean I would rather...you know...recycle. I don't really like to throw stuff out and I don't like the idea of built-in obsolescence or, as you can probably tell, I'm not a follower of fashion particularly. So, there's probably a moral dimension to that. There are probably other factors there as well. You know, I'm not very self aware in terms of how I look particularly. Um...I've got a wife. She would point things out and say 'Now that really doesn't go with that.' Or those heels are really worn down, it's time you got a new pair of shoes.

And so if you think about clothing purchase more specifically then. So what are the things that kind of characterise your behaviour in that respect? Do you buy often or infrequently? Do you have particular retailers that you would go to?

It's probably infrequent. Um...I like things that would last basically. Very occasionally, I might...I might just see something and you know, if it's got ah...what would it be? I bought a t-shirt at a concert the other day, which is unusual for me now - in my teens I'd, you know, you'd wear your musical genre literally on your heart...you know, your Led Zeppelin shirts or whatever it was. And I did buy something the other day. As it turned out, when I already got home and tried it on, it really

didn't look right at all. The style was just wrong on me. So, I passed that on. So, it's gone to a good home, I'm not wearing it. (Laughter) And it taught me a lesson in a way. I shouldn't just get carried away and think 'I really like that band. I'm going to buy a piece of their merchandise.

Yeah. I do a lot of that!

But it...it's mainly, you know, what's functional. If I got holes in my shoes, it's time to get a new pair of shoes. If I'm going somewhere and I know it's going to be really hot; I know it's going to be really cold...you know the environment dictates that I need a particular piece of clothing that I don't currently have, then I have to buy something. But I don't set aside X amount of money in months like some clothing allowance that we work on.

So we've talked a bit about those environmental concerns. In terms of maybe trying to buy less, is that how it manifests itself?

Yeah. I mean, I don't...I'd rather...there are other things I'd rather spend my money on. There's that as well...there's another priority issue. Well, there's a place I go to, and this is another sort of moral dilemma... but I haven't been there recently. I'd go there very occasionally actually. And this might come up in some of your other interviews, if they hasn't...you may want to bear this in mind. Do you know where McArthur Glen is?

I do know where McArthur Glen is!

Okay and do you know what its tag line is?

I don't.

It is apparently the home of guilt-free shopping.

Ah! I've seen that before. Yes. I've seen that before, yeah.

Well, me being me, the first time I went there, I went over to customer service (Laughter) to have a discussion about this. And said 'Does that mean you can guarantee there's no sweatshop labour involved...and you've got corporate social responsibility all down the commodity chain, you know?' Is this why I'm guilt-free? Which of course went completely over their heads, I said 'Well, what does that mean exactly?' What it means is you can go with...a hundred pounds or something and if you go McArthur Glen, you can come away with bags and bags of shopping. They were saying, about roughly twice as much as you would if you go down the main street in the Centre of wherever. Um...so, it means you can buy a lot of stuff without feeling guilty because you didn't spend so much. That's the trick. But I would still feel guilty because I bought so much. And then you would also have to factor in that this probably is not fair trade produce by any means.

So the question is did you buy anything?! And did you feel guilty afterwards?!

Did I buy anything? I did actually, yeah. I did. But not as guilty as much as...perhaps I should have done because it's stuff which I've...I've still got...I got it very much for a purpose because I have now, a starting to wear a bit of a jacket and a tie look when I'm 'customer facing at work'. Ah...but I've only got one basically, you know, and that's it. And I've had that for probably three or four years now. It's the only time I wear it. And I get home and I get back into the jeans and t-shirt.

So you mentioned quite a few things in there in terms of fair trade and supply chain issues and maybe organic cotton and some of that stuff. So, are those issues that you would tend to take into consideration when you're buying?

Probably, only if it's...I immediately obvious to me. Um...I mean I wouldn't...well, I'm aware there are places you're not supposed to shop, like GAP. Whether that's still the case or not, but I remember there was a campaign like you know, you're not supposed to eat Nestle chocolates. But unfortunately they were Rowntrees because they got bought by Nestle. So I do miss the odd lion bar. But...yeah. There are other things that I could have!.

So things like those...you mentioned Nestle particularly, those kind of high profile boycotts...

It's because they are...

...are they still something that's important to you?

Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah. I haven't bought a Nestle, but not knowingly bought because...unless you read the small print, you don't always know. And I think the student union is still on board with that, even though the university is not and you're regularly see Kit-Kats in meetings, yeah.

And you mentioned GAP as well. So is GAP somewhere that you wouldn't shop because of those...

Yeah, I mean it's not something...I mean, that was from two or three years ago. You know, they may have repented. But as far as I know, that's still an issue. So, I'd probably would not...I prefer not to go into the chains.

Are there any other clothing retailers that you would tend to avoid for similar kinds of reasons?

Well, you hear about Primark only because that's sort of in the press but it isn't something that...I gone out of my way to look. And I was...I could, if I was thinking about I'm coming up to that cycle where it's time I got a new range of clothes. Then I might... I'm sure there are websites where you could look at ethical trading. There's stuff that say who are the good guys and who are the bad guys.

Is that something that you've ever done?

Not yet, no! But I um...I could do. I mean I'm just clearly aware of Gap and Primark but that's...and it's because it's been pretty high profile cases.

You said clothing is not particularly important to you so it's not something that you really think about. Are there other aspects of your consumption behaviour of other product types of product groups where you tend to prioritise those kind of environmental issues more? If I went to your house, would it be obvious that you are environmentally concerned, for example?

Oh, probably. Yes. Because of the nature...because you group things together. You know...and you saw the...sort of the decor and stuff, you would think 'who lives here? You know, probably an old hippy!' So, yeah, you probably would be able to tell. Well, I've already mentioned diet. I mean that's...because you're doing that every day. That's one thing that's a pretty central part of your consumer choices. And we do do the veg-box scheme. And issue...I've actually started growing our own stuff which we've been meaning to do for a long time, but circumstances not permitting, this the year we did it. A relatively small scale kind of idea, but we liked the idea of that.

And then in terms of other kind of products and types and groups within the house, I'm thinking stuff like...I don't know maybe kind of everyday household products like cleaning stuff or....

Yeah, cleaning stuff. That's um...I mean, if that...I will go and push the trolley but it tends to be my wife's decisions. But I have noticed she will buy Ecover stuff. You know that is something she is aware of.

Does she have similar values to you in terms of the environmental sides of things?

Yup. Overall, yes she does. But I have seen her shopping in Gap. So, maybe not as hardcore as me!

So when you're buying clothes in particular, do you have preferred retailers that you would tend to go to when you need stuff?

I don't think I do, no. No, nothing is really coming to mind. Oh, tell you what I do quite like...Backlash and some of those, you know the retro stuff. Just because I quite like the style.

So, generally do you tend to go for the smaller independent-type shops?

I prefer to really. Yeah. It depends on what I'm looking for. You know. If it's...if it is something for work, then...I suppose it probably would be Debenhams or John Luis or something probably would be of the bigger chains. But for something that's more casual, it might be... something that I might pick up at a festival or.... On occasion in a charity shop...I mean, I would look but I'd rarely buy at...rarely buy at a charity shop. My wife would buy stuff in the charity shop. But I'd always look in

into the...whole buying...(Laughter)...good and stuff. But if something catches my eye, I wouldn't not get it. I'd already prefer to.

Do you tend to buy most things on that kind of impulse, do you think? Whereas, if you see something and....

Yeah. I've pretty much got everything I need. So, it's only be if...I needed something a bit smart or that...it's gotten a bit worn out and a bit scruffy, that I might need to have an upgrade.

If we take what you're wearing now, just an example. So, talk me through what you're wearing and where it came from, and what was behind it?

Well, bas-...the shirt was a present, right. And it is something that I would never have bought myself. It is branded. It's branded to Ben Sherman, who I see as a mod retailer, whereas I see myself as a rocker! Because I would not generally buy a.... Having said that, it's quite cool and comfortable, and actually I've come round to wearing it every now and again.

Yeah. But it took a while? (Laughter)

It took...it took a while. I don't think anybody seeing this on me would think 'I bet he's got a Vespa.' (Laughter) Because I haven't. I am wearing Converse All Stars, which is a bit of a...I know they're quite popular now but I wore them the first time around, so I was quite pleased to see them come back. And they are casual and comfortable. They're okay. Um...the trousers, I don't know what the brand is. But I could've been easily had been wearing another style which is like...which are Craghoppers, which are really walking trousers but it's...it's warm today and that...they're cool. And if I was wearing my jeans today it would be too hot. So...everything I'm wearing is comfort over style. (Laughter) Obviously.

So function is quite important.

It's true. Oh, yeah. I couldn't... There's something I'm noticing at the moment, and I particularly noticed it at a graduation the other day, is...young women who now seem to be having this fashion of very high heels to that point of...they look as if they actively need additional support to be able to walk. I know, do you know...I don't know if.... You know, I've got older. I used to...I was a bit glam years ago. In the attic, I still have the black leather platform boots, which I've... (Laughter). When the occasion arises, may come out again. And I'm sure...but I know at the time, people of an older generation, they...who understandably thought I looked quite ridiculous. Um, and it must be difficult to walk in those things. I seem to have a knack of it. I seem to be okay. But maybe it's a similar sort of thing - maybe it's a generational thing. But I think there's also a bit of an issue...that's clearly uncomfortable. Probably not very healthy in the long term, in terms of what it's doing to your posture. And your toes, presumably. Because they're getting pushed down into the front of the shoe.

Do you have a particularly favourite item of clothing in your wardrobe?

Not anymore...I did.

Which was?!

Oh, don't reopen that scar. (Laughter) No, I haven't...I had a pair of jeans which were.... I was never really...I ride a motorbike, but I was never an Angel. But I did have what I would consider to be my originals, that there's this pair of jeans that you didn't wash, and you know it had some patches on. You know, it built over...some years, it built up over time. Um...and then there was a period where I had to put some of my stuff in store for reasons I wouldn't go into. And um...and my mum had a bag of clothes, including these jeans. And she just thought they were...you know, rags basically. And the...and she said she did consider washing them. But said, if I wash them, it will just fall into bits. So she lovingly took the patches off, which she then presented to me. Um...I was horrified. I was...because they was...they were my second skin, you know. They were....

Was this recently this happened?!

No, no. (Laughter) Oh, I'm 57, this is in my early 20s. This was over 30 years ago but it's probably the only thing that maybe me and my mum had ever fallen out over.

But you still remember it and you still remember that.

Well, only because somebody is asking me about 'Have I had a favourite item of clothing' and that was it. That's the first thing I thought of. (Laughter) Because that...they were, um.... They were quite symbolic. They were more than...I said I'd dress for comfort over style but that would be the exception. That would be something where, you know, they actually meant quite a lot to me because of...they did look incredibly scruffy but that was part of my identity at that time.

Is that...is that thing with clothes reflecting your identity is something you still feel is quite important? So you mentioned like the Ben Sherman shirt...

And the Ben Sherman thing, yeah. I mean if...I've got a few t-shirts with 'rockstars' on. And I suppose it's...it probably is significant if you got somebody who's wearing a Frank Zappa t-shirt as opposed to a Britney Spears t-shirt, unless it's being done ironically, who's to tell?!, That says something about somebody's identity. They've chosen to do one rather than the other.

But for you, is that something that you still feel is quite important to you? Do you feel that your clothes say something about who you are?

Um...it would depend on....Oh, yeah. It probably does. Yeah. I mean, it...um.... I mean there's not many occasions where I'd actively think right, I'm going to wear my Jimmy Hendrix shirt tonight or the Frank Zappa shirt but...they're what I happen to have, I'm going out in jeans and a t-shirt. But then...but I suppose also, I know that...it can be something that could start conversation, you know because if somebody sees you wearing that. I have one tattoo, which is sort of a clothing thing. And it's a 1970s prog rock group, right, just on my arm. It doesn't normally show but there's been two or three occasions where I've been to the gym or something or swimming and I've been in shower or getting changed, and a man of a certain age will go 'Blimey! Emerson, Lake and Palmer - they were my favourite band.' Now, I wasn't deliberately trying to engage in conversation with a semi-naked man in the shower. (Laughter) But...you know, that's happened a couple of times. And clothing could do much the same sort of thing.

Is there an item of clothing in your wardrobe now that is a particular favourite?

Um...I'm having to stop and think about that. But...no, not a particular favourite. I mean this t-shirt, I'm still...I've got a couple of things which I've kept which I will rarely wear now. They've actually become mementos. A Led Zeppelin Knebworth commemorative shirt. You know, because I was there. I was a bit slimmer then. (Laughter) I can get into it but it doesn't do me any favours! But I couldn't bring myself to throw it out. You know because that was a very special event. No. There isn't any...there's no particular jeans or jacket or hat or anything really.

You mentioned earlier on, when we're talking about McArthur Glen, about Fair Trade. Do you ever buy clothes there that have those labels or certifications, whether its fair trade or organic or stuff from people that are overtly 'ethical' in their...

Oh, I would like to actually. Although I tend not to. I could explain that. Because I will go in to shops that have got the...you know, they promote themselves as being fair trade and having ethical values. And you can still get your cheesecloth shirts and sorts of things that were around years ago. And I look...and I do quite like the style but it is and my wife will say no. (Laughter) Now, that was then, this is now, right? You know, that really does look a bit dated. Yeah.

And do you...do you kind of feel as your perception that those...that kind of overtly ethical clothing is stuff that is kind of the old...? You know, it's kind of like what you said; cheesecloth shirts and yoga pants?

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. No, it's...you can still get it. I don't see so many people out and about in it now. Um...but I just don't feel like that is my style. I did use to wear those sorts of things years ago. Um...I had embroidered waistcoats. You know. (Laughter) that I'd been less likely to wear now.

Are you aware of any of the mainstream retailers or any other suppliers that do that kind of stuff whether it's fair trade or organic cotton?

Well, because it's not really a world I engage with that much. If I was looking for that sort of thing...I'd go into that sort of shop you know. There are specific shops that you can go to where you know those things will be. I wouldn't expect to see them in the big chain retailers.

When you're buying other items that might be available as fair trade or organic, would you... are they the things that you tend to buy, so...I mean groceries is an obvious example and things like coffee and wine, and chocolates and stuff like that, and organic veg.

Yeah, the organic veg we get anyway. We will...if we're getting teas and coffees and stuff. Well, not tea so much because they tend to get the Earl Grey, right. But if it's coffee, we've probably would look for the fair trade logo. And the um...well the coop is the obvious place but most of the supermarkets now, you can get at least a small amount of fair trade goods.

So we talked a bit at the start about your research and your values and how the two are connected there. Do you feel easy to act in accordance with your values when you're buying things? Whether it's clothes or anything else. You know, is it something that you struggle with or something that you...it concerns you or is this something that you find quite easy to do?

Um...it's probably isn't easy to do in terms of it wouldn't be immediately obvious where to go. You know, you have to go and seek out the things and it's also knowing those specialist shops. And I'd probably wouldn't buy that sort of stuff now anyway...particularly. No, I don't get the sense of...as with most things, the majority of stuff you consume is not fair trade; it's not sustainable. Social and environmental costs are not factored in to the whole production process. So in that respect, it's probably not that easy. No, you have to go on a bit of a mission if you're trying to know really do the good life right...right down the line.

Because you mentioned travel being something quite specific where you kind of had a lot of internal wrangling and discussions with colleagues about having to kind of justify that behaviour, is that something you find, also applies in other aspects that you considered...?

Well, that was a very obvious one. You know, because it was...and it was unusual as well. It's unusual to get research leave. (Laughter) So it's only going to happen every few years if you're lucky. And, you know, we don't have an overseas holiday...time you know, because there's just...that actual cost anyway, never mind factoring interplanetary costs. So it isn't something that we feel we've got to do.

But I guess there was a kind of internal argument that I could kind of sense you were having with the travel, you felt it was difficult and not in accordance with the things you were doing.

And well, I think, you know partly bec-... You know the irony of what I was actually researching which clearly opposed to the way about which I was going about doing it. There was clearly a tension there.

If you think about some of those ethical and environmental impacts of products generally, or maybe clothing in particular, do you perceive that to be quite big problems around that?

Oh, yeah. As I sort of said, no stuff is non-sustainable, you know.

And do you feel, in your own sort of purchasing behaviour any kind of responsibility to address that? Is that something that you try to take into account, do you think?

Yeah. I mean...neither myself or my wife are big consumers. I don't think...I mean on a global scale, of course we are because we're living in the UK. Relative to many parts of the world, we're hugely over consuming. But relative to the rest of the UK population, I'd say probably not.

And is that something that's quite a conscious decision?

Yeah.

Rather than it is kind of... just because of your lifestyle?

Oh well...

Do you see the distinction that I'm trying to make? You know...

Okay. I don't know if this is a good example but we've talked about music quite a lot. And you may be aware that recently the Rolling Stones got back together. Okay? And you couldn't see them for less than a hundred pounds. Now I've got more than a hundred pounds. I still couldn't bring myself, even though I wanted to see them, I thought that's just too much. You know, to stand at the back of Hyde park...you can get down but probably cost you more. And it wasn't a great support and...I just...I talked myself out of it basically, however on the face of it...I've got...I've seen them several times but I would have gone and see them again. But I just thought it's too much. So...you know, that's the sort of consumer choice in a way. There's nothing to do with sustainability and stuff, but it isn't a question of like, well you've got an amount of money...disposable income. Now I could've easily have afforded it but I couldn't justify it to myself. Well, that's just wrong. And you could probably apply that to all sorts of purchases. You've probably justify it better because that's not a very good example, thinking about it.

But I know what you mean. And do you feel that own behaviour makes a difference? Do you feel that you're making an impact?

Oh yeah. And people would often say...you know, what could one person do but everything happens. It's what one person has done; there might be a lot them doing it together. But I do try to get that across because when I'm teaching the global studies stuff and I say, you know this is a fascinating subject not just because it's...it's inherently interesting but it's so engaged with what we do. We're not looking at globalisation as some abstract process. It's something that you can't separate yourself from. And people talk about the impact globalisation has on the world, but it's only what we're doing, largely. Oh, there's a sort of the physical process is going on with weather and climate and stuff. But...it's mainly the collective...lifestyle choices. Well, options and choices of humanity as a whole. Sometimes, thought of in the social construction that is the state. But...it's still what people do. But I'm...what globalisation is largely what people do.

So in terms of addressing some of these wider problems, and particularly the environmental problems, you mentioned, where do you see the responsibility being for addressing some of those problems? Is it with consumers or is it with...?

Yeah. Yup. But it's partly. I mean there are levels of it. Ultimately, we do have some consumer choice. But you can see a lot of structures that are pushing things as like the media. The big business and multinationals, of course they're profit driven. But even governments, you know they could legislate on this and they can actually say that you know, things should be labe-.... There's a lot of stuff about food labelling now, and there now a traffic light system of how good it is for your body, basically, how much fat, sugar, salt is in it? Um...I'm thinking aloud here but...realistically, there ought to be a way in which people could see that when they're buying something, the cost of that is...there's much more going on than the price it's labelled at. But...you know, unless you are in that fair trade shop...and even then, it's not that completely transparent. But the vast majority of world trade doesn't factor in social and environmental costs. That isn't passed on to the consumer. So this is why somewhere like McArthur Glen can do the guilt-free shop and thing because it's got a completely different mind view to what when guilt comes in to that, you know, and responsibility. So if you have traffic light system or something similar, you're saying...how much tropical rain forest has been clear felled to grow palm oil to go into X product. If that was factored in, people would probably still go for the cheaper option but then it would be an informed decision. I think a lot of people might mean well, but they don't actually know what they're doing because they're not seeing the connections and not seeing the links between...their lifestyle behaviour and the impact on other people and the environment.

And that issue of guilt, is that something that you ever feel as a result of your consumption practice?

Temporarily. Yeah.

I mean, obviously the travel is quite a big one. Is there anything where you kind of felt you've had that...even fleeting, maybe a moment of dissonance?

Um...probably not though, it's something that's sort of...is with me in terms of I've got that awareness and probably, a little bit more informed than your average punter. Um...but it doesn't especially weigh heavily on me. I think I do balance that out by you know, accentuating the positive. I know I'm not a big consumer relative to other people. I do fall back on the vegetarianism because I think that's probably the things that I think is the most environmentally friendly thing that I do. And I do that every day.

Do you buy leather, like do you buy leather shoes?

Yup, that's a good question. I do have some leather. I'm currently wearing a leather belt. But I know exactly where and when I bought this. That's how ironically...on the other side of the planet, I bought um...probably 20 years ago now. I was in Australia and my belt bro-...the one belt I had with broke. And I really needed a belt. So I bought this one and I've worn it virtually every day since then. There was a downside to that, I had travelled...I didn't travel to Australia to buy but I did happen to be in Australia at the time when I bought it. So I don't know how good an example it is!

Is it something that you still buy now? I mean do you buy leather shoes?

Yeah I will. I know it's possible to not do. But it's a bit like I'm vegetarian and really I should be vegan, I know that. You know, this is a sliding scale, I suppose. Um...and there's all sort of justifications for it. The cow is already dead; you know...there's lots of ways in which you can justify these things. So, I don't beat myself up to the point where it's 'I couldn't possibly do that'. So, yes, you're right. I am a hypocrite.

No, no, no! I mean, I think what, with.... You know what I'm interested is the way that...because it is difficult, you know and quite often, there are competing factors.

Oh, there are. Yeah.

That play with your values, you know. There are times you got to sacrifice your values to...to other values, you know. That's the point.

Oh! Actually, I haven't got...you asked about an item of clothing, that I like. I just remembered that some years ago, I have...and this has been passed on to me by somebody and it was falling apart then. I just couldn't keep it together but it was a leather jacket. But it was...um...one of those you know, fur-lined world war II bomber jackets. Right. I know I looked quite good in it. And it was really cosy and it was a very nice jacket but it just fell apart. It couldn't be fixed. I tried to get it fixed. But the guy just said no, it's just falling apart.

Is mending stuff something that you do quite often to try to extend the life of the clothes that you've got?

I've probably did it more than I do now but...I would do. Yeah, if something was literally just needed a bit, needle and cotton just to sew the sleeve back on or something.

You're quite good with a needle, do you think?

I haven't done it that somewhat recently, but yeah, in the past. I sew things out together with the thread. Yeah.

Interview ends.

Interview 16 - Sarah

Could you start by telling me a little bit about your academic background, professional background, and how you ended up doing what you're doing?

Okay. Alright, then. So, yes, I'm doing a PhD, also looking at sustainable fashion goals and seeing how feasible they are. Now, I started doing this...I started doing this from an MSc project that I did. I did an MSc Climate Change and Sustainable Development some years ago. When I was looking for a project to do, couldn't find one, and then I happen to know my present supervisor, through a group in my home town, a mum's group, and she says, 'Oh, yes, I've got a project for you to do.' And so, we did this project and it was all about sustainability of clothing and it was...we both really, really enjoyed it. And so, we said at the end, 'If we're really enjoying this, why don't we continue and go into PhD and do it?' So, that's how it all started. Before I did the MSc in Sustainability and Climate Change, I was an Information Professional [for a professional body]. And I use that term "information professional" rather than "librarian" because people have a stereotypical view of librarians, which was also what I did. Yes. So we did various things, all to do with information and management and very, very, very...actually non-stamping books. (Laughter)

How did you go from that into doing your MSc in Climate Change and Sustainable Development? And what was your motivation for doing that?

Well, I think it was partly I had children and I think you sort of start thinking of things about, for example, organic food. I really started getting into organic food once I had children because I started to think about what am I putting in my body, what am I giving to my children, to babies? And you start thinking about life a little bit differently. And then I had a big health crisis and treatment took a whole year. It was quite a significant health crisis. And at the end of it, my husband said, 'Oh, you know, you need to do something. You need something to get your mind off of things. How about This MSc?' Because he had his friend who worked there. I looked into it and said, 'Oh, yeah, this looks really interesting.' There's all these things. And I just remember that first module I did was on sustainable development and I was thinking, 'Oh, at last. I've been thinking all these things a while. I didn't realise other people are thinking the same things.' And it had a name! And it was something like, 'Yes, I'm definitely on the right course. I'm definitely doing the right thing, yeah.'

So, if you weren't kind of aware of that as a discipline...

Yeah, not at all...

...what drew you to it over doing something else, do you think? What was the...? Someone suggested it and you saw, looked at the content and thought....

That's right, someone suggested it, yeah. But I think it was sort of I was getting interested more in the environment and I was getting more concerned about things like climate change. Things like climate change, I believe it is happening. I believe it is happening because... I don't look at scientific evidence. I'm not a trained scientist, so I wouldn't know the arguments. It's just my own observations over time. For example, summers...how I remember summers in my youth as a child are very different to how they are now.

In what ways?

They were more stable. They were more stable. They were more predictable. I mean, British weather is notoriously unpredictable, we know that. But, to me, there was definite memories of weather being more predictable, weather being more seasonal and just seeming more stable. You know, summers were summers. They were warm. And actually they weren't that warm. I remember particularly in the morning, they could be a bit cold so you needed your cardigan for school. But you didn't need sun cream, for example. And that's another thing. Sun cream was only something you use when you went to France on holiday. Soon as you have children, they've got...health is the same way. Your baby's got to have sun cream on. And I know that's not climate change but it's awareness that things have changed, something has changed, something to do with the environment.

And is that quite a vivid memory of those summers, do you think?

Yes, yeah, it is. It is. That's right because.... It is a very vivid memory. And one thing I remember particularly, because at my primary school we had a swimming pool, which was a little bit unusual. But we did have a swimming pool and it's an outdoor one. And we went pretty much swimming every day in the summer term. That was the thing. And there were very, very few days we didn't go swimming because it was raining too hard. So, that indicates to me there wasn't that much rain.

Yeah. (Laughter)

And you just feel... yeah, the feeling that things that are changing. And just some other things like organic food, that really started when I was pregnant. I started thinking, 'What am I eating? Could this help?' You start thinking, 'What...' Because when you're pregnant, you start thinking more about what you're doing in terms of your health, and because you've got such a big responsibility for another life. Some of your actions can affect this life. So, that's how that started.

So, you mentioned a bit about how those – I'm going to use a broader term of ethical which could involve some of the things you're talking about, organic or sustainable, but it could be a host of other things as well.

That's right, yeah.

So, do those types of issues feature generally in your...more generally in your buying habits?

Yes. Well, pretty much 80% of what we eat is organic, yeah. And, yes, I'd say habits-wise. I did try.... Yeah... there's a high proportion of fair trade and organic food. Let's say 80%, I'd say, is about right. And just other things I'm very keen on. I am very keen on recycling because I always feel guilt that I'm throwing away stuff that's just going into a landfill and I just don't like that. And it's a constant argument between me and my husband. He says, 'Just chuck it.' And I say, 'No. I've got to see how we can recycle this or Freecycle.' You know you have these arguments that are heavy. He says, 'Just chuck this sofa.' And I say, 'No. I'm going to Freecycle it because I can't bear the thought of this sofa going....'

I often ask this myself and I'm not sure what the answer is. But where do you think that comes from? What's the idea of something going into landfill that bothers you?

Well, I think it's an awareness that we are on a small island. And I do like nature. I do like nature. I do think we do live in a very beautiful island and I think it's very underappreciated. Particularly in these days of jet travel. And I do like going to the countryside, walking, going to English country houses and gardens. And so, you just think, 'Well, where is all this stuff going? It's just going in the ground.' It does bother me a bit.

So, you've talked about loving nature and that kind of stuff. Was that something that came from your parents? Did you kind of have an 'outdoorsy' childhood?

I did have a bit of an outdoorsy childhood, yes, because where I grew up was very...where I grew up was really quite unique place. It's a large village and it was a great place to grow up because it was a large village that's big enough for a primary school. At the same time, my parents were very keen churchgoers so I had sort of church community as well. And this church is right on the edge of Epping Forest, which is in Essex. So, we'd go out every Sunday afternoon, that was the thing – go to Epping Forest for a walk every Sunday afternoon, just walk in the forest. And then, later on, when I was a bit older, a teenager, I was really heavily into horses. So, again, every Sunday was riding horses (laughter). So, yeah, it is and even now, it's right at the end of the Central Line. So it's close enough to London. So I could be in the centre of London within an hour. But it's still surrounded by fields and forests. It's quite a unique place. Probably not for long, but... it's still there.

So, you talked about food, in particular, and organic and fair trade as being quite important.

That's right.

So, when you think about sort of the ethical side of things, what is that? What do you identify the most with? What does that kind of mean to you?

Oh, okay. What do I identify as ethical? Actually, I think, to be perfectly honest, there's a bit of self-interest there. I tend to think that if you got fair trade sugar, even if it's not organic, it's bound to be a better product because if they're treating people fairly, the likelihood is they're been – how can I say – been more honest with the product, if that makes sense. It's bound to be a better product. If they're not cutting corners with people, perhaps they're not cutting corners with the actual product.

So there's an implied link with quality and things like that.

That's right, yes. That's right. Exactly. Yeah, yeah.

Maybe it's a bit of a crude question. But if you were faced with organic or fair trade, which would you...? Which do you feel is the most important?

To be honest, I think the organic might win. Yeah. I'm afraid so. Yeah.

For what particular reasons?

I think I'm very aware of.... This goes down to the fact I've had a significant health crisis. There's a lot of theories about food and what you...you are what you eat, and what you're putting inside your body that could trigger things. So, I think that's for me. But then, you see, I'm a bit of an odd case... They didn't think.... Basically, it was cancer actually.

Right, okay.

And I remember when I was diagnosed, they were saying to me sort of, 'You know, with your age, it's highly unlikely you've got it.' But I did have it. So when you have something like that you are, sort of, slightly neurotic about food. food. Because there's so many theories about food and how chemicals in your body could do this and can do that. So, yeah. I'm not brilliant. I'm still not even sure that I'm half-way getting it, but...

Do those kinds of issues then kind of spill over into other consumption choices, so obviously you're researching clothing?

Yeah. Well, clothing is an interesting one because organic clothing is very hard to find, very hard. No, it doesn't spill over so much. [Pauses] Because it's so hard to find. If I went just for organic clothing, I don't think I'd have very much in my wardrobe at all. No. It's not readily available, certainly not in the high streets. And I know you've got online, you've got...yeah, you've got online. And I'm a member of the Ethical Fashion Forum as well. So I know there are suppliers of these. But it's still very hard.

So, what sorts of....? Well, I want to talk about some specific purchases in a little bit. But, again, if you start thinking outside of clothing, you think about you as a consumer more generally. Are these kinds of...you know, we've talked about not just organic, but environmental issues more generally and recycling and all that. Do you tend to take those kinds of things into account more generally, do you think?

I think so, yeah. I mean, I think.... Yeah, I've always...I've never been sort of a big spender on clothes. And I do have been brought up by my parents to be quite thrifty. And....

Is that a generational thing, do you think, with your folks?

Yeah, I think it's generational for them and also I think my father is like that anyway. (Laughter). I know my grandfather was the same - you couldn't get money out of either of them – I tried several times! (Laughter). But anyway, talking about clothes, I wore this [jacket] partly because it was raining, but partly because I thought, 'Oh, a Barbour.' I bought a Barbour a couple of years ago, and I thought, 'This makes sense to me in so many levels. This is going to be a garment for life.' It does the job. It's built for rainy days, that's the whole purpose of it. They can repair it. You can re-wax it. I have re-waxed it myself – I didn't do it very well, but... So that appeals to me on several grounds, not just ethical grounds, because they're made in UK, aren't they? I think.

I'm not sure.

I'm fairly sure they are.... Ah! I don't know. I know there are so many more. But I'm fairly sure.... Anyway, that appeals to me - it is made in UK, I think. I'm fairly sure it is. This is a garment for life. You'd spend a lot of money on it. But it's lovely thinking that's it, and it's a lovely coat. It does the job. And I like the colour, it's dark green. And therefore it's....

Was that longevity, that thing would last for a long time is the most important thing?

Yes, that's what it was. It was just this is going to last me a lifetime and that really appealed to me.

Do you find with your clothing shopping habits generally that you tend to like to buy things to keep for a long time?

Yeah, I do actually. I do that. I do like to buy things that are going to last for a long time. But there's been a huge difference in quality I think, over the years. Marks and Spencer's, for example, I feel since they stopped producing things in UK, they're not as good, just not as good as they used to be. From a quality point of view. Have you noticed that? It's something that has bugged me for years. I've always noticed the quality of men's clothing seems better than it does on women's. That's annoyed me for years. Even before women have had these **issues**. (Laughter)

So, when you say "quality", how are you defining quality, like durability or...?

Yeah, quality in terms of longer lasting...yeah, durability, longer lasting fabrics, or just that feel, you know, that feel of 'Oh, this is nice, thick cotton. This is going to last an awfully long time.' Whereas in the women's, they'd would be a bit more flimsy. You think, 'Oh, that's not going to....' Stuff like that.

Right. Okay. So, obviously, the Barbour coat, was that something that you knew you needed a new coat? What the process behind that?

It's actually an impulse to buy (laughter). We were just...my husband and I were in John Lewis one day and I said, 'Oh, look, a Barbour.' And I sort of at the back of my mind always wanted one because I knew someone years ago who had one and we lived in Wales so it was continuously chucking it down rain. And they had Barbour coats and I remember thinking, 'I really want to have one, they look good.' And I saw a Barbour, 'Oh, they really look nice.' And I tried one on. And my husband says, 'Well, that really suits you.' I said, 'It does. I like this.' (Laughter) And I knew a bit about the brand, anyway, Barbour, the fact that it is meant to be for life; it is a lifetime garment, and it really appealed to me. I just thought, 'Great.'

And you're still happy with it? How long have you had it?

Yeah. Two years. I didn't realise how re-waxing was so (laughter) difficult and I don't think I did a great job. Might send it back to the factory next time. (Laughter). Yeah, that's a bit of downside, looking after things is not so brilliant.

So, that thing about durability, do you find that you tend to mend stuff?

Yeah, yeah. I try. I try. I try and mend stuff. It's not easy. I don't know how to darn. Actually my challenge at the moment is darning a pair of ballet shoes, not mine, my daughter's. I don't know how to darn (chuckles). I may have to ask someone to (laughter) darn ballet shoes, as well. Oh, gosh. But I actually, I do, yeah. I do. I sew on buttons. I sew things up. I do have some sewing skills, thankfully. Not many, but, yeah, I do.

And then you mentioned Marks and Spencer, you mentioned John Lewis. Have you got particular places that you will go to buy clothes normally?

At the moment they come to me, actually, because I know someone who knows someone who gets end of line clothes. One of my participants told me how ethical these were. These are actually quite ethical end of line clothes. Because that's it, they're not doing them again. They're just going to waste. So, a friend of mine who knows someone.... I tend to go for end of line clothes.

Is that in a particular store or is that sort of personal contact...?

A personal contact.

You kind of go around to the house and...?

No, she comes to my house (laughter).

She shows up in a van full of clothes and....

Yes. And they really are very reasonable and they come from all sorts of places...Marks and Spencer is probably the main one. There's also Fat Face...

And do you find you can get the things that you want through there? Because it must be quite a limited selection?

She's really.... This a friend of mine, she's really, really good because she gets quite a lot. And she's really, really good at knowing what I like. So, she's pretty spot on all the time. Well, I think, really, at some age, you sort of know what styles are going to be good for you, you know what colours are good for you. And so, I tell her, I say, 'Look these are my colours, these are my sort of styles,' and she's really good at sort of finding....

And do you have any problems with fit or anything like that?

Well, she gives me a chance to try them on and they don't always fit. But, yeah.

So, how long have you been doing that and buying stuff through her?

A good eight months now, yeah. A lot of times before that, I used to go to the factory shops down in Hinckley. There's Marks and Spencer and Monsoon have these factory shops, end of line clothes.

For similar reasons?

Similar reasons. I think it's always that you can't resist the temptation of buying cheap clothes. And so, yeah, just getting colours and styles. Because the colours and styles that I like are not always in fashion. That's always been a problem for years. Certain things you like are not in fashion. Like, for example, I once tried to find this suit...actually when I was at School, I wanted a navy blue suit. I wanted a blue suit. Blue wasn't in fashion, so I couldn't find one. (Laughter). Yeah. Because my mum was going to spend a lot of money on a suit and I was going to wear it for the whole of sixth form, because it's almost a suit, it doesn't matter what colour it is. And it's black. Yay. I couldn't find what I wanted. It's just frustrating.

(Laughter) So, you're not much of a high street shopper? You don't think you are swayed by whatever's fashionable at the time?

No. I think that if you grew up with '80s fashions, you really have a low view of fashion. The '80s fashion was just awful as a teenager, grappling that – you know, ra ra skirts, ruffle skirts, knickerbockers, padded shoulders. Oh, gosh, the '80s fashion ... (Laughter). It was just a nightmare finding clothes.

Okay. So, we've talked a bit about kind of ethical issues generally, so I want to focus on clothing particularly. So, what do you kind of see as being the biggest issues within clothing? What do you tend to think about when you're...?

Issues – what, in terms of buying?

Yes.

In terms of buying. I think one of the biggest issues is availability. It's definitely availability. As I say, I'm a member of Ethical Fashion Forum and I've been to some of their events. I know there are some of those producers out there, things like the People Tree. The problem is I'm from the generation...I know things are changing a lot. But a lot of your habits are formed when you're younger. And, of course, when we went shopping, we never...we didn't have the internet, the internet wasn't around. Catalogue shopping was around but we didn't like that very much. So, I

think there's a problem with buying clothes online. And I think a lot of those are the things like the People Tree, you're buying things without being able to try them on.

Yeah. And is that quite important for you?

Yeah, it is a bit of a problem.

Why is that? Maybe this is a stupid question, but why is that important to you in terms of being able to...?

Because you just don't know a lot of things, how they're going to fit and....

And what would your worry be if it didn't fit?

Well, you just send them back. But then, it's sort of a hassle. It's hassling and you don't...I don't need that. I don't need to be checking into a post office every so often, particularly when they've closed a lot of them down. And also, I think the biggest problem, and I find this....it's not just availability, but I think the biggest problem is in the more sustainable and fair trade clothing because the styles they go for seem to be very different. They seem to be more.... I can give you an example. I used to get a catalogue from Bishopstone down in Bristol. Don't you know, they finished? And I found it quite ironic they're partly finish because the people they sent to school didn't want to do it. (Laughter). Well, sort of didn't want to become a machinist and make clothes. The thing is the problem with fair trade clothing, it does have a sort of hippy image. And to be perfectly honest, if you look at the styles and think, 'I would look like a hippy and I don't really want to.' You know, patchwork trousers is a classic example. They have patchwork trousers. And I just thought, 'Who wears patchwork trousers?' I think when you're in your, you know, teenager, 20s, particularly being an art student, you can wear patchwork trousers and look good in them and get away with it. When you're older, wearing...people will automatically think you're bit of a hippy.

So you find they don't have the styles that you want?

No, they just don't have the styles.

Is it something that causes you a bit of angst? Is it something that you find difficult in buying clothes?

Yeah, it is. It is angst, and that's probably why I go with this friend of mine because she's so good at finding what I like. She says, 'I know what you like. I'll find it for you.' And she does. And she loves doing that sort of thing as well. And so, that's another reason why I do it. She brings them around to my house to try them on. And I say, 'Yes, I'll have this one, I'll have that one.' That's it. It's that convenience aspect. And I'm buying clothes that would otherwise, I don't know, go to waste, so there's a lot of good stuff there. Yeah. So, what was the question? (Laughter)

No, that's fine. You've already answered it, I think. So, do you feel a bit of a sense of, to follow up with that point, do you feel a bit of sense of responsibility to buy ethically?

Yeah, I do. I do. Yes. I think and that's why.... I do feel a bit of responsibility, and that's why I was so pleased when I saw this Barbour coat, I tried it on, it looked really nice, and my husband said, 'That looks nice on you.' I said, 'Yeah, it does. Why don't we get it?' Which is one of those impulse buys. But, thankfully, yeah.

So, that sense of responsibility, who's that sense of responsibility to, do you think?

Sense of responsibility to – that's an interesting one. I think...I feel a bit responsible because I do know so much about the issues. I do know.... That's what I'm constantly reading about. I know so much about the issues. So, I do feel a responsibility to do something and make a difference. And actually this is an interesting one. I really should.... And it is a hard one because I know I feel guilty. I should be...I should be going to the [inaudible] shop. There's a fair trade shop in town, I should be going there and buying clothes there, I really should. But sometimes I do go there. I look at the clothes and I think, 'Oh, no, they're just too flowery.' Or they seem to be...like the patchwork trousers, there are styles that you just wouldn't really wear. They're sort of dowdy. Dowdy. They seem to be made for someone who really doesn't care what they look like. That's

the problem and I don't know why. I mean, if I was talking to a fair trade clothes designer, I would say, for me, I would go for classic styles, styles that flatter. Like, for example, a classic one is the empire style line. I don't know if you're familiar with that, the empire style. Think Jane Austen. Do you remember what they wore? It's sort of....

I'm aware of the period of time, but I wasn't around then! (Laughter)

Yes. But they sort of emphasise the bust and then it falls very gracefully down – the empire style. That's a sort of classic style. And that I find very popular with a lot of women. They like that. Sort of tunic tops – the empire style line. You find that's really, really popular with women because it sort of hides a lot of bad bits and emphasises the good bits. That's really popular. And the empire style, it sort of emphasises the top. So, if you've got a bit of a big tummy, it flattens it, makes it disappear. If it's cut really well, it will make it disappear. So, you see, there's all these considerations going on. And then, that's why I find.... Because I'm having conversations all the time about clothes with women (laughter) even though it's not in my study. And if I had to choose a style that's probably the one most popular, it would be the empire style line. So, if I was talking to a fair trade designer, I would say go for classic styles, you know flattering ones. They don't have to be fashionable, they don't have to be up-to-date, but go for some nice classic... And I would go for classic basics as well. Basics in a wardrobe, that's what I would go for as well. Because I think those.... I just don't know if sometimes what goes on in their minds.... I mean, I'm going to suppose it could well be to do with the way they dye the fabric or something. I don't know. But you just look at them and you just think, 'Oh, gosh, A-line skirts.' Honestly, nobody wears those except...unless they're your uniform requirement (chuckles). They're a very hard skirt to wear that makes anyone look good, I think.

Okay. So, there's a couple of things that you said, just to pick up on. So, the first one you said that you feel a responsibility to make a difference. So, do you feel that your individual choices do make a difference?

Do I feel I make a...? Probably a little bit but not enough, I don't think. Obviously, my individual choices aren't going to make enough difference. Actually, that's one thing I want to find out with my participants, to have discussions about what would make a difference. And from there, knowing what I know about the way they shop. I mean, I think...to be perfectly honest, I think there's a lot of power behind the big chains. They have enormous power. And I think it would really help if you start with those. I think as little people you can't really do a lot. But, at the same time, I don't like sort of saying there's nothing much you can do – that's sort of giving up. I think there are things you can do. And I think possibly one of them might be through social media, using that a lot more. But I wish...I do wish designers.... I don't know. I'd love to know what goes on in their heads.

I would imagine there's a very complicated chain though from a designer having an idea to actually getting it to market and all the different....

Yeah, I'm sure there is. Yeah, that's right. As this friend of mine who says...there's a friend of mine who said once, 'Do I look like the sort of person who wears patchwork trousers?' And she was actually horrified with the idea. Have you seen them? Have you seen one? (Laughter) It's so bad.

Yeah. So, generally, I think you probably already said this. So, you find it...you've got your values of what you want to do. Would you say generally you find it quite difficult to act in accordance with those?

It's very difficult. I think it is very difficult. I mean, you think, say like organic food, that's so much easier, or fair trade food, that's so much easier. I mean, for example, the shop, a co-op shop, there's a co-operative. It's not *the* co-op, it's a co-operative here, that there's nothing but fair trade and organic food. And so, that's so easy, you just go there, stock up, go home. But there isn't really that for clothing. And I know they do have ranges on the high street and then Marks and Spencer's do ranges in the high street. But its availability and it's the fact that I'm not really very au fait with online shopping. I'm not sure. I've never really tried it. I know a lot of people my age actually do do it and they love it. But I'm sort of an...you know. (Laughter)

Okay. And then, you said early on as well, that you kind of feel a bit guilty that you don't use some those fair trade or organic places.

Yes, I do. Yeah.

Is that...? Maybe it's difficult to say, but is that something that comes into your mind when you're buying clothes?

It does, yeah. Oh, yes, it does.

Or after you've bought them...?

Oh, it does. It does. I mean I was shopping in John Lewis once and I found something in organic cotton and I was sort of debating, should I buy it or not. I go, 'Oh, it's organic cotton. Yes! (Laughter) I'll buy it.' That's tipped it over the edge. But I think.... It is on my mind. It definitely is on my mind. And it is something I feel quite bad about, particularly when I'm talking to other people about it. And I'm perfectly aware that I'm not practising what I preach. So, I do feel bad about it.

But clearly it does come into.... You know, you talked about the sort of buying end of line stuff and buying stuff that will last, even though it might not be labelled as organic or fair trade.

Yeah, that's right. Yeah. I think that's probably tipped more towards that, something that would buy something that would last. I mean, like, for example, I've got a super jacket I've had for 20 years. It's actually gorgeous, brilliant condition because it's such a good material. And I remember at the time going, 'Oh, that much? Is it really that much?' And then thinking, 'Well, yeah. You know what, I'm going to buy it because I love it.' And I just tried it on the shop and I loved it so much. It has lasted 20 years. I won't be surprised in the next few years one of my children will nick it (chuckles) because it's a really nice one. But that was a heck of a lot of money, even now, on a jacket. I mean, it's nearly £200 and this is 20 years ago, so could you imagine how much it was. And I was...but.... It was an absolutely beautiful jacket, tailored, really lovely. Yeah, actually, and that's one thing I want to do at some point is go to a tailor and I and my husband's been there. He's bought two suits from a tailor, actually made by the tailor. And he spent a lot of money on both. But I really encouraged him with that because I said, 'Well, it's totally neat. It fits you brilliantly. It stands out. You can tell it's been made especially for you.' And it's lasted. It's Scottish tweed. Was it Irish tweed? So, again, it ticks all the boxes: it's tweed; it's made in...one's made...came from Scotland, one came from Ireland, so it's been made in the British Isles; the tailor was making them himself, doing it all. And that's one thing I really want to do is actually have a coat made by him. He says he'll make a coat for me. That's...it's just so... that was £200, this is going to be significantly more than £200. But then, on the other hand, that...yeah, that's my wish list to do. And that would last me donkeys years.

Do you feel that you know all about...? So you talked about some of the retailers that you use. Do you feel that you know a lot about their practices and where stuff comes from? And you mentioned the Irish and the Scottish tweed, for example.

Yes, that's right. Yes. Because the tailor is able to tell you. He says this is where it comes from. I can't remember what my husband has – Harris tweed or something. But he was able to say this is where the cloth comes from, it's from here. So, if you want to, you can go see it. Donegal tweed, it was Donegal.

And do you feel that generally, like from retailers that you might buy from normally that you have that...? Are you able to get that same level of awareness?

No, no, I don't think you are. No, you're not, you're not. I mean, I know a lot of places have sort of the ethical trade initiatives. Places like Primark have it and then you read.... Because I do read a lot. I'm getting a lot of bulletins from Labour Behind the Label, all those places. I'm getting a lot of their bulletins. And that big factory collapse in Bangladesh, Rana Plaza. But I've had people say to me from those places, from those big retailers, they say, 'The supply chain is so complicated, you don't really know what's going on.' And they've admitted that to me. (Chuckles) They don't know

what's going on. And I just think, 'Yeah, of course, you wouldn't because you're doing it on such a scale. How could you know?' And that's another nice thing about this tailor is that he'd say, 'This is Donegal tweed. You can go see if you want.' I don't think it's because you're small, it's just him in the middle of the shop. It's in...there's much more traceability than these big retailers. Honestly, I don't really trust half of what they say. And I think quite possibly half the time they don't really know what's going on and they're sort of quite possibly not finding out, are they??

Oh, yeah. And it's expensive to find out, isn't it. Okay. So, do you have a particularly favourite item of clothing in your wardrobe?

Particularly favourite item? Favourite item. A few, a few favourite items.

Okay.

Yeah. Any...?

Is there one in particular that kind of stands out that you think, 'That's something I really, really, really, really like?' Or if you think about them as a collective of items?

Yeah.

Or whatever the collective noun for items of clothing is.... (Laughter). If you think about them as a group, kind of.... Is there something that characterises them that makes them your favourite?

I think my favourite items tend to be...for example some trousers I've got. They're cotton. I love cotton. I love wearing cotton. Actually I do prefer natural fibres. They're much nicer to wear. And they tend to be colours as well. I'm thinking a particular pair of cotton...those most beautiful. They're like that orange but a little bit darker. Lovely colour. I love that colour. I mean, my favourite colours are autumnal colours. And I can wear it with a variety of items. That's one of my favourites at the moment.

Okay. So, how long have you had, that's a pair of trousers, yes? How long have you had those?

They're trousers, yeah. Monsoon.

How long have you had those?

Two years possibly. Two years. Actually Monsoon, I quite like Monsoon.

What is it about Monsoon that you like?

Well, firstly, they are...I think they are a bit more ethical. They are a bit more ethical and I do like that. I think it's the colours. They really go for colour and I love colour. Says me, wearing grey. (Laughter) I love colour, particularly autumnal colours and I love the fact that some fabric is... And they're not cheap, but you know.

Were they a planned purchase?

They were in the Monsoon sale and I saw that and go, 'Ah! They've got a plus size.' And I bought a very similar pair at the same time in dark brown and they're great as well because dark brown just goes with everything I've got. So, I'd say they're my...two of my favourite items at the moment because....

Did you find those to be quite easy purchases?

Yes, yeah. Yeah, you could try them on. 'It fits! Yes!' (Laughter).

And did you feel like you had to make any sort of sacrifices in buying them?

No, no, sacrifices at all. They were in a sale, so that was just great. They're some brilliant finds. It was just me browsing a Monsoon sale one day. So, I'm thinking, 'Oh, these are nice. There's something orange. Yes!' A really lovely burnt orange.

And what was the last thing that you bought?

Oh, god. Last thing I bought. It must've been from Sonia.

From Sonia?

Yes, the lady who rings me.

Oh, okay. I thought it was a chain I'd never heard of!

No, I'm sorry. No, no. (Laughter). She just turns up on my doorstep with a bag. 'I've got a bag for you.' And there was this.... One of the last things I bought was this cardigan, really...and it's got some of my favourite colours in it, autumnal colours again, all woven in, autumnal colours, yeah. Quite a loose cardigan, yeah.

Where was that from, do you know?

I think it's Mark and Spencer's, yeah, yeah. I think it was. Yeah, so that's one of the last purchases that [inaudible 00:42:33] and it was a gold cardigan as well, another autumnal colour.

So, what proportion now of your clothes would you say you get from Sonia?

At the moment, most of them, a vast majority of them, yeah. I've stopped...yeah. I'm not buying clothes so much at the moment because we've had an extension at the house and moving stuff around. And I've got so many clothes and that's one of those jobs that really got stood out. These clothes exactly. So, I'm not buying clothes...that many clothes at the moment.

And is that just a practical thing because of what's happening with the house?

Yes. That's right. Yes. And that's another thing, buying stuff, you just think, 'Why did I buy all this stuff in the first place? Perhaps if I didn't buy it I wouldn't be sorting it out and start cleaning the house.

So, there's an element of effort, too, involved in owning them because you've got to sort and store them and all that stuff?

Yeah, there is, yeah. Yeah, that's about right.

Would you say that shopping for clothes is something that you do or have enjoyed?

It's a very hit and miss, a very hit and miss affair. It depends. What really frustrates with the whole clothing business, it's so dominated by fashion and it's frustrated me for years. So, because I go for certain colours, autumnal colours, turquoise. But that's another reason why I like this Marks and Spencer's factory shop, it's all done by colour, everything's sorted by colour, so I just go straight to my favourite colours, find my size, nice and easy. So what was the question again?! (Laughter)

I asked about if you like shopping or not.

It depends. It depends. Yeah, it can really vary. I think if I have gotten no particular.... There's so many times it frustrates me. One of the last times I went shopping, I was looking for a dark brown skirt, a dark brown winter skirt, because if I have a dark brown winter skirt, it would just go with so many things and be really practical and warm and comfortable. Dark brown wasn't in fashion so I couldn't find it. So, another thing influences my...and I didn't bring it with me. I don't know if you've heard of the Colour...what's it called? It used to be called *Colour Me Beautiful* but it's now called something else. Colour something. But it's where you have to spend a day with a consultant. And my mum organised this for me. Because she did it and loved it. And so she said, 'Oh, you've got to do it.' You spend a day with a consultant and it goes on a fact that.... Anyway, the long and the short of it is I've been given 36 colours. These are my colours. And some are better for me than others because she's tried them all. There's 36 colours in it.

And on what basis did they make that judgement about which are your colours?

She has the colours in scarves and she puts it around your neck, and then you look in the mirror and then you discuss it, you know, does it suit me, what colour is better for you. I should have brought it with me because I've got this sort of a swatch of 36 colours. So, if I'm not sure about something, I check the swatch, and then if it's not quite the right colour, that's it.

Right. Okay.

Yeah. But it does work. It does work. I do find...because there's certain colours that look so much better on you than others. It goes with your skin tone, your eye colour, your hair colour. I forgot what it's called – Colour something. House of Colour. House of Colour.

Well, okay, I've never heard of it!

Google it.

Most of my colours are black or blue, so that's got to be it for.... (Laughter)

Yeah. So, just for me, it isn't all about colour because having hair this colour as well. I used to be a lot redder than this. You know from early age that certain colours really set it off and other colours are a disaster.

Where do you think it comes from, that thing with colour being...? Like why is colour the thing that you tend to prioritise, do you think?

Well, first of all, I do love colour. If you see my house, it's full of colour. (Laughter). I love colour and I hate black and white. And you do notice the difference. You do notice the difference. And you know right from early age I've had people say, 'Oh, that colour really suits you. That's you, that colour.' And you do notice the difference. I feel it really makes a difference.

A difference to how...?

Yeah, how you feel, how you look, how you feel, because certain colours look so much better than others. Yeah, they just fit much better on you than others. And I noticed that white is always a disaster for me. I just look dreadful in white and black. I just look dreadful in black. It's very draining. Black is actually a very draining colour. You look really pale and like mean. (Laughter). So, yeah, certain colours make a difference, they do.

Is there anything in your wardrobe that you really hate or really regret buying?

I don't think there's anything I really hate because if I've got it, I would have got rid of it. But there is a bit of regret I've got over a pair of.... I remember when I got it – when was it – a year and a month ago. I was going shopping and I wasn't quite in the right mood. I was a bit, I think.... I know I wasn't quite myself that day and I've gone shopping and I went a bit mad and bought this top, sort of silk top and trousers from a brand I never had before. It's a greenish gold and I loved it. I thought, 'Oh, this looks really nice. I love it.' I went home and I showed my children and said, 'Look at my lovely clothes I bought today.' And the younger one said, 'They look like pyjamas.' I looked and saw they actually do a bit look like pyjamas. And then suddenly everything went out. I thought, 'They actually they do.' I never took them back either, and they're quite expensive. But there's something that I'm thinking, 'When can I wear them?'

Have you ever worn them?

I think I wore them once. I wore them once for my husband's grandmother's 90th birthday. And it was a freezing cold day, so they didn't last very long and I just went home and changed (chuckles) because the party was being held in this quite cold place. I've only worn them once. But, at the time, I thought, 'Oh, this is so lovely. They're greenish gold and they're silk and they're really fabulous and luxurious.' I should've known that they definitely are pyjamas. No, they're not pyjamas! (Laughter)

So, what's the thing that bothers you the most about them?

That they look like pyjamas. (Laughter) I don't know. They look glamorous. They don't glamorous. They look like pyjamas. (Laughter)

But I mean, where does your sort of dissatisfaction come from? Is it just because of the way they look or is it because...

Yeah, that's right. Yeah.

...you've wasted money or...?

Yeah, that's right. And also I didn't check the fabric properly enough as well. There's two things. Firstly, the way they look. They do look a bit pyjama-y. They look like I should be in Turkey or Iran or something. They do look pyjama-y. And also, when I checked the material as well, it was viscose. 'Oh, no, why did I pay so much for viscose?' You know, silk...

So, what don't you like about viscose?

Oh, it's not natural fibre. I don't like unnatural fibres.

For reasons of...

Comfort. It's pure comfort. Viscose is just awful. I dislike wearing it.

So, is your annoyance with the fact that you made a bad choice or wasted money?

Yes, I made a bad choice, yeah. Bad choice and wasted money. I don't mind spending a lot of money like for something that the Barbour coat. You just say, win-win this one. But these, spend quite a bit of your money and you're just thinking, 'Oh, I can't really wear them, except for like pyjamas.' So then I thought...then they're viscose as well, so they're not...they don't even have that sort of comfort. A bad purchase, yeah! (Laughter)

Interview ends.

Interview 17 - Elisabeth

So, the first thing, could just tell me broadly about your academic and professional background and how you ended up doing what it is that you're doing now?

Yeah. I'm Sustainability Coordinator for the school and also leading the Green Academy team. And I think I came into the school, I was always interested in this area already as 15 or something. And I studied first philosophy and theology. I always had a focus on business ethics already then. So, it was kind of...and also, environmental ethics was also part of my first Master in philosophy and theology already. So, I originally planned to become a vicar actually. But then, my father died. And because he was a consultant, I had to take over his business because there were lots of companies and... 27 corporate contracts that he couldn't get out basically. So...

So he was a consultant. He was a business management consultant rather than....

Yeah. For the pension fund specifically and we were running the pension funds for 27 companies. Well, he was before he died and then came very sudden. So, I was suddenly just thrown into it together with my mother, to run the business and took on for the 27 companies as well. So I did do this for four years kind of because we just had to do it until we would find someone who would buy it from us and it took us four years to find someone who's interested enough. And then I had the feeling, okay, I have now a good combination as I have this kind of theoretical understanding from ethics and I have a very practical approach. And what I wanted first was to actually get an understanding of the theories in management because I was only doing it just out of nothing kind of. So I did actually apply for an MBA in the UK. So I did do the MBA to get the theoretical knowledge in business. And already, I was there leading the business ethics club as well because it was still my strongest interest. And from there actually, I was deciding to do a PhD which would finally combine both areas in an academic qualification. And then I applied for jobs. Actually, I got a scholarship here. This is why I ended at...well, I have been now since 13 years because I first applied scholarship, finished my PhD, and then got a job in this area kind of.

Right, okay. So you were in Germany before you came to the UK?

Yeah.

Okay. And you said you wanted to be a vicar originally?

Yeah.

So how did...is that because of a family connection or how did...where did that come from?

This was actually because I was doing a lot of youth work in the Protestant Church. And actually, I did also while I was running the company, I was in parallel doing the whole training to be a vicar as well. So I was working two and a half years as a vicar as well. But it was quite a challenge to do both and they are very, very different jobs kind of which, yeah. But I think the main idea was that I really enjoyed the youth work so much and the church and, yeah. And I was always very passionate about anything ethics. But mainly, it was really mainly environmental and business ethics. And so, I didn't really kind of – as when I was doing the job as a vicar – I'm not really so much conc...I am concerned about the other part of Christianity but my focus is really environmental ethics and business ethics. So therefore, it didn't really.... Someone said to me, 'You shouldn't be a pastor – the German word is pastor - or vicar. You shouldn't be a pastor. You should really preach environment and not preach as a....' Because my focus was too strong on the environment.

So, what do you think...what sparked your interest in the environment and environmental ethics?

Was that something that came from your parents or...?

I'm not fully sure. I have asked myself quite often. I mean, one more, I was at... do you know, the forest school concept?

The forest school?

Yeah, which could become...it's now popular here as well. So my daughter was for example in a forest school in her first year and she's quite passionate about it. Finally, it was a very, very new movement that I was more...my primary school was a forest school. So the first four years of my primary education were in this forest school. So it was surrounded by forest, a lot of the teaching was under the forest, linked with the forest, doing everything. And I think this maybe has made me such a strong link to the...especially to the forest as well as a starting point. And then....

Is that something that's quite common in Germany or is that something that your sort of parents had a very strong motivation towards...they wanted to send you to a school...?

It was the only school we had in the village. It wasn't really (laughter)... Yeah. So I think it wasn't a proper choice from them but I know that they are now really coming as a movement as ever. I think in Sweden very popular. And now, they're in the UK. And actually, even we even teach about them here now. So it's really becoming a movement here as well now which is funny because I'm much older than (laughter).

I've never heard of it.

Really? Oh, okay. Yeah. They can learn. They want to even open it to other stuff. It's their interest as forest school is better pedagogy kind of, so...

Yeah. On the religious side of things again, is that something that was quite a big feature in your upbringing? Were your parents quite involved with the church?

No. They were kind of very much normal Christians. Like in Germany, people are much more...as the Church there has much higher impact than here actually. And people tend to go like...you go Christmas, you go Easter, and you go.... And my parents were those kind of people who you go three times or four times per year to the main things. But when my father brought me the first time to the children's service, I was six or seven, I insisted to be brought every Sunday. (Laughter) he didn't like it because he thought, 'I do it once every four months.' (Laughter) and suddenly he had to bring me every Sunday because I wanted to go. I was really insisting on going to church because I just loved the way they did it. It was very creative and things. So it, sort of was a very nice children's service.

And were they quite supportive of your desire when you were younger to become a vicar and become more involved in the church?

Yes. My father had also already been very interested in business ethics. So his masters is actually...was already also in business ethics 20 or 10 years...20 years before me kind of. So, I think there was always this interest in business ethics in the family and he was always looking forward to a time in which he didn't experience to actually kind of be more active in this area and to promote it more and so on. So I think it's very much coming from my father especially.

Do you know why? Because it would have been quite a new thing I guess. But he was...when he was younger, do you know where his interest came from?

Yeah. I think it's come to maybe really much from...as his family background from my grandfather is actually that...as my grandfather was a Physics...working at the university as a physicist as he was developing air... developing planes in the '30s and he lost twice because he was very much against Hitler. And I think this is maybe where it all comes from, I don't know. And he actually lost his first job because he decided not to join the party and Hitler came to power. So he lost his job actually two months after Hitler came to power because he immediately kicked people out because he was developing the radio at this time as a part of the team developing the radio and Hitler didn't want to have anyone in there who's not a Nazi. Therefore, he was kicked out. And then he started with the Junkers airplanes and also working there to develop planes. But he did another I think very brave step in '36 when the Jews were kicked out of the Association of Academics in Germany, he actually did step out with them out of solidarity. So he kind of said if you're kicking them out, I am going too. And then he got actually – two years later – they got someone as a help in the house who was constantly in the house for seven years. And my grandfather didn't know that this was the last thing he could do. Otherwise, it will be

concentration camp. They got someone observing the family. My father didn't know for seven years because he was very small. He didn't know for seven years. He's not allowed to say a word even in the family because they had this spy in the family. So this is kind of...I think maybe that is quite a big ethical background because you're getting this kind of...you know that there is right and wrong and that you have to choose on which side you're standing.

Obviously, there's a very sort of strong ethical motivation there then and you have talked about your interest in business ethics. So, when you think about outside of your kind of professional life, if you just think about you and your day-to-day life if that makes sense, do those ethics come in to your consumption activities and the way in which you buy things generally do you think?

Yeah. I do. I think so.

So, in what kinds of ways do you think that that ethics manifests itself?

If I can afford, I try to shop ethically. For example, we have a vegetable box every second week from one company and then another one from the other com-...because I want to support both of them so I can't make up my mind. And one is Abel & Cole who also has everything that we do. Every second week, we do our general shopping including yogurt, everything from them. So they're kind of...it isn't ethical decision for me because I have everything based organic and they try to reduce the logistics. They try to reduce the packaging, everything. So I think I do it nearly on every level but kind of from the money I earn, I can't afford to do it consistently in everything. Because if I do – like I would shop for my kids – everything in ethical way, as I say, I couldn't afford. It will be just.... So I try to do it as much as possible. But still, sometimes, you have to say, 'No, this doesn't work.'

So when you say in an ethical way, so you gave an example of buying stuff for your kids, what do you mean by that? Can you give me an example of something where maybe you wanted to buy something that you perceived as being more ethical but were unable to?

Yeah. For example, if you buy everything especially when they are small loads of stuff, everything ethical is quite expensive. So I would sometimes go for, yeah, like underwear or something which has a...it's a German kind of...that it's tested for harmful substances. It's a kind of lower environmental symbol but they are cheaper and I don't go for really expensive organic as well but I know that actually the standards are higher. So I kind of go down because it would get too much if I would go buy everything in this way. So it's kind of trying to get something of it but I can't afford to be the most ethical person, kind of.

So when you talk about ethical things that...I guess you're talking about things which are...?

Organic, mainly, and fair trade. Fair trade is very important to me as well. It's a decision like buying a bed for example which are then several hundreds or you can also have it several thousands from a very ethical company, then I would...and then for example, we just bought a bed for my husband and myself and it's an organic mattress, it's produced in the UK. So I've looked for some criteria but it wasn't the high as it was the cheaper from the price and that's a really good one which I found out with my research but it would have cost several thousand pounds.

Do you think you tend to – you mentioned you did some research around that – do you think you tend to try and research a lot about the companies that you tend to buy from?

Yeah, for big decisions, definitely. As for smaller ones, I think I often...I trust. I know that it's not necessary but I often trust what is on the packaging actually. Also, I know that it can be a bit...everybody can state something that's a bit off. And I don't have to...I think when I was like a student, I had more time. I would kind of really investigate everything kind of. But I don't have the time anymore to kind of be on top of what's the best deal, what is the best whatever, what is the best or, I mean, Ethical Consumer. And sometimes, I look things up there or we just...but I couldn't say that I'm on top of everything because it's just too much information to take in.

So that's Ethical Consumer magazine?

Yeah.

So, do you use the kind of the buyer's guides and things like that?

Yeah. I do this a little bit, yeah. So, they have it as a subscription. So I get it every month kind of or every two months sort of.

So, is it normally that you find that it's price that is the big barrier? Is it the things that you would like to buy that are the most ethical you think tend to be the most expensive and that's the main thing that you have to...?

Yeah. It does cost more to do it properly, to pay the people, properly run everything. So that costs a lot. That's why I decided to try to do it in several things that's right or manage to pay so much. But as I say, there's a limit. There's certainly everywhere a single case is already put in, like the mattress - it was organic cotton. It was made in the UK so there has not big logistic. So I didn't look for everything else but it has to be also as I...for example, I don't know whether the wood actually sustainably sourced or not which is like...but in that as well. So I gave up and I had these criteria fulfilled (laughter) so.

And you mentioned organic and fair trade as things, as labels that you would tend to look for? Is one of those more important than the other to you? Or if you were confronted with two products and one was organic and the other was fair trade, which would you prioritise do you think?

I normally am very straight but I normally go for the organic one. I think I'm always a bit more passionate about environment than I am about human things. I don't know why but, I mean, it's kind of (laughter). Because I think I have this bigger picture. I think really also think, if you would make me decide between apes and humans, I wouldn't know that but I will hope that nobody would ever let me decide. I rather want to keep everything alive kind of than to... then improve the conditions of each individual within which could be an ape or a human. But I think the general idea from me is more to give everything a life in as best condition as possible, kind of.

Yeah, okay. So on that subject, for example, are you...does that come into other aspects of your different facets of consumption? So are you vegetarian or anything like that for example.

I was vegetarian for 10 years and then I really couldn't stand it anymore because I love meat and I love the taste of meat. So, I tried as I am now not vegetarian anymore. I try to be sometimes but I can't say I'm vegetarian because I just really like a steak or something. But I try to have then organic and where animals are reared properly and stuff like this or....

So if you think about clothing consumption more specifically – could you just tell me a bit about your shopping habits and your attitude towards buying clothes and how you buy clothes and how you would describe yourself in that respect?

I'm a bit of a nightmare actually. It's funny. I have a very... I shouldn't really tell this. So this actually should be a secret between the two of us (laughter)... My aunt and my cousin are very fashion-conscious. So they will very fast decide this is out of fashion. I get all their off-casts. So I get loads of and I don't want actually to buy much because I get so many clothes from my aunt and my cousin. Because I know that I will still take it even if it's out of fashion. And I really don't...this is from my aunt. I don't think...for me, it's not out of fashion. It's kind of - I like it. That's why...as I wouldn't take anything I don't like from them. So I really go to check whether I like it. But for me, it has nothing to do with fashion because I'm not fashion-conscious at all. I don't even know what the fashion is, kind of.

So are your aunt and your cousin in Germany or are they in the UK?

Mm-hmm. Yeah, in Germany. So, normally when I go there and I have several things which my mum has on the cupboard, 'Would you like this? Would like this? Would you like that?' And I really realise that I don't need to buy because I get clothes from them. I get all sorts of things from them. And then because my aunt will buy something one season as one thing to her and then it's out of fashion for her. Sometimes, she will buy the next thing and then she knows I might take it (laughter)!

So you said the shirt that you're wearing is one of your aunt's. Is there anything else that you've got on, is that come from your aunt or cousin? Is there stuff that you've bought that you're wearing as well?

No, I think. Otherwise, I have...today is my own (laughter). No. I think I do with business clothes, I always shop at Ulla Poppen, which won't tell you anything.

No, never heard of it! So, why do you like Ulla Poppen so much? What's the...?

First of all, she has a... because I'm, you know, that I'm not a slim person. So she has...it's a big choice for my size. So her focus is really on my size kind of people, not the 36L or how do you say, 10? Size 10 in the UK, size 10 people. I think a lot of shops have only slim people in them. Everything which is nice is only for slim people. And this Ulla Poppen has made a focus on people my size and I have the biggest choice in her shop. So then, people who are bigger than me don't have so much choice anymore. And slim, they don't shop at all there because there's really nothing in there, small sizes and I think this is amazing, really. And I really like their style. So it's a very small shop. I mean, it is a chain in Germany and they have it in lots of cities now but it's a tiny shop. It's always very well decorated so you get loads of ideas how to do things together which I also like. So you have ideas how to do scarves or how to combine different colours or some different...I think the design is very, very nice. And maybe she isn't fashion. I don't know. As I say, I don't watch the fashion but I buy, everything new, I think I buy from her actually.

Okay. Is that again in Germany or does she have shops in the UK?

Yeah, in Hannover. No, I don't think she has, just a shop in Germany. For clothes.

So how often do you go back to Germany to do your clothes shopping?

Normally two or three times per year in Germany anyway. And normally, I go shopping every time I think, clothes shopping.

Is that quite a conscious thing that you do when you go to Germany, you know, that you'll go and do a clothes shop and go to Ulla Poppen and buy the things that you need?

Yeah. Like for example, if I have trousers I need to replace. Okay, next time, Ulla Poppen trousers (laughter). So it's really part of the, yeah, actually, I nearly go always there normally with my mum and some other people as well.

Is that quite a... when you go clothes shopping, is that sort of a family thing that you're doing together with your mum and...?

Yeah. My kids come, they have a play area there. So my mum is normally watching and entertains the kids, and I'll try things onto which is also easy way of doing it because here, first, I would have to do it as I ask someone else to look after the kids or to carry my husband who's not interested at all. (Laughter) And he would have to watch the kids. So I think it's...my mum likes it as well. So therefore, it's kind of something we do as a family then, without my husband.

So you're not really the sort of person that would kind of after work just go and browse in the shops for half an hour on your way home or anything like that?

No. They're normally always closed (laughter)! Or I have to rush to get the kids as I (laughter) as I go early and I have to like get the kids. Oh, it's too late.

Is clothes shopping something that you enjoy?

No.

What don't you like about it?

That things don't fit the way I want. I'm always doing a diet after I go shopping. It doesn't last long enough that I'm really happy the next time I go shopping. No. I think it's...I mean I do like looking at things, like browsing, I really love the experience of going in this Ulla Poppen shop and looking at new ideas and how would I do. And then I also like to sometimes look at... I mean, the other one I do like but it's...this is where it's too expensive for me. It's Waschbaer actually. I love

the clothes but they are very... And they send to the UK as well. So I order other things from them, only really clothes. They are this very, very ethical company. So, maybe if you buy a shirt from them, it will cost you €100 or something. So it's really expensive. Totally everything is correct about them, I have some clothes from them. But I love, I mean, I get a catalogue from them every half year. So I know, for example, I always inform myself what seems to be in season with this catalogue. I really read every single page. I look at every single item in there because I love to look through those catalogues. So this is what I enjoy about shop as well. Shopping clothes and then sometimes, I always say, 'Oh, this is really nice.' And I think I will splash out on me for this one and then ask for it as a Christmas present or something like that.

Are there particular types of items that you tend to splash out on more than others do you think?

Dresses. Which I never wear to work but dresses which I can wear for...as like evening dress or, yeah, something special as well. And then, I like also special design also. Then that's interesting, the design, as well. Then I really enjoyed kind of looking at different possibilities and choosing something and so on. But I think for work, I feel sometimes I'm not very inventive at all. Sometimes I think I *should* make an effort make an effort and try to get more...know what is actually fashion for work clothes or so but I'm not very inventive, so... I don't spend time. I think, 'Well, maybe it's not my interest....' Yeah. And I don't have an idea I think either. So I'm quite happy with my orange, my green and my blacks (laughter). I have got used to this style kind of. And I have loads of orange, loads of green pieces, and combine them. So, this is kind of easy.

So you mentioned that Waschbaer was sort of quite a very overtly ethical company but quite expensive with it. Ulla Poppen, is that something as well which has ethical principles behind the brand?

Yeah. Some but it's not overly at all as it's kind of...I don't think...I don't even think they have organic cotton. So I think they make really a kind of...because I have never found someone who has these kind of things in organic cotton. I have to say I've never made effort either to find out. So, Waschbaer doesn't offer this kind of clothes. So it's kind of more for....

So when you say these kinds of clothes, you mean, like formal kind of suits and things like it?

Yeah, like suits. Yeah. I have to say I've never made an effort to find out if there's someone who has organic suits or so.

The Ulla Poppen brand, so, have they got particular values or particular things that you like behind that brand?

Yes. I think where they are produced, as they kind of have more the part...they look into the part that they pay fair wages, but I don't think they have organic cotton or anything.

And how long have you been shopping at Ulla Poppen predominantly? So, is that somewhere that you've shopped for quite a long time now?

Yeah, I think so. Ten years.

Okay. And before that, where did you tend to buy your clothes before you started shopping there?

[Inaudible] but they have closed down. [Inaudible] was a shop in Hannover which was only a shop in Hannover. So it was really a very small...it's not a....

chain, but they have closed down and I bought suits from them before. And I think they...I didn't pay, as I say, so much attention. If I see in the shop that something has organic cotton, then I would tend to go for this one if there's a choice between two items in the shop. But because I don't spend much time looking around, I'm actually quite happy when I go in the shop and then just find what I need. Then to really kind of...I wouldn't browse whichever shops to find one which would offer something organic as like, as I say, with Ulla Poppen, I just take what is there. And if there would be an organic version in her shop then I would take the organic one but not make the effort to go somewhere else.

So, if you think about your whole wardrobe, how much of it would you say was given? What proportion would you say was given to you by your aunt and your cousin?

Er... 50%.

Okay. Out of the remaining 50, how much of that would have come from Ulla Poppen? Like all the rest or do you ever buy stuff elsewhere?

I have bought once by Debenhams, from Debenhams because they had the personal shopper which I thought was really nice. And then this was actually quite a nice shopping experience because I said what I wanted and she was running around and bringing me things. And what I needed for it was a summer holiday, I had everything in one and a half hours - a swimming costume and everything as I had five items and it was a summer holiday and they brought it to you. I didn't go for anything ethical. I just want to have these things for the holiday, these pieces and be done with it and have something nice. But it was a really good experience. So I was thinking actually, I should look into Debenhams a bit more, maybe, find out what they are standing for because I would like to use this personal shopper again because I thought it was really nice.

Did you go there because you've seen them advertising personal shoppers?

Yeah, because I saw someone who maybe makes it less stressful then I have not to go through 20 trousers before I have one which fits me (laughter). And she was really good. I really had to try a lot of things on. It was [inaudible 00:27:03] they immediately did...some will get my size and the proportion and everything did fit, actually, which she brought so which was nice.

And how long ago was that? Was that recently or...?

It was not this summer but the summer before.

Okay. We talked a bit about...you were talking about finding it difficult for you to find the things that you like. Is that something generally that you think is quite difficult for you to find things that fit and that you like and that you feel look good on you?

Yeah. Because as I say I don't have a model size which I...so I think it has, yeah, it's not too easy to get the right clothes and it still looks nice.

So when you talk about sort of looking nice and things like that, would you... is there a way in which you could identify your style or what sorts of things do you tend to like?

I still somewhat - I don't know why - but I still like these two colours, green and orange. And I like everything which is...whenever this comes in season, I would normally try to shop a bit more because I know they aren't always in season, these colours. So therefore, they only come every several years. So I then try to get a few more items of the colours in season. And I think I have done ones, gosh, 15 years or so. I have done a colour. I had a colour and style weekend. So, as a group, it was something they offered in Hannover - I was living in Hannover then still - and they offered something where you can find your own style and ultimately, you can find colours that will match your face. And I've a little booklet that all the colours will match. And these are some of the colours that match but somehow from the range they gave me which matched my skin colour and so, these are the ones I liked the most. So I kind of decided, okay, I based my...which makes it also easy when I go away. So I'd have everything in this colour. It's easy to fit everything together because I can take four green shirts and just combine them differently which was quite easy. It might be a bit boring but I mean, it's (laughter). And then [a colleague] was saying he can...always, when he looks for something orange it's normally me. So therefore, (laughter)...

We talked about this more generally at the start actually, but also with the clothes, do you feel sometimes you have to make sacrifices to be able to live in accordance with your ethical values, but also to be able to afford things and things like that. When you're making those sacrifices, is consumption something that you feel causes you...what's the best way to describe it? I don't know, some kind of existential angst, you know. Is it something that you kind of worry about that makes you feel uncomfortable in some way?

Sometimes, when I buy for the kids for example, because for them it's much easier to get things, kind of. But for example, I will...what I don't like, I make these trade-off. For example, this [inaudible 00:30:14] one or so many good shoes which are also ethical, from a good company which we get from the ethical shoe company. And I don't know if you know it. It's a specific little company which has focus on shoes for kids and.... And we buy each as always, with one pair we get from there, and the other pair we get from Lidl, and I find this compromise not very good. But I have to think I can't afford two of these really expensive shoes because they are £50-£60 or so each and that they'll only use three months or so until they grow out of them. So the second one is one for £10 or £5 from Lidl (laughter) when the other one is dead or whatever, which is then a replacement. So this was it. And I don't feel totally comfortable shopping with Lidl because I know it's one of the cheap, erm.... And they have always this kind of range of clothes and stuff and other things. But I kind of tell myself that I am...because I can't spend everything on the best ones. I go for one best and then I'm allowed kind of. But it feels a bit like I need the permission to be allowed to buy the cheap stuff from Lidl (laughter).

So you said you kind of rotate them – you buy the expensive pair until they've grown out of them and then pass them on to the next child?

No. They will only...you can't pass them on. Not with my kids. They always destroy them! So they really get a pair of fresh new shoes which they destroy in three months or when they need next size. And then I get the cheaper one which is from Lidl which is really like only £5 or £10 which is just a back-up, so if they get muddy or have really wet shoes, they get the Lidl shoes on the next day or something as well. So I have one other pair for them.

Do you tend to use the supermarkets for the children's clothes quite a lot?

As in from...yeah, either the ethical shop for the kids as well and then some more of it from Lidl. It's always Lidl. Because Lidl has at least some environmental... because it's a German company at the same time. So even though they are a discounter, they still have some ethical consideration. So they're not the worst as when you compare them to Tesco or someone else. They are still better than others, so that's why I shop with Lidl. I don't know if you have looked into Lidl - what they offer as clothes and things?

A little, yeah. We'll talk about that afterwards perhaps, yeah. So....

Because they have also this little logo on their clothes as they kind of say tested for harmful substances. So everything they produce is at least tested for harmful substances. And sometimes, they have organic or sometimes, they add it as well but not often. So it's not too bad, I think, but it's compromising.

Okay. So, can you remember what the last item of clothing that you bought was?

For me or for the kids?

For you.

For myself? Shoe. It was a shoe.

And then can you just talk me through that purchase. So, why you bought them and where you bought them and the the thought process you went through?

Yeah. It wasn't...I think it was not... but I did need to because I didn't have any shoes for the... I was invited to a special event in Manchester and I didn't have a proper shoe to go with my dress so I had to buy a shoe. And as the focus was actually trying to find shoes for my son and I saw these shoes only as a side effect. I said, 'I really need these shoes. Maybe I try them on.' It was really a very fast decision because they did fit. They're were comfortable and I just went for it. Maybe if I take another, this was really because I didn't have time, they were closing in like 10 minutes. I didn't know any of any other shoes that fit. So there was no consideration beside that I liked it. There's one before.

Where was that from?

It was from this shop on the way to the train station because they have Clark shoes and I wanted a Clark shoe for my son. Because they have special...the trainers from Clark I think are quite good for kids. And therefore...and also, they measure as well. And because it was...he had destroyed all his shoes somehow and he needed a new shoe. So, the shop near my house is always closed on a Sunday, that's why we went to Clarks. And then as a side effect, I saw my shoe and I just bought it on the spot. So (laughter) but the one before I went to ECCO actually and...you know the ECCO shop?

Yeah.

So because I know that ECCO has quite good credentials.

Is that the reason that you went to ECCO particularly to look for the shoes?

Yeah.

Okay. And have you got a particularly favourite item of clothing?

A favourite item of clothing, no... Yes, um... summer dress.

Okay. What do you like particularly about it?

I think the association with summer dresses (laughter)! At the time I went to beach and it's warm and hot (laughter)! And because I also like the style as well. I like to wear dresses actually, when it's warm enough kind of.

And where did that one come from?

The last one I bought, I don't buy them often because there's not much...so much summer here actually, where it's really hot. It was the one from Debenhams actually when I had this five-item purchase.

Just to go back to the thing with your aunt and your cousin, and them passing things on to you, is that something that's happened for quite a long time? Have they...has that always been a feature of your life that you'd sort of...members of the family that would pass clothes on to you?

Yeah, very. And it's the same for my daughter because she gets everything from her cousins. So I don't need to buy much for her either because we get all the clothes from her cousin who's two years or three years older than her. So just very normally, and as a child, it was first because my cousin is younger than me. So I was first passing on to her. But then she became taller, very fast taller than me. So she's taller but not as... so it does sometimes fit kind of which she offers. It's more from my aunt because she's the same size as me because my cousin is that taller than me. So therefore, it's not fully matched in many ways.

And what is it that you particularly like about having those clothes handed on?

That's the easiness. It's just (laughter)....

It just means you don't have to go and buy things?

Yeah. So just...yeah. And I like the idea that I really don't...that I reuse clothes. I think...I wouldn't go in a charity shop to buy anything because I wouldn't know where it comes from. So I think I'm not this person who would go in a charity shop. But because I know my aunt and I know, yeah, and I have no problems at all to wear her things, and it's because sometimes funny because I was wearing her winter coat and people at the bus stop comment on how nice this coat is. And they said, 'Oh, where did you buy this one?' And I said, 'I don't know. I got it from my aunt.' And she buys good things so she buys high quality as well and she spends quite a bit of money on it so I normally know it's also good quality which she buys. And I think it's a nice idea just to recycle or even reuse - even better than recycling reusing things which...and they are not destroyed. And they're never destroyed as well. Because I say, it's normally up to three months. And I think it gives her a better conscience as well that she can always be totally in fashion because I will still wear her stuff and she doesn't feel bad I think to give it away because it still gets used kind of. And she has a feeling always that she needs to dress me up because I'm not fashion.... So normally, she

will offer me for my Christmas and birthday. She also buys me something. So she will quite often go shopping at Ulla Poppen with me to buy me something as a present as well. They look a bit nicer.

Do you have items of clothing that you're kind of...that you don't like? What things tend to kind of dissatisfy you about clothes?

What I don't like about clothes?

Or have you got an item of clothing that's kind of your least favourite or something you really hate?

Not really because I normally then give some away if I really don't like them. So I don't hang on to things. As I say, I don't...I will give them charity shops normally. So, I'm quite good I think in giving clothes away if I don't like them anymore.

Is that something you have to do often?

Not so often I think. No, because I'm not such a big shopper. I think you can tell from my description I'm not the biggest shopper in the world (laughter)!

Okay. All right, good. So, I think the final thing now, I just want to ask you a couple of questions about this thing about, I suppose, about the retailer's responsibility and the business ethics side of it, and whose responsibility you feel that it is to address ethical issues?

Yeah. I think I would see it very much as a responsibility of the business to look at least into some minimal standards - things like as environmental issues but also into how they...where they source their clothes from, how much they pay workers - I would expect them to. Because at the end, I can only buy what is on offer. And if there's nothing on offer, then I really have not much choice at all. So, it's very difficult to raise my voice if there's not much on offers as a customer.

Do you find generally that you are able to buy things which are made in accordance with your values? You know, do you think the availability is there generally or do you find it quite difficult?

No, it's really hard to find I think. It has got a bit better for kids. So for example, I buy sweaters for the kids there because they have some from recycled bottles which they turn into sweaters. So I think they have tried a little bit. But I find it so unpleasant to also shop somehow because I don't feel fully comfortable with what is on offer. And then I feel like I'm neglecting all my values because I already have problems to find something which fits me. And then I don't feel so comfortable I am neglecting all my other values which I really would normally find important. So I think I would find it much, yeah, I think that's definitely their responsibility. And I try to really, as I say, not behaving - not yet in clothes - but for example, I boycott Tesco already since a long time because I don't think they...I think they're exploiting suppliers and so on. So, out of principle, I don't shop with Tesco's.

Are there any other companies that you boycott?

Yeah, um... Nestle if I can. So again, I want to be conscious. It's quite often difficult because information is so hard to get and I really don't have the time to spend three hours researching if this product (laughter) is owned by Nestle. So therefore, it is...but I think if I can avoid it, then I would avoid it. Asda I think as well because of links to Walmart. And also, as Walmart hasn't proven really much yet. Clothes-wise, no, I wouldn't buy things like...I only bought once from Primark because I had to find a specific shirt in a specific colour for my child's assembly. And I couldn't find it anywhere else. That's the end - scrap your values and go to Primark (laughter)!

So that was something for one of the kids, sorry?

Yeah. Also, he needed it for school. So I really had to think I just don't get it from John Lewis, I have looked before, and Debenhams which I've seen. And M&S, I have looked in. And then I decide 'Okay, now I give up here' and just go to them and they had one. So, I thought, 'Okay, I'll buy it there.' But normally, I wouldn't buy from them because I think they have no ethics as far as I know at all. So I wouldn't buy at all these cheap shops, the cheap clothes shops. I wouldn't buy.

So is this something that you think you really associate with the very cheap shops that tend to have the sort of the looser ethical principles and the more expensive ones tend to have the...?

They all too can have a brand where you only pay for the brand and they too don't have any morals. It's not.... For example, I was in Milan, but on exchange. And I did also take three weeks of design management there as a course. And I was quite interested as I really liked...as they had it like the kind of fashion and design given to designer shops and so on. And I really had got the impression that you pay totally for the labour and there's nothing, no concern whatsoever on who has it produced and how much they pay. I think you can have something from a very good brand which was still produced under the same cheap conditions like one of these low, cheap-end products.

Do you feel that when you buy positively, you know, when you buy the things that are ethical, do you feel that you're making a difference?

Yeah, I think to some extent. I do believe that every single action contributes to something. So I think even if it's a tiny act, kind of action it does count in the big thing as well. And if everybody would then do this little stuff like I do, then it would be a movement.

We talked a bit about...I know we talked about the environmental side and how that influences at least some of your consumption behaviours. Is that done out of a sense of responsibility to someone or something do you think?

First of all, I can't really stand it when anything...when the environment gets destroyed. For example, there was a time when you could see the dying of the forest very strongly because you could see the...whenever I see it still when I see here the times of...three years' time, I really can't stand it. I only feel... I don't want it. I just don't want it.

Why is that do you think? What is it that gives you that negative feeling?

I don't know. Just....

Is it just something kind of innate inside you? Do you think that's...?

Yeah. I think I would always... I feel sorry when my kids... So if by accident they step on a ladybird, I would feel sorry for the ladybird. And I think they feel sorry for the ladybird also as well. I think it's something you pass on very, very early. If you could just see this as well, I mean, my daughter sees everything. She sees any tiny, tiny creatures anywhere and she really kind of feels sorry for it if...and rescue it. My son actually started a ladybird club in school where they were rescuing ladybirds in every break. So, they had a ladybird hospital (laughter) since. So I wasn't sure if the ladybird hospital was really helping the ladybirds (laughter). I think it's a very, very early...I think it's....

So it's just something that's inside you rather than....

Yeah. I always thought...for example, I have bought a book about how to educate kids in the environment, how to pass it on. I haven't had time to read it. But when I see my kids, this is one of the strongest things they have already. I think it's one of the very few things which are really strong there. So if you have passed on so much without actually explicitly...I never lectured them or anything. I didn't do anything, any specific effort to pass this on or so. It just is there kind of, I think by the way I talk about animals or how we watch things in the garden and whatever. I think it's very strong.

Yeah. Okay. That's good. Oh, I'm a bit conscious of the time. I don't want to keep you longer than an hour. Is there anything you want to ask or add?

No. I think it was interesting, very interesting.

Ends.

Interview 18 - Daphne

If you could just start off and tell me a little bit about your professional background and how you ended up doing what you're doing now?

I'm originally from Mexico. I did my undergrad industrial design and I had an opportunity when I was doing my.... In Mexico, we have five years so in my fourth year of university; I had an opportunity to go to Finland as an exchange student. Basically that experience changed my life. I met my husband there so you can imagine why it changed my life but in terms of why I got interested in sustainability was basically because I saw how Finland as a society works and one of the my first interest of going to Finland was to study how as a country that is very based on crafts as Mexico is in a way, we have a very rich culture, could transform their crafts, culture into an industry as well. All my life, I am having like this social responsibility... since I started work, and I started a lot of projects with artisans. My main reason to go to Finland was to see how crafts and culture can make money from it because in Mexico, artisans don't earn much money from what they do and they do beautiful things. So I wanted to explore more of that as a society and as a culture itself and as a country, how did they achieve that. Even though I had been in Europe before and all that, it's completely different to America, being in Finland kind of opened my eyes to other perspectives as well about caring for the environment, and about caring for the society and their wellbeing and things like that. Of course, I did understand because their population is so...there are not so many people in Finland. There is just 5000...yeah, 5 million people living in the country. Just in Mexico City, we have 25 million by now, so you can see the difference that population matters a lot about this things. I think, well, it started to open my eyes a little bit more and kind of growing up as well, I came back to Mexico and I had the opportunity to work with one of my professor, my lecturer who owns a furniture company so I was designing furniture before graduating for a year. Then, I graduated and I continued working with him for another year but then, I still wanted to do something else than just designing furniture, so I started looking into possibilities of working with the Mexican government, so I got some freelance projects with them to do work with artisans and do some workshops and run creativity and how to improve the design and techniques and things like that. From that I got an opportunity to work in an NGO. By that time, my husband which at that time was my boyfriend came to Mexico to kind of work in there for three years. It was for one year but then he decided to stay for three but he wanted to come back to Europe so I started looking for opportunities where we could have the same advantages and opportunities for my career and his career. He's an IT developer. We decided to come to the UK and I got the Chevening scholarship to do a Masters Degree. I did my Master's Degree in Design for Sustainability. From that....Then from that, it was like what should I do next? I really enjoyed my dissertation. I had a cousin already living in the UK so he told me, "Why don't you apply for a PhD? I think you are a kind of perfect candidate to do a PhD?" Well actually, I did enjoy my dissertation a lot and actually, when I was working for an NGO, I did a lot of research, a lot, so I learned all my research skills basically from the NGO. Well, yeah actually that's a good idea. In the NGO I was doing quite a lot of marketing research so I got interested in the consumption side of things and also how we could...with the artisans, I was also kind of trying to brainstorm ideas that their products could be more ethical and not just seeing...for example, dyes to colour the textiles or the palm that could be harmful. We were looking into the sustainability of the products as well. I was very interested in the consumption side of things of what to deliver to the market. So I started doing my research proposal on sustainable consumption. In the University, the person that developed the course of study for that Masters was not there anymore. I knew about her since Mexico before coming to the UK. She left two or three years before I started my Masters but I wanted really to work with her and her team, so I just made an appointment with her. It was just such a lucky thing because the day I went to talk with her she told me, "I read your proposal. You're a good candidate, please apply. What about funding? Are you going to look for funding from Mexico or from the UK?" I said, "Well I would like to start as soon as possible and if I looked for funding from Mexico, it would take more time. If the UK doesn't have funding for me, I would have to wait and ask for Mexican funding." She said, "Well, actually we have now. I just received some notification from the graduate school that there is one funding for international students.

Just apply for it and we will see.” I got it, so I was very proud and very happy. I did my PhD and then I started being established here and to live here in the UK, and now I’m working here.

So you came here straight from your PhD?

Yes, yes. I did some couple of internships in the meantime. I did work with the Royal Society of Arts for three months and I did another internship in the Royal College of Arts in the Helen Hamlin Centre but that was two months. My first work experience in the UK was here.

Okay. So taking things back a little bit, I mean obviously you’ve talked about Finland being that kind of transformative experience, but you said that social responsibility had been important to you before that. What sparked your initial interest in social responsibility do you think?

Oh wow, that’s a big question because I think its part of my values I think. It’s part of my family values.

Is that something that was quite important to your parents; that you think that they’ve...?

Yes, especially because in Mexico we have a lot of social issues. There is a lot of disparity between rich and poor and you see that every day. Some people in Mexico which have a good life and have money and are rich and things like that, they treat people awfully sometimes. They really think they’re the best and they treat people really bad especially like the working class people and I really hate that. It’s something I always fought for when I was a kid because every time my family is...my family, I could say we are high middle class. Basically since my grandparents...we came from the bottom basically so they teach my mum especially to be a hard worker and then my mum taught me to be a hard worker as well and not to take things for granted. I think that’s one of the things that make me think about social responsibility because for me everybody is the same. No matter where we come from or if you are rich, poor or Chinese or Mexican, we are all the same. That’s very important for me and of course we need to kind communicate and understand our difference and things like that but I will never make a judgement about someone just because of their culture and nationality or because of being rich or poor. I will always try to learn as much as possible from people and that’s something that my mum taught me, and my grandpa and my grandma taught my mum. I talk a lot about my mum because my parents are divorced, so....

You said that your grandparents kind of came from the bottom. Was it your grandparents that kind of managed to improve their lives or was it your parents really that kind of were able to make that...?

No, it was my grandparents, especially my granddad. I can talk a lot about my family! But I don’t think you will like to listen to these stories! Well, just to make it short. My grandmother, she was an orphan since 5...no sorry, since 14 and my granddad was an orphan since 18. My grandma, she raised her brothers and sisters, she was one of the oldest, so with the older sister they raised the rest of the rest of their brother and sisters. With my grandpa, he lost his parents when he was 18 so he was already going to university but he was mainly raised by his grandma as well. When they met, they kind of shared the same circumstances, let’s say. They were not...especially my grandma she was not wealthy or anything and she had to work since 14. She started working to work in a family...like a relative had a restaurant so they gave her a job as a waitress and then she had the opportunity to go and study and make another thing, so she was a secretary. When she tells her story, she tell it like, “Sometimes I went without eating and I had to just give my food to my brothers and sisters” and things like that. It was kind of interesting. Then yeah, my granddad he decided to drop school because he was studying to be an architect but then he had the opportunity to...he always liked the countryside so he had the opportunity to go and work with a big cattle man and he became a cattlepersion like the one that has cows and manages cows. He got into the milk business and he was the one that started from the bottom up really in the milk business. He was the one that made a deal with tetra pack to bring the tetra pack package, the first one, the triangle, to Mexico. After probably 10 or 15 years after, he was able to become wealthier and he was in that business for all his life until he died. He died quite young. Then my grandma also learned a lot from my grandpa in that sense because both of them started from the bottom and then continued growing together, let’s say. That example was transferred to my mum and my aunties, so the three

of them are very hard working. One didn't work because she's married and is a housewife but the other two had been working all their lives.

Those values, that they passed on, I think from the way you described have a very kind of human aspect in terms of that social responsibility that you talked about.

Completely.

But then you started talking about some of the things that you were interested in going to Finland and then when you came back and trying to work with artisans in Mexico, there is quite an environmental side to that. Are those two things that have always gone hand in hand or did the environmental stuff come later? I was interested you talked about the tetra pack thing which got a...?

Yeah, a kind of environmental impact, yes. Well, I think the environmental side...well, the social side of thing is more from my family and the values they put into my mum and my aunties and then showed me and my cousins. The environmental side of things I think it was more in school because when I was in primary school I think my school was one of the first ones talking about the environment and how we should care about our environment. So, I have been recycling since I was 7 years old because that was the rules in school, so we had different bins for different things. I have known about like biomaterials and things like that since then because every year we had an eco fair at school so new technologies were coming to present their projects like solar panels. You know about that time, in the 90s, that was like a really...you know. Now, we talk about solar panels as something normal. At that time, it was a breaking through thing. It was just like so new. That school always had like how to save tips. They were telling you have to close the tap when you're washing your hands and the teacher would always come and give you a lecture on how you're wasting water or don't waste food and things like that had been always been in me because the school was telling me to do it.

Is that something that was peculiar to that school do you think?

Yeah, it was peculiar to that school. It peculiar to the school. Well, in Mexico...well, here if I say public school it means private but in Mexico, I will talk like as private as you know, you have to pay for it. In Mexico, we have public schools that are owned by the government and managed by the government but normally, middle class people don't go to public schools so there is a big range of private schools that you could pay from probably I don't know £20 a month to £200 a month. It always depends on social class and education and things like that. I was in a school that was kind of in the middle from the £200 to the £20 school, let's say. I remember having a scholarship, I'm always a good student. They will always give me scholarships to study so I was happy about that. So the thing about the sustainability of things or caring about the environment, I think that was a particular thing from that school. Funny enough, nowadays I know a friend of mine who is getting into sustainability quite a lot in a different area but she's more into growing sustainable food. She completely changed her career because she's studying to be a lawyer and then she just dropped everything and started being organic and how to grow food more sustainably and it was a break in through thing. Talking to her, we were like, "Well where does this this thing of the environment come from us?" and we were okay, probably from school and actually yes, I think this was from that school that we went together.

So, if you think about the social sustainability side of things, the environmental sustainability side of things, and then start to think about your own life and your own habits and your own consumption, are there things that you think feature quite heavily in your consumption generally?

Well, yes. I think...in consumption, you mean like when I do consume also like electricity at home and water at home or like when I go and buy my groceries?

Yeah. I mean I'm trying to get a broad sense of kind of how these things might influence....

Okay. So in terms of home, yes I do always try not to take big showers or like I almost never take a bath and things like because of water consumption. I always close the taps when I'm washing my hands, when I'm washing the dishes, when I'm brushing my teeth everyday and that's again from

school. Recycling? Again the same and I made my mum in Mexico to recycle as well and that was also from school. The thing in Mexico that even though we were recycling at school and then I was making my mum to recycle at home, she was not...when the waste collection came, everything was going to the same bin. Nowadays, our recycling system in Mexico has improved quite a lot so now my mum takes her recycling to a special place that they will sort them out. Yeah, I have always been recycling.

And then in terms of the things that you actually buy?

On the things I buy...well, food. I struggle with food because since I came to the UK, my meat consumption...I never thought in Mexico about meat consumption I have. Meat could affect sustainability. I learned that here in the UK when I started knowing about sustainability. In Mexico, I never questioned myself about how much meat I was eating; that was more something that came here in the UK. However, I think I do eat meat but I try to cut the times I eat meat especially red meat, so I try to eat more chicken or fish but - I'd still eat red meat - I try to eat at least once every two weeks or sometimes once a week depending you know, also what we are doing as well as going out or not or things like that. I try not to not to consume it a lot. In terms of the grocery shopping I do, I used to do a veggie box but then when I got the job here, my husband lives in London and I live here and during the week, I have a flat here and it's very difficult to get the veggie box because it's just in certain time and things like that and then just for one person is a lot of veggies. Just for me, I don't consume it so I tried to do it here but the veggies got spoiled so I decided not to do it. Now, what I try to do depends on...I try to buy more locally...not locally, sorry, seasonal as possible so I buy from the supermarket - from Sainsbury's - but I try to order things that are in season and organic if possible but sometimes also because of the price, it's more expensive, I just go for the other one, for the normal range. In terms of clothes and electronics and that kind of things, I'm very easy going with electronics. I don't want to have the latest iPhone or the latest thing, and my laptop has been with me for 10 years and you know, they are still working. Now for this Christmas, actually we are thinking about buying a new laptop and we will share it between my husband and I. We have a desktop in London, I think that he is a bit more technology savvy so he buys more gadgets and things like that but he's more controlled, I would say. I don't care about technology so much. If the phone works and does what I want and my laptop is still working until it stops, I will continue using it, so that's why I've had my laptop for 10 years.

Do you think generally that's the principle you try to kind of adhere to that you sort of try and buy less and make things last for longer?

Yeah, that's for sure. In terms of clothing as well. I buy clothes...yeah, probably once a year. I have kind of two kinds of seasons, especially since I live in the UK I have winter clothes, and more summerish clothes. At some point, I stopped having summer clothes because it was like I'm not using this anymore [laughs]. They were very old like I probably had that kind of summer clothes for 10 years so I had to kind of renew. But literally now I have less summer clothes than winter clothes and I actually try to have clothes that I could wear in both seasons like in winter and in summer. I tend to keep my clothes for probably 5 years, 6 years, and if... my grandma when she died; she had really nice clothes, really nice, nice clothes. You know, kind of vintage and things like that. I got some of her clothes as well so I have skirts probably that are more than 50 years old and still in very good conditions. I think clothes were made better in the past, now they break really easily. I don't...it's very difficult to buy clothes in general nowadays I think. I don't shop in Primark that's an ethical... you know? (Laughter)

You seem very definite about that!

Yeah, very definite! I'm not shopping in Primark but I do shop in other stores like Zara especially Spanish brands. I do like a lot of Spanish brands and I know that they're not ethical or whatever, they still you know, use people in Bangladesh or whatever to do their clothes but at the end of the day, it's what in the market. I'm a bit...you know, with second-hand clothes in a store like here in Nottingham, you'll find a lot of vintage stores. I don't like to buy things from people that I don't know, like already were used by someone else that I don't know. Since I was little, that's also

something that we used to do a lot with my cousins. When my older cousins were leaving their clothes, they were passed to me and I was using them. When I was growing up, I passed those to my little cousins, so we worked like that and there's always that cascade of using the clothes of your cousins. I'm used to that, so nowadays as well, if I have wedding dresses that you don't use that often, probably once, twice a year, normally I am happy to ask my cousins to borrow her wedding dresses and they can borrow mine as well. Now living in the UK is more difficult but yeah, I still have some wedding dresses in Mexico so my cousins know that they can just go there and open the closet and my mum will give them the wedding dress, so that's fine. Clothes like my grandma, like people I know I don't care about using second hand or reuse them but people I don't know, I feel a bit not very sure about that. Yet, I try to keep my clothes as long as I can like sometimes, especially from this Spanish store, Zara, Pull and Bear and Bershka and all that stores...

What were the second and the third?

Pull and Bear. It's a Spanish brand. It's part of Inditex, the same group as Zara. In London, they only have one store, and in the UK there's one in Oxford Street. Bershka, they have a couple of stores in London.

That's Bershka? I don't know that one.

Bershka, yeah. All of them belong to the same and I know them because they are very big in Mexico. Normally when I buy clothes...in the UK, where I buy clothes that's another thing, I buy clothes either in Mexico and then you can import it. In the UK, normally stores I like to go to is Benetton because it's good quality and basically Banana Republic which is an American store which is also good quality. I avoid Topshop. I avoid Primark. I don't like those stores as at all and Zara.

What is it particularly that you don't like about going to the Topshops and the Primarks and those kinds of places?

Primark, I don't believe they can sell t-shirts for a pound. For me it's like it's really... (Laughter) I know it will last for two days and then I will have to throw it away. I like my clothes to last for long. Topshop, I don't like their fashion style. I don't like it. I hate that is always packed with people. I don't like to go and fight with girls about, I want this, I want that. I hate that. I don't like Topshop at all. I also note that the clothes could...yeah, they're better quality than Primark but yeah, still I don't like their style or anything. In the UK, I buy it in those stores and Esprit which is I think is a German brand. And Benetton is Italian so actually I don't buy UK brands. (Laughter) In Portugal and Mexico, we have mostly the same stores which are the ones I told you. Even though the clothes in those stores are also made to probably not last as long. I don't know... because the way I care for clothes, I also in the washing, I do take certain measures so they don't rip off and things like that. If they start having little holes that sometimes happen, I mend them. I always sew, do it, like mend them myself and try to keep them as long as I can. It's funny, I don't like to go shopping so much. (Laughter)

What do you don't like about shopping?

The amount, the people. I don't like shopping with lots of people. If it's like Christmas time, I hate it. This is...I don't like to go and fight with people.

So how often do you go shopping, do you think for clothes?

I think like a massive shop, I do once a year. I try to do...yeah, especially like at the end of the summer when you have things still for summer but then winter is coming as well and you come and find things for winter. I try to do that. I do shopping sometimes in the sales but when they are...not in the first days of the sales, more towards the end of the sales. I go on Monday or Tuesday when there's no people and that's in winter and summer as well but that is just for things that I really need or I'm missing. For certain things, I do take time to think what I want, so for example my winter jacket, I have been with it for five years already and it's starting to get a bit...because it was not, it was...in that sense, it was not with great quality but at that time, I had that much money to buy a good quality jacket so I find something that okay, could probably last

for 5 or 6 years but probably that will be it. I think, yes it's getting to a time that I had to change the zipper because it broke so I had to replace the zipper and now I'm starting to see that in the inside it's getting some little holes and then, how you call it? The things that...it's patchy and worn in the inside.

It's bobbling.

Yeah, exactly. It's kind of rubbing out. I think yeah, it's time to replace my winter jacket but I have been going to stores and trying to find a good winter jacket that could last longer than 5 years actually. I take time to make that decision.

How long have you been looking for a new winter jacket, do you think?

Two months now.

Okay, how many stores would you say you'd been in?

Mainly in London, probably about 20 stores but I do go back because you know, especially in some stores like Benetton that I know I could find a good winter jacket, they normally bring more jackets towards December, closer to December...December and January. I have been more into that new stock coming into the stores.

It sounds like you've been struggling to find something that you like a little bit. What are the things that you're finding difficult?

The winter jacket, well because I would like to...I know it's very difficult to get one that is completely water proof because you will need like technologies like [inaudible 00:33:06] or something like that. I saw one that was really, really nice in this store called Geox which is I think an Italian store, I don't know but it was like about 200...about £300 and I said well, it's very nice, it's a proper winter jacket but it's not really a jacket that in the UK we will be using that often because it is winter here, it's rainy but it's not minus 10 degrees, and that winter jacket is for minus 10 degrees. I said I should buy something more for the weather for the UK. What I'm trying to find is something that the material could kind of repel the water, has a hood, and a kind that I could use for informal and formal events, so something that I could use for everything. The moment and surely because the things I have been finding are nice looking and I could use for formal and informal things but the quality is not really good like Zara several times I always had problems with zippers. I tried to zip it up and the zipper was not good enough or it was already kind of broken and I go with my husband and he started telling me, "You have to buy something with this quality, that is good looking..." blah, blah, so he was just like this constant fighting so I just tend not to buy anything. Normally, I tend to buy clothes with my mum. My mum is more easy going. I think since my mum comes to the UK at least once a year, I just wait for her to come and go with her. (Laughter) Or when I go to Mexico, we always go shopping and it's nice. She's more easy going and I don't have to fight with her about things. For my husband, I go with him and he's always buying clothes and I don't buy anything and yeah, I just wait for my mum really.

You mentioned liking the Spanish brands and that some of other European brands as well but what is it particularly about those brands that you like?

I think the style, the fashion they put. Yeah, I don't know it's more classic. I don't want to say that the British style is a bit trashy but sometimes I think it is. (Laughter). Especially Spain usually has a very nice classic style and I like that.

You said those brands you see them a lot in Mexico as well. Is that...would you say that you've kind of shop to the same brands for quite a lot of time that goes back to when you were in Mexico?

Yes, yes. I think I have been shopping in Zara and when I started shopping in Zara I was about 14 years old. Zara at that time was something different that is now. Like at that time, it was really good quality Spanish brand that you could see in the clothes, but then they, because the fashion industry started to turn as well into these fast fashion, Zara had to kind of pick up like that as well. They've become a fast fashion brand. When I was 14 years old, actually I still have...my feet, I raise

more and it hasn't grown, my feet, since I was 14 so I still have some boots I brought from Zara and I still wear them.

That's amazing!

So yeah, you can imagine like the quality of things that they were selling back in the days.

And you mentioned before that there's a bit of awareness that they're not necessarily as stringent in their supply chain policies as they might be. Is that something that you kind of actively...well, there's two things. Is it something that you actively try and find out about, is the first thing? Secondly, is it something that causes you any kind of angst or worry or anything like that?

Well for example, H&M, I do think they are doing quite a good policy in terms of sustainability. They have their, how do you call it? Responsible fashion? The scheme they have to return back clothes and get vouchers, I mean they're still the same, and M&S does the same. Sometimes, I do buy in H&M as well. I like H&M not in the UK but in Mexico and in Portugal, I tend to go to H&M and buy clothes and I like it. I know some of those things; I consider them as well as a bit greenwash. At the end of the day, I know they are doing something or trying to do something and they have been recognised by a lot of big NGOs like WWF I think and organisations such as Sustainable Brands. They have putting and Forum for the future, they have been putting, and H&M as an exemplar. I think they are trying to do something and work with NGOs and work with consultancy like those two kinds, to kind of improve their sustainability. Sometimes I struggle and I say, well I should just go and buy clothes in the...I do like to sometimes to do that, to buy clothes in the, you know small shops that are more local. Here you will find really nice shops like that but it's very difficult to make the judgement of where the clothes are made because probably they are made here in the UK and they're a good price and I will say, "Okay, yes, I will buy it." Literally, most of the clothes are made abroad, even in these shops. Probably the clothes that are made, they are in Portugal or in Italy and actually, Zara and the Spanish brands, they produce quite a lot in Europe. I do like that from them but I know they are also produced in China and India and all those other places. Sometimes when I'm buying a t-shirt I just tend to see where is it from. If I do like it a lot, I would say well I would buy it anyways. I do try to see where things come from and things like that. At the end of the day, it's very difficult it's why it is there. It's what isn't in, you know, what is in the market. Sometimes, you feel locked into that and you try to kind of make the judgement. Well, I do try to make the judgement and I know it's made in India but it seems like it's good quality and all that and probably, I will keep it for X amount of years, so yeah, I can buy it. It's the social versus the environmental but then there are always tradeoffs I think in this kind of things.

How do you try and resolve those tradeoffs? Is there one more important than that other to you? How do you try and make sense of that or rationalise that?

It's an interesting question. I think I try to rationalise it as looking...I'm very informed about these things. I know for example if H&M is doing something about it and I see that they are coming...and you know, H&M had this big scandal with the Bangladesh sweatshops that they fell down. It was just like a big media campaign towards H&M about it. That kind of things help you to make decisions so if it's coming from Bangladesh you will say 'no' but that sometimes you will say that you know that things are in India and in China, in Taiwan and even in Mexico, you can just see that they are there. What I try to do is say okay well, at the end of the day if it is made in somewhere else and I really, really like it, I'd probably would buy it but then, I will try to keep it as long so I don't damage the environment. Probably, I'm damaging the social bit, but the environment. I will try to keep it longer and try to mend it and all that. All my clothes, normally go to, well... Nowadays it's difficult. In here in the UK, I put it in there. If I don't want any clothes, I tend to take it down to charity shops and the ones that are more ripped or... that I make the judgement that they are not in good condition, I put them in those bins for clothes. The ones that are in good condition, I normally take them to charity shops. I don't know, it's very difficult. You feel guilty sometimes about - I don't know, it's what is there in the market. It's not a justification but it is there.

No. Of course it's is incredibly difficult and the supply chain is so complex, you know it's hard to know. Have you ever bought anything that is kind of been positioned as being very overtly ethical in some way like do you ever buy clothes which is fair trade or organic cotton or from a brand that position itself in a way that's very ethical or sustainable?

From H&M I have bought some of their organic range but actually I have trouble with organic cotton because organic cotton...well, cotton you know uses a lot of water. It uses a lot of water. Organic cotton even more because the one that is not organic, the fertilisers and pesticides actually help not to use that much water. Yeah, organic cotton is an interesting one. Fair trade clothes, there is another Spanish brand which do fair trade clothes and I have bought some clothes there. It's from the Basque region.

Because their fair trade or just because it...?

No, they are actually really nice *as well* because I like classic styles and I also like a kind of, I don't know a kind of...how can I say it? I don't know, they have original designs. You know this store, Desigual? Desigual is also a Spanish brand and they have a lot of flowery patterns and they just produce like bespoke, you know? Not like that their coats, probably they will have three or four coats of the same style or the same patterns and then they will do something else. It's a very interesting brand, that one. They tend to be also quite ethical in that sense and they do fair trade and things like that. There is a store in London of Desigual. The one I'm saying, the Basque one, it was more because of the design as well and they use also...they recover clothes and then upcycle clothes basically. They upcycle clothes.

So you get very one-off kind of pieces.

Yeah, exactly. Exactly. It is very nice but those kind of stores, I just kind of buy clothes when I am abroad or go to Portugal. I bought that dress in this store when I was in Spain. I tend to kind of, if I am on holidays, I try to go shopping and see if I like something. I find those kinds of stores, I will try to go and see what they have, and if I like something, normally I would buy it. It's not that...yeah, I don't know. In the UK I find it more difficult to find stores like that. In Mexico for example, what I like is that nowadays, they are having a lot of designers, like graduate designers that are having their own stores and putting their own shops as well. You can find the shops in shopping malls and things like that and they are very locally and ethically mind set and things like that, so you will find very nice Mexican patterns in very modern or contemporary piece of clothes and things like that. I like that type of clothing as well. In the UK, probably here, you will find some stores like that but in terms of price, they're much more expensive. In Mexico, Portugal or other places, those type of stores are really competing with the high retailers.

Just a final thing, obviously we've talked a bit about how some of those things, those values and those things that are important to you influence your buying behaviour and obviously, they do in quite a big way. Do you feel like you're making a difference through the things that you do?

Well, I hope so. It's not a big difference because I still think I buy in the high street. I'm not living in...you know, really to make a difference you have to live as a voluntary simplifier. You know that you are in a cocoon living outside of the city and you're like making your own clothes and producing your own food and things like that. I do think that if yeah, living my lifestyle and doing what I'm doing is a little bit of contribution. It's not a big one but it's a little bit. I don't think people do anything. They really do not do anything and it's not important for them. I know I cannot be isolated because I wouldn't like to be isolated either and I know that it would be very difficult for me to be isolated. What I'm doing now, you know as much as I can do in the lifestyle I want to be.

Do you think consumers do have a responsibility to address those things?

Of course they have a responsibility. Yes, of course they have. Of course they have a responsibility. All of us have a responsibility but I think it's not just the consumers that have the responsibility. I think the retailers and the producers also have a responsibility because at the end of the day, they are the ones putting the products there and we are the ones that have.... Even though we are

asking for some unsustainable products, the producer or retailer just say that's not something I would put in my store because it's unsustainable. Even if you want that, we have to change you as well, so I think there is a big relationship between producers, retailers and consumers in the way they interact with each other and we all are responsible. It's not just...because I love when the producers and retailers blame the consumers and the consumers blames the producers and retailers, and I think it's not who blames who. It's actually how we can work together and I think we all are responsible.

Alright, that's it I think. Unless there is anything you want to ask or anything you want to add?

No, I hope it was useful. I told you all my life story. (Laughter)

[Interview Ends]

Interview 19 - Meryl

So, could you just start off by telling me a little bit about your background, what you're doing here and how you got into that?

Okay. I have been in the fashion textile clothing industry for 25, 30 years. It's all I've really known that I have worked in. I was at art college, studied fashion design, pattern construction and then have had various roles as a designer, a technologist and have taught on fashion courses. So, I've ended up now teaching on the fashion knitwear program. I have a strong interest in good quality clothing. I always have a strong interest in good quality clothing and it's sort of merged into sustainable clothing. I've seen many changes over those years in terms of fast fashion being introduced and that's sort of really my interest level there.

So, when you started your work before you came in to work in academia, did you work in industry before that, in very focused industry roles?

Yeah, very focused at work for quite a few factories. I started off at Next as a pattern cutter. I have also worked for a small mail order company, sort of designing Jacquard patterns and then I've taken on roles as knitwear design, senior knitwear designer for manufacturing companies, again in the days when there were factories in the UK, supplying major high street stores like M&S. I'm trying to think of others, M&S, BHS, all of them really I've tampered with, and one company I worked for, we used to supply mohair dresses to Russia, so quite a diverse sort of supply base really that I've worked for, held roles as designer and then the latter years I went more into the technology side, really purely because I wanted to work less hours and it was harder to do that. I've worked freelance as well and I've also worked for quite a few children's wear companies, or supplying children's wear, retailers as well, yeah.

And then how long have you been in academia?

Well, quite a few years. It must be '92 I started a freelance sort of work in pattern. And while I was freelancing for factories, I was also teaching a part-time, like HPL type of role. And then I sort of went into teaching at FE for a full-time post for a few years and then I went back to industry and then I've been here on the fashion knitwear course for eight year now.

Okay. So you said that you were always interested in the quality of clothing and that developed into an interest in sustainability if I understood that correctly?

Yes, yes, I think that's where it merged on because well, sort of when I first started at my career, everything had to be done to a set quality and I think it was about the skill base of the people within the factory, it was like controlled that everybody was responsible for the quality of the garments leaving the factory. There was one factory that I spent about six, seven years that it was a very -- well, a few factories were very family-orientated, sort of mums and daughters and dads all worked within the same factory. So, there was a lot resting on sort of their positions within that company and this was board level right down to factory floor level. So, quality was seen as quite an important part and if there was a fault in something, somebody would pick it up instantly and it would be sort of rectified before it went out to stores. It was also the days of when there were large orders going outsourced. There wasn't the variety in fashion styles perhaps when I first started. So, quality perhaps was easier to maintain along with the lead times and deliveries, and there was time to sort of resolve any sort of manufacturing issues. So, I think I've always had an interest in quality from that side of it and also working with retailers and sort of store groups and buyers, that you have to meet a certain quality, so I've always been quite particular in ensuring the garments that do go out are correct for them to evaluate. And even then, that reflects into perhaps my own personal sort of clothing purchasing habits is that I'd always look at the quality of something, feel it, see what it's made of and assess whether or not it's going to last the period of time rather than just an impulse purchase. I don't think I'm an impulse purchaser. I'm a careful purchaser. And in fact, I've always been told that, yes.

So that's going back as far as you can remember?

Yes. In fact I even remember my days at Next, when they used to have like sample sales. And somebody said to me, "Oh, you're very careful in the way that you put things together and purchase them." So even they were sample sales and the quality was quite good because it was a sample, but maybe they were cheaper clothes and you could sort of select what you wanted. I still didn't see the point in having things for the sake of having them, is perhaps what I'm trying to say. So I think that's just me as a person, and even in my family situation, I always make sure that my sort of boys are -- men now, but when purchasing their clothes, it was always seen that, oh yes, that needs to be passed down. That can last X amount of time and then it could be passed down. Or even now, I say make sure you need to buy it. It's not just something that you want in that sort of -- it's got to be a reason for having it not just because you fancy having it or an impulse buy.

And is that something that kind of characterised your own upbringing as well when you were --

Yes, actually. I think it must have been because my parents even now say to me, "Well, when we were younger we didn't have very much in our day." And I do remember stories of even going back to my grandparents, them saying that -- my mom particularly telling me that she didn't have sweets. She only ever had one doll. And so maybe she's always been sort of careful as a child. So, maybe that has been installed in me that they've always been very careful and not purchased for the sake of it and so on.

When you think about that, whether it was with your parents or with yourself and think about your own children, I mean presumably that's something that was done out of an awareness of the sustainability impacts, so was it out of a -- it's just a generational thing or --

Just generational. Yeah, that was just sort of my upbringing and how I believe. So, the sustainable sort of interest maybe came really at the turn of the fast fashion chain really, of the Primark suddenly came in onto the scene and George has asked to -- I always remember him saying, "Hey, we can buy T-shirts for a pound, why would you need to sort of buy T-shirts for hand down clothes when you can just buy them and throw them away?" And there was a bit of that that was sort of installed when that first hit the market level. And I can remember then going into Primark and seeing all these very, very cheap clothes, but just looking at the threads hanging from them and thinking, "I'm not quite sure I want to wear these." But there is still a temptation to buy something because it was only a pound. But I'm afraid I didn't really get hooked onto that because I just felt - I don't really think I've ever purchased anything from Primark although my daughter did start having a bit of a phase of it and I was horrified having to go shopping with her because there I was in this store with all these fast fashion cheap clothes. But that's sort of later on. I do remember it first hitting the sort of high street and sort of the obsession people had with it. And the queues used to fascinate me of people queuing up with arms full of clothes that they probably didn't really need.

What was the thing that kind of bothered you the most about that? Was it the kind of sense of, you know, it's poor quality, it's not going to last and there's kind of an economic -- that it's kind of a waste of money or was it that -- was it more a sustainable thing? Is that something that's going to last or going to end up in a landfill, like what was the bit that bothered you?

Yeah, there was a bit of that but maybe also part of it because when that sort of revolution sort of hit the high street, just prior or around that time, a lot of UK manufacturing was closing down and it was almost that there was a connection -- well, it was because the UK couldn't manufacture and produce. So, it was almost like a bit of an insult to the industry and it had a massive impact on the industry which is an industry that I've always worked in and loved. And so, I did have some sort of feelings about that, how it was destroying what was going on in the UK and how, when we had spent years trying to perform -- to produce garments to the quality that retailers wanted and then suddenly, they were going out to the far east, buying these very cheap clothes and selling them to the mass consumer market and it destroyed an industry that we've spent years and years building quality.

So, part of me I think sort of feels upset and disappointed that that happened and the government never stepped in to sort of really do anything about it. They opened the doors up so the country

was flooded with -- so yeah, so maybe part of that from a sustainable aspect and yeah, and just that I knew that clothes didn't last. That was the other reason why I wouldn't buy anything from there. I've seen things that my daughter has had from there -- like from Primark, even companies like Top Shop and River Island because I still have a teenage daughter that purchases from these fast fashion stores because it's the in thing to do. And it's horrific really, the price now because the price has gone up that you pay for such rubbish really and they don't last at all. They just don't last. I have not yet educated her to go to a better quality because obviously they haven't got the right styles. So, there's clearly a link there between fast turnover styling and yeah, the price that they can charge for it really and the quality is just appalling.

Dwelling for a second on that, that aspect of sustainability then, so when you think about that as a particular issue, what are the things that are particularly important to you?

Sorry, you mean the cheap clothing? What do you mean by --

Yeah, the sustainability impacts of that, what are the kind of the important issues if you think about that idea of buying something ethically or buying something sustainably, what main associations --

Well, I see a few things there. I've got obviously an interest in clothing not going to landfill and having a longer life. So one, I see these huge piles of clothes being sort of just chucked out and sent to landfill which is quite soul destroying from a sustainable point of view. But also ethically in terms of the way the manufacturing has gone from the UK and how garments are manufactured is quite -- well, I find it confusing because one, I've come from this environment of like a UK -- sort of working in the UK, like I said with these families and it was like whole families that had been there generations and then suddenly there were people miles away making clothes who we don't know, who will probably make them in appalling conditions as it sort of seems to have come to light and there were just people exploiting them I think. I've never actually -- although I've worked in the industry, I've never actually been -- I'm just trying to think have I been to a factory in the Far East. I've been to China and I've seen it all done in a nice, glossy sort of exhibition but I've never actually been into the depths of the factories and some people tell me they are wonderful. I did work for a company when there was the turn from UK to overseas manufacturing. I worked for a company that imported and sold on and we bought from Bangladesh and there was obviously a shiny front person that we spoke to but I'm sure deep in the back there were factories making these garments where they were quite appalling conditions. And I didn't feel particularly comfortable about the fact that we were doing that but it was a job at the time and I didn't stay very long, though. But that was at the turn of when the industry have changed and I did start having doubts then as to how were these people making all these clothes. In Bangladesh, there were many issues that cropped up with like electricity, with flooding and people flocking into the mountains and so on. It was quite an impact it had on delivery dates and then here I could see like retailers wanting their delivery date and there was an issue with the shipping and so on. And just in my mind I was thinking that something is not very nice here that's going on here.

And the person I did speak to, I'm going back now a few years as like the contact person for this company that produced all these garments, was a lovely lady and used to sort of want to know all that was going on in England. But I did often wonder what was going on in her life when she left the office or wherever she was in, which I never saw. So, that did start to make me think that it's not right about all this, being shipped over to the UK when people are making the clothes, living in very poor conditions that wouldn't even wear, because I'm a knitwear person, wouldn't even wear sweaters because the temperatures were too hot. I couldn't get my head around that either.

And do you feel that you know -- I mean obviously through your role and through your past, you've got a really good knowledge of the industry. But when it comes to thinking about some of those companies now that are on the high street, do you kind of really feel that you know where the clothes come from and I mean for the things that you might buy yourself. Do you feel you have good awareness?

I've used it a few years ago. I was always very conscious that I looked at the label Made in the UK but that's quite a rarity now. So, I'm afraid I just don't do that anymore. And I just don't see one country being any better than the other in terms of the mass high street. And I mean once upon a time I would make things and that would probably make me feel good to do that rather than have to purchase something because I'd know where it come from then but I'm afraid I don't do that now.

Why don't you do that anymore?

I think it's time - that's a really poor excuse. I do keep saying I'm going to start again, yes. I think it is time. So, when I do purchase clothes now, I do still look at where they're made but I have no connection with where they're made and I do know that there's probably things going on behind the scenes that I perhaps wouldn't want to know about.

Have you ever looked at a label and seen that something was made somewhere and decided not to buy it as a consequence of that?

No, I haven't. I must admit that hasn't really informed my purchasing choice, because I think all countries are the same. I don't think there's any country that's better off than the other. Probably what would inform my decision to make that choice is fair trade - if I knew that the people -- if I knew and could guarantee that the people making the clothes were being paid a fair wage, which I know a lot of the high streets are doing a lot of work on that to ensure that happens. But as a consumer, I just don't feel I know whether that would happen or not and I do think as consumers, we're all kept into the dark as to what goes on. In terms of the retailers on the high street, they obviously are trying to be seen to be doing things upfront and they want to be seen as being ethical and sustainable. But I am a bit suspicious as to whether or not that really is happening to the degree that they're telling us that it's happening and whether it's just -- I mean I'm sure some of it is happening but I'm sure there's an awful lot of stuff going on in the background that is brushed under the carpet.

You mentioned fair trade. Do you buy any fair trade clothes or do you own any fair trade clothes?

No, I don't actually. I don't even know where I'll find fair trade clothes to be quite honest. I buy fair trade food. That's easier to identify. But I was thinking about that the other day actually. There are very small niche markets of clothing and there's a lot of like niche businesses popping up. And I haven't actually visited one company which I really do feel I need to go and do, and whether or not I'd find clothing that fits me is the first point of all or whether it's my style, I'm not sure. But that is something I've started thinking about in recent weeks that I need to go and do that. And maybe that's because there are more and more companies that are cropping up now.

Do you buy kind of organic? It's probably a bit more common with clothing if you ever come across any of that stuff.

Well, not really. If it's got like organic cotton on, it's probably just sheer luck if I'd buy it. It hasn't really informed my choice. I think it's more about whether I like it or whether the quality is going to last than it is to wear the -- and maybe that's a bit -- I'm just trying to think now. Maybe that's because I know the fibres quite well and if I see something -- if that's cotton, yeah, I won't buy cheap cotton. I'm trying to think now.... Or maybe the fibre doesn't even come into it.

How do you gauge that? Can you tell by looking at it if it's --

The feel, I look at the way it's been put together is perhaps the key thing to me. And a garment wouldn't have been put together or constructed well if it wasn't produced from or been cut correctly or been produced from nice, good quality fabric.

Okay, right. So, thinking about yourself as a shopper and clothing in particular, so how would you describe yourself as a clothes shopper?

Okay. I don't purchase very often but I get to a point where -- right, let me think about my wardrobe now. I'd had a phase where I haven't purchased for a while because I felt like I've got things in my wardrobe that was suitable, and then had a few sort of occasions I needed to go on

after all my working day wardrobe could do with a boost. So, I did go out consciously to shop for a coat and for few sort of mix and match pieces and I sort of identified certain shops that I know I liked to shop at because I feel that the garments will last. It's really about lasting for me and they've got to fit as well. I don't consciously go to a shop. I tend to shop at high street shops, Marks & Spencers, COS is a favourite one, Hobbes that sort of store market. And I –

What was the second one, COS?

COS, yes. C-O-S, COS, yeah, which is sort of fairly newish to the high street, but I've particularly found things that fit and I think they're aiming for a mature age and they've got a nice market going. But I've not actually explored whether or not how sustainable they are and that is maybe something I need to do, yes.

So, it is kind of -- do you have quite a small -- so you mentioned those three, you have quite a small set of retailers that you would typically go to?

Yes, maybe sort of 10 years ago I might have come to different shops.

So what would have been different 10 years ago do you think?

Probably my size, if we're going to go down that route! Size and maybe style how it looks on my age as well. I think that's quite key. Perhaps what I would have worn 10 years ago I wouldn't have worn now. Actually I confess, I have purchased in recent years a dress from Top Shop because my daughter drags me in there every so often and I thought, "Oh, that might be quite nice." It was quite -- it was as expensive as going to maybe Marks & Spencer which I found amazing, so I was obviously paying for the fast fashion sort of element of it. I wore it a few times and the seams all started to come undone, which was very disappointing and it wasn't just seams coming undone, it was like fabric tearing. So, it couldn't be repaired. It was disappointing because I liked the style and it did fit, but I don't know in terms of how ethical it was, where it came from. I can't even remember looking at the label actually. It's just an purchase by just going into the store.

And then those other ones that you mentioned, Marks and Spencer and Hobbes, are they companies that you feel you would know a bit more about or –

Yeah, Marks and Spencer probably. I know they sort of promote sort of fair trade in some ways, they are ethical. And I would feel there was an element about them that is true and that they're not brushing things under the carpet, and I'm sure there's a lot of what they -- they do do a lot of work in terms of ensuring that their workforce is, you know, ethical and their factories are all audited, et cetera. In terms of quality and sustainable fibres, they all seem to be doing something but I don't know whether it's enough and I feel comfortable going in there in the fact that I do think that they are sort of -- I don't know how sustainable they are but they are doing something towards being sustainable and they are marketing it maybe as well to a consumer from my perspective.

So, this might sound a bit of a silly question given your background, but is shopping for clothes something that you enjoy?

Yeah, do I enjoy? Yes, I think so, yes [laughter]. I do tend to buy now because I've always been in the industry. It's always about going to see what is in the store. I do go shopping just to look, not necessarily to purchase, a lot of the times, yeah, when I have time. And last week I was in -- last week or a week before, I was in Florence on a student study trip and the shops in Florence just amazed me, because there's a lot of like small boutique shops in Florence and in France and a lot of these European countries which I've forgotten about in terms of like here, we're just vast big stores now, hypermarkets, big supermarkets. But there was that element of sort of smaller shopping, not that I knew how sustainable any of these shops were but there was just the sort of care with the shopping experience that you walked in and you asked if there was anything you wanted help with. It was quite a different approach as I think what goes on in sort of the shops, the bigger stores anyway. There's not many small sort of niche like independent shops, so much now that I think in the UK, or to the quantity that there are in some of these European countries.

And that's something you prefer, you think? That type of experience?

Yeah, and maybe that does go back to -- that experience, you'd be able to identify more whether there is a sustainable shop that would become a favourite and so on.

Yeah, okay. And then do you find it easy to find the things that you like that you want to buy?

Yes, quite easy I think! [Laughs] And I think maybe that's because I do spend a lot of time looking and not -- yeah looking and not purchasing. And that goes back to being a careful shopper I think is that I do have lead on it and I do plan what I'm going to buy like when I went out and bought my coat. In fact there is a little bit of a process going on here. I looked on the internet, I've seen some things that I liked, I went out and looked at them, thought about it, planned how it could work with my wardrobe and then went out and bought the coats, yeah in that way. And that was over a period of a few weeks, not just go out and buy a new coat, or go out and buy a new dress and everything else that had to be planned around, how it would coordinate with the working wardrobe.

Is that quite typical of your approach to shopping do you think?

Yes, yes.

Can you think of other items where you've taken that approach to things?

You mean like how -- yeah, maybe the same with like curtains and furniture, maybe, yeah. I think that is quite a typical approach, yeah.

For clothing as well...

Oh definitely for clothing, yeah, definitely. I'd plan ahead for what was needed to fill the space and --

So it's pretty rare that you might be doing your window shopping and looking what's out there, and buy something on impulse?

No, I don't think I've ever done that, no, never. I'm trying to think. Maybe I did do that perhaps when -- because at one point, supermarkets didn't sell clothing. I can remember when that first hit though, sort of supermarkets. Maybe there was a little bit of a temptation to walk through the clothing and perhaps buy something but I definitely wouldn't do that. Matter of fact, I don't really look at clothing in supermarkets. I just find that a complete turnoff to go and look at clothes while I'm doing the food shopping and plus -- yeah, definitely not.

Is that true - because you've talked about family -- is that true for the family too when you bought the family's clothes? Would you adopt kind of a similar approach for them?

Yes, I think I would. I would look to see if I like it. I'd never buy them on impulse, no. It's going back a few years. Yeah, maybe even Christmas shopping, is another example for clothes. I do tend to buy my family clothes for Christmas. I wouldn't just buy something just there and then. I don't like that type of shopping. I'd have to think about it and make sure that it was the right product before it was purchased, yeah.

But again do you think you've always been like that even from being quite young that you've been quite careful with --

Yeah, and maybe it's sort of managing money as well. Maybe that comes into it. Yeah, I've never bought anything out of just suddenly had a wind for or that's not needed.

When you went into the fashion industry, when you started working, was that because you had a pretty inherent --

For the love of sewing --

Interest in fashion and clothes or the process of sewing or what was --

It was the sewing thing really I think and the craft and the knitting. I used to hand knit when I was quite young. But I think that again, probably the influence on that was my grandmother who was a

big knitter because going back in that generation, people did use the knit jumpers because they needed to, not because it was a hobby. It was out of necessity because they want to have things to buy. And then when I was quite small, my mum had a wool shop which is really bizarre where she sold wool. So, I think maybe there was a connection there, I don't know. But then, I've always been interested in sewing and making things and I was taught so from quite an early age. So, that was really how the connection rolled in to sort of going to do a fashion design course, yeah, to then have a career in the industry really.

You mentioned -- you talked about the last shopping trip where you went to buy your coat, So, could you please talk me through that in a bit more detail in terms of --
How I went shopping?

Why you decided to do that and where you went and what your kind of decision process was.

Okay, right. So, I knew I needed a new coat and I knew I needed a few new items. So, the first thing I did, I went to [an out of town shopping centre]. So I went to the Marks & Spencer there and the new ranges were in, so I thought, "Right, I'll have a look if they've got a coat." Did I see it there? I can't remember. I might have just glanced, that's it, as I was looking around, I can't remember.

And again, was that in one particular store?

It was in the -- yeah, Marks & Spencer, yeah, in that store. Then I think I looked at it on the internet and started to think about it, and then I planned a shopping trip to Birmingham with my daughter and we planned to go and have a look at this coat and if it was right, I would -- the intention was I'd buy it that day. So, it was predetermined that I was going to go out and buy a coat that day along with -- but then --

And you specifically needed to go to look for it at a particular place in Birmingham?

Well, I knew that I've seen this one in Marks & Spencer so I went back to the Mark & Spencer in Birmingham. I didn't really look at any other coats. I just liked a particular coat maybe that I'd seen.

What was it about that you liked particularly?

I think it was the colour and it was the fit, yeah.

Okay. And then was it just the coat or there were a couple of things --

That day we did buy a few other items, so -- what else did we buy that day? There's a COS in Birmingham so that was really also why we wanted to go to Birmingham. So, I went and had a look there. Now, they did have a sale on, so I was tempted that day but I've gone with the intention of buying a new cardigan. In fact -- because I've gone with the intention to get this coat, but maybe I also looked at the coats and cardies before I bought them in Marks & Spencer but I didn't like the fit of them. So, I went back for the one in Marks & Spencer. But I did buy a cardigan from COS. That was in the sale but had gone with the intention of possibly buying a cardigan and a shirt that day. So, it wasn't quite so planned but that was the sale temptation. But then saying that, I've got my daughter with me and maybe I let her buy some impulse purchases from -- I can't think what she bought now, but she did have something and that would have been from the River Island or Top Shop.

You've talked about kind of shopping with your daughter a couple of times. Is that something you do quite often together?

Yes, we do often, very often.

A leisure activity?!

Yes. But it is quite strange because as much as I like clothes, maybe -- I don't know why but she has an interest in clothes. She doesn't make clothes and is not at all interested in textiles or anything to do with them, she just likes buying clothes or for me to buy the clothes for her. So, I

think maybe she does like shopping with me because -- well obviously I buy the clothes but also I think she knows from my background that I like looking at lots of different things. Maybe I don't restrict her to -- yeah, I like to have a good look. Maybe that's an opportunity for me to see what stores are doing from a professional perspective. So, she does like to go shopping with me. And we do look a lot rather than just buy quite often. She doesn't have something every time we go shopping. And I do try and instil into her, "Well if you bought that, that would go with what you've got at home," or sometimes she will look at things and say, "Well, I really like that," and then we'll go off and perhaps in a few weeks go back and she'll have that, yeah. So, there is an element of planning in that.

Do you ever fall out over it?

Often, often! Well, that's probably purely because I won't buy her everything she wants. Yes, we do quite often fall out. I'm just trying to think if there's an example. I can't think of a particular example at the minute, but yeah.

And what would your point of objection be, just the quantity of things that she wants to get?

Yes, exactly and that she doesn't need it. And one thing I have noticed that she's done is that she does tend to -- which I think we all perhaps do but I've noticed it more in her that she tends to want a new item of clothing that is exactly like the one that's already in a wardrobe at home but it's because it's new. So, there is a certain amount of educating there into shopping correctly but maybe I'm doing that subconsciously and not planning to do that, yeah.

Yeah, can I ask about that? Do you think that you've tried to pass on -- because obviously you've got a set of values around quality and longevity and all of that and understanding what the garments are made from and how are they made. Is that something you try to pass on to the children?

Yeah, I do think so, but perhaps subconsciously more so. You've just reminded me of another instance of when we did fall out. The angora fibre, there was a big thing of the rabbits and how they were kept. And it was quite horrible really. So, I started to become quite conscious of whether there was angora things and she wanted a pair of gloves, a new pair of gloves. And I looked at them and it got it, so I just would point blank not let her have them. And then she was walking with a friend -- we were walking with a friend and friend's mom and somebody was saying, "Oh, these are my new gloves." And she piped up and said, "Yes, my mum wouldn't let me have these new gloves because they've got angora in them," and they laughed thinking that it was quite -- you know and I was quite -- it's not right. There is a better way of doing it. So, there was that sort of little value that was instilled in her in that way and obviously that has passed now. So, I think I do instil the values in but perhaps not in a very conscious way, yeah.

Do you have a particularly favourite item of clothing?

What, in my wardrobe right now? My new coat.

Or a thing that you might have had in the past. Anything really, anything that you kind of identify as being, "These are really the kind of things that I loved."

Okay, from the past. Yeah, yeah. I do tend to have things, wear them day in, day out, day in, day out and then I do get to a point where I need to buy something new and then that sort of goes back to the wardrobe.

What would trigger the thing where you need to buy something new? Because it's worn out or...

Yeah. Well, it's looking a big old and shabby, or yeah, or maybe it's just that I feel I need to have a new item of clothing to be seen in. I do sometimes think, if I didn't come to work, would I need as many clothes to change my clothes as often. But there is an element of sort of how respectable you look in your clothes, to me anyway in terms of maybe that's part of the industry that I work in and part of the department that I'm in because obviously everyone's sort of looking in the industry of -- at new clothes all the time and changing. So maybe there's an element of that but I'm not quite so conscious of that now perhaps. But I think it's more when they're starting to look shabby

now that I think, "Oh I really ought to" -- like my coat, I really needed a new coat. I've not had one for four years and perhaps it's time for a new one. But in terms of favourite items, so I have sort of ongoing favourite items that I just feel comfortable in. But in terms of past, I've got about three or four items that are in the wardrobe that I wouldn't get into now that I wouldn't be able to wear. One was a dress that I made about 20, 25 years ago and I just loved the fabric I made it from. So, I kept that and that is still in my wardrobe but I wouldn't wear it, but I just like it.

When was the last time you wore it?

Probably about 25 years ago! It is a really long time ago. It was just such a lovely silk fabric at the time and it was made for special occasions. So, there's that one. I'm just trying to think -- I don't think I've really kept anything typical at the minute. There's a shirt that I quite like wearing at the moment that's quite a favourite piece.

And what about it particularly that you like?

It just feels nice when it's on. The fabric feels nice. It's a nice fit. And a jumper, I've got a nice cardigan that I like wearing often as well. Yeah, again, it's the fit and it just feels comfortable to wear.

Are they from any one place in particular or are they from all over the place?

The shirt, I think that is from Hobbes and I think the cardigan is from COS.

Okay. Have you got any least favourite items that kind of are imprinted on your memory?!

Well, not really. Least favourite item -- there's perhaps a couple of jumpers in my wardrobe that I wouldn't really wear now. They're perhaps a little bit small and a bit faded in colour or just looking a bit worn, but not really. I do tend to keep on top of my wardrobe.

Is there anything that you kind of ever really regretted buying?

No, not really. I think if I've had bought something that I didn't like or I regretted when I got it home, I'd know and then I'd take it back. And I have done that before. I can't think of an occasion but I know I have taken things back because when I've got it home, it's not quite -- maybe I wasn't quite decided at the time of purchasing it. I wasn't 100% sure and then I've got it home and felt, "No, that's not going to work," and then took it back, but not very often.

So you say it's not going to work. What's kind of the biggest reason?

It doesn't feel nice to wear or I don't feel comfortable in it. It's not going to work with the rest of the wardrobe or just felt that I didn't like it as much as I did the time when I bought it.

Okay, great. So, just quickly before we finish, going back to some of the kind of the ethical issues and the sustainability issues and things like that, do you feel that you have a bit of a responsibility to try to address some of those things that we talk edabout or is that something you feel is quite important to you or --

Yeah, I think it is important and I do see it as important. I mean like the rabbit instance of the angora gloves. I would be conscious of things like that. Maybe they're topical at the time and maybe I just don't have time to root out places that are seen to be exceptionally sustainable or ethical. But I am very conscious and I am aware that it is a responsibility that I do take that or see that as a responsibility and that everyone should be aware of it. And I think maybe -- again, going back to the rabbit incident, maybe it is when it's highlighted through the media that it does make people think. But then it goes away and I think people almost do -- like the rabbit incident, I do feel as though it's gone away, but it probably hasn't. And it is just sort of being aware of it all the time really.

That could be quite difficult. Do you feel that -- say with the angora wool, would you feel that your buying behaviour makes a difference?

Well yeah, I would think so. I'd like to think so and I think if everybody stopped buying it, then it would. But I guess just me doing it wouldn't. And I guess again that's where the media comes into

it to prompt that, that it has to be for the right reasons, because it could have a massive impact. And then some of them abuse, sort of -- well, if that impacts on that, it's got to be replaced with something and that needs doing quickly, otherwise there are jobs at stake and I see it perhaps more from that point of view. But yeah, maybe I'd go with my values particularly with something like that.

Because you mentioned in other sort of areas, in your consumption of food and other things you tend to buy fair trade and things like that. Are they things that you kind of try and uphold in your life?

I do think that makes -- I do feel that makes a difference like chickens, I buy chickens from the local farm shop, and I do try and buy local, I'm conscious of that as well in terms of food. Yes, so I do feel that should make a difference.

Is that from an environmental sense of responsibility?

Yeah. And cruelty responsibility, yeah, environmental as well, yeah.

Okay. You talked a bit at the start about when the supply chains changed, when a lot of the manufacturing got taken overseas. You said something about how you felt the government should have stepped in to try and protect the industry and protect some of that. Do you kind of see that, in terms of addressing some of those issues, that it is government's responsibility or where do you kind of see the responsibility for that?

Well, I don't see it totally as the government's responsibility that I think they can intervene in situations like that, because that happens so rapidly and maybe I'm just aware of that because I was working for a company at the time and we just couldn't compete on price at all and that was what was happening, it was like dominoes at that time; all the big factories just couldn't compete in price, whereas in the past they'd all be competing against each other, suddenly they were all out. And I did feel at that particular time that the government could intervene and stop the quota of goods coming in or control it, take control. Maybe not actually fund anything but it all went really. So, I do think that they can intervene if necessary but I mean now, I think the whole clothing chain is just so vast and global and complex that I don't know what could be done about it in terms of bringing it back to the UK unless sort of people just stopped buying clothes unless they were made locally really.

Do you feel -- does that cause you any kind of -- existential angst, you know, you've clearly got that set of experiences and values and I think it's probably fair to say that it's quite difficult to live in accordance with that just because of the way things have changed. Does that cause you any problems? Do you feel that you have to make sacrifices to --

I do think like that. In fact, sort of only recently I've been looking at local factories and there's a lot of people I've been talking to and saying, "Oh, UK manufacturing is coming back here, it's coming back," but have this sort of view, "Well no, it's never going to come back to how it was." And I feel as though it's like out of my control that it's happened now and it is how it is and we just have to live with it. But I do feel that there are certain things that I can make my little stamp on maybe buying clothes that are made in the UK if it's easy enough to identify them and supporting UK clothing. The same with food, like I said I buy from a local farm shop buying local produce and yeah, so although it's out of my control, there's just a small element of it that I can -- and that makes me feel better whether or not it's actually doing anything that's of any good, it makes me feel better as a person to think that I'm thinking about it and actually trying to do a little tiny bit.

Have you been able to buy anything that's been made in the UK recently that you can think of?

Not that I could tell you that was made in the UK, no. I don't know how I'd identify whether it was in the UK. Once upon a time, the country of origin was always -- well, it was always made in UK. I mean I think it's very unlikely, I think the only way would be if I went to a local factory and ask them to make me something at this stage. But there are rumblings that clothing is coming back to the UK, but yeah, I don't know.

It's difficult as well because there's the manufacture and then the growing of the cotton, and then...

Exactly, yeah, how far back does it go, yeah. Maybe again I feel it's out of my control and I couldn't do that.

Is it something that plays on your mind a lot of the times do you think or is it kind of --

Well, not now.

Does it ever affect you to be kind of -- to buy and not buy things do you think?

No, I don't even think about it now in terms of going to buy clothes. Like I said, perhaps a few years ago when there were labels on things quite clearly stating it was UK or Bangladesh or China. I would perhaps look at the labels and make a conscious decision not to buy something, but I don't even think about it now.

Yeah. Okay, I think that's everything I wanted to ask you. Unless you have any questions?

No, no, that's fine. I hope I've not rattled on too much!

[Ends]

Interview 20 - Kate

So, the first thing that I wondered if you could do then is just tell me a little bit about your research and your professional background and how you ended up doing what you're doing.

Okay, so professional background is in the travel industry, so I actually didn't do A levels, et cetera, I went into an apprenticeship in the travel industry and then after a while, I realised it wasn't really going to take me very far in that particular sector but I still had a passion for travel, so I went back to education, did my degree, et cetera and did some teaching, did a lot of backpacking and sort of spent a lot of time in Thailand, in Southern Andaman and then obviously the Asian tsunami struck in December, 2004 and one of the places that I had spent a lot of time was severely affected by that. Around about that time I was considering doing a Ph.D. but more looking at social impacts of tourism and sector tourism specifically, so that was my current line of thinking but made a trip back to Thailand in Ko Phi Phi specifically after the tsunami and sort of looked at some of the issues presenting themselves in that context. So, the fact that the destination had been deemed as highly unsustainable before the tsunami because it's a very limited amount of space but about 30 different landowners, so they're all wanting to get as much as they possibly can out of the destination. So, it's developed in a highly unsustainable manner, very serious environmental and social consequences of tourism and starting to become unappealing and unsustainable. So, because I'm interested in tourism impacts but mostly on the social side more so than the environmental side, it was a fascinating subject for me and spending time there after the tsunami, there are a lot of debates about what was going to happen to the future of the island and some including the World Tourism Organization saw it as a clean slate opportunity that -- well, rather insensitively so, up in my personal opinion, the tsunami sort of wiped the slate clean and they could re-plan and redevelop along those sustainable lines. So, my Ph.D. was all about looking at power relationships and interactions of different stakeholders in terms of whether sustainability was a viable option for more sustainable tourism as a viable option and how different stakeholders would sort of leverage their own interests and what the result would be. So I sort of -- as long as you choose the study and map that from 2004 to 2012, and basically they've recreated a highly vulnerable situation because the power -- long and the short of it, the power of the landowners is much greater than that of the government and yeah, there's a lot of corruption and sort of issues associated with that destination. So yeah, it was looking at sustainability in Ko Phi Phi and whether it was a viable option but looking at how a disaster has affected the prospects to re-plan and redevelop along those sustainable lines, take something that's highly unsustainable and what could be created, but it was also looking at how different people interpret sustainability because a lot of obviously discourses of Euro-centric bias and sort of Western bias, not much from an Asian perspective and sort of looking at whether sustainability is understood differently and sort of what traditional methods of sustainability might be and whether they're implemented and whether that creates a difficulty in a tourism destination being sustainable according to our opinion of what sustainability is, because it might mean something different to them. So, it mapped how different stakeholders in that tourism context understand sustainability.

So you've mentioned sort of the two dimensions of that, so you said there's the environmental sustainability side, but you said your interest was more in the social sustainability side, so what were those kinds of social sustainability impacts?

Well, it is an Islamic, more predominantly an Islamic destination and so the original settlers there were Moken fisher people, so originally sea gypsies. And so there's quite a strong sort of religious background on the island but what they're doing is promoting a form of hedonistic tourism really now, it's sort of Phi Phi rivals, Ko Pha Ngan for the full moon parties and sort of they're getting drunk and there is no separation though and that's the problem because of how densely developed the island is. There's no separation between the tourists and what the tourists are doing, the late night parties, the excessive alcohol consumption, skimpy sunbathing, et cetera, all of that and then the local people. So, you see a lot of culture change in respect of that through something -- in the tourism literature it's referred to as the demonstration effect, so young children being brought up in that environment, seeing the behaviour of tourists and then changing their behaviour accordingly. So, I find that area more interesting because I'm more interested in people and all that

sort of stuff rather than the environmentalist perspective, but nevertheless it was still important because the reason why people go to Phi Phi initially is because of its aesthetic beauty and diving and the snorkelling and the rock climbing, so that's the basis of the tourism appeal but how it then developed was starting to degrade and erode that touristic appeal.

And it was interesting you said you travelled after your degree and after having worked in the industry for a bit. So, was it just that travelling that sparked your interest in that or is that something that you think you always kind of had?

Travel is something I always wanted to do, so obviously a younger age where you're sort of rebelling against parents and what the direction they want you to go in, it was the solution to that childhood rebellion was well, you're going to pursue something and train in something that is of interest to you, what you're passionate about. Travel, I'm interested in different cultures, different countries, I want that opportunity but obviously working in travel agencies doesn't give you that opportunity, so that was a very naive perspective but you learn those things, don't you? So, it was actually after my HND which is a two-year course, I then had a gap year before I could go on and do my top-up degree, so it was in that time that I went off and sort of did my first travelling and that's when I spent quite a bit of time in Thailand and then afterwards when I started my degree, I went back and lived in Phuket and taught at a university there, so spent a lot of time going to and fro from Ko Phi Phi to Phuket to do research.

And was it that experience that fired your interest in specifically sort of the sustainability aspects of what you've kind of experiencing there or --

It wasn't more sustainability that was my interest, it was more the impacts that tourism was generating, so seeing all the bad that tourism was bringing to this very beautiful destination and seeing the change over a period of time because the first time I went there was in 2000 and you saw the shift and it was interesting to sort of -- I'm not one that necessarily goes back to the same place many times but it was somewhere that -- it sounds really stupid but a lot of people in my research especially the tourists, when you ask them to describe Phi Phi and what's so special about it, it's got a real magical sort of appeal because of its beauty, its aesthetic beauty. And because of the community, there's no roads there, you come in on a boat and then there's no cars, there's no vehicles, et cetera and it would be a bit of a hippie backpacker sort of thing. So, there's a bit of hippie in me maybe to a certain extent and it was that original impression that stuck with you and then when you sort of saw how it become before the tsunami and the damage that tourism have done and then you sort of think, okay, the tremendous loss of life, 1500 people died and pretty much most of the infrastructure in the central part of the island was destroyed because it was built out of very fragile sort of materials and you think, well, if the tourism industry haven't developed in this way, the devastation wouldn't have been so vast. So then you start to think, well okay, could it be better going forward if it's a clean slate like the World Tourism Organization thinks but it wasn't a clean slate, with the philosophy and the mentality sort of underpinning the way it developed, that couldn't be more clean, it couldn't be erased, so that's why the same sort of state was recreated.

Okay. So you've mentioned the -- like there's a bit of a hippie side to you. So when you say that, in what ways -- particularly growing up and things like that, was that kind of a part of your identity that you were very conscious of, was there an interest in --

Just in freedom and exploration is important to me. Yeah, I don't know, I think I'm a bit of a dreamer and I do, I like sort of immersing myself in quite an alien environment and just going with the flow and sort of seeing what happens. I'm not sort of scared to put myself into new situations and obviously travel is a part of that, just of exploration but at the same time still like a certain amount of familiarity. It was interesting on one of your questions that you like to see sort of safety and security and I was applying myself to some of the tourism models, the allocentrics are the explorers, sort of the pioneers. I'm certainly not that but I still like a little bit of safety and as you get older you do, don't you? So no, I don't know, I like sort of being free not having constraints, being able to please myself to a certain extent, be my own boss sort of thing.

I mean obviously one of the things I want to talk about is consumption, so do you feel that some of those values and that background manifests itself in the things that you buy?

That's a really odd thing because now I don't think it does, apart from -- well travel purchases certainly but in terms of clothing and where I shop, I care a lot about the people very, very close to me and I care about what's going on in the world but I'm being very hypocritical because I do very little about it.

And why do you think that's hypocritical?

Because if I really care that much, I wouldn't just look after sort of me and my own. I don't know. I do more. I sort of lobby to a certain extent and campaign for certain causes, exploitation in terms of development, human rights issues, et cetera but there's a lot more I'm sure I could do to be a global citizen. I think there's a lot more I could do and it's a poor excuse to say I haven't got time. I think there's a desire to do more but not the action, it doesn't translate into action.

So did you ever find any of that sort of translates into things that you buy, like -- I don't know, do you ever buy kind of fair trade things or companies that you boycott or is there anything like that that you kind of tend to do?

No, there aren't any and that's why I feel like I am hypocritical because I don't sort of back up maybe my values with action. I make sort of conscious choices in respect to travel to be more sustainable and to maximise benefits that I would give as a tourist by for example not staying in all-inclusive resorts and staying in sort of smaller guesthouses and using a local tour guide and things like that. But I think it's because of maybe an awareness of that particular discipline and that area that I changed my behaviour in that respect but my other purchases I don't believe I'm that sustainable.

You said you do some bits of campaign work and things like that, so what kind of things has that involved?

So, in terms of -- I've got like a tourism issues Facebook group and also a Twitter group and it's really to raise awareness of different human rights issues in respect to the tourism industry and also in terms of development, so things like child trafficking and exploitation. And it was set up because it's my own sort of personal interest and to help share and create a discussion and dialog around these issues, but it was also a set of the benefit of the international tourism module here to try and get our students involved in sort of discussions and debates and thinking a bit more deeply about some of the issues we talk about in my module, because there's only a limited amount of scope and ability to cover some things in just one final year module. I want to try and get them thinking outside the box a little bit. So yeah, particularly my interest in human trafficking and child trafficking and sort of exploitation and the sex industry, that was my original Ph.D. choice and I sort of do wish I still gone down that direction. There's still time for research in that area, so yeah that's still an interest but it's still a sort of social issue that does relate to ethics I suppose.

Yeah of course. When you think about some of those ethical issues in the travel industry, like I suppose there's a lot of discussion around whose responsibility it is for people, whoever those people are to address those kinds of problems and whether it stems with individual consumers, you said you'll try and stay in the local hotel and use the independent tour guides and that kind of stuff, or whether it's the responsibility of the big corporations, or whether it's something that government should take responsibility for. Do you have a view on that? Is that something you ever thought about?

Yeah. I mean in respect to the industry, they have a sort of moral obligation I think to make sure that they are treating their staff, their employees in the right way. I think it's more of a, yes it's important for the government to provide that sort of support but from the research that I've done a lot of that, governance can be undermined through corruption and because of the power of the organisation specific within the tourism industry as well particularly, I think they can play a far more important role in sort of protecting workers, avoiding exploitation, et cetera.

Do you tend to kind of -- well there's two questions in that, do you tend to trust big corporations to do the right thing?

Yeah, I do because I do like to trust in people but you do become increasingly cynical when the more you learn about a particular subject, sort of exposing you to more examples of green washing. The more aware you become, the more cynical you become, definitely. I do like to trust in people.

And then on a personal level, do you feel in the actions that you take in terms of going to the smaller local independent type people when you're travelling, do you feel that makes a difference or do you feel that your individual acts as a consumer is helping the situation?

Not drastically but if you didn't do that and no one did that, there wouldn't be an impact. So, however small a footprint you can make is important, so yeah, small actions are important. There's certainly more myself as an individual could do in lots of different respects.

And do you feel that you have a sense of responsibility then do you say?

Yeah, definitely because you're sort of creating your demand for travel to a particular destination, creating a situation where exploitation can occur but it's also creating a situation where opportunities can occur as well. So, there's a lot of time spent talking about the bad and so organisations like Tourism Concern are very vocal about that but there's also a lot of sort of financial, social benefit that the tourism industry can bring as well, so yeah.

Okay, good. As I said, what I want to talk about particularly is clothes and sort of clothing consumption habits, so could you just tell me a bit about how you see yourself as a clothes shopper, what's the overall process of how you buy clothes now from where and all that sort of stuff?

Every now and again I realise that I've got nothing to wear, nothing new, everything is old, looks rubbish and I'll go out and have a little bit of a blitz. But I don't spend a lot of money on clothes. I shop in quite cheap shops, and that's not now because I can't afford it, I'm very value conscious in that respect of I would -- I don't sort of go after brands and I wouldn't spend more to get a particular brand if something just as good or the same, it's more about the style, what I feel comfortable in and the price really, which sort of goes against maybe my own values in respect to sort of shopping at Primark, et cetera. But yeah, that's how I am.

Okay, so when you said every now and again, sort of how often do you tend to go and do that?

Say once every couple of months, so last weekend -- because I get very little time to actually go out and go shopping. I don't really shop online although I'm starting to more and more because I like to go see those items and so that's a basic trust issue, isn't it? But not necessarily if you try things on and then I'll come back with a big bag from Primark like I did on Saturday, only spent about 60 pounds but got about five or six different outfits, and that's how it seems to be with me. It's on the rare occasions when I do get tired, I'll have a day and I'll sort of go off. I'll probably only be in one or two shops and get everything I need.

Okay, so you mentioned Primark is one, what other kind of the places that you tend to go to?

H&M, Tesco's, Peacocks, yeah, that's about it. I wouldn't shop in Top Shop because it's horrendously overpriced, Miss Selfridge it's too young now, or New Look. That would be it, but no, I don't sort of go for the designers brands or brands in particular. It's more about sort of style and comfort and yeah, the price really.

Have you always been like that do you think?

Yeah, very much so. I've never sort of -- yeah, I've never been sort of worried about wearing the latest fashions or brands or anything like that. That's not a thing that's important to me at all.

And then in terms of the sort of the places that you tend to go to, has that been fairly consistent do you think over time?

Yeah, very much so. It's strange it has been very little, yeah, little change in clothing purchase habits, yeah.

Is clothes shopping something that you enjoy doing would you say?

No, not huge somehow really. It's very functional. I used to, yeah, I think I used to and it used to be a bigger thing when you have more time available then you'd actually make a bit of an event, you'll go with your friends but I don't suppose I'm a typical female in that sense because yeah, they seem to sort of spend hours trolleying around the shops but I'm more sort of in, I'll see that, grab it, grab it, grab it and then go.

So you said you went recently to do a bit of a blitz. Can you talk me through that in a bit

I was down in London for the weekend and I was at a loose end and I pretty much spent about three hours in Primark and a couple of hours in H&M, so very limited range of shops and I looked New Look and I don't really tend to sort of go into the other shops because I generally feel that I'll get what I need in a limited range of shops, so I sort of went over and over, Oxford Street, Primark is the biggest Primark in the country I think. So yeah, I spent a good deal of time in there and pretty much got everything I needed including shoes, handbags, jewellery, et cetera.

And what is it in particular that you like about Primark and H&M? Why are those two that you tend to like to go to?

One thing about Primark which is -- yeah, I'm probably going to be quite unethical is that they have quite unusual jewellery that is very low priced that you actually -- it's very similar to what you might get when you're overseas in somewhere like India because they sourced it from there and it's an easy means of accessing cheap and sort of like quite ethnic-y jewellery. I like H&M because it's more sort of Bohemian style clothes. Yeah, that's really it, simple in that respect. That's why I was worried when you asked me to participate -- I knew you would have problems!

No, no, everyone is kind of slightly different to some degree but also obviously similar in many respects as well.

It is, it's very much about -- nowadays, it's about time availability and what I can slot in to quite a busy life and so shopping is very quick and then it's quite a functional sort of act.

Yeah. Do you tend to find it easy to find the things that you like?

Yeah. But yeah, I came back with a whole bag of black clothes the other day and I was like, I really do need to sort of vary things a little bit. But I've obviously got a very clear idea of the sort of styles and things that I like and the current scheme is grey or black. Yeah, I seem to sort of go for the same sort of thing again. But then every season I'll sort of look back at -- because it's cheap clothing, I do sort of send them on to charity shops and things and I will probably renew the wardrobe after sort of six months to a year or something like that and I'll look back on the wardrobe for last year and think, "What was I thinking?" And then I'll seem to adopt a slightly different style that next year but I stick with the same sort of colours and stick with the same shops.

So in what ways do those kind of styles change?

This year it's more about sort of a more ethnic style and baggier clothing, greys and blacks, whereas last year I had a lot of like 1950s style, so sort of a -- more like skater style dresses and things like that. And I was -- because one of my interests is in burlesque so that was influencing that at that time. I don't know what has caused this shift this time, I really don't know, probably random.

Okay, and do you tend to be -- when you buy stuff, are you quite happy with what you've bought generally in the short term?

Yeah. I rarely try on before I buy things because I know it's easy enough to take it back and you generally know in certain -- because I'm so familiar with those selected few shops that certain

sizes will fit you and there won't be any problems. So, it's a rare situation where I would return things, so I'll be pretty certain that I like the style and it would suit me before I'd leave the shop.

Are there things that you really don't like when you think about clothes or shopping or clothes shopping?

Yeah, gaudy bright colours, skimpy, trashy sort of clothes. That's a personal choice obviously, it's not something I'd go for, and there's nothing really I can think of that I dislike, it's just my personal preference against other people's I suppose.

Have you ever bought anything that you really regretted?

Not massively because I never spent that much money on it that it would be huge regrets. I think with clothing, because the investment isn't -- well, my personal investment, some people obviously would spend a lot of money, it wouldn't be that same level of regret as perhaps a big item or expensive item. So no, not that I can think of, but there have been real fashion disasters, I've blocked them from my mind.

Is there anywhere maybe used to buy clothes that you stopped buying clothes from that you can think of particularly?

Miss Selfridge a little bit because my perception now is I shouldn't really be shopping there anymore. I'm a bit too old for it. Where else? I can't think of any, oh Dorothy Perkins.

Okay, for similar reasons or --

No, just they're quite boring in terms of the range and different styles, it's all quite conservative sort of stuff.

Okay. And you were talking about the price consciousness. Is that something that you think you always had?

Something I've always had and I think I always will be like that to be quite honest with you, even though I'm a lot more comfortable now than I sort of was when I was 18. I'm still very conscious of not spending for the sake of spending. It's not because I'm being penny pinching, I just think that a black dress in Primark that costs 13 pounds, why would I spend 40 pounds in Warehouse? No point if it looks the same and no one is going to know. It's not an issue. I'm not sort of buying things because of the brand benefits.

Yeah. And is that something where your parents would be quite -- what would the word be? Kind of careful with money?

Yeah, they were extremely careful and I always had to sort of earn -- well, from quite a young age, I was never given hand outs, it was you will work and you'll earn and you'll have a limited amount of money and you can't go over that because we're not just going to give you extra. So, I was always quite careful in terms of knowing how much money I had and looking after that quite carefully. So, I think they did instil that sense of sort of value and sort of taking care of what you have.

Yeah, and do you think that -- would you say that they have quite a similar outlook and similar habits too in terms of -- particularly buying clothes?

My dad doesn't care at all and he will only wear new things when mum puts them on the bed for him, so I'm probably more like my dad in that respect. Mum doesn't buy for brands but she buys sort of for style and she spends a lot more money on clothes. But then again, it won't be a regular, it will be every now and again, similar sort of habit in how I do things but I will spend a lot less and shop in different shops.

Have you got a particularly favourite item of clothing?

I've got some brown sort of vintage boots that I love, brown leather boots and I had those for quite a few years, and they were a Dune purchase, so more money was spent on those but they're actually a Christmas present from mum. So I will take very good care of those!

So what is it in particular that you like about those?

The style because they're sort of vintage, the heel because I don't like huge, high heels, it's got to be comfortable so comfort is an important thing. No, not because they're from Dune, whereas normally I'll just get some from Primark or somewhere else. No, no - it was Jones' shoe shop, so that normally -- this is a Christmas present, we want you to buy something decent, so we'll go somewhere decent whereas yeah, I probably wouldn't have...

So, is it because of the better quality of the stuff that you'd normally buy do you think or is it just because you like those pair of boots?

They are -- yeah, much better quality than what I would normally wear. I'd normally purchase something that might fall apart after a certain amount of time but that's okay because I tend to change my mind about what I like regularly. But they're constant but they don't necessarily suit the style that I'm -- they're more the vintage style that I was last year whereas... but I still love them, they're lovely. And then my new other favourite thing is the dress that I've got over the weekend from H&M.

Right, okay. And what in particular do you like about that?

It's grey, it's comfortable, I won't even say it's latest sort of style but it makes me feel a bit younger when I'm wearing it by sort of like student age! Yeah, that's all really. It was in sale as well so that's good!

So you think about yourself, you've mentioned changing styles every year and sort of -- you're kind of starting to put some labels on there, it's probably a quite difficult thing to do but if you thought back like over the last three to five years or something like that, could you identify definitely that year with that style, that year with that style?

I can't remember. Yeah, well last year was more sort of 1950s vintage. Yeah actually, there is a bit of alternation there, so this year I'm going back to the more ethnic harem trousers, yoga pants, this is outside of work obviously, sort of comfortable ethnic wear. But that seems to correlate when I've gone somewhere that's particularly sort of travel related that's had an impact on me. So two years ago I went to Cambodia and Vietnam, et cetera and then I came back and I changed my style and adopted yoga and meditation and all of that sort of stuff. I'm so fickle! Yeah, and I can't remember before that. I can remember back to sort of 19, 20 where sort of going out night clubbing a lot and wearing horrible, skimpy, bright shiny clothes and trashy stuff.

All right, so we talked a little -- we've alluded to it a little bit as the course of things gone -- particularly think about the sustainability impacts of clothing and whether that's environmental or social or however you want to define it. Is that something that you ever kind of think about do you think?

I think about the wastage in terms of the clothes that I buy because some of them don't last that well because I sort of change my mind about what I like and I'll have sort of a six-month clear out, make room for new things. But then I'll always donate them to charity shops so it's sort of this recycling idea. I am aware of obviously some of the controversies about supply chain in respect with some of the shops that I use but again, this is -- I'm aware of it and I sort of think it's a terrible thing that I don't boycott, so how strongly do I actually feel about it? I obviously don't feel that strongly if I'm not acting on the basis of it. So, I'm a hypocrite!

I don't think you're a hypocrite! You obviously said you were aware of one of two of the issues, is that something that plays on your mind, does it cause you any kind of angst or is it just something you kind of think about and then when you go out to buy clothes you just kind of forget it?

It's a fleeting thought if I'm entirely honest and it isn't something that causes me a lot of angst. No, whereas sort of the purchases like I've explained before with travel purchases, I give that an awful lot more thought. And clothing purchases, it's not that it's not important to me but I don't think too much about it.

Are you able to kind of rationalise that? Why do you think that is -- where you've got this thing in tourism where you're obviously quite passionate about on some of the impacts, does that translate into –

I don't think I'm as passionate about clothes and fashion. I think it's that but probably because I live and breathe travelling in that sense because that's my work and it's my research and it's what I'm constantly sort of aware of in terms of the social media and news that I interact with, it's to do with that, not to do with what's going on in the fashion industry. So, everything that's going on there is peripheral I suppose to my -- I'm very blinkered to be quite honest with you. I only concern myself with what I have to because time doesn't commit me to do otherwise really, so yeah. I feel like it's a counselling session; I've got it off of my chest now! But you've analysed me and you're forming a judgment now!

[Interview ends]

Appendix 7 – Full List of Codes

Name	Sources	References
Emotion – mood	1	1
Net Value for the Customer	2	3
<i>Benefits - Outcomes</i>	0	0
Strategic benefits	0	0
Financial benefits	2	5
Practical benefits	3	3
Satisfaction	4	8
Personal benefits	4	9
Ethical concerns	1	1
Belonging	2	3
Health	5	8
Feeling good.	6	8
Social benefits	4	8
Validation - approval	1	1
Impact - making a positive difference	3	4
Projecting self-image	10	19
Benefits - Attributes	1	2
Service Quality	0	0
Added Service Features	1	2
Convenience	2	4
Returns & Repair	3	5
Service - personal service	4	6
Impact - making a positive difference	3	3
Core product features	3	5
Location of manufacture	3	5

Local	3	9
Recycled	4	4
Use - occasion	4	5
Colour	5	12
Material	9	23
Fair Trade	11	29
Goods Quality	13	25
Durability	14	39
Fit	14	34
Organic	15	35
Function	16	45
Style	18	61
Customisation	3	4
Sacrifices - Non-monetary	3	5
Relationship costs	1	2
Family	3	5
Subjective norms	6	9
Psychological costs	7	15
Dissatisfaction	4	6
Dissonance	15	51
Time	9	17
Effort	9	23
Learning new skills	2	2
Search	6	17
Sacrifices - Monetary	4	6
Disposal costs	0	0
Distribution costs	0	0

Search costs	0	0
Opportunity costs	0	0
Learning costs	0	0
Maintenance costs	1	1
Acquisition costs	2	2
Costs of use	3	5
Price	16	53
Repair	4	8
Disposal	5	8
Charity shops	7	18
Context	9	10
Shared values	3	4
Friends - peers	3	6
Austerity	6	6
Differentiator	6	15
Difference	3	8
Education	7	14
Children	10	19
Life change	14	42
Self-identity	17	54
Family	18	46
Work role	18	40
Work-based motivation.	9	12
Values	20	67
Power	0	0
Achievement	0	0
Conformity	0	0

Stimulation	1	1
Hedonism	1	3
Self-direction	1	2
Security	4	4
Tradition	6	6
Benevolence	9	11
Universalism	17	36
Upbringing	21	53
Lack of consideration of ethics	10	21
Ethical concerns	11	20
Boycotts	1	1
Mainstreaming ethics	1	1
Obligation	1	1
Charity	4	6
Lack of ethical motivator	6	9
Bounded rationality	7	17
Animal rights	7	10
Local	7	11
Sustainability	14	37
Economic sustainability	1	1
Reuse	2	3
Waste	7	11
Environmental sustainability	14	50
Social sustainability	14	24
Buying less	16	35
Decision process	14	51
Cognition	6	8

Availability	14	27
Attitude to clothes shopping	15	34
Scepticism	15	30
Power	16	29
Influencing company behaviour	3	4
Lack of power	8	8
Influencing others	9	15
Habit	17	59
Responsibility	18	39
Awareness - Knowledge	19	58
Publicity	4	5
Labelling	8	11
Knowledge	17	39
Retailer examples	19	68
Trade-offs	20	104